

MEDICAL IMAGE COMPUTING (CAP 5937)

LECTURE 3: Pre-Processing Medical Images (I)

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Outline

- **CAVA:** Computer Aided Visualization and Analysis
- **CAD:** Computer Aided Diagnosis
- Definitions and Terminologies
- Coordinate Systems
- Pre-Processing Images
 - Volume of Interest
 - Region of Interest
 - Intensity of Interest
 - Image Enhancement
 - Filtering
 - Smoothing

CAVA: Computer Aided Visualization and Analysis

- **Definition:**
 - The science of underlying computerized methods of image processing, analysis, and visualizations to facilitate **new therapeutic strategies, basic clinical research, education, and training.**

CAD: Computer Aided Diagnosis

- **Definition:**
 - The science of underlying computerized methods of image processing, analysis **for the diagnosis of diseases via images.**

Purpose of CAVA and CAD



Object System: a collection of rigid, deformable, static, or dynamic objects inside the body of or conceptual objects.

CAVA/CAD Operations

- **Pre (Image) Processing**
 - For enhancing information about and defining object system.
- **Visualization**
 - For viewing and comprehending object system
- **Manipulation**
 - For altering object system (virtual surgery)
- **Analysis**
 - For quantifying information about object system.

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Today's lecture

Terminology-I

- **Object:**
 - An entity that is imaged and studied. May be rigid, deformable, static, or dynamic, physical or conceptual.
- **Object system:**
 - A collection of related objects.
- **Scanner:**
 - Any imaging device-real or conceptual.
- **Body region:**
 - The support region of the imaged object system.
- **Voxels (3D):**
 - Cuboidal elements into which body region is digitized by the imaging device.

Terminology-II

- **Scene:**
 - Multidimensional (2D, 3D, 4D, ...) image of the body regions; $S=(C,f)$
- **Scene Domain:**
 - Rectangular array of voxels on which scene is defined; C
- **Scene Intensity:**
 - Values assigned to voxels; $f(c)$
- **Binary Scene:**
 - A scene with intensities 0 and 1 only.
- **Structure:**
 - Geometric representation of an object in the object system derived from scenes.

Terminology-III

- **Structure System:**
 - A collection of structures representing the objects in an object system
- **Rendition:**
 - A 2D image depicting a structure system
- **Body Coordinate System:**
 - A coordinate system associated with the imaged body region
- **Scanner Coordinate System:**
 - A coordinate system affixed to the scanner
- **Scene Coordinate System:**
 - A coordinate system affixed to the scene
- **Structure Coordinate System:**
 - A coordinate system determined for structures
- **Display Coordinate System:**
 - A coordinate system associated with the display device



Coordinate Systems

$\alpha\beta\gamma$: body coordinate system



abc : scanner coordinate system



xyz : scene coordinate system



uvw : structure coordinate system



rst : display coordinate system

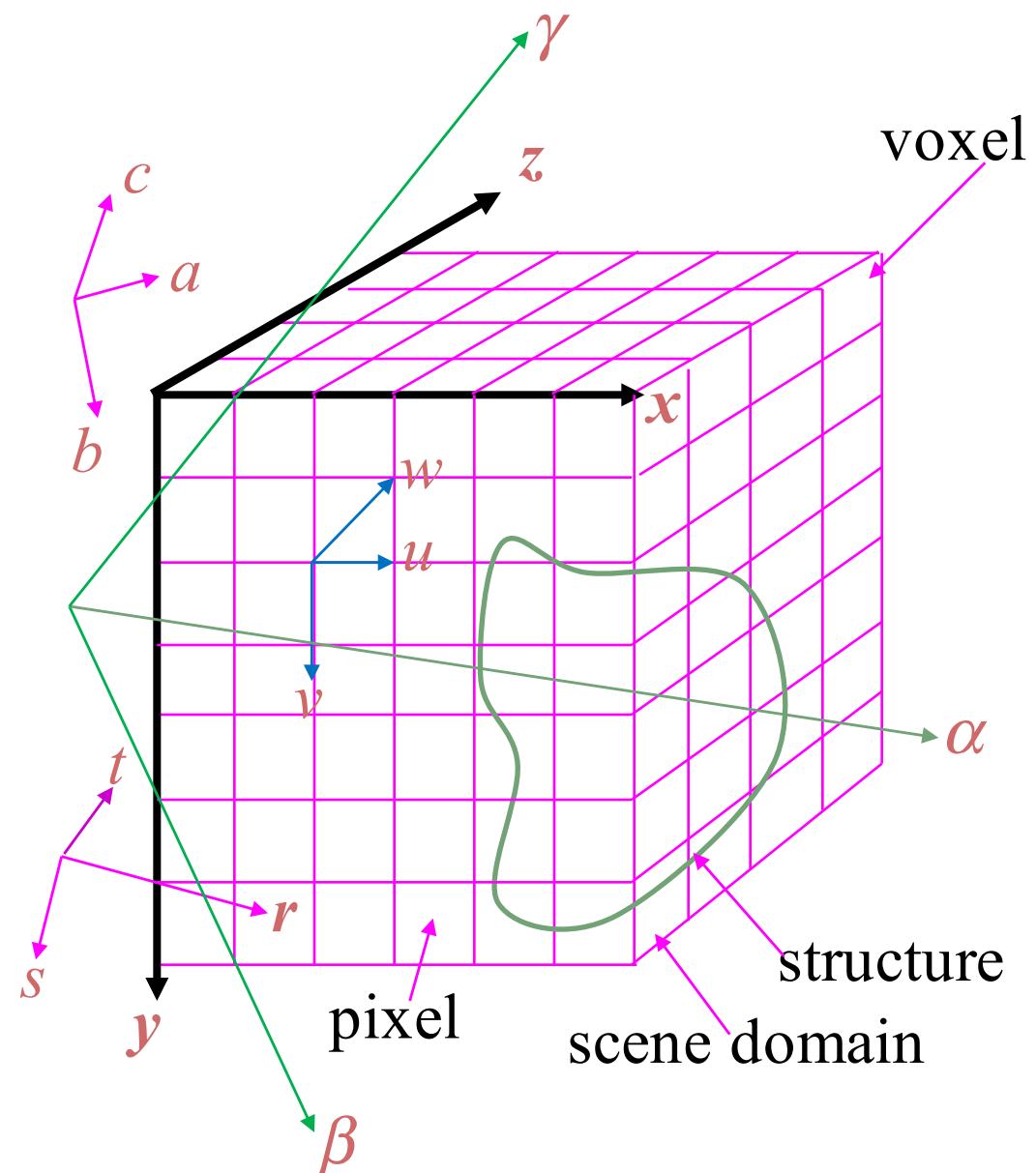


Image Pre-Processing

- **Volume of Interest (VOI):**
 - Purpose: to reduce data for speeding up CAVA operations.

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Image Pre-Processing

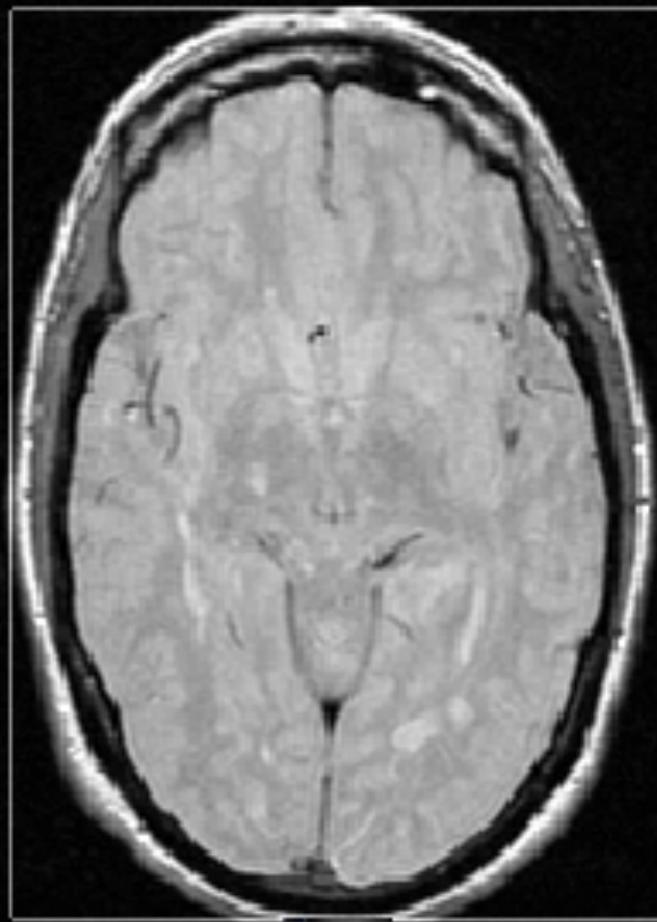
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 - To specify a subset of the scene domain.
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Storage requirement can be reduced by a factor of 2-10

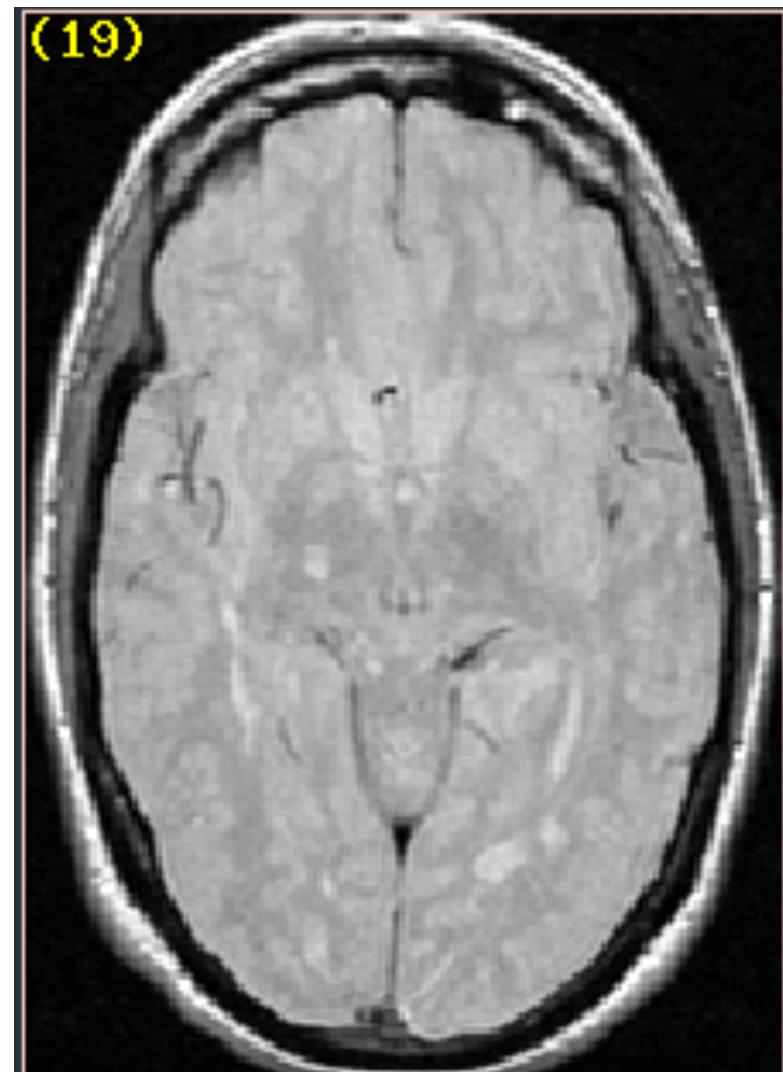


VOI / ROI (volume/region of interest)

(19)



(19)



VOI / ROI (volume/region of interest)

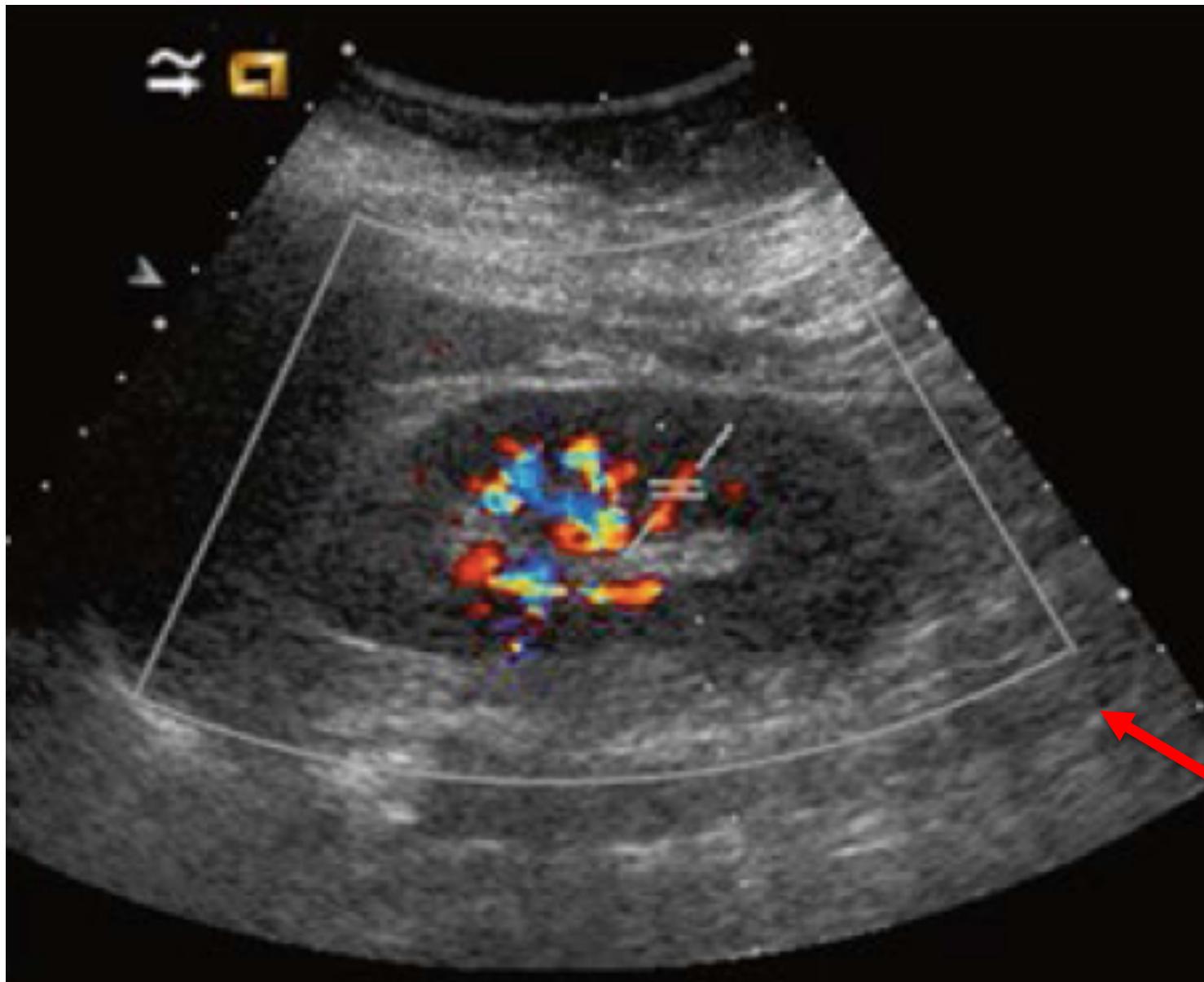


Image Filtering

Scene → Scene

$S=(C,f) \rightarrow S_F=(C,f_F)$

Purpose: To suppress unwanted (non-object) info.
To enhance wanted (object) information.

