

A Low Cost Eye-tracking Interface to Help the Physically Impaired Users

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Abstract

This paper presents a low cost alternative to traditional eye-tracking interface to help physically impaired users interact. We propose to implement an eye-tracking system utilizing a single camera. We present a Convolutional Neural Networks based approach which eliminates the necessity of external light source as required by existing solution.

1. Introduction

We propose to implement an eye-tracking system utilizing a single camera. Gaze tracking has numerous application in human computer interfaces from use as input for the impaired[1], to determination of region of interest for augmented reality and image processing. Our system would use a camera on a laptop and determine the target of the users gaze. This would then be used to move a cursor around a graphical keyboard on the display which could be used for input. Our design results in a multi-segment system. We propose to first segment the face from the image. Then the left and right eyes are each segmented from the face. The eyes are then fed into a trained neural network to determine the location of focus for the user. We will examine work that has already been done in the past on gaze tracking to build upon. The literature contains systems from strictly classical approaches to systems that are built on neural networks for the processing [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8]. We hope to be able to use a combination of the two to achieve good results. While existing commercial solutions use external light source and additional hardware to implement eye tracking, we expect to utilize openly available gaze eye-tracking dataset to eliminate the requirement for any additional hardware.

2. Problem Statement

The existing commercial solution available require external hardware being attached to existing device[11][12] This makes eye tracking an expensive and unreachable solution for many. These solutions are based on external infrared light source and rely on the reflection of the light from the

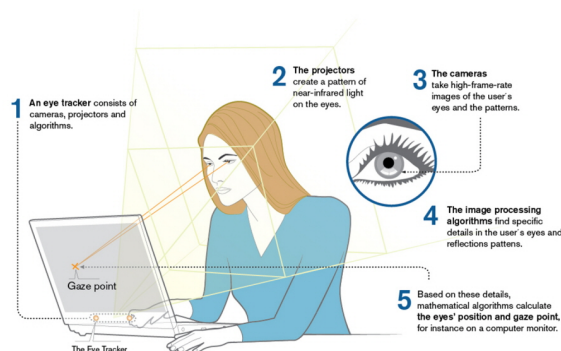


Figure 1. Existing solutions to gaze-tracking problem

user's pupil to identify point of user interest. We hope to utilize the built in web camera of our system and eliminate the necessity of additional hardware such as external light sources with help of a well trained convolutional neural network.

A brief introduction of existing solution mechanism can be seen Figure 1.

3. Related Work

Eye tracking has being studied over hundred years, a great deal of research has gone into studies of the mechanisms and dynamics of eye rotation, but the goal of eye-tracking is most often to estimate gaze direction. The papers which closely relevant to our work using CNN are "Eye Tracking for Everyone"[3] and "Webcam-Based Eye Movement Analysis Using CNN"[?].

In the paper "Eye Tracking for Everyone", authors implemented solution for Apple iOS mobile devices, it used iOS libraries to identify face and eye. Author used crowd sourcing to collect a large scale reliable dataset. The training of the system required manual intervention, and user to physically interact with the device.

In "Webcam-Based Eye Movement Analysis Using CNN" authors Meng and Zhao used take a different ap-

proach at collecting data, they utilized widely popular web camera to capture user image for training. Their experiment obtained a large manually sanitized data to test their neural network.

There are some other non-CNN based experiments based on paper by Fabian Timm - "Accurate Eye center localization by means of Gradient".

4. Our Approach

The system was originally designed to run 2 threads, one thread to capture and validate input from webcam and another to process the captured input. The second thread processes the captured and sanitized input through our convolutional neural network and obtains the point of user interest on the screen. We merged these 2 threads to improve reliability, we face some lag in response as a compromise. In following section we explain the break down of system from image capturing to evaluating point of interest.

4.1. Image capture and face/eye detection

We implemented the system in Python 2.7 using the OpenCV libraries for image processing tasks. The use of OpenCV gives us an easy hardware abstraction layer to video capture and display peripherals. We use haar-cascade utilizing Viola-Jones face recognition algorithm to identify face and eyes.

