

# Data Augmentation for Improved Morphology on Mars Data

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. As a medium of communication, pictures have been used since the dawn of *Homo Sapiens*[1], which makes understanding the information embed in them a major part of research in the various fields of science ranging from Archaeology to the relatively more recent Computer Science.

In Computer Vision, a vital process in retrieving information in images and which form part of most systems for visual understanding is image segmentation[2]. It is the process of partitioning an image or a video frame into multiple segments[3]. Segments are fundamentally a set of pixels in a region that share a common property such as colour or texture, enabling the identification and locating of boundaries of objects in an image[4]. Digital image segmentation is applied in various domains, including but not limited to, medical (locating cancerous tumors and measuring tissue volumes)[5], facial and fingerprint recognition, self-driving vehicles (detecting pedestrian). There are and continue to be proposed, many algorithms for image segmentation. Currently, these approaches are either segregating pixels based on intensity changes (i.e. detecting discontinuity) such as edge detecting algorithms, or partitioning an image into regions with similar predefined criteria (i.e. Similarity detection) examples include thresholding approaches. The various algorithms can also be categorized based on the method used in solving the problem; namely (1) Edge detection based segmentation e.g. histogram-based[6] and gradient-based[7], (2) Thresholding approaches such as those proposed by Abd Elaziz *et al*[8], and Houssein *et al*[9], (3) Region-based segmentation techniques include region growing[10, 11], region split and merge[12, 13], (4) techniques based on Partial Differential Equation are active contour[14], C-V model[15] etc., (5) Clustering methods such as K-means clustering algorithm[16] and relatively more recent approach is the Artificial Neural Network (ANN) algorithms which solves image segmentation problems with higher accuracy compared to other approaches. Examples of Deep learning or ANN approach to image segmentation include but not limited to Convolutional Network models such as VGG16, GoogLeNet, Fast R-CNN, Faster R-CNN[17], U-NET[18], V-NET[19] and Mask-RCNN[20], Recurrent Neural Network models include ReSeg[21], Generative and Adversarial (GAN) Models e.g. [22, 23, 24], a comprehensive list of GAN-based techniques can be found at [25].

The problem of image segmentation can be coined as that of classifying pixels with semantic labels i.e. semantic segmentation

(fig. 1c) or segregating pixels into individual objects in the image i.e. instance segmentation (fig 1d)[26]. In semantic segmentation, pixels are assigned to the same segment if they are of the same object type in the image. This can be thought of as classification at pixel level. Instance segmentation involves assigning all the pixels that belong to the same single object to the same segment. It is a two-step process; extracting bounding boxes around each instance of an object through object detection and then classifying pixels that corresponding to each instance in the bounding box. This technique combines object detection (fig. 1b) and segmentation. A third, relatively new, formulation is to combine both instance and semantic segmentation termed Panoramic Segmentation (fig. 1e). It involves the detection and segmentation of all objects including background and labelling different instances in an image.

Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) are essential in analyzing erosion and drainage, hill-slope hydrology, studying groundwater flow, watersheds, and contaminant transportation as they are important tools for parameterizing topography. DEM is representation of planetary (earth, moon, mars etc.) terrain from elevation data in 3-D image. There are two types; raster Geographic Information Systems (GIS) layer representation and the vector-based triangular irregular network format. DEMs are obtained using techniques such as Surveying, Stereo Photogrammetry, Lidar, Radar, etc.. Flight and Train simulations, GIS and Satellite navigations are some of the systems in which DEMs are used. Martian surface has an abundance of geographical features such as volcanoes, layers and gullies, with phenomena like volcanoes bringing out microbial entities that were protected from solar radiation. Moreover, glaciers and mounds that have water underneath them might contain evidence of life. Detecting and studying these morphologies can help us find extraterrestrial life on mars. The detection of mounds formed from phenomena such as volcanic eruption can be done automatically using ANN based image segmentation methods.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The many algorithms available for solving image segmentation problem is an indication that no single approach can solve it all accurately and in a more efficient way. An affirmation of this assertion is the numerous methodologies proposed in literature by Deep Learning researchers in recent decade. Furthermore, the choice of algorithm and by extension the need for new approaches, is principally influenced by data pertaining to the problem, its representation and the type of segmentation problem. In view of these, we formulated the following questions with regard to the data at hand.

