

Steganography and Steganalysis in Digital Images

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Outline

1 Introduction

2 Related Works

3 Problem Formulation

4 Proposed Work

5 Conclusion

Steganography

Steganography

- Steganography = Steganos (covert) + graphia (writing)
- A way of secret transmission of data through innocent looking carrier or cover

History of steganography and steganalysis

- Steganography methods have been used for centuries

History of steganography and steganalysis

- Steganography methods have been used for centuries
- In ancient Greek times, **slaves tattooed message on their shaved heads and send when hair is regrown**

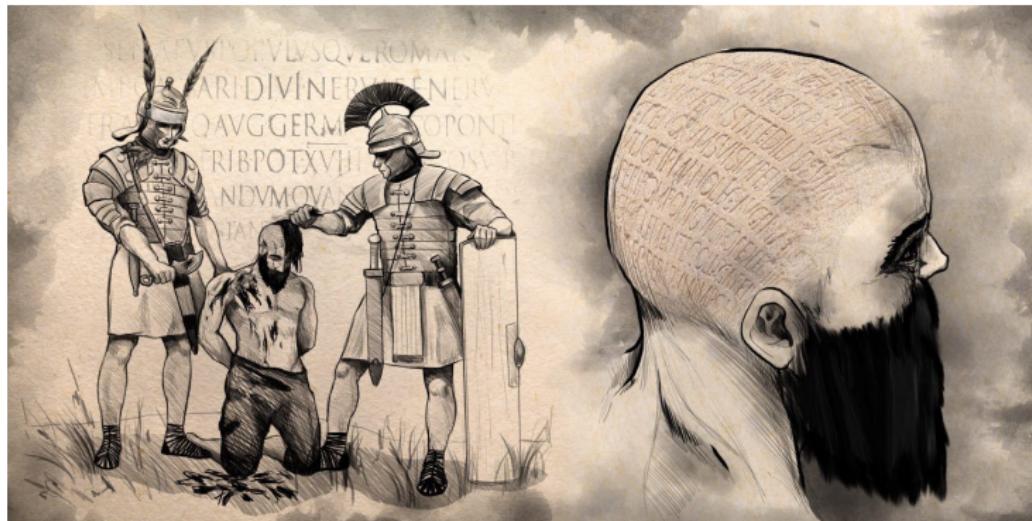


Figure: image src: googleimages

History of steganography

- Message to be hidden was written on the **wood** and was covered with new **wax layer**

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- During **World War-II, Milk, Fruit Juices, Vinegar** were used for writing secret messages
- During 1990's secret messages are hidden into some **digital files**

Characteristics

- **Security.** presence of hidden message should not be detected with probability more than random guess
- **Capacity.** must be as high as possible
- **Imperceptibility.** should not be perceivable by human eye

Classification of Steganography

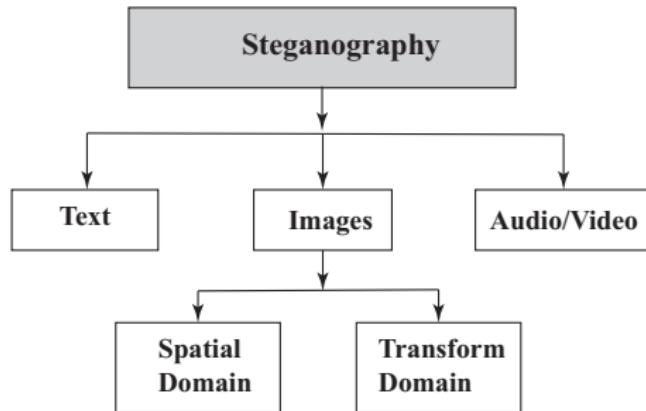


Figure: Classification of Steganography methods

Text Steganography

- Hiding secret information in text

Example!!