Enhancive: For enhancing edges, regions.
For intensity scale standardization.
For correcting background variation.

Suppressive: Mainly for suppressing random noise.

Medical Image Enhancement

- Medical images are often deteriorated by noise due to various sources of interference
 - affect measurement process in imaging and data acquisition systems

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- Medical images are often deteriorated by noise due to various sources of interference
 - affect measurement process in imaging and data acquisition systems
- Improvement in appearance and visual quality of the images may assist in interpretation of medical images
 - may affect diagnostic decision too!
- Some enhancement algorithms are developed for deriving images that are meant for use by a subsequent algorithm for computer processing!
 - Edge detection, object segmentation, etc.

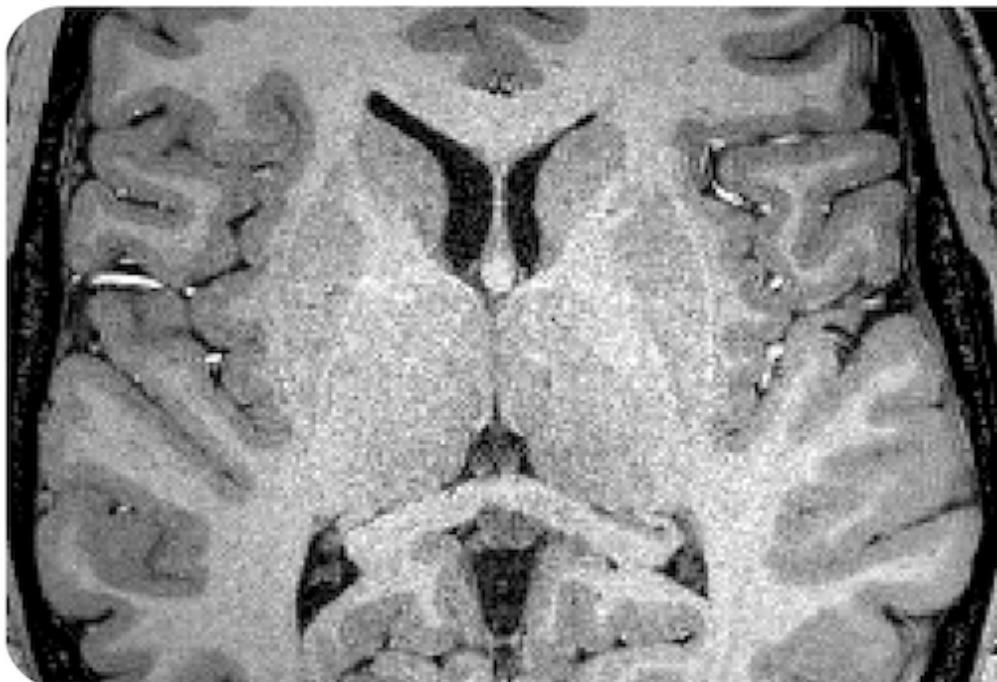
Inappropriate use of Enhancement Methods

- Enhancement methods themselves may increase noise while improving contrast!
- They may eliminate small details and edge sharpness while removing noise
- They may produce artifacts in general.

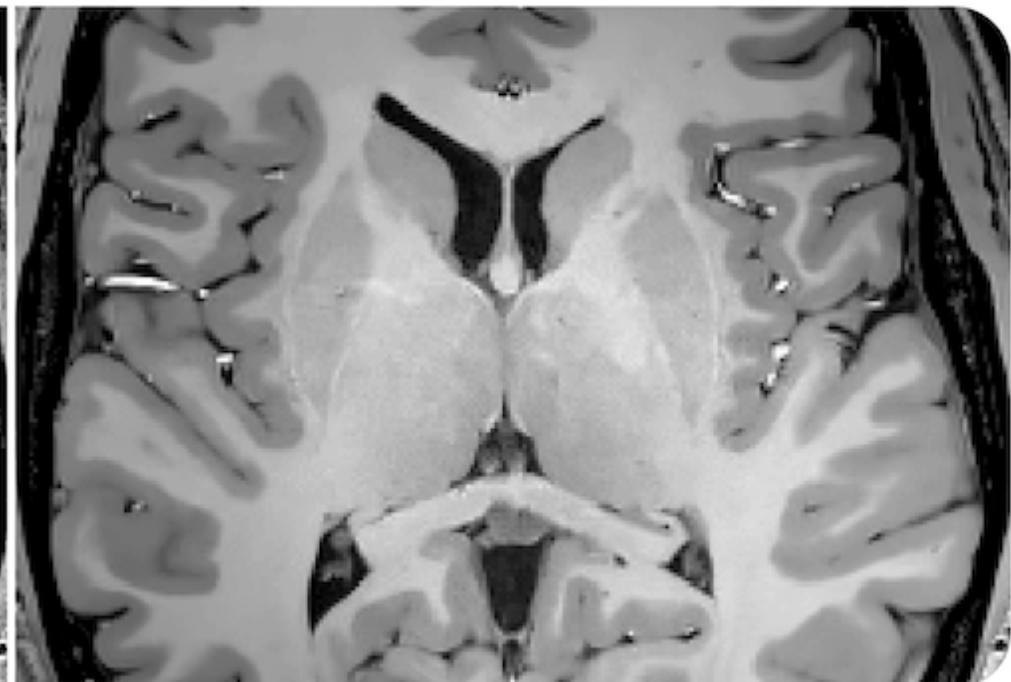


Smoothing MRI

Before



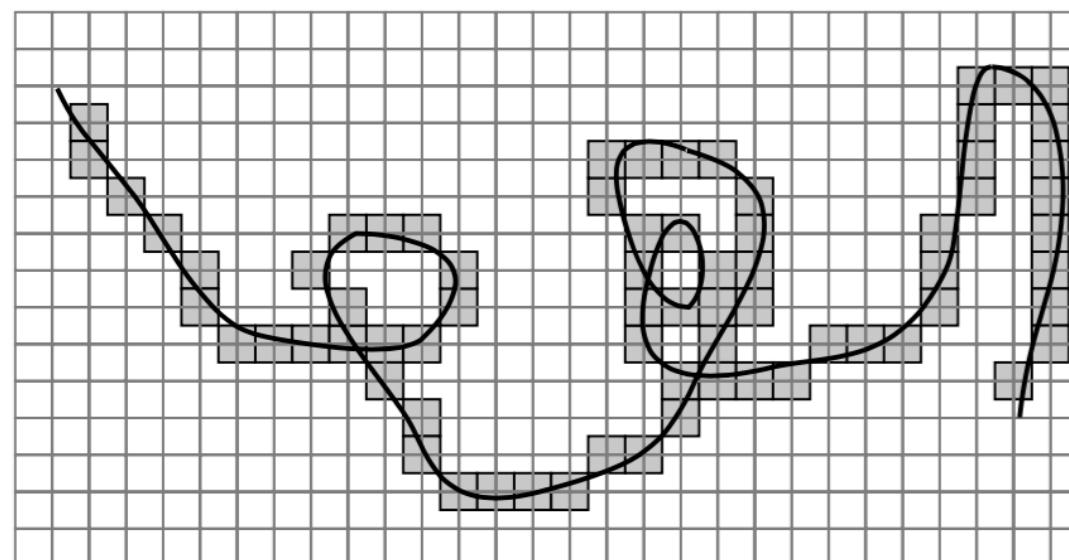
After



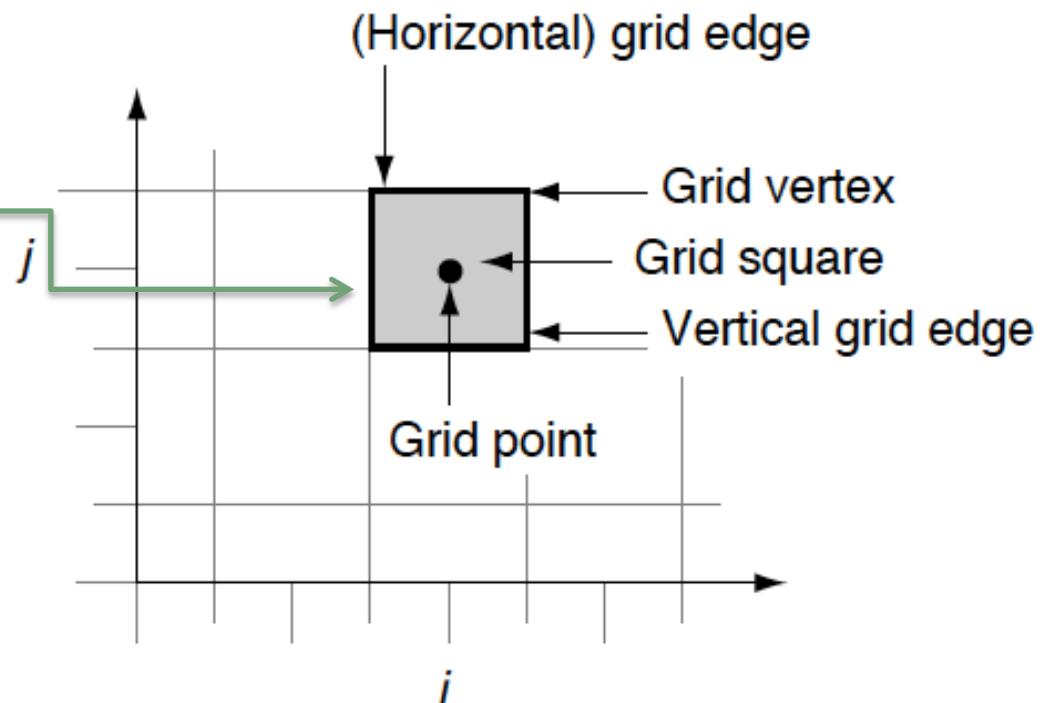
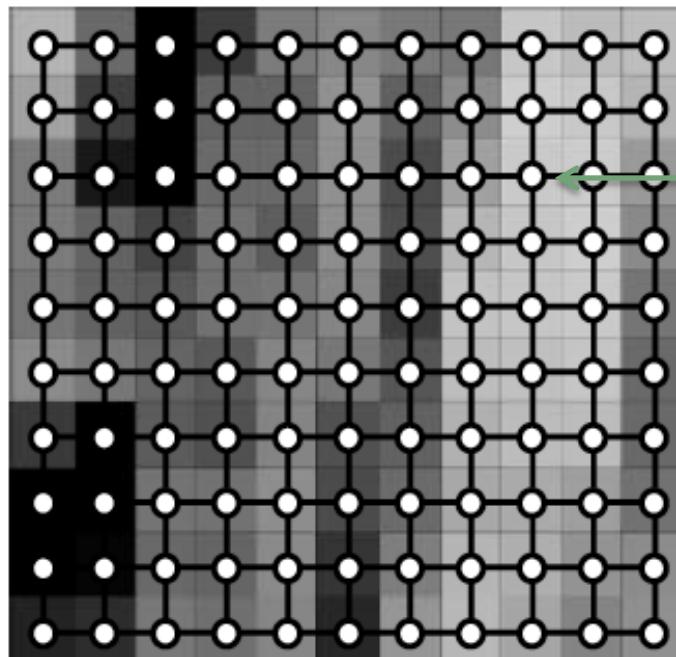
Credit to © Dr Pierrick Coupé



- Computers use discrete form of the images
- The process of transforming **continuous space** into **discrete space** is called digitization



- **Definition:** A (2D) image P is a function defined on a (finite) rectangular subset G of a regular planar orthogonal array. G is called (2D) **grid**, and **an element of G is called pixel**. P assigns a value of $P(p)$ to each $p \in G$