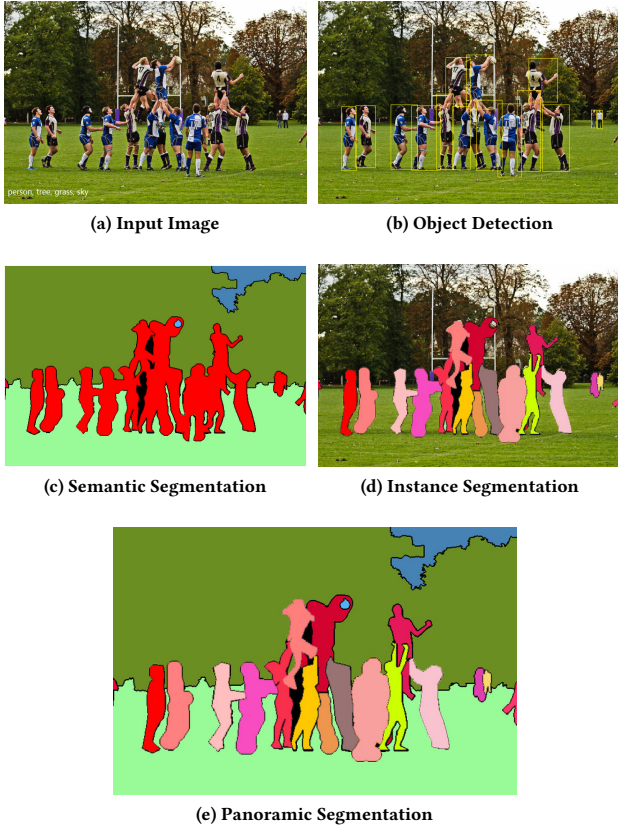


Figure 1: Variations of Segmentation [27]

- Will data augmentation have any effect on the accuracy of our selected approach (es) for application, and if yes, how much extra data relative to the training data?
- Which of the Machine Learning, more specifically Deep learning, techniques, segments the data with much more accuracy?
- Most of the Deep Learning algorithms in literature are categorized under supervised learning. Can this problem be solved with unsupervised learning techniques?

## 1.2 Related Work

Wuff-Jensen *et al.* proposed, to the best of our knowledge, the original idea of using GANs to generate terrain from DEMs. Their architecture was based on deep convolutional GAN (DCGAN)[28] – a type of GAN made up of a fractional-strided convolutions (generator) and a discriminator of strided convolutions.

Spick *et al.*[29] presented a method of generating height maps from digital elevation of regions of earth. The authors approach was based on Spatial GANs (SGAN)[30]. Spatial GANs remove fully connected layers from DCGAN allowing outputs to be scaled to any size and mapping features onto output as translation-invariant.

Bowles *et al.*[31] investigated augmenting training data using GAN-derived synthetic images. Progressive Growing of GANs (PG-GAN)[32] network was used as a baseline architecture, and demonstrated that this can improve results across two segmentation tasks (1) - Computed Tomography (CT) images with manually delineated Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) labels, (2) - Fluid-Attenuated Inversion Recovery (FLAIR) images with manual White Matter Hyperintensity (WMH) segmentations.

## 2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In this section, we formally present the problem of automatically detecting mounds in Mars' Arabia Terra. Specifically, classification of pixels in the digital elevation model of Mars in to segments of mounds or no-mounds using Artificial Neural Network based techniques. We sought to predict where mounds given any DEM of Mars

More formally, given  $n$  annotated images  $\{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$  and each image, say  $x_i$ , has  $m_i$  objects that are categorized into  $C$  classes with objects labelled as  $y_i$ .

$$y^i = \{(c_1^i, v_1^i), (c_2^i, v_2^i), \dots, (c_{m_i}^i, v_{m_i}^i)\} \quad (1)$$

where  $c_{m_i}^i \in C$  and  $v_{m_i}^i$  is the object's pixel mask.

The goal is to learn the values of some parameterized ( $\theta$ ) function  $f$  such that:

$$y^i = f(x_i, \theta_i) \quad (2)$$

And be able to predict object (mound) locations  $\hat{y}$  for all new (unseen)  $x_i$

A loss function to optimize the prediction would be:

$$J(\theta) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n l(\hat{y}^i, x_i, y^i; \theta) + \frac{\lambda}{2} \|\theta\|_2^2 \quad (3)$$

Due to the relatively small number of training samples, we proposed, as a starting point of our implementation, inspired by the work done by Souly *et al.*[23], an architecture with a generator to provide extra training samples and classifier as a discriminator in a Generative Adversarial Network. We evaluate the performance of each approach against the following metrics *Pixels Accuracy* i.e. ratio of properly classified pixels to total number of pixels, *Mean Pixel Accuracy (MPA)* is the average of the ratio of properly classified pixels to the number of pixels in a class and *Mean Intersection over Union (mIoU)* is the ratio of the intersection between the ground truth and the predicted segmentation map to their union, averaged over all classes.