Example: Alice sends the following e-mail to her friend Bob:

My friend Bob,

until yesterday I was using binoculars for stargazing. Today, I decided to try my new telescope. The galaxies in Leo and Ursa Major were unbelievable! Next, I plan to check out some nebulas and then prepare to take a few snapshots of the new comet. Although I am satisfied with the telescope, I think I need to purchase light pollution filters to block the xenon lights from a nearby highway to improve the quality of my pictures.

Cheers,
Alice.

- It seems conversation between two astronomers

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1st letter of each word \Rightarrow expansion of $\pi \Rightarrow$ preceding letter

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- Reality: Alice and Bob are spies
- Bob knows that Alice using steganography and follows prearranged protocol
- Here, Predecided protocol is:
1st letter of each word \Rightarrow expansion of $\pi \Rightarrow$ preceding letter
- Bob starts by listing the **1st letter** of all words.

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⇒ "mfbuyiwubfstidttmnttgilaumwuniptcosnatpttafsotncaiaswttit-intplpftbtxlfanhtitqompca"

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- Result: "**a**"

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- Result: "**at**

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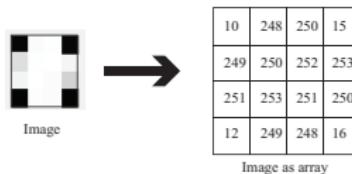
Terminologies

- **Cover** - text, images, audio, video, etc.
- **Stego** - After embedding cover object known as stego
- **Payload** - Amount of data hidden (bits-per-pixel or bpp for images)

Steganography in Digital Images

Why Steganography in Digital Images?

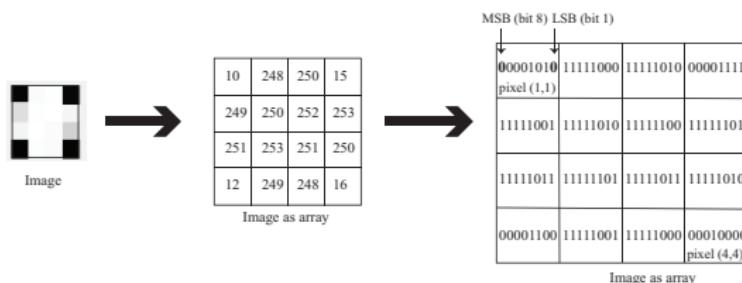
- A gray scale image = A 2-D array of 8-bit values
- Each pixel has 8-bits. i.e, pixel values $\in [0, 255]$



Steganography in Digital Images

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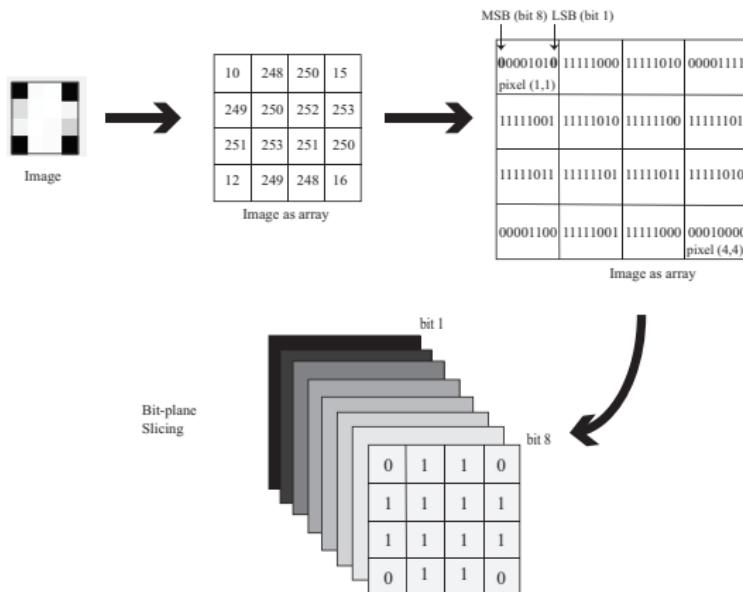
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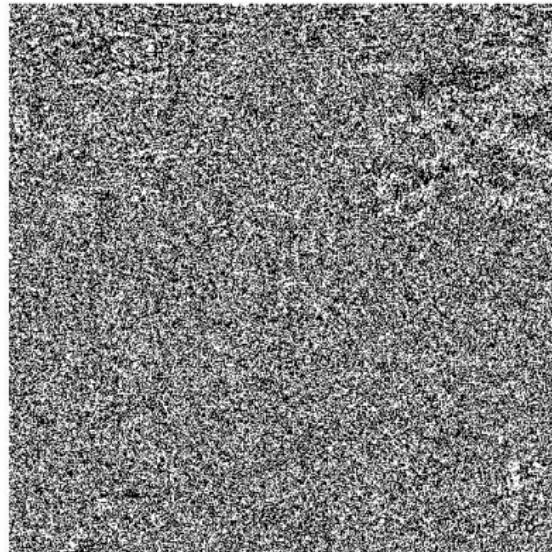
Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Original Image

