

# Vehicle Driving Assistant

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(*Draft Paper*)

**Abstract**—Autonomous vehicles has been a common term in our day to day life with car manufacturers like Tesla shipping cars that are SAE Level 3. While these vehicles include a slew of features such as parking assistance and cruise control, they've mostly been tailored to foreign roads. Potholes, and the abundance of them, is something that is unique to our Indian roads. We believe that successful detection of potholes from visual images can be applied in a variety of scenarios. Moreover, the sheer variety in the color, shape and size of potholes makes this problem an apt candidate to be solved using modern machine learning and image processing techniques.

**Index Terms**—Image processing, Machine Learning, Pot hole detection, Clustering

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The project aims to provide a comprehensive set of assistance features to aid the driver (or autonomous vehicle) to drive safely. This could includes a number of indicators about the environment, the major cue being visualisation and detection of potholes in the road ahead.

"A pothole [5] is a structural failure in a road surface, caused by failure primarily in asphalt pavement due to the presence of water in the underlying soil structure and the presence of traffic passing over the affected area". An example of a road with pothole is shown in Figure 1.



Fig. 1: Pothole example

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. We present a brief history of the related work done so far in the field of pothole detection and visualisation in Section 2. Section 3 discusses about the experimental set up we used in this work. In the subsequent section we describes the methodology that we follow in the following section 4. It

includes road extraction part and blob detection part. Then the result that we obtained are given briefly in section 5. Finally section 6 concludes the paper. Section 7 gives a light to the future enhancements that could be done.

## 2. RELATED WORK

In Nienaber et al (2015) [1], a system using basic image processing techniques in a constrained environment without relying on any machine learning techniques is used for pothole detection. It presents a good preliminary method for detecting potholes using a single camera within an range of 2 - 20m from a vehicle moving at a speed of not more than 60km/hr. The method separates a rectangular area of interest just above the hood of the vehicle which contains road surface, assuming that driver maintains a safe distance from the front vehicle. The rectangular area of interest is separated by connecting the various farthest region of interest using convex hull algorithm.

The work presented by Ajit Danti et al (2012) [2], presents a comprehensive approach to address the acute problems of Indian roads such as faded lanes, irregular potholes, improper and invisible road signs. Instead of using image processing techniques for pothole detection as done by Nienaber et al (2015), Ajith Danti et al (2012) uses K-Means clustering based algorithm to detect potholes. By addressing the acute problems above mentioned in the paper it makes automated driving safer and easier in Indian roads.

## 3. PROPOSED WORK

In this paper we use both image processing techniques as well as machine learning to study the presence and occurrence of potholes. At first we used a Digital camera mounted on the window of a slow moving vehicle (40km/hr) to capture the potholes images. The images are captured at high resolution so that the analysis of the potholes will be easier. This paper propose a way to visualize the potholes as well as identify whether or not the road has a pothole in it. The visualisation approach is similar to how humans perceive the pothole images in the brain. The pothole identification approach will help to signal the driver of a vehicle to take preventive actions upon pothole infected lanes.

The subsequent subsection describes the approaches we took for visualising the potholes. We used contour detection after applying morphological transformation as a method I and then we used contour detection after extracting the road area by using convex hull algorithm in method II. The methods are described in detail below.

### A. Using morphological transformation

Morphological transformations are some simple operations based on the image shape. It is normally performed on binary images. Two basic morphological operators are Erosion and Dilation. Using which the image is analysed to visualise the pothole present in the region.

### B. Using contours and convex hull

For visualising the pothole we first extract a region of the interest from the given image which will contain the road area. This is done by first selecting the largest contour on the images ROI and then drawing convex hull using convex hull algorithm. Since extracting the road area will help to narrow down the area of interest. This way we will be able to prevent the irrelevant informations from the analysis like foliage, vehicle hood, other vehicles on the road etc. We then apply image processing techniques like contour detection, blob detection and edge detection to draw a bounding box over the area of the road which contains the potholes.