## 3 DATA ACQUISITION & PRE-PROCESSING

### 3.1 Data acquisition

In our paper, we are using data from HiRISE (High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment) camera, onboard the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) spacecraft. We have the DEM (Digital elevation model) of the 'Firsolf' crater, which is an impact crater on Mars. Two high resolution images of a specific area on the ground are taken from different camera angles, and then these stereo images are combined together to obtain a DTM (Digital Terrain Model). The photos were taken at an altitude of 272 kilometers above ground. The scale of the image is very high in resolution at 0.27 meter per pixel. This data has been made publicly available by NASA/JPL/

University of Arizona. We decided to utilize a DEM format, since it is a three dimensional digital representation of a terrain with x,y and z coordinates. The Z coordinate (Elevation data) will help us find natural morphologies on the surface like mounds, craters and channels. We can use DEMs to generate additional features by performing slope and aspect analysis. The use of DEMs also allows us to build 3D models of the surface. Moreover the distance between the sample points (spatial resolution) and the vertical resolution are very high in the HiRise DEM.

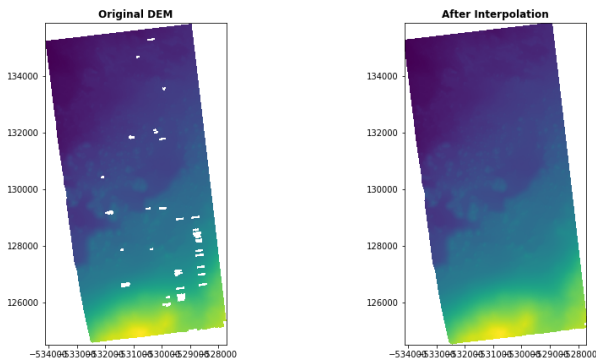
### 3.2 Data preprocessing

The first step in preprocessing was to fill in the No Data values. A no data value is present in the dataset when there is no depth reading available at that coordinate. This usually represents things such as backgrounds and borders, but also occurs when data is not available due to technical difficulties etc.

There are a few methods that can be used to treat the NoData values. We chose to perform automatic interpolation using the 'fillnodata' method from the python package 'rasterio'<sup>1</sup>. Manual interpolation is also possible, but requires expertise in domain. Sometimes interpolation can also cause geometric patterns and artifacts in the image which end up adding noise to our dataset.

The rasterio interpolation we used has two tunable parameters, Max\_search\_distance and smoothing\_iterations. Max\_search\_distance corresponds to the maximum number of pixels to search in all directions to find values to interpolate from (using inverse distance weighting). The smoothing\_iterations refers to the number of 3x3 average filters (passes to run on interpolated pixels) are applied to smooth out artifacts. We used a value of 35 for the max\_search\_distance and a value of 0 for the smoothing iterations

After the interpolating the missing values, we obtain a proper DEM with no missing values. The DEM file is now ready for the tiling process.



(a) Interpolation

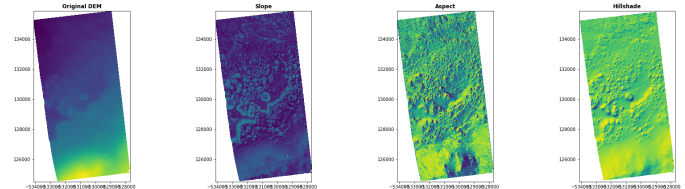
Figure 2: Filling NoData Values Using Interpolation

<sup>1</sup><https://rasterio.readthedocs.io/en/latest/api/rasterio.fill.html>

The DEM image we are using has a resolution of 6418 x 11339, and is a geoTIFF file. Each pixel corresponds to the depth measurement at a specific area on the ground. The maximum depth value is -1595.222, maximum value is -3050.866 and the No Data value is represented by -32767. The DEM has 75% valid values and a mean of -2594.830. A standard deviation value of 336.037 was observed.

### 3.3 Feature engineering

Adding channels or features to our data will help the segmentation neural network detect morphologies better. We can make use of additional features such as hillshades, slope and aspect analysis etc. We decided to generate hillshade, slope and aspect from our DEM file as additional features using 'gdal.DEMProcessing'<sup>2</sup>. Since the



(a) Feature Extraction

Figure 3: Variations of Features

dataset is very small and consists of only one image, we decided to tile the image into N x M parts. Tiling will allow us to have multiple training samples, which inturn will improve the performance of our neural network. All of the morphologies to be detected have a polynomial, amoeba-like shape. There arise a few problems when using tiling, ex. A tile border can cut through a morphology, giving it a linear edge where there is none. Since we will also be tiling the testing data set, this should not be a problem.

Tiling Pseudocode Divide the training image into N rows and M columns Obtain N x M number of square shaped training tiles Divide the testing image into N rows and M columns Obtain N x M number of square shaped testing tiles

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<sup>2</sup><https://gdal.org/python/osgeo.gdal-module.html#DEMProcessing>

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## A PHASE CONTRIBUTION

- Phase One Douglas D. Agbeve
- Phase Two Salim Fares