¹Image src: BOSSBase

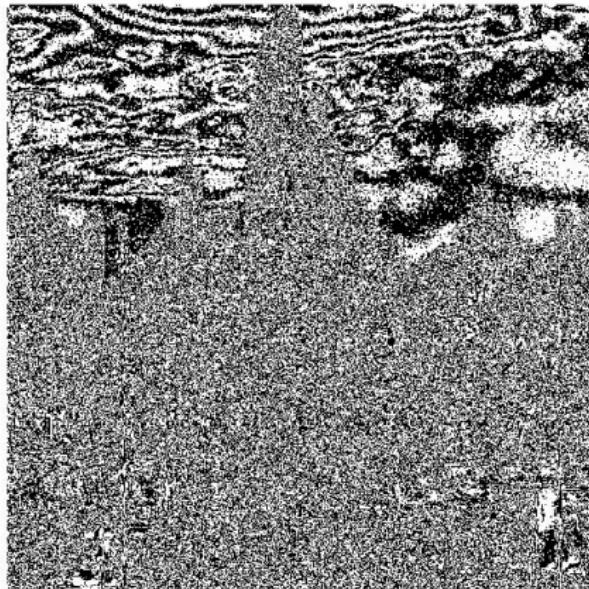
Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 1

¹Image src: BOSSBase

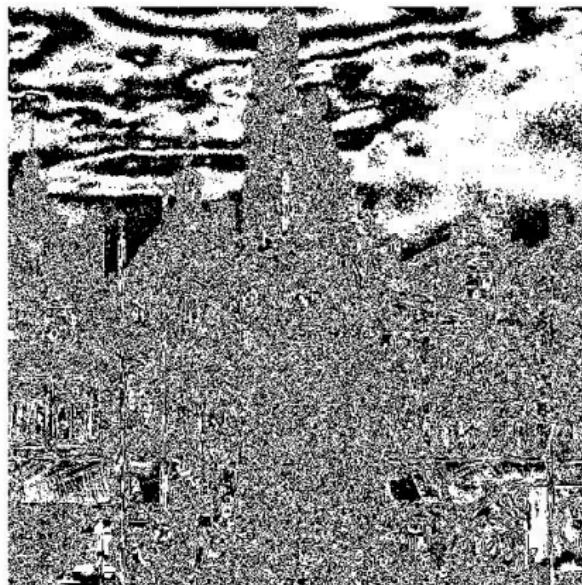
Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 2