First we capture input stream using peripheral interface provided by OpenCV. We convert each frame as it is captured to grayscale, this frame is then analyzed using haar-feature based cascade classifier to identify a face. Once we have detected a face, we process frame detected as face again using haar-feature based classifier to identify eyes.

In our initial runs we encountered difficulties with these cascade classifiers. This can be seen in (Figure 2). In order to sanitize the inputs passed to our neural network, we added additional defensive coding to eliminate false positive detection for eyes or faces. We make sure a detected face has eyes and location of the eyes are not in the lower half of the detected face

Once the face itself has been extracted from the video and the eyes are isolated from the face, then images of the face and the location of eyes are fed into a neural network to determine the location of the gaze.

4.2. Neural Network

The neural network is implemented in TensorFlow. The neural network is a multilayer classifier where the inputs are the extracted images of the eyes and the bounding boxes for the eyes and the face in the original image. The two images of the eyes are 32x32x3 images where the extracted images of the eyes are scaled to a set size. This gives us a fixed image size to feed into the network invariant of the

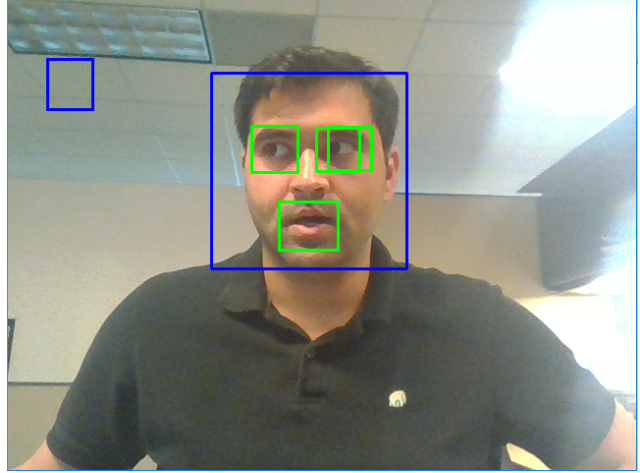


Figure 2. Failure observed without defensive coding for face and eye verification.

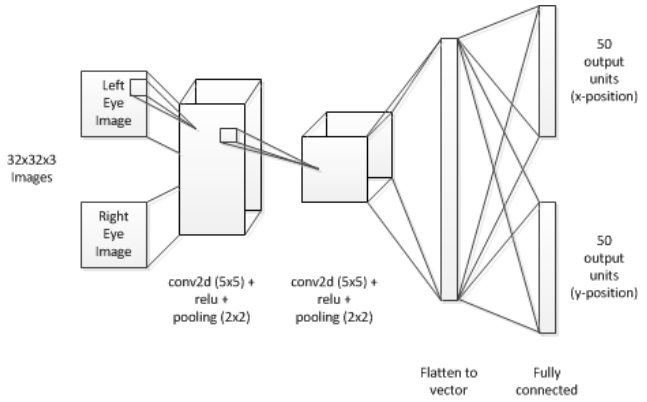


Figure 3. Neural Network Architecture

original size of the eyes in the original video frame. The size of 32x32 should be large enough to provide enough detail without creating a network that is too large. It is in line with work that has come before.

The images are fed into a bank of 16x convolutional filters. This results in an output of 32x32x16 outputs. The filter kernels have support of 5 pixels in the x- and y-axes. The output of the convolutional filters is passed through a rectified linear activation function. Following the convolution layer, we perform max pooling with a non-overlapping 2x2 filter to reduce the dimensionality.

A second bank of convolutional filters is then convolved with the output of the first bank. The second set of layers is also a convolution and max pooling layer. The input of the second bank has shape of 16x16x16 inputs. The second bank has 16 input and 32 output channels and stride of 1. The filter kernel has support of 5 pixels. This is essentially the same as the first layer with a rectified linear activation function, but the dimensionality is smaller in the image x-

and y-axes, and larger in the filter bank depth. The output again is passed through a max-pooling layer.