Histogram

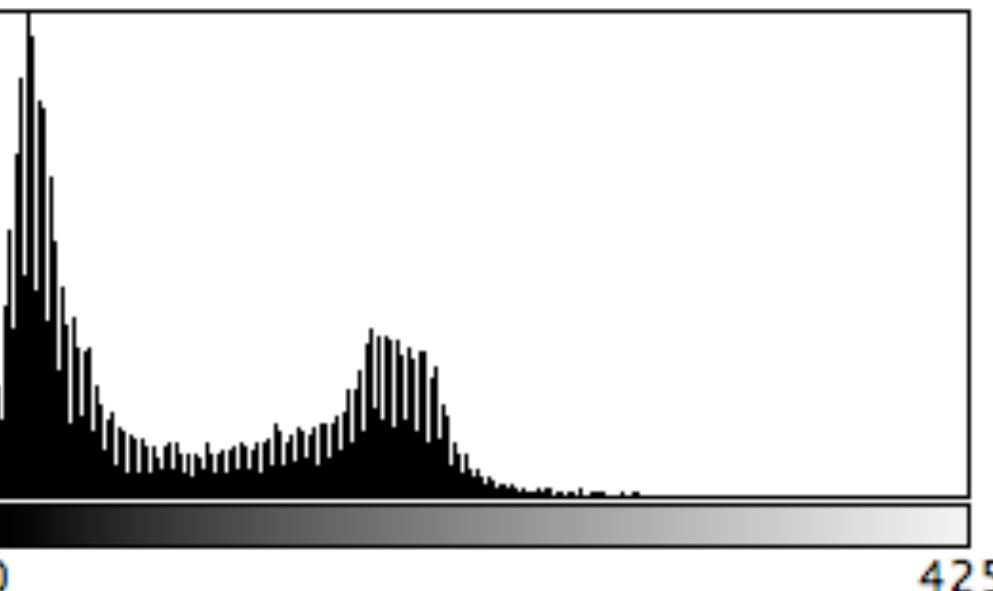
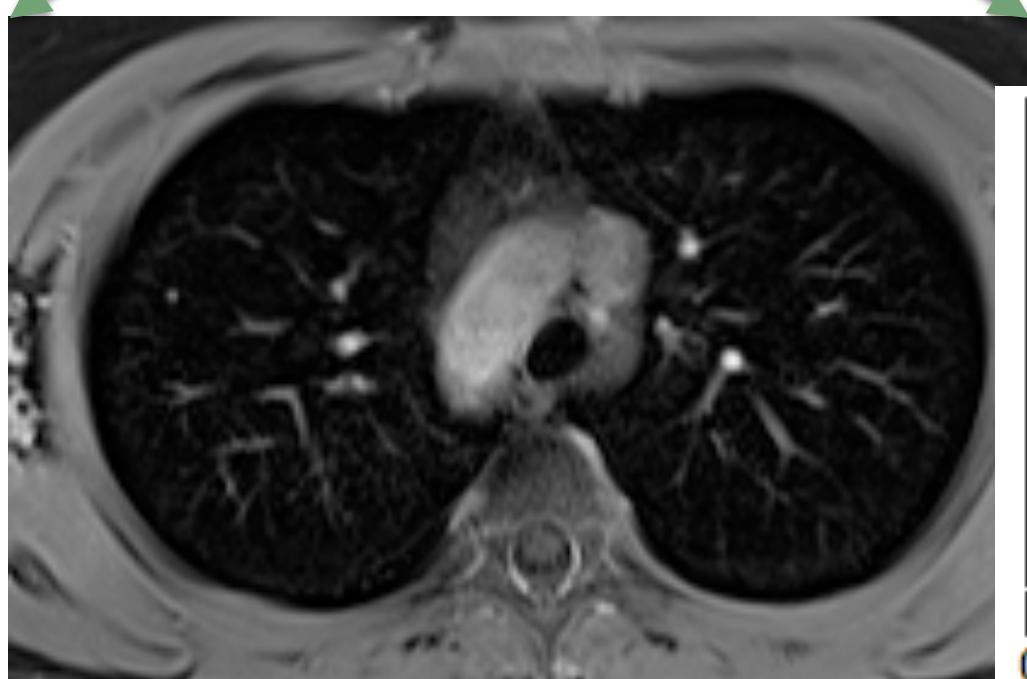
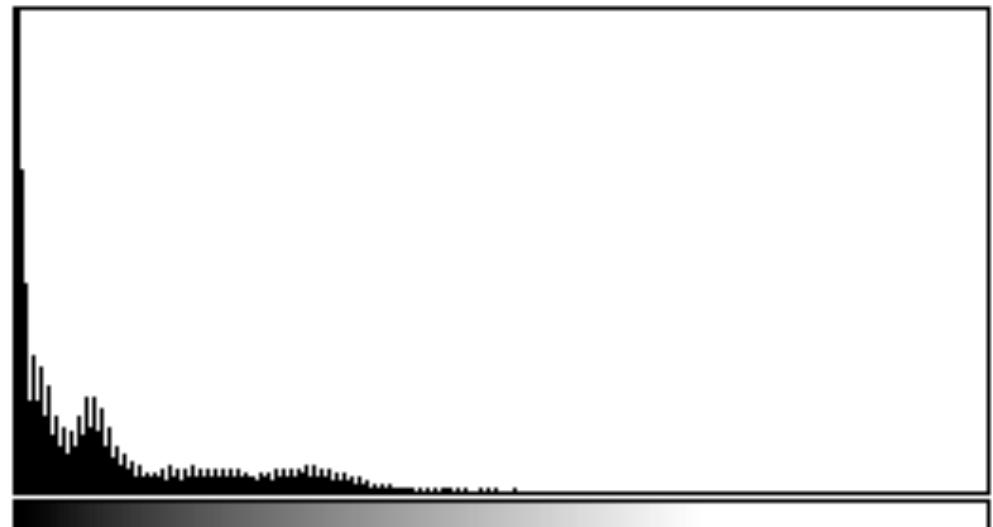
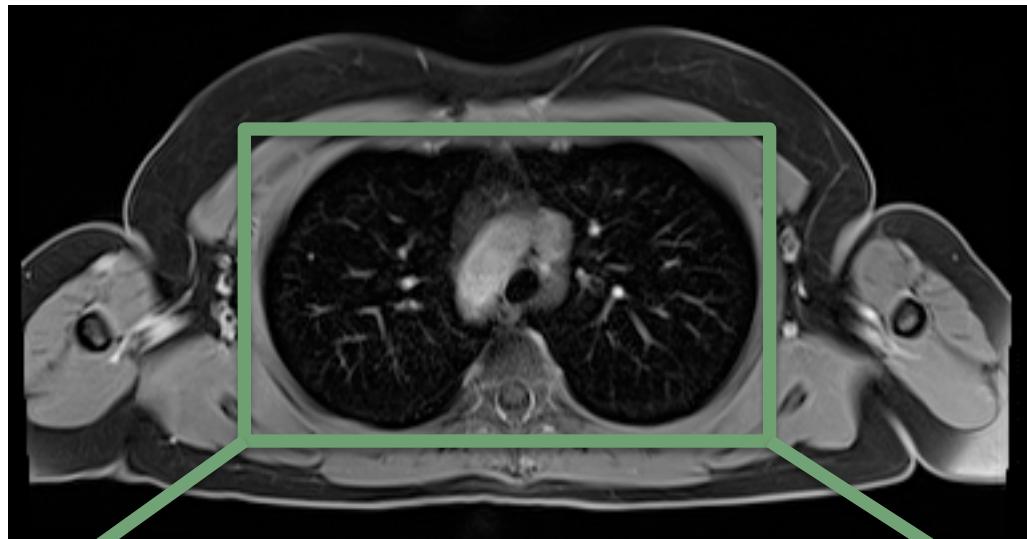
- Histogram of an image provides the frequency of the brightness (intensity) value in the image.
- Provides a natural bridge between images and a probabilistic description.
 - Ex. Probability of pixel (x,y) that has a brightness (intensity) value z

Pseudo-Code for Histogram

1. Create an array \mathbf{h} with zero in its elements
2. For all pixel locations (x,y) of the image A , increment $\mathbf{h}(A(x,y))$ by 1

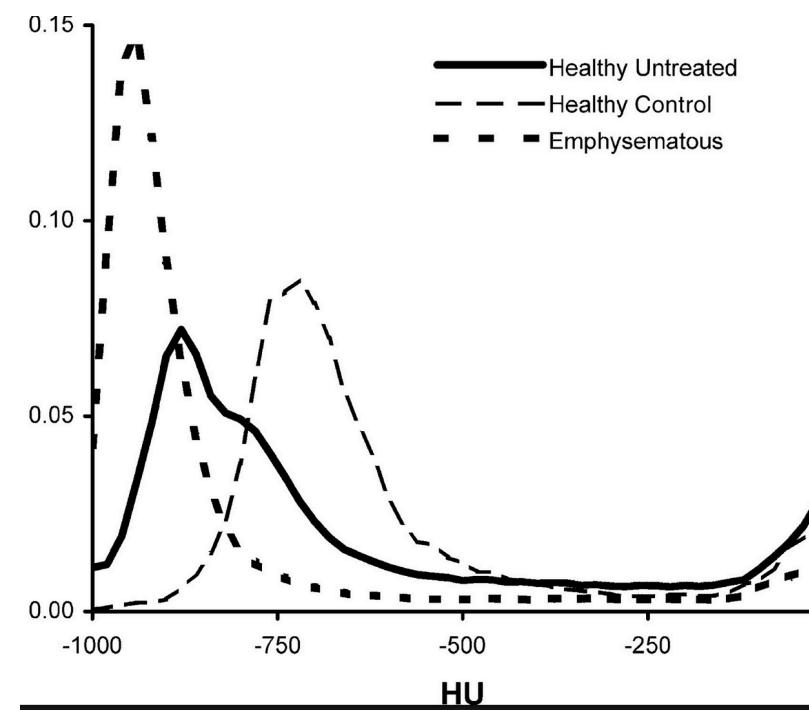
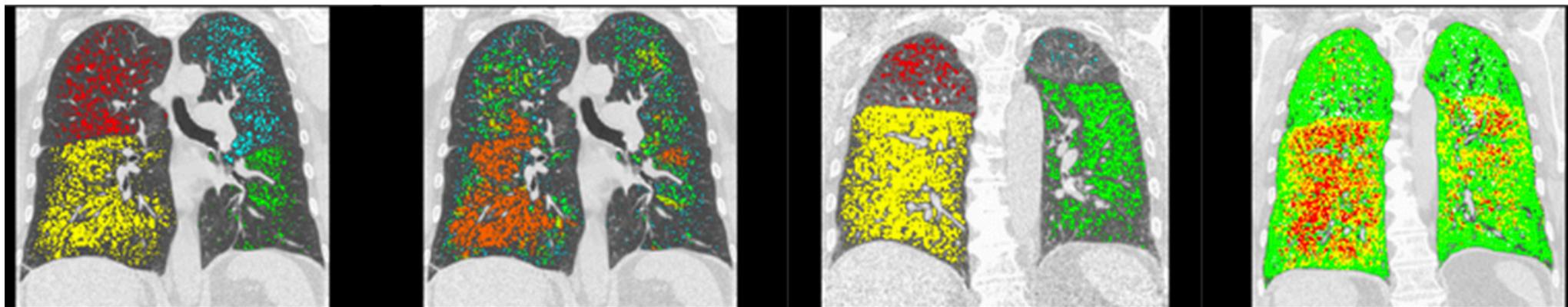
$$h(i) = \sum_{m=0}^{M-1} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \delta(f(m, n) - i), \quad i = 0, 1, \dots, P-1,$$

$$\delta(w) = \begin{cases} 1 & w = 0, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$





Ex: Histogram based analysis of Lung CT (credit: *imbio*)



- **Spatial resolution**
 - determines the smallest structure that can be represented in a digital image.
- **Contrast resolution**
 - Local change in brightness and defined as the ratio between average brightness of an object and background
 - is an indirect measure of the **perceptibility of structures**. The number of intensity levels has an influence on the likelihood with which two neighboring structures with similar but not equal appearance will be represented by different intensities.

$$\text{Contrast}_{\text{global}} = \frac{I_{\max} - I_{\min}}{I_{\max} + I_{\min}}$$

Another method for measuring contrast

- **RMS (root mean square) contrast:**

$$\text{Contrast}_{RMS} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{MN - 1} \sum_{i=0}^{M-1} \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} (I(i, j) - \text{avg}(I))^2}$$

The measure **takes all pixels into account** instead of just the pixels with maximum and minimum intensity values (M and N are size of the image, avg means mean operation over the entire image I).

Image Artifacts

- **Noise**
 - MRI (ex: Gaussian,)
 - PET / SPECT (ex: Poisson, mixed Poisson-Gaussian)
 - CT (ex: Gaussian)
 - DTI, DWI, ...
- **Intensity inhomogeneity**
 - MRI
- **Intensity Non-Standardness**
 - MRI
- **Partial Volume**
 - MRI, PET,...

Image Artifacts

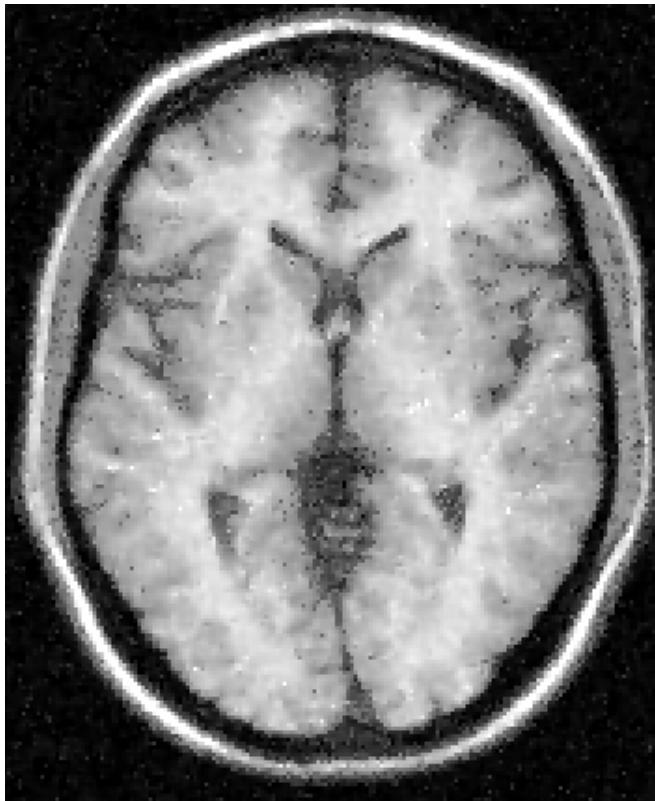
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 - MRI, PET,...