¹Image src: BOSSBase

Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 3

¹Image src: BOSSBase

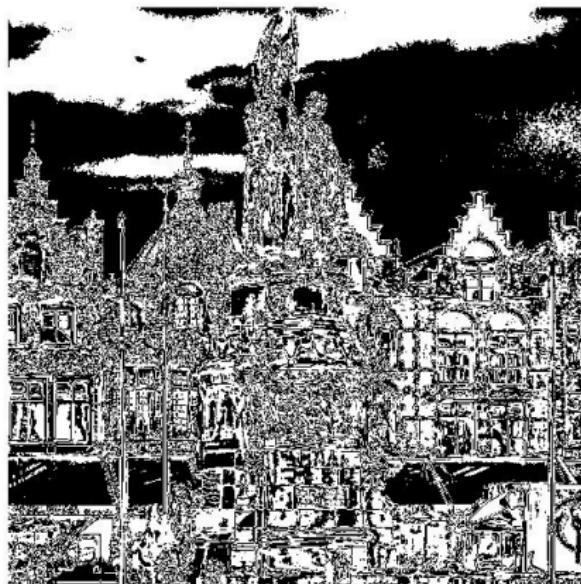
Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 4

¹Image src: BOSSBase

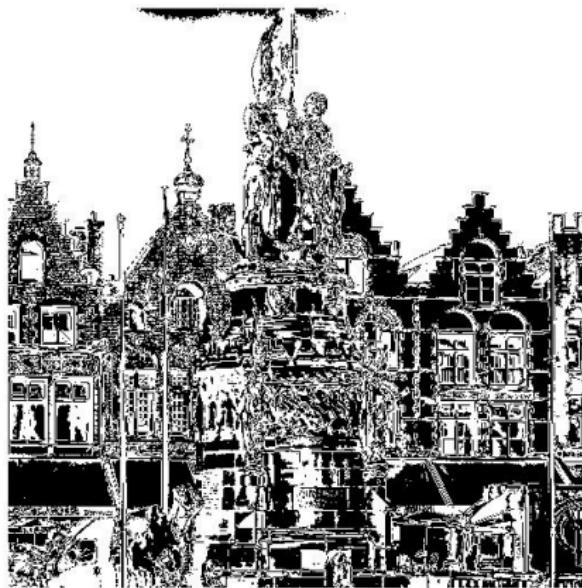
Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 5

¹Image src: BOSSBase

Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 6

¹Image src: BOSSBase

Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 7

¹Image src: BOSSBase

Bit-plane slicing of an image¹



Bit Plane 8

¹Image src: BOSSBase

Construction of image with bit-planes



Bit Plane 8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with bit planes
7 and 8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with bit planes
6,7 and 8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with bit planes
5,6,7 and 8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with bit planes
4,5,6,7 and8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with bit planes
3,4,5,6,7 and 8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with bit planes
2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8

Construction of image with bit-planes



Image with all bit planes

Why Steganography in images?

- **Observation**

- ① Image can be represented with only 4-bit planes nicely \implies **large amount of redundant bits**

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- **Observation**

- ① Image can be represented with only 4-bit planes nicely \implies **large amount of redundant bits**
 - ② Redundant bits can be utilized to hide secret message
- images frequently used over Internet
 - HVS cannot differentiate between normal and stego image

Steganography (How?)