Following the two convolutional layers, the output is flattened into a single vector and passes through a fully connected layer of 200 units. This layer is then connected to two 50 unit output layers in fully connected fashion. These two sets of 50 units represent the x- and y- outputs of the gaze. The two sets of 50 output represent segmenting the angle of gaze into 50 segments where the center output unit represents a gaze of 0 degrees. The x- and y- axes are separate here and the output is a softmax function and represents the probability distribution of the output in the x- and y- directions.

5. Neural Network Datasets

We will use the Point of Gaze Eye-Tracking Dataset from the University of Texas at Arlington[2]. This provides a mapping from a video of eyes to locations in 3D space where the gaze of a user is focusing their attention. The dataset consists of data captured from 20 subjects. The dataset for each subject consists of a video of the users eye, transform matrices that relate the users eye and the screen of a display, and the target location on the screen that the subject is looking at. There are 6 scenarios for each of the 20 users. The transform and the target locations are provided per frame of the video. We also plan on using the comprehensive head pose and gaze database[4] to infer correlation between the pose of the head and the target that the subject is looking at.

We hope to run the system in a real-time manner and compare our results to expected locations on the display. In this setup data that we capture from the camera connected to the system will be used as our system inputs and data to process.

6. Progress

Despite some initial hurdles, we are still on track in terms of milestones we had initially set for ourselves. We are yet to build test framework to evaluate our solution. The test framework is conceptualized in the Evaluation section of this report.

6.1. Neural Network

We currently have the neural network implemented in TensorFlow, but has not been trained yet with our dataset.

6.2. Timeline

- 2/9/18 - Familiarize with opencv and setup base infrastructure for face/eye detection
- 2/16/18 - Face and Eye Detection

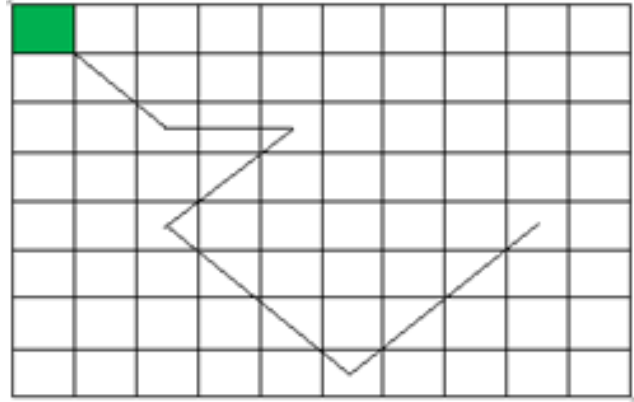


Figure 4. Path followed by Object on Screen.

- 2/23/18 - Setup a neural network with existing database
- 2/26/18 - Compile and submit progress report
- 3/9/18 - Trained the neural network ready for inference
- 3/16/18 - Generate results and demo

7. Evaluation

We propose to evaluate our results by having the user follow an object around the screen on a known path (Figure 3). This would be our target. We can then compute the gaze of the user from the observations by the system (Figure 4). We can compute the error between the computed target from the gaze of the user and the known target location. From these two measurements we can compute the mean squared error between the target and the computed gaze location. We hope to achieve results that are within the size of the panels used for a keyboard on the screen. If the error is within the size of a key, then we can determine what keys a user is looking at, and even use the system as an input device.

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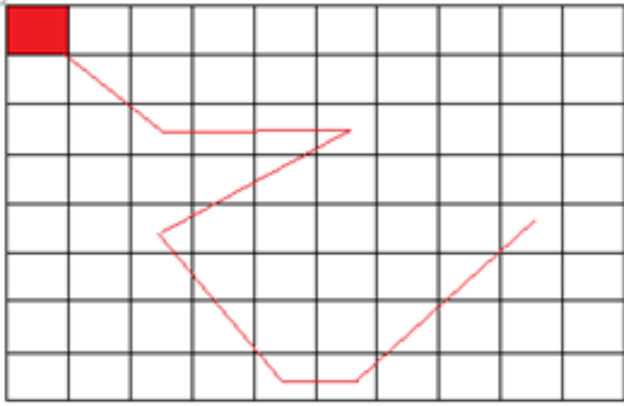


Figure 5. Path generated by tracking users eye.

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