### C. Using Machine Learning Methods

For machine learning technique we use annotated dataset [4] for training various classifiers and then try various machine learning algorithms to figure out the presence of a pothole in the frame given.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

In this section we briefly familiarize the methodology that we used for the visualisation and detection of potholes in detail. The subsequent section first discusses about the image processing techniques that are helpful for pothole visualisation followed by feature extraction and machine learning learning techniques used in the study.

### A. Image Processing Techniques

*1) Morphological Transformation Method:* We used erosion to detect contours around potholes in the images. Gaussian Blur and thresholding were applied on the input frames to remove the noise signals from the image. The results of Image Gradients: Laplacian, Sobel X, Sobel Y were compared, after applying them on the blurred image. Among all, Sobel Y, performed the best. Then, erosion was applied to this output frame, with the medium sized kernel, to narrow down the search for potholes in the frames. Contours were being detected in the final frame. This technique worked on the Google Images dataset with partial noise being detected but detected too much noise in our dataset along with a fraction of potholes.



Fig. 2: Pothole example

*2) Road Isolation Method:* The figure 2 show the image that we collected from the Digital camera. The image is then converted to its corresponding HSV channel because we found out the HSV channels are good for analysing the image with various image processing techniques.



Fig. 3: Pothole Image



Fig. 4: Converting to HSV

From the image we selected a region of interest (ROI) where the most part of the road appears, since we are using a fixed camera mounted on the window of a moving vehicle we assume that the road area tend to appear on a fixed region above the hood of the vehicle. Hence we select a Region of Interest from the (ROI) image as show in figure 4.



Fig. 5: Selecting the ROI

Figure 5 shows the enlarged ROI of the image. Then we convert the image to a binary image by selecting the gray scale channel. We apply thresholding on the binary image as shown in Figure 6. Then the image is analysed using contour detection to find out the largest appearing contour in the selected ROI to extract the road area from the image. This largest contour serves as the mask for extracting the road.



Fig. 6: Region of Interest

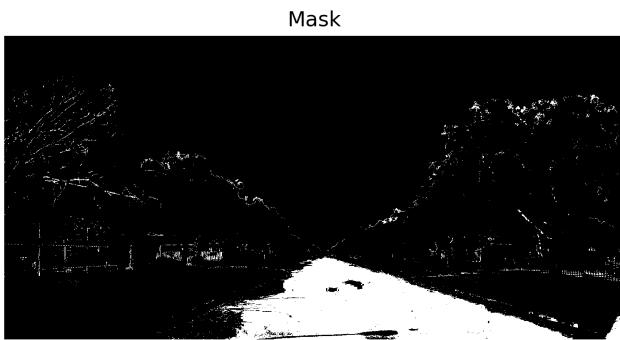


Fig. 7: Mask

The Figure 7 below indicated the convex hull of the largest contours selected from the thresholded images. This largest contour is used as a mask to extract the road area as shown in the Figure 9.