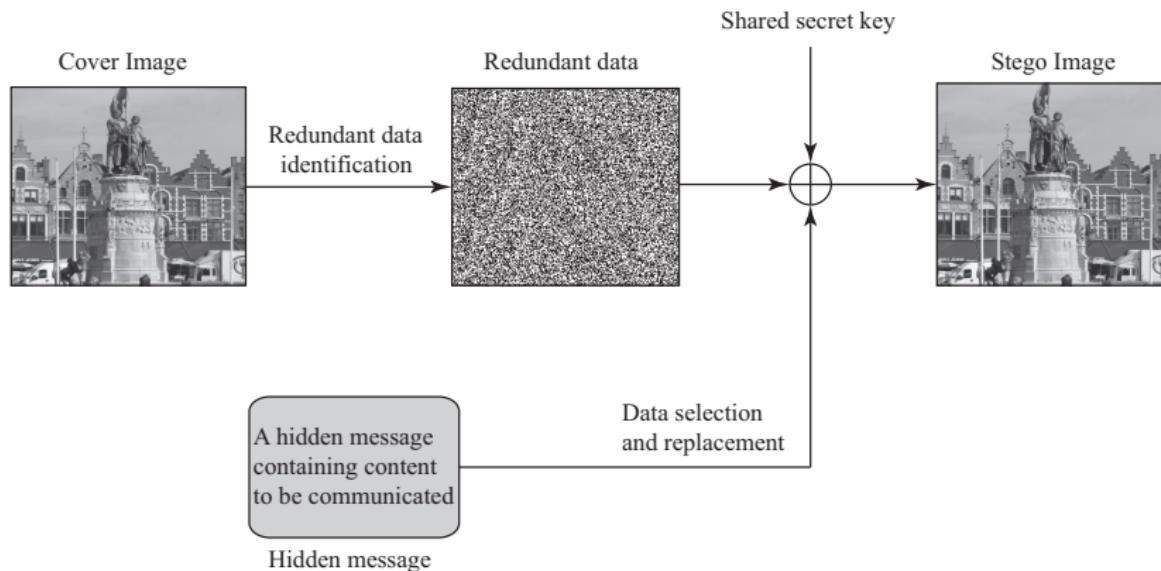


Figure: Steganography process in digital image

Types of image steganography

Image steganography can be divided into the two groups:

- ① **Spatial domain**- Modifies pixel values of the image
- ② **Transform domain**- transforms image (eg., DCT) then embeds in transformed image

Spatial Domain schemes

- Some of the spatial domain methods are:
 - ① LSB embedding
 - ② HUGO
 - ③ WOW
 - ④ S-Uniward

LSB embedding

- simple steganography approach
- Make use of LSB of image pixels
- Intuition: replacing MSB with secret message will have noticeable effect
- Replacing LSB produces near duplicate color, which is not noticeable by human eye

Example: LSB embedding



a) Cover Image

Example: LSB embedding



a) Cover Image

b) Message text

Example: LSB embedding



a) Cover Image

In 1960, an inventive and ingenious steganographic method enabled a prisoner of war, Commander Jeremiah Denton, to send a coded message via television. He was forced to say the word when he was forced by his Vietnamese captors to give an interview on TV. However, he could not say anything critical of his captors, as he spoke, he blotted his eyes to Morse code, spelling out 1-0-0-1-0-0-1.

In 1967, another very ingenious technique was actually used in several wars in the midtwentieth century. The idea is to shrink the message so much that it starts resembling specks of dirt but can still be read under high magnification. The technological obstacle to use of this idea was overcome by the French photographer Dragan, who developed technology for shrinking text to such small size that it could be easily hidden in nostrils, ears, or under fingernails. In 1967, J. T. (the pseudonym of the author) hid a secret message in a photograph of a man's face, which "was hidden in corners of postcards slit open with a knife and revealed with starch." The modern counterpart of this is to print a message on to one page of text and even contain photographs. The Italian discovered the usage of microdots in 1970. The first application of the concept of the microdot was recently proposed for hiding information in DNA.

For the purpose of fudging important genetic material, microdots in the form of dust were used to identify car parts. Perhaps the best-known form of steganography is writing with invisible ink. Such inks were organic liquids, such as milk, urine, vinegar, diluted honey, or sugar water. These inks were invisible until the paper had dried. To make them perceptible, the letter was singly heated up above a candle. Interestingly, some inks were invented by replacing the message-extraction algorithm with safer alternatives, such as gamma filtering (light).

b) Message text



c) Stego Image

Example: LSB embedding



a) Cover Image

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Microdots are a very ingenious technique that was actually used in several wars in the nineteenth century. The idea is to shrink the message so much that it starts resembling specks of dirt but can still be read under high magnification. The technological obstacles to use of this technique were overcome by the French photographer Dragan, who developed technology for shrinking text such small objects could be easily hidden in nostrils, ears, or under fingernails. In World War I, the Germans hidden in carriers of pastilles, slit open with a knife and revealed with starch. The modern inventors have managed to fit up to one page of text and even contain photographs. The Allies discovered the usage of microdots during the Second World War. Application of the concept of the microdot was recently proposed for hiding information in DNA.