Noise

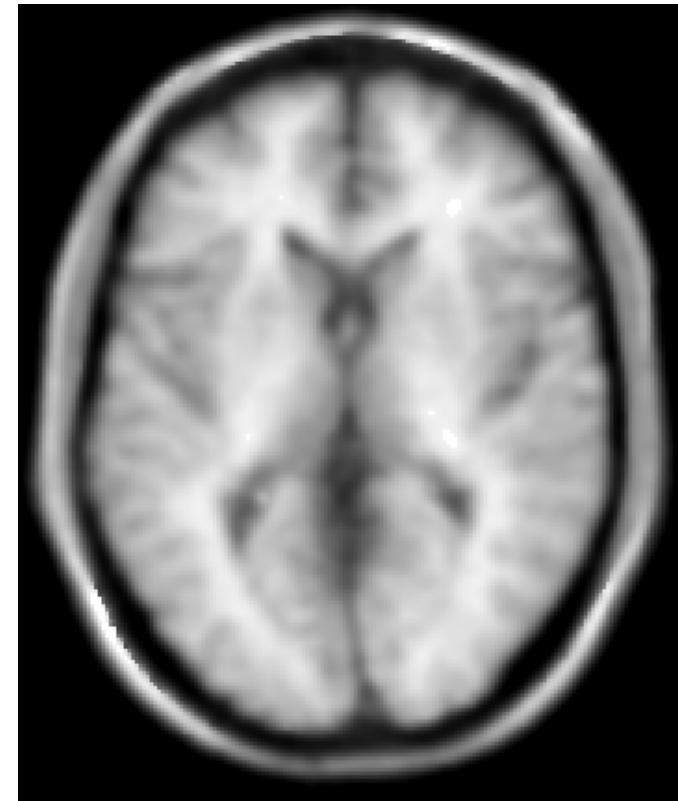
Noise is corrupting the image information, and it is unwanted.

- **Signal independent noise**
 - $g = f + n$
 - *Gaussian*
- **Signal dependent noise**
 - $g = f * n$
 - *Poisson*
- *Often, medical images are considered to have Gaussian noise, however PET/SPECT images have mixed Poisson/Gaussian, and MRI have Rician type noise.*

Noise Suppression



Higher noise, higher contrast



Lower noise, lower contrast

For best results, we need lower noise and higher contrast.

Linear Filtering

- From linear system theory, we know that an image $I(i,j)$ can be written as follows (convolution)

$$I(i, j) = \sum_{k,l} I(k, l) \delta(i - k, j - l)$$

Linear Filtering

- From linear system theory, we know that an image $I(i,j)$ can be written as follows (convolution)

$$I(i, j) = \sum_{k,l} I(k, l) \delta(i - k, j - l)$$

- Practically, for a linear-shift invariant kernel f , convolution operation can be written as cross-correlation

$$f * I(i, j) = \sum_{k,l} f(k, l) I(i - k, j - l) = \sum_{k,l} h(k, l) I(i + k, j + l) = h \cdot I(i, j)$$

$$h(i, j) = f(-i, -j)$$



Convolution Operation

$$f * h = \sum_k \sum_l f(k, l)h(-k, -l)$$

f = Image

h = Kernel

f_1	f_2	f_3
f_4	f_5	f_6
f_7	f_8	f_9

f

h_7	h_8	h_9
h_4	h_5	h_6
h_1	h_2	h_3

$X - flip$

h_1	h_2	h_3
h_4	h_5	h_6
h_7	h_8	h_9

$Y - flip$

*

h_9	h_8	h_7
h_6	h_5	h_4
h_3	h_2	h_1

$$\begin{aligned} f * h = & f_1 h_9 + f_2 h_8 + f_3 h_7 \\ & + f_4 h_6 + f_5 h_5 + f_6 h_4 \\ & + f_7 h_3 + f_8 h_2 + f_9 h_1 \end{aligned}$$



Correlation Operation

$$f \otimes h = \sum_k \sum_l f(k, l)h(k, l)$$

f = Image

h = Kernel

$$\begin{matrix} f \\ \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline f_1 & f_2 & f_3 \\ \hline f_4 & f_5 & f_6 \\ \hline f_7 & f_8 & f_9 \\ \hline \end{array} \end{matrix} \otimes \begin{matrix} h \\ \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline h_1 & h_2 & h_3 \\ \hline h_4 & h_5 & h_6 \\ \hline h_7 & h_8 & h_9 \\ \hline \end{array} \end{matrix} \longrightarrow \begin{aligned} f \otimes h = & f_1h_1 + f_2h_2 + f_3h_3 \\ & + f_4h_4 + f_5h_5 + f_6h_6 \\ & + f_7h_7 + f_8h_8 + f_9h_9 \end{aligned}$$

Correlation and Convolution

- **Convolution** is a filtering operation, expresses the amount of overlap of one function as it is shifted over another function
- **Correlation** compares the similarity of two sets of data (relatedness of the signals!)

Noise suppression: Image Filtering

- Enhance or restore data by removing noise without significantly blurring the structures in the images.

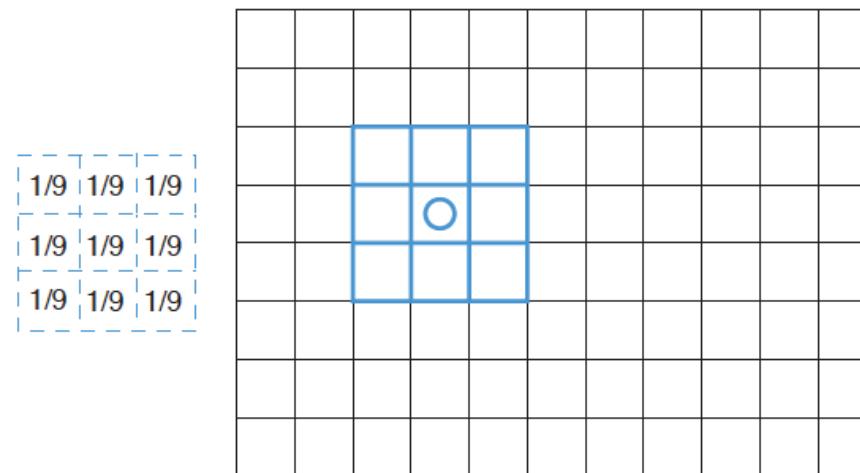
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- Box (averaging/smoothing) Filtering:

$$S = (C, f) \longrightarrow S_F = (C, f_F)$$



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$$f_F(\nu) = \sum_{\nu_i \in N(\nu)} w_i f(\nu_i)$$

Noise suppression: Image Filtering

Gaussian

0.01	0.08	0.01
0.08	0.64	0.08
0.01	0.08	0.01

- Gaussian Filtering:

$$S = (C, f) \longrightarrow S_F = (C, f_F)$$

$$f_F(\nu) = \sum_{\nu_i \in N(\nu)} w_i f(\nu_i)$$

- f_F is a Gaussian weighted average of f in a neighborhood of N of voxel ν

Remark: Why Gaussian Assumption?

- Most common natural model
- Smooth function, it has infinite number of derivatives
- It is Symmetric
- Fourier Transform of Gaussian is Gaussian.
- Convolution of a Gaussian with itself is a Gaussian.
- Gaussian is separable; 2D convolution can be performed by two 1-D convolutions
- There are cells in eye that perform Gaussian filtering.

Noise suppression: Image Filtering

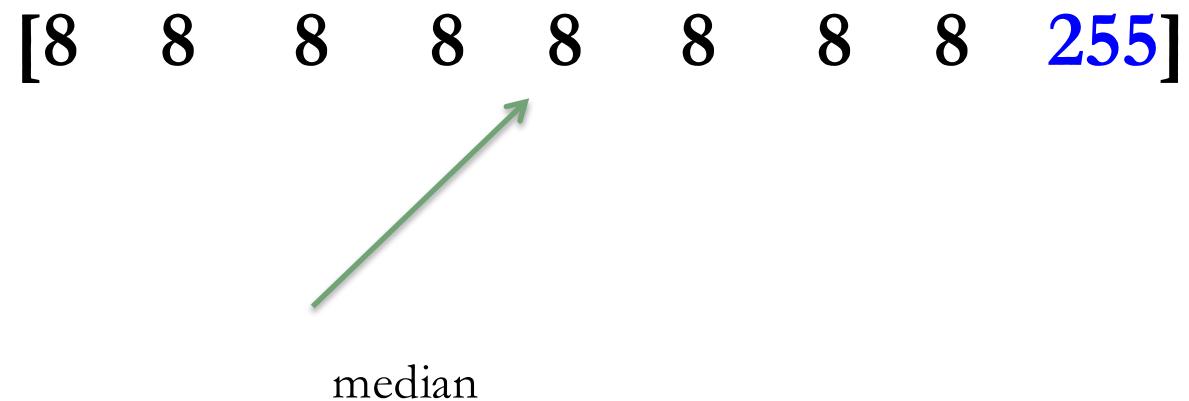
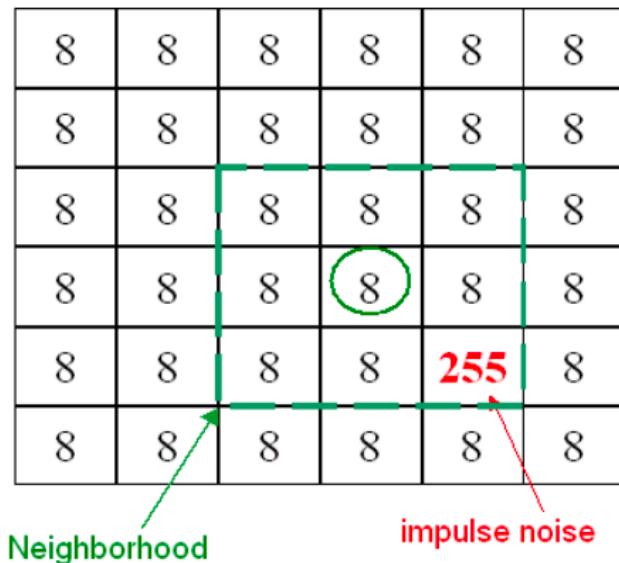
- Enhance or restore data by removing noise without significantly blurring the structures in the images.
- Literature is vast! We will cover only a few of them.
- Median Filtering:

$$S = (C, f) \longrightarrow S_F = (C, f_F)$$

- f_F is median intensity in a neighborhood of voxel v .



Median Filtering (Details)



Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

Example: Box Filtering
(smoothing)

What does it do?

- Replaces each pixel with an average of its neighborhood
- Achieve smoothing effect
(remove sharp features)

$$g[\cdot, \cdot]$$

$$\frac{1}{9}$$

1	1	1
1	1	1
1	1	1



Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

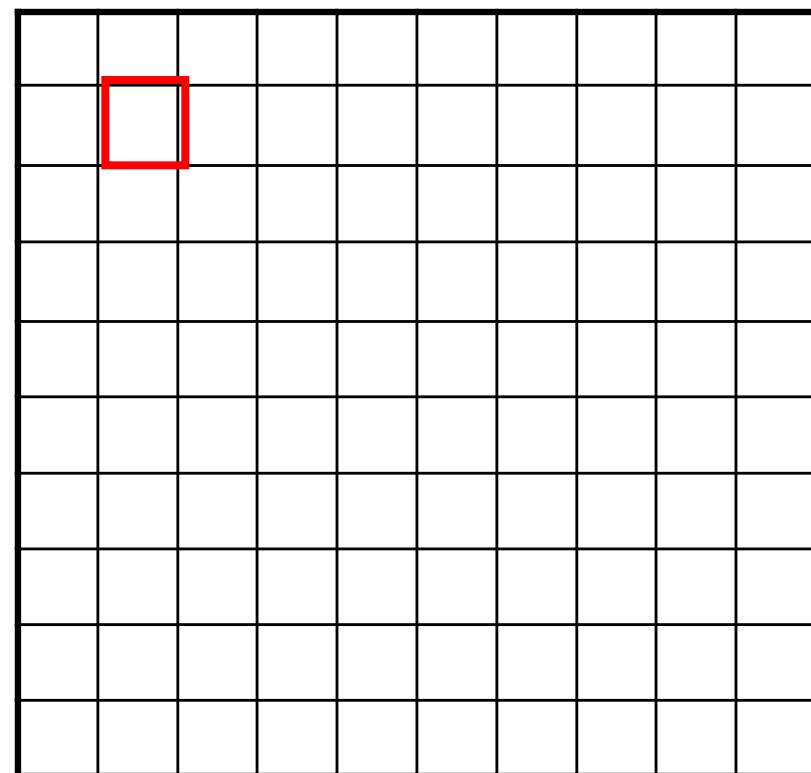
$$f[.,.]$$

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

$$h[.,.]$$

$$g[\cdot, \cdot] \frac{1}{9}$$

1	1	1
1	1	1
1	1	1



$$h[m, n] = \sum_{k,l} g[k, l] f[m+k, n+l]$$

Credit: S. Seitz



Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

$$f[.,.]$$

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

$$h[.,.]$$

0			10							

$$g[\cdot, \cdot] \frac{1}{9}$$

1	1	1
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Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

$$f[.,.]$$

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

$$h[.,.]$$

			0	10	20					

$$g[\cdot, \cdot] \frac{1}{9}$$

1	1	1
1	1	1
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Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

$$f[\cdot, \cdot]$$

$h[.,.]$

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Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

$$f[.,.]$$

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

$$h[.,.]$$

0 10 20 30 30

$$g[.,.] \frac{1}{9}$$

1	1	1
1	1	1
1	1	1

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Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