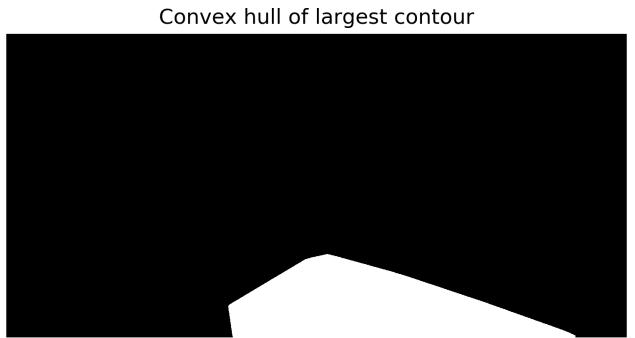


Fig. 8: Convex hull of largest contour

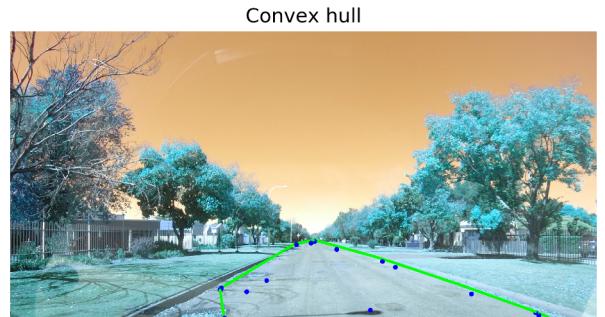


Fig. 9: Convex hull on Original Image



Fig. 10: Extracted Road

*3) Blob Detection Method:* The extracted road area is then analysed further for pothole visualisation. In computer vision, blob detection methods are aimed at detecting regions in a digital image that differ in properties, such as brightness or color, compared to surrounding regions. Since we assume that pothole appear in the road in different texture than that of the road area mainly in dark shadowed regions some time it appear as though it is covered in mud and water. Since there is a differentiating factor that make pothole identifiable in the road we used blob detection algorithms to highlight the potholes.

*4) Contour dilation Method:* The extracted road area could also be analysed using contour detection or edge detection (Canny edge detection) further for highlighting the presence of the potholes.

### B. Machine Learning Techniques

In this section we describe in details the various machine learning techniques that we used for detecting the presence of the pothole in the roads.

*1) Feature Modelling:* The feature extraction is done in two ways

- Downscaled images as features  
The image is downscaled into lower resolution and then flattened to be used as a feature.
- Color histogram as a feature  
The color histogram of the frame is take and is used as feature for training the classifier.

*2) Machine Learning Algorithms:* The following list of machine learning techniques were used in the study. They were trained using the above mentioned feature and the results were analysed.

- Logistic Regression [6]
- Decision Tree [7]
- AdaBoost using Decision Tree
- GaussianNB
- KNN [8]
- SVM [10]
- Random Forest [9]

## 5. RESULTS

### A. Pothole visualisation using Image processing Techniques

The image processing techniques gave us suboptimal results. Method I using morphological transformation didn't work well as there are edges in the roads that created extra contours which were wrongly highlighted as potholes. Method II using road isolation followed by contour detection and edge detection worked for some scenarios but did not work well for most of the cases. Hence pothole visualisation is found difficult to achieve with the current technology as we were not able to find discriminating feature for potholes from our analysis

### B. Pothole detection using Machine Learning Techniques

The classifier are trained using the feature and the results obtained are shared in the below tables. The table below

Methods	Accuracy(%)
Logistic Regression	72.73
Multinomial Logistic Regression	68.93
Decision Tree	86.88
AdaBoost using Decision Tree	80.32
GaussianNB	44.26
KNN	73.77
SVM	55.73
Random Forest	68.18

TABLE I: Table show results with color downscaled images as features

show the result obtained while using the Downscaled image as features.

The table below show the result obtained while using the color histogram as features.

Methods	Accuracy(%)
Logistic Regression	77.27
Decision Tree	77.04
AdaBoost using Decision Tree	83.60
GaussianNB	75.40
KNN	78.68
SVM	55.73
Random Forest	95.45

TABLE II: Table show results with color histogram as features

As we can infer from the tables that the classification using downscaled images worked well when decision trees and AdaBoost using decision tree are used. Meanwhile Gaussian Naive Bayes performed the worst using downscaled images.

The color histogram as a feature worked relatively better when compared to the downscaled images. We were pretty surprised to see the performance of color histogram using Random Forest which gives at accuracy of 95%. SVM didn't give good accuracy in both color histogram as well as downscaled images.

## 6. CONCLUSION

We presented a mix of methods, incorporating both image processing and machine learning, to detect the presence of potholes in an image. Given an image, the road was isolated and extracted with best results using contours and finding the convex hull of the largest contour. Through successive testing, it was found that using machine learning models yielded better results than conventional image processing methods as far as detection of potholes were concerned. The models were trained using features extracted from the isolated road segment. Comparison between the different methods of feature extraction and the performance of different models on these features have also been exhibited.

## 7. FUTURE WORK & IMPROVEMENTS

The present work yields suboptimal results in scenes features heavy shadows. Better discriminating features could be

extracted which helps to discern potholes even in environments where the lighting is uneven and interspersed with shadows. Methods could be developed to accommodate the presence of incoming traffic and road markings.

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