The purpose of tagging important genetic material. Microdots in the form of dust were used to identify car parts. Perhaps the best-known form of steganography is writing with invisible ink. In the past, messages were written on paper that was treated with organic liquids such as milk, urine, vinegar, diluted honey, or sugar water. These liquids were transparent until they dried. Once the liquid had dried, the paper was perfectly legible once the paper had dried. To make them perceptible, the letter was briefly heated up above a candle. In the case of microdots, the letters were invented by replacing the message-extraction algorithm with other alternatives, such as using ultraviolet light.

b) Message text



c) Stego Image



d) Stego noise

Content-Adaptive Steganography (Modern)

- Minimize additive distortion function for embedding:

$$D(X, Y) = \sum_{i=1}^{n_1} \sum_{j=1}^{n_2} \rho_{ij}(X_{ij}, Y_{ij}) |Y_{ij} - X_{ij}|$$

ρ_{ij} is cost of changing pixel X_{ij} to Y_{ij}

- Distortion (Cost) function indicates where to embed
- Assign the embedding cost to be high to smooth areas and low cost to textured or noisy areas
- e.g., S-UNIWARD, HUGO, WOW, etc.

Example: WOW



Cover Image

V. Holub and J. Fridrich, "Designing steganographic distortion using directional filters," 2012 IEEE International Workshop on Information Forensics and Security (WIFS), Tenerife, 2012, pp. 234-239

Example: WOW



Cover Image



Stego Image

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Cover Image



Stego Image



Stego Noise

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Steganalysis

Steganalysis

- Analyzing images with intent of finding trace of hidden data
- Given an image. Is it Stego or Cover ? (Binary classification)
- Works in three steps:
 - ① Preprocessing
 - ② Feature extraction
 - ③ Classification

Related Works

Related Works

- Related works can be categorized as
 - i) Hand-crafted feature based and ii) Deep feature based

Pevn et al. (SPAM)

- Assumption: steganographic embedding alters the pixel dependencies of the image
- modeled deviation between adjacent pixels in images
- First, filter $[-1, 1]$ is used to suppress the image content and expose the embedding noise, results in noise residual
- Using Markov chain, dependencies between neighboring pixels in residual image is modeled
- The resultant transition probability matrix is used as feature vector
- These feature vectors are then used to train SVM for classification

Fridrich and Kodovsky (SRM)

- SRM computed residual through 39 different high-pass filters
- An ensemble classifier is trained on these features
- EC is consist of several binary classifiers called base learners
- Fisher Linear Discriminants are used as base learner
- EC reaches its decision by majority voting.

Some of SRM filters

$$spam_{14h,v} = (-1 \quad +1) \quad minimax_{22h,v} = (+1 \quad -1 \quad +1)$$

$$minimax_{41} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & +1 & 0 \\ +1 & -1 & +1 \\ 0 & +1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad KV = \frac{1}{12} \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 2 & -2 & 2 & -1 \\ 2 & -6 & 8 & -6 & 2 \\ -2 & 8 & -12 & 8 & -2 \\ 2 & -6 & 8 & -6 & 2 \\ -1 & 2 & -2 & 2 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Problem with Hand-crafted feature based schemes

- Requires well designed features
- Hand-crafted feature is heavily dependent on user expertise
- Hand-crafted features extraction is time-consuming

Solution of Problems using CNN

- CNN (Convolutional Neural Network) are known to be very good feature extractors
- Features can be learned by the CNN
- Feature extraction and classification can be done using a single network

Qian et al. (GNCNN)