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0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

$$h[.,.]$$

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$$g[\cdot, \cdot] \frac{1}{9}$$

1	1	1
1	1	1
1	1	1

Credit: S. Seitz

$$g[\cdot, \cdot] \frac{1}{9} \begin{matrix} 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 \end{matrix}$$

Filtering Operation (Spatial Domain)

$$f[., .]$$

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	0	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	90	90	90	90	90	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

$$h[., .]$$

	0	10	20	30	30	30	20	10		
	0	20	40	60	60	60	40	20		
	0	30	60	90	90	90	60	30		
	0	30	50	80	80	90	60	30		
	0	30	50	80	80	90	60	30		
	0	20	30	50	50	60	40	20		
	10	20	30	30	30	30	20	10		
	10	10	10	0	0	0	0	0		

$$h[m, n] = \sum_{k,l} g[k, l] f[m+k, n+l]$$

Credit: S. Seitz



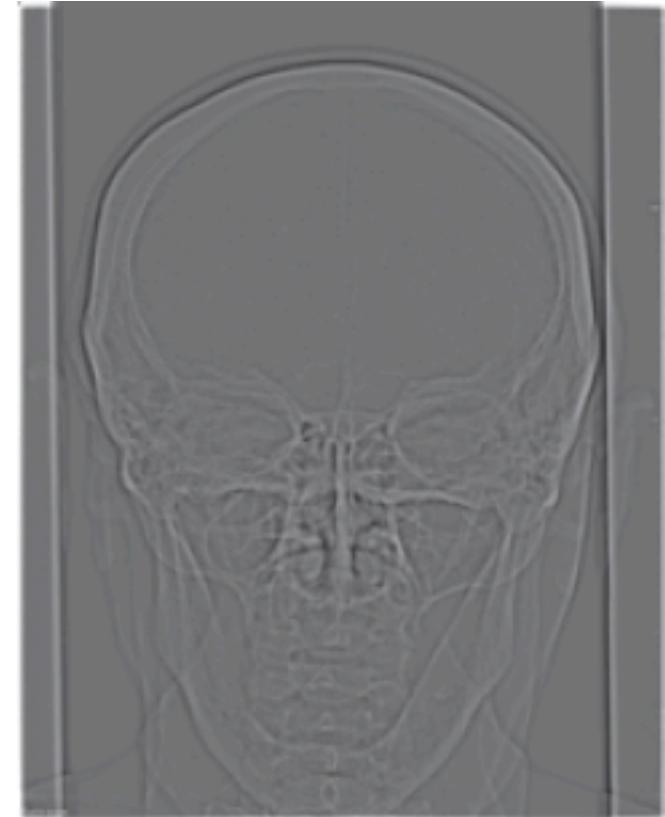
Filtering X-ray



(a)



(b)



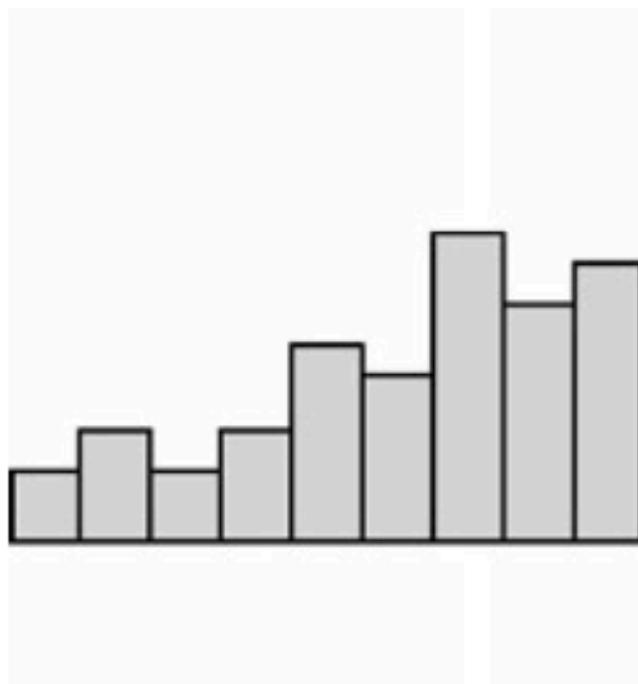
(c)

- a. Radiography of the skull,
- b. low-pass filter with a Gaussian filter ($\text{std}=15$, 20×20),
- c. high-pass Filter obtained from subtracting b from a.



Unsharp Masking

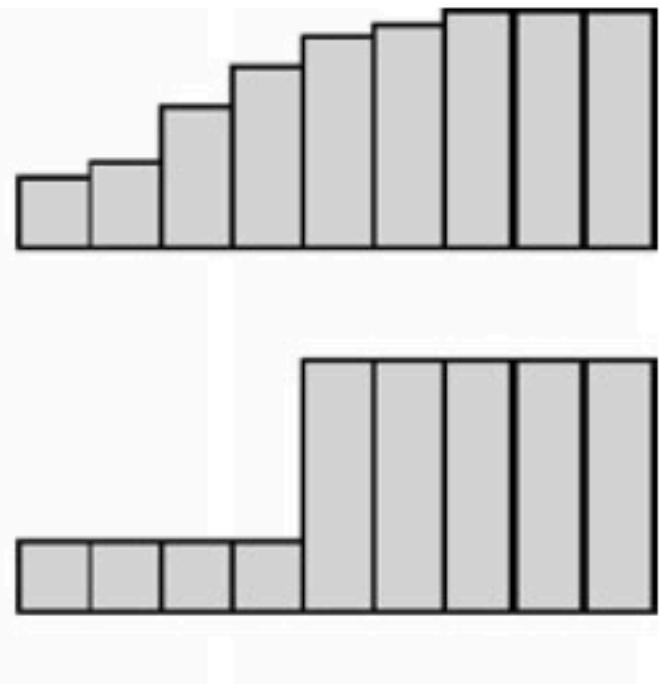
Lower Noise, Higher Contrast



histogram

smoothness
only

smoothness
and few intensity
changes



histogram

Unsharp Masking

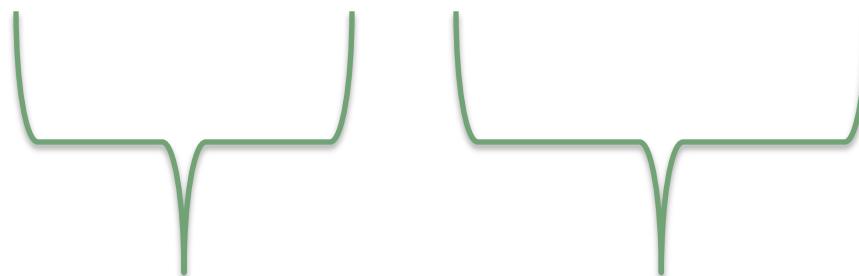
- Not only noise removal, but edge enhancement is necessary!

$$I = g * I + (I - g * I)$$

Unsharp Masking

- Not only noise removal, but edge enhancement is necessary!

$$I = g * I + (I - g * I)$$



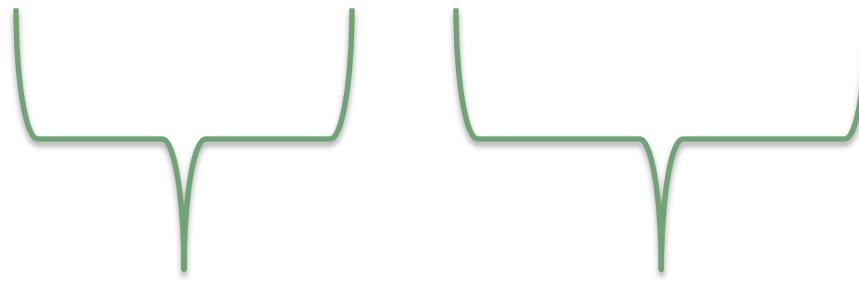
Smoothed image
(low pass)

Edge enhanced image
(high pass)

Unsharp Masking

- Not only noise removal, but edge enhancement is necessary!

$$I = g * I + (I - g * I)$$



Smoothed image
(low pass)

Edge enhanced image
(high pass)

$$I' = g * I + (1 + \alpha)(I - g * I)$$

$$\alpha > 0$$

Reminder: Edges are located in high frequency of the images!



Hand X-ray Unsharp Masking ($\alpha=0.5$)



Original Image



Enhanced Image

Unsharp Masking: Example CT (head, axial)

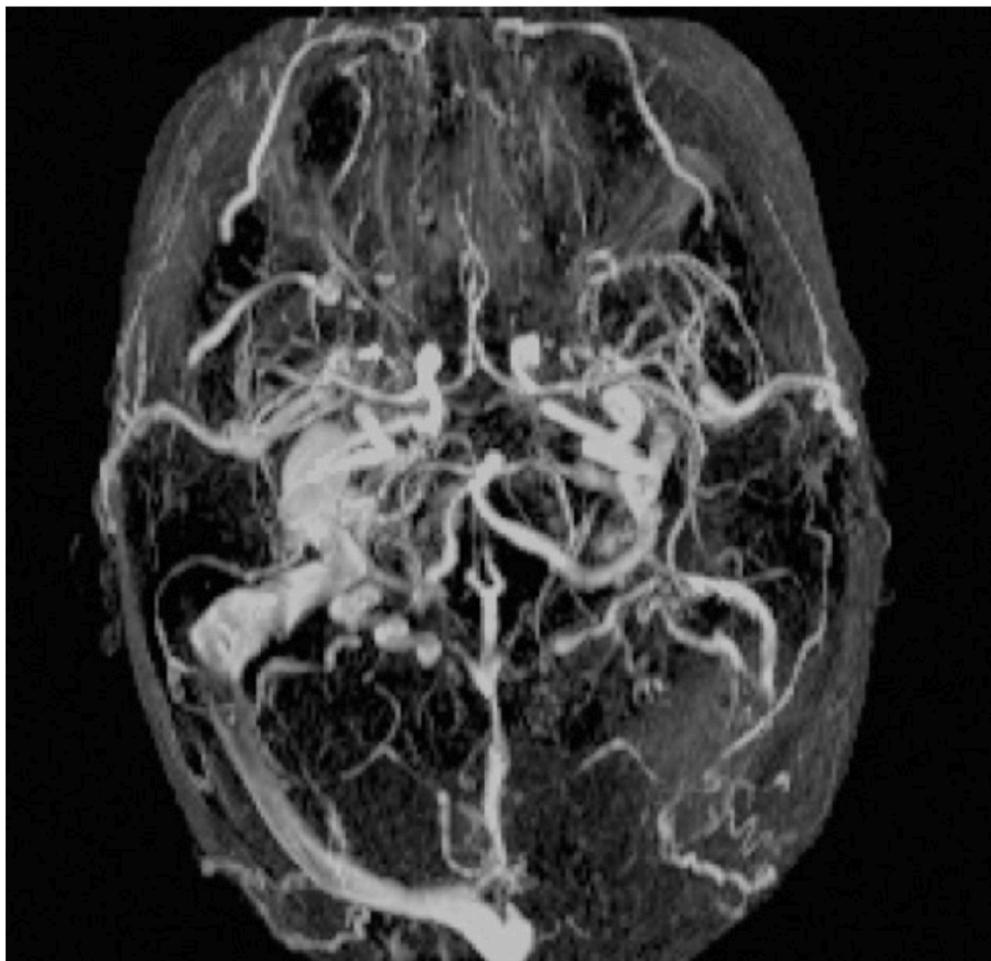


Original CT Data

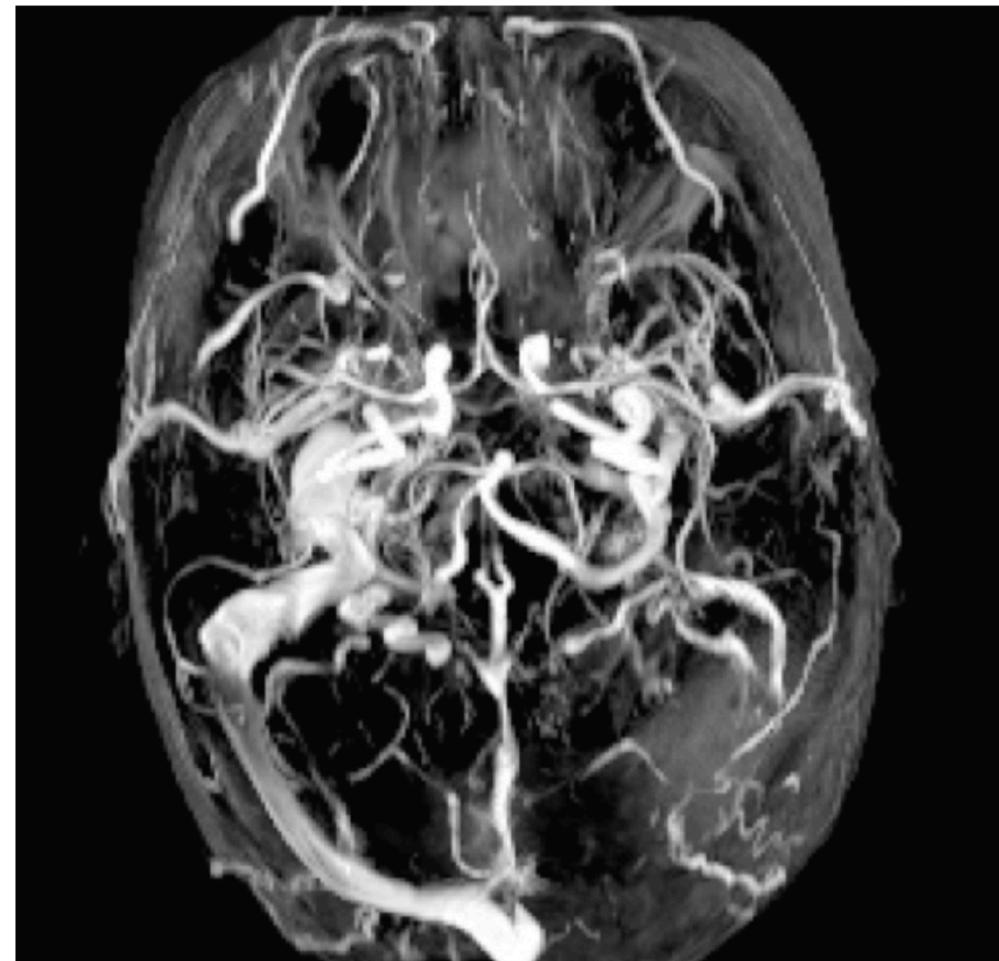


Filtered CT Data

Adaptive Filtering: Example head MRA



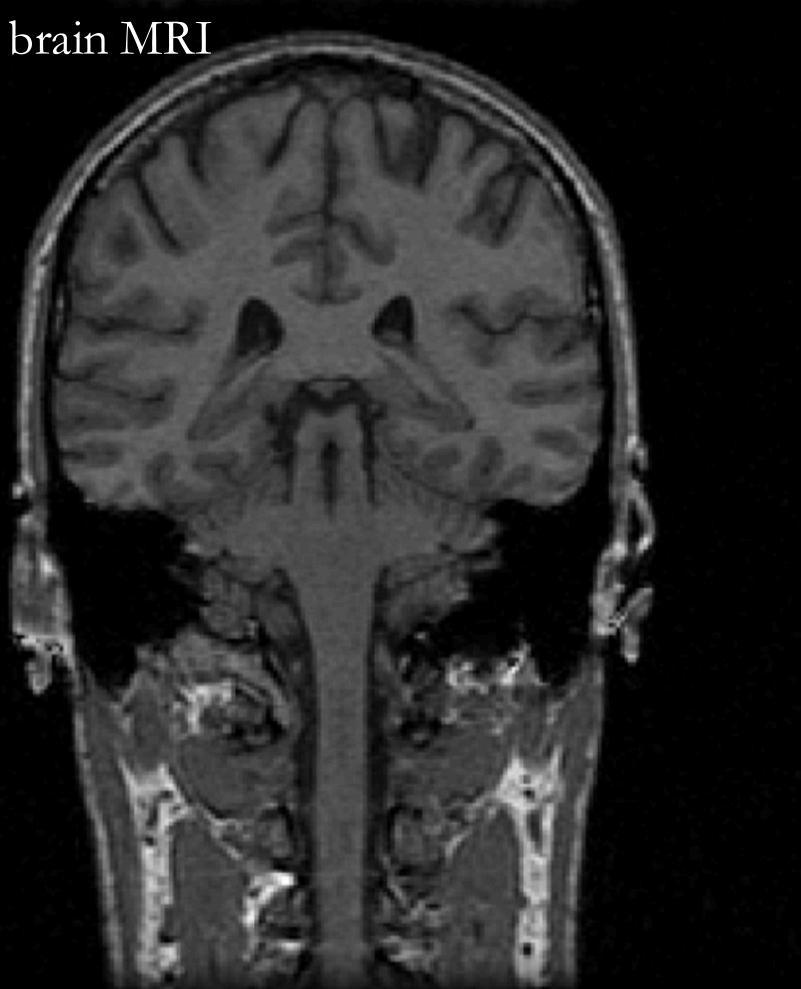
MIP of MRA data before filtering



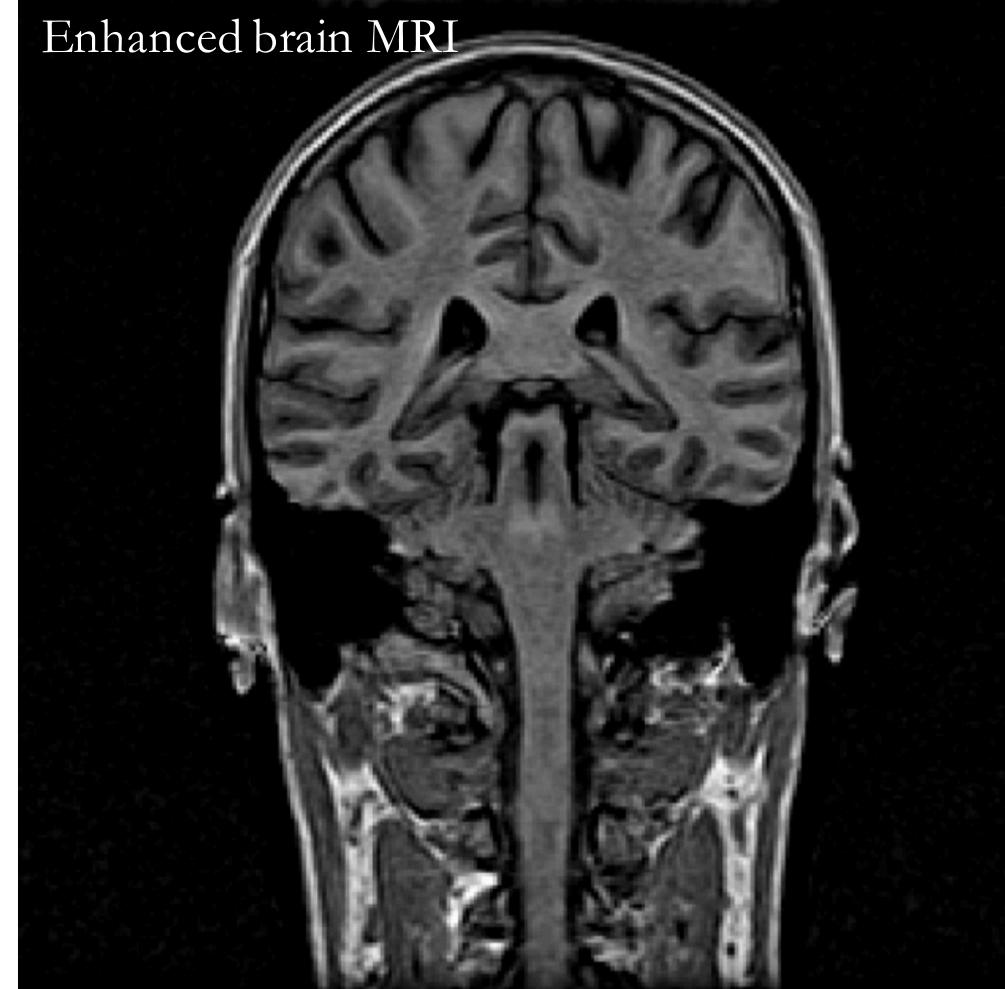
MIP of MRA data after filtering

Adaptive Filtering: Example brain MRI

Original brain MRI

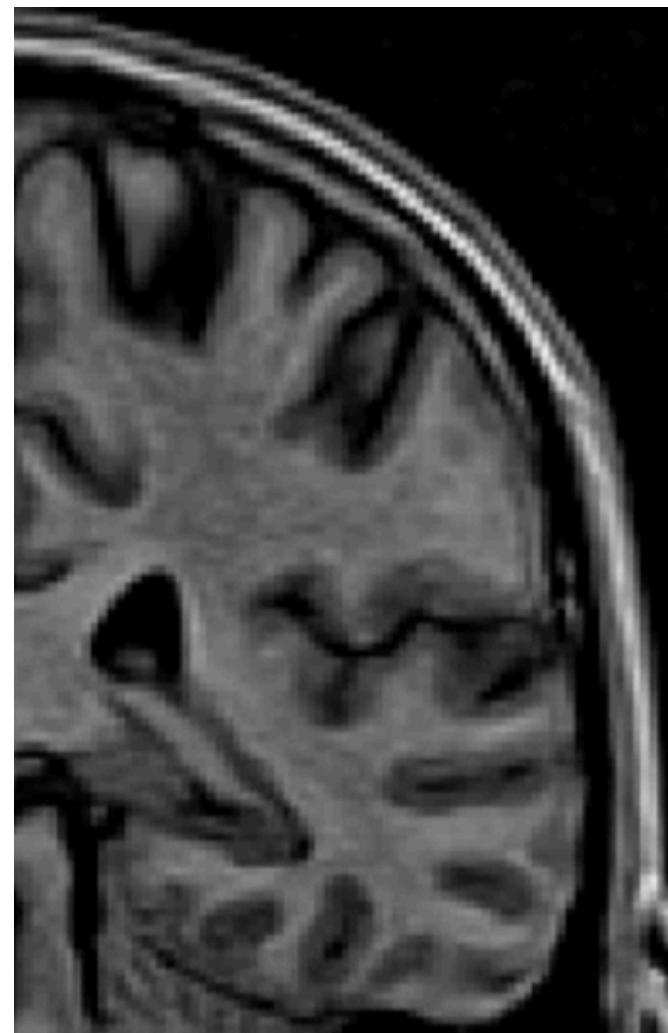
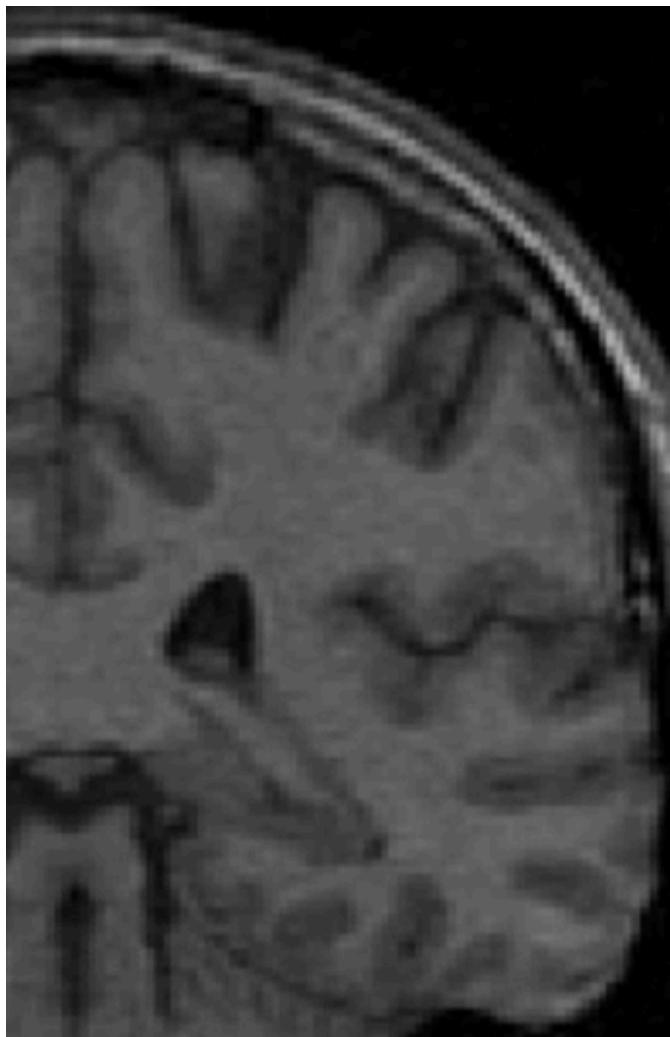


Enhanced brain MRI



Note the improved contrast between brain and CSF (cerebrospinal fluid)

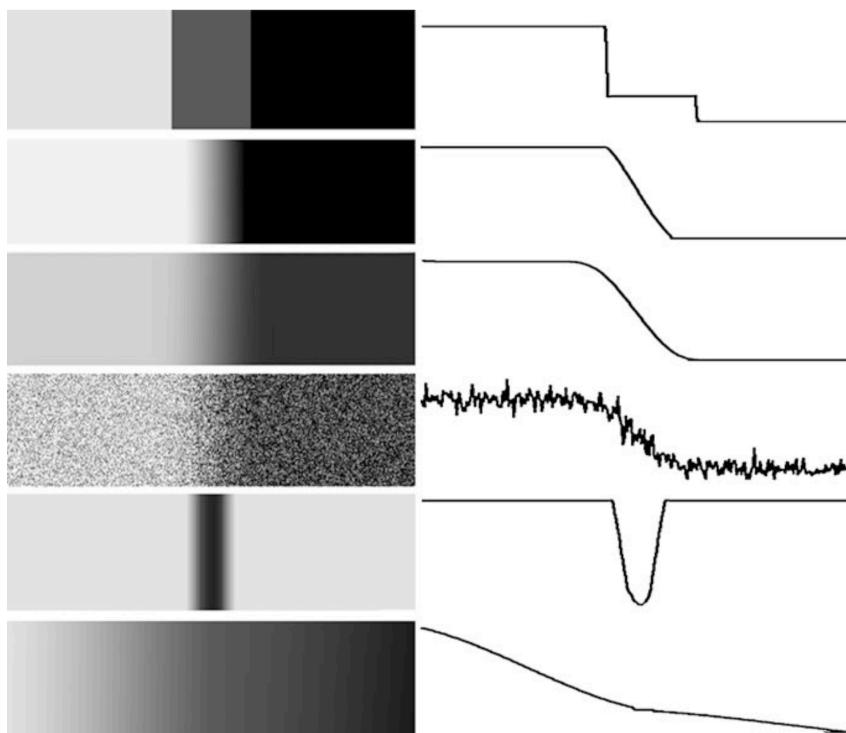
Adaptive Filtering: Example brain MRI (zoomed)



Note the improved contrast between brain and CSF (cerebrospinal fluid)

Edges

- **Discontinuities** in images are features that are often useful for initializing an image analysis procedure.
- Edges are important information for understanding an image; by moving “non-edge” data we also **simplify** the data.