- Preporcessing using KV filter
- Features are extracted using CNN having 4 conv
- 3 fc with ReLU and a softmax layer is used for classification
- Layers used
Gaussian activation
followed by pooling
- 4% of improvement over SRM

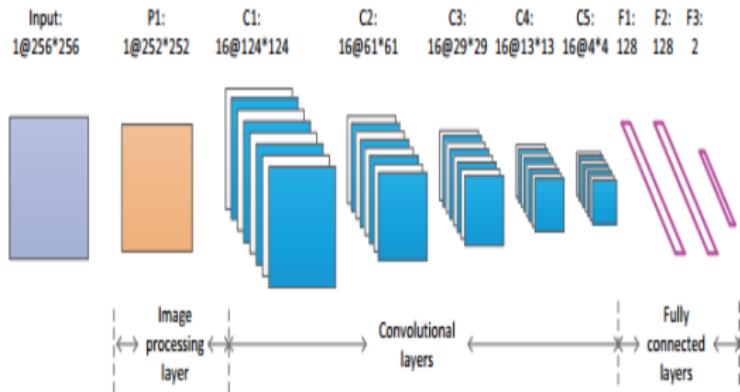


Figure: Qian Network

Xu et al.

- HPF used for pre-processing
 - ABS is used to preserve the negative values
 - BN is used to prevent CNN from falling into local minima

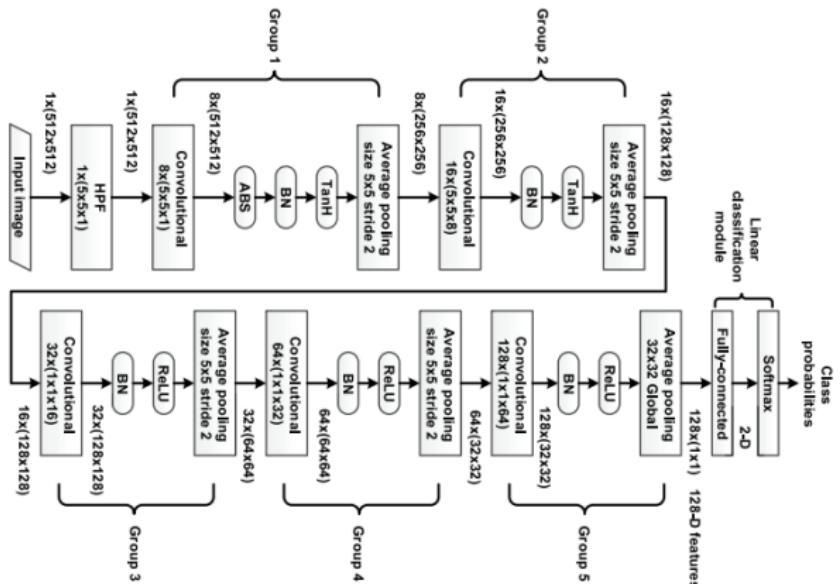


Figure: Xu et al. network

Qian et al.

- Presented a transfer learning for steganalysis
- Observation: The lower the payload for a steganographic algo, the harder the training of CNN
- Sometimes CNN fails to converge
- GNCNN is trained for detecting a steganographic algo with a high payload
- Feature representation is transferred to to improve the learning of features for the same steganographic algo with low payload
- Reported better performance compared to SRM in detecting the WOW algorithm

Y. Qian, J.Dong, W. Wang, and T. Tan, "Learning and transferring representations for image steganalysis using convolutional neural network," in 2016 IEEE International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP), Sept 2016, pp. 2752-2756  

Limitation of existing works

- 1) Existing schemes used a fixed HPF to compute noise residual

A fixed kernel may not always be optimal for extracting noise residual

- 2) Some methods used a deeper network for classification, which may lead to vanishing gradient problem
- 3) Some methods used pooling which may ruin the stego noise

Thank You