Edges → rate of change

Rate of change → differentiation

Differentiation → difference in digital domain

Edges

- **Discontinuities** in images are features that are often useful for initializing an image analysis procedure.
- Edges are important information for understanding an image; by moving “non-edge” data we also **simplify** the data.
- **Goal:** Identify sudden changes (discontinuities) in an image
 - Most semantic and shape information from the image can be encoded in the edges
 - More compact than pixels
 - Marks the border of an object

Edges → rate of change

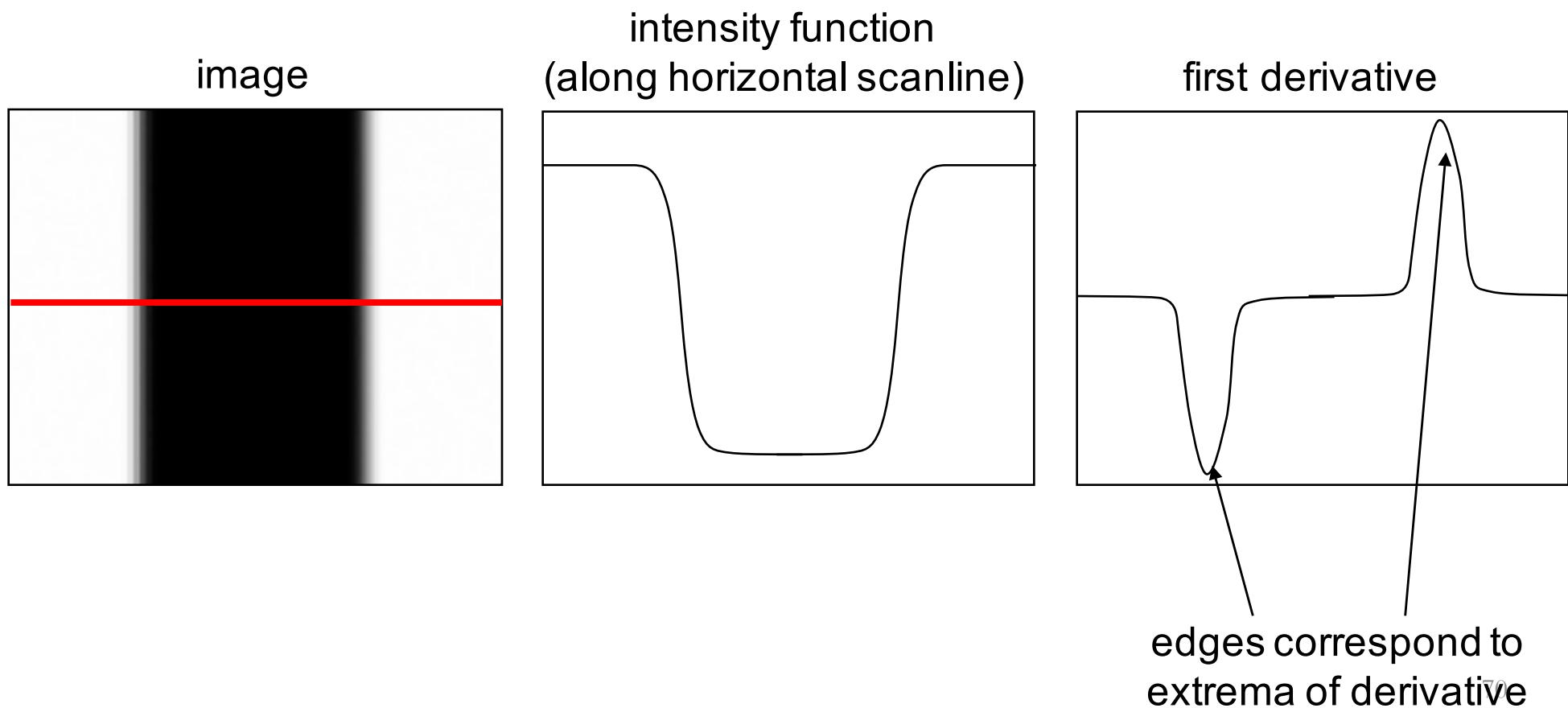
Rate of change → differentiation

Differentiation → difference in digital domain



Characterizing Edges

- An edge is a place of rapid change in the image intensity function





Derivative of Images

Derivative masks

$$f_x \Rightarrow \frac{1}{3} \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \quad f_y \Rightarrow \frac{1}{3} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

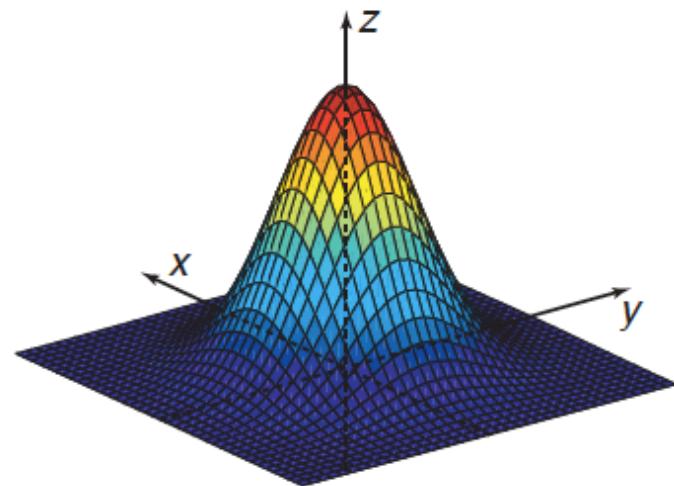
$$I = \begin{bmatrix} 10 & 10 & 20 & 20 & 20 \\ 10 & 10 & 20 & 20 & 20 \\ 10 & 10 & 20 & 20 & 20 \\ 10 & 10 & 20 & 20 & 20 \\ 10 & 10 & 20 & 20 & 20 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$I_x = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \boxed{10} & \boxed{10} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 10 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 10 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$



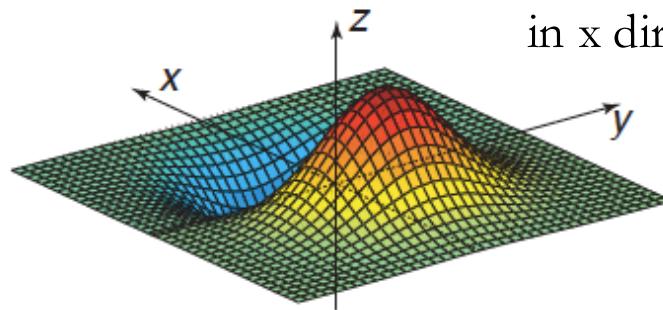
Laplacian: Difference of Gaussians

Gaussian



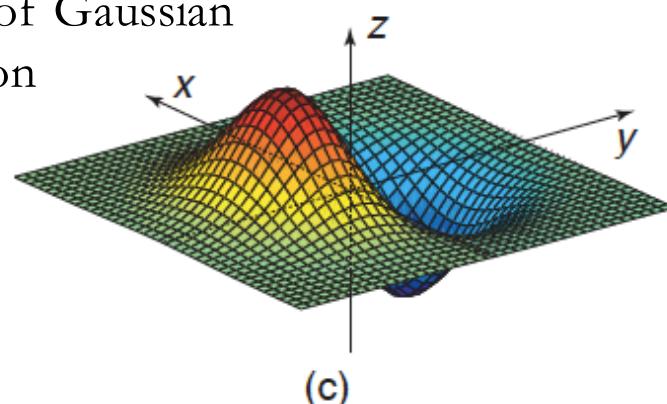
(a)

Derivative of Gaussian
in x direction
(gradient)



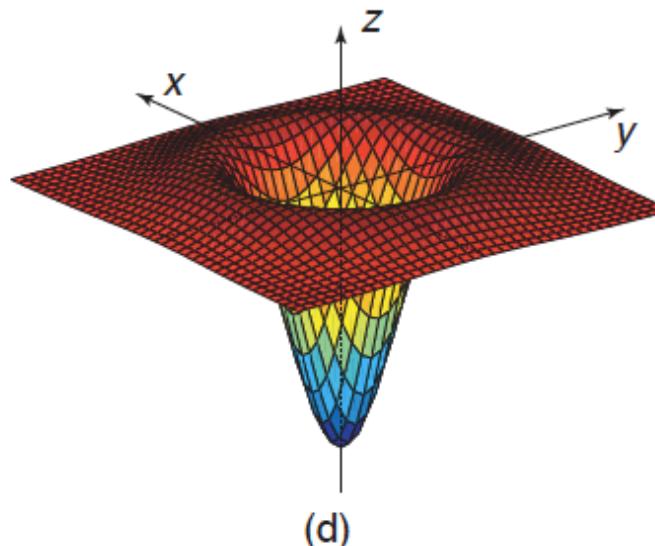
(b)

Derivative of Gaussian
in y direction
(gradient)



(c)

Laplacian of
Gaussian



(d)

Difference of Gaussians \sim Laplacian

Gaussian	0.01	0.08	0.01
	0.08	0.64	0.08
	0.01	0.08	0.01

$\frac{\partial}{\partial x}$	0.05	0	-0.05
	0.34	0	-0.34
	0.05	0	-0.05

$\frac{\partial}{\partial y}$	0.05	0.34	0.05
	0	0	0
	-0.05	-0.34	-0.05

∇^2	0.3	0.7	0.3
	0.7	-4	0.7
	0.3	0.7	0.3

How to measure for evaluating noise removal algorithms?

- Simultaneously suppressing noise and retaining high contrast is difficult ... trade-off game. **Filter Operating Characteristic (FOC)** curve captures this trade-off.

Residual Noise RN: Standard deviation of intensity within object region

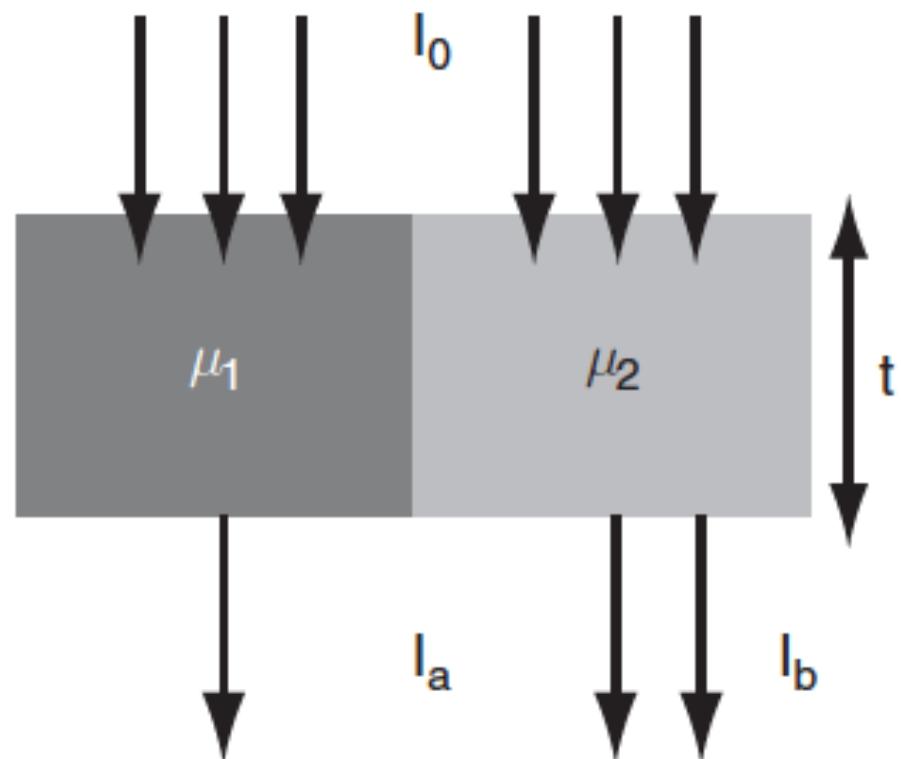
$$RC = \frac{|\mu_O - \mu_B|}{\sqrt{\sigma_O \sigma_B}}$$

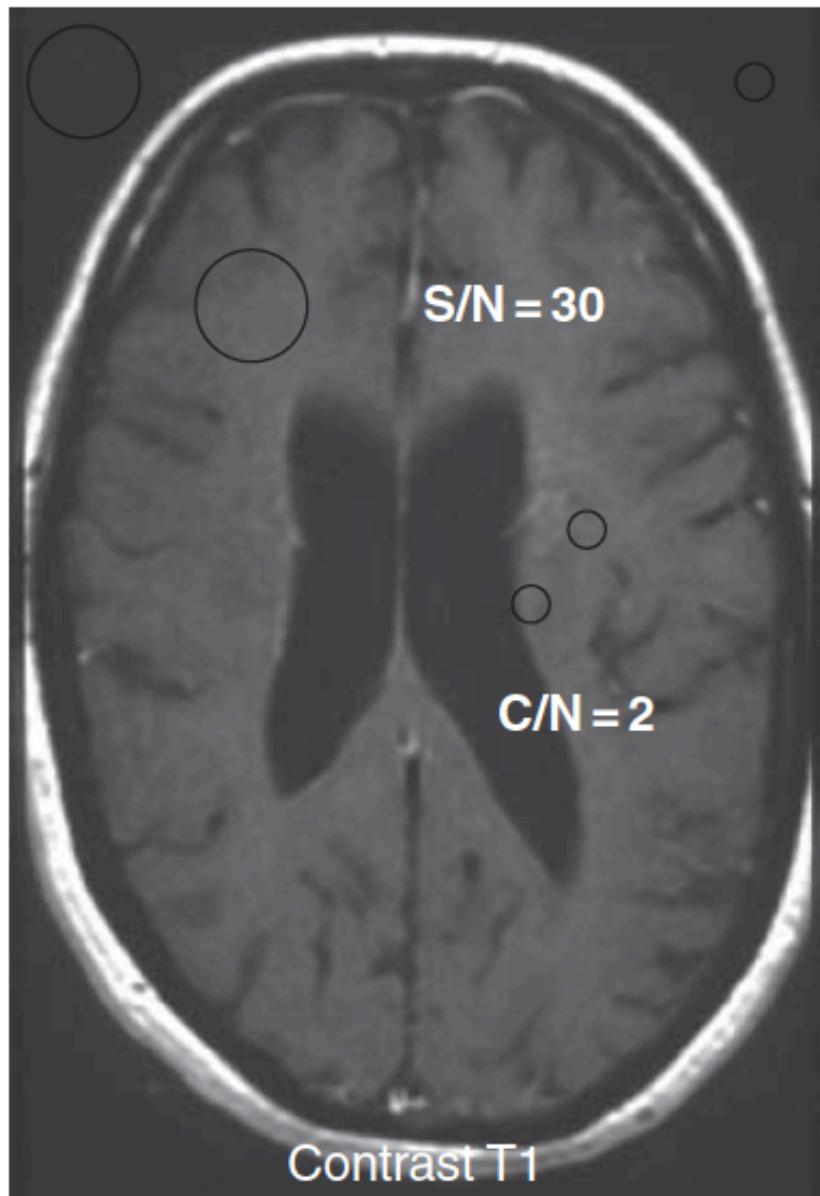
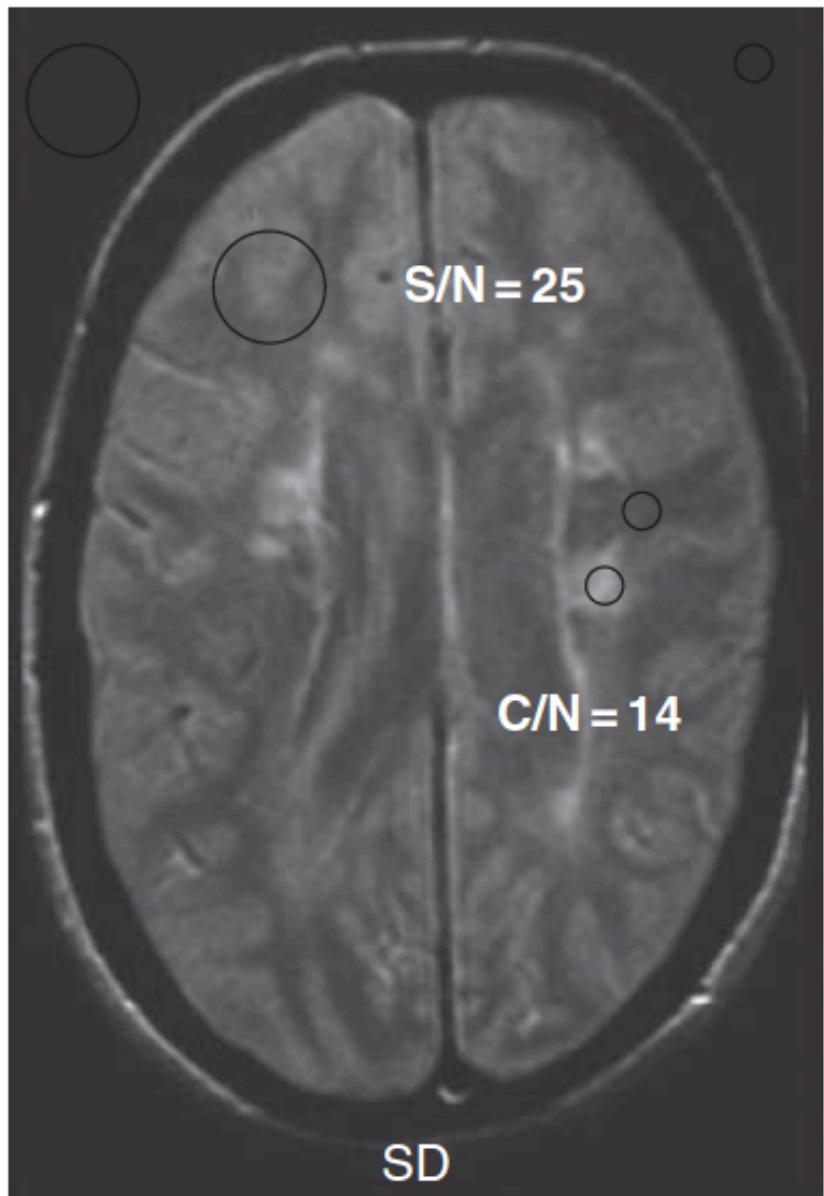
- μ_O, μ_B - object & background mean;
- σ_O, σ_B - object & background std.
- FOC is a curve of 1-RC vs 1-RN.

How to measure for evaluating noise removal algorithms?

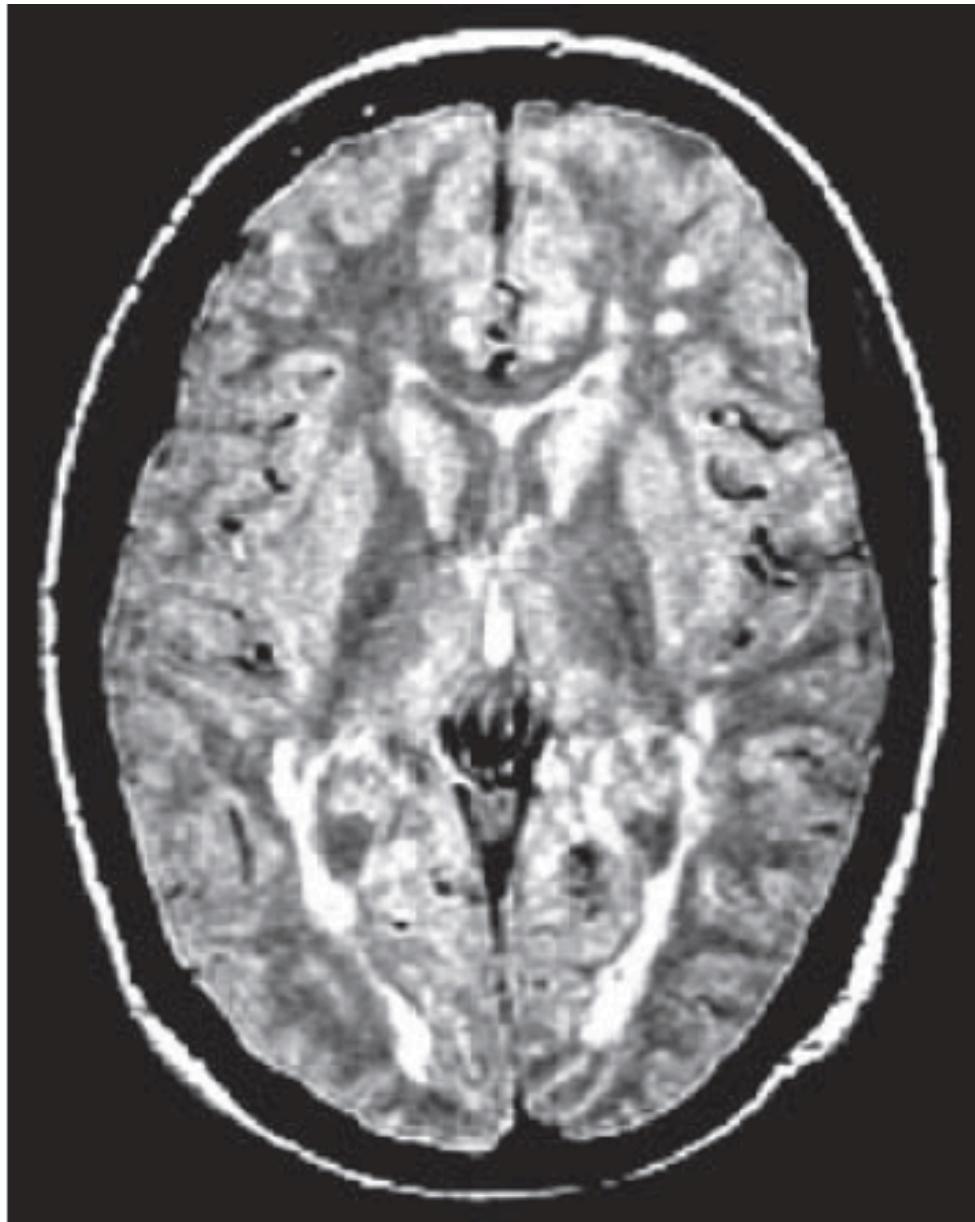
- **SNR (signal-to-noise ratio):** basic measure of image quality
- SNR in an image is simply determined by averaging signal intensity within similar-sized regions of interest (ROIs) inside and outside the sample (background).
- **CNR (contrast-to-noise ratio):**

$$(S_1 - S_2)/N$$
- CNR in an image is determined by averaging signal intensity in similar-sized ROIs placed within two objects in the sample and another ROI outside the sample

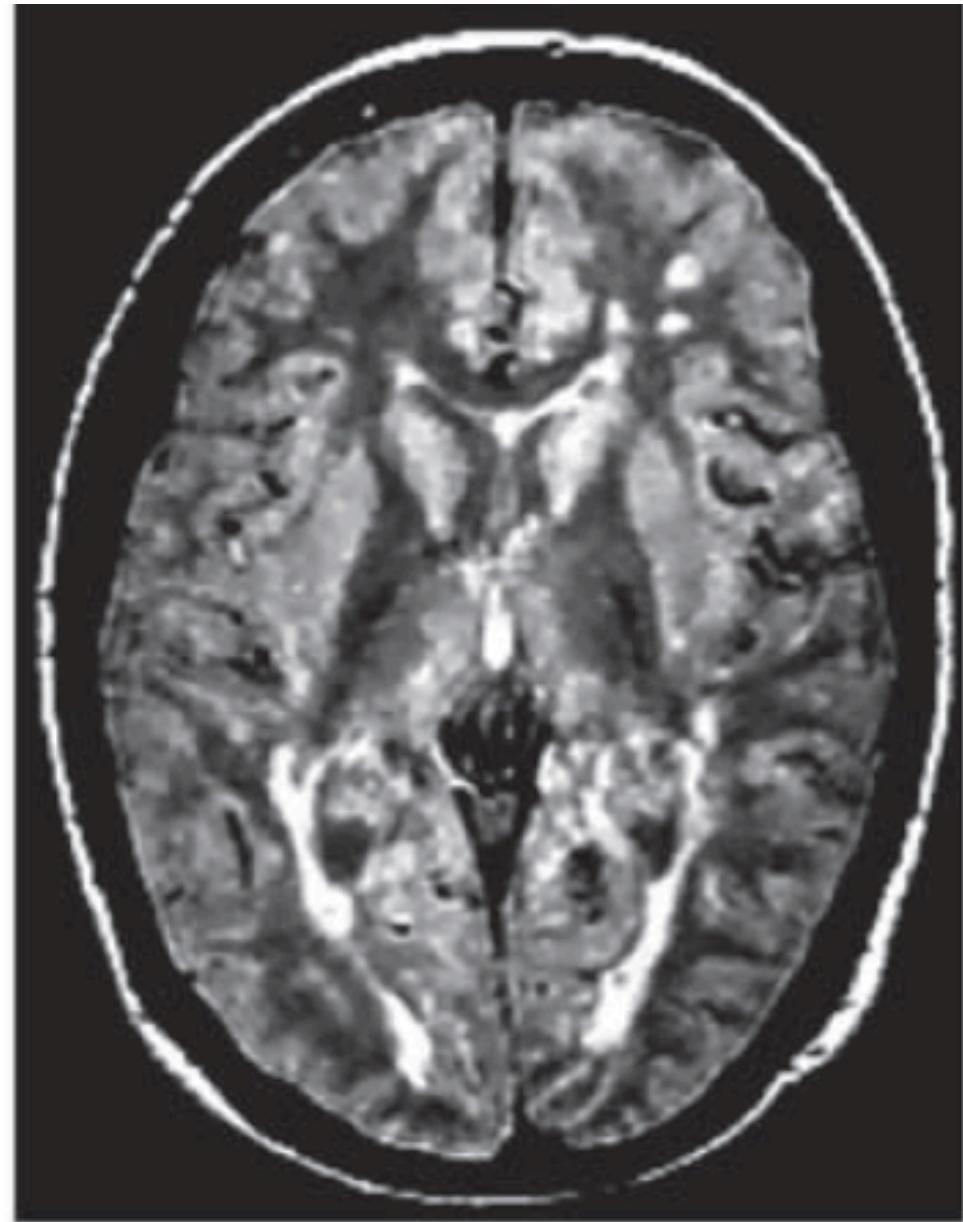




SNR (S/N) (of normal brain) and CNR (C/N) of multiple sclerosis plaques to normal brain on spin-density and T₁magnetic resonance images.



Original



Noise Suppression

Summary

- CAVA: computer aided visualization and analysis
- CAD: computer aided diagnosis
- Coordinate Systems
- Pre-Processing Images
 - Gaussian Smoothing, Median Filtering, Unsharp Masking
 - Edge Enhancement
 - Evaluation for image quality metric (contrast and noise)

References and Slide Credits

- Jayaram K. Udupa, MIPG of University of Pennsylvania, PA.
- P. Suetens, Fundamentals of Medical Imaging, Cambridge Univ. Press.
- N. Bryan, Intro. to the science of medical imaging, Cambridge Univ. Press.
- CAP 5415 Computer Vision (Fall 2016) Lecture Presentations
- Next Lecture (Preprocessing of Medical Images II)
 - Diffusion based Smoothing in Medical Scans
 - Intensity inhomogeneity Correction in MRI
 - Intensity Standardization in MRI
 - Noise Removal in PET/SPECT Images