TSBB15 Computer Vision

Lecture 4 Motion estimation and optical flow



Motion

In many applications it is the case that

- the scene depicted in the image is dynamic
 - moving objects
 - deformable objects
- or the camera is moving relative to the scene
- in general: both cases



Motion

- From the camera's (viewer's) perspective these two cases are indistinguishable
 - Unless a high-level interpretation of the scene is available
- However, we can describe how points in the scene move relative to some reference frame, e.g., as defined by the camera



The motion field



The *motion field* is the projection of the 3D motion onto the image plane It can be

represented as a vector valued function of the image coordinate

m(**x**)



The motion field

- If we can measure the motion field **m**(**x**) it is possible to infer
 - how points and objects are moving relative the camera, or
 - how the camera is moving relative to the scene (*ego-motion* estimation)



The motion field

- In practice, we cannot measure $\mathbf{m}(\mathbf{x})$ directly
- However, we can measure how the image intensity moves/varies over time
 - Optical flow
 Will be formally defined shortly
- But there is no direct relation between the optical flow and the motion field
 - 3D motion may not always generate temporal variations in the image
 - 3D points that move along the projection lines have constant positions in the image
 - Temporal variations in the image may not always correspond to 3D motion



Physical vs visual motion



From Jähne & Haussecker



Displacement estimation

- One approach to motion estimation considers **two images** of the same scene, e.g.
 - Taken at two different time points, same camera position
 - Images from a video sequence, e.g., two consecutive images. Displacement is an estimate of the motion field m(x)
 - Taken from two different position, possibly at the same time point
 - Stereo images. Displacement is an estimate of depth in the scene (assuming a stationary scene)



Example (from *Middlebury*)





Mathematical model



Image I

Image J

- Assumption:
 - $J(\mathbf{x}) = I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{d})$ for all $\mathbf{x} \in \Omega$
- Pixel values are constant, but displaced by **d** 4
- How can we determine **d** for each point **x**?



Depends on position of **x**

Estimation of **d**

• **d**, at point **x**, can be estimated by forming a cost function, based on the constancy of the pixel values:

$$\epsilon = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y} + \mathbf{d}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \right)^2 d\mathbf{y}$$

A region of the origin, same size as Ω
A weighting function, e.g., a Gaussian, of same size as Ω

The minimizer of *ϵ* is an estimate of **d** at **x**, which we then use as an estimate of **m**(**x**)



Estimation of **d**

- As an estimate of m(x), d(x) is referred to as *optic flow* (or optical flow)
- Finding the minimizer of ϵ is a non-linear estimation problem
 - Computationally complex problem
- It can be simplified by a linearization of I



Linearization of *I*

• At each point **x**+**y**, the dependency on **d** in the intensity function *I* can be expressed as a Taylor expansion:

$$\nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial I}{\partial u} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} \end{pmatrix}$$
 = Image gradient at $\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}$

$$I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y} + \mathbf{d}) = I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d}$$

• **Assumption**: higher order terms in **d** can be neglected



Linear estimation of **d**

With this linearlization of *I* at hand:

$$\epsilon = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d} \right)^2 \, d\mathbf{y}$$

$$\uparrow$$
Equation (A)
$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial u} v_1 + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} v_2$$

- We want to find the minimum of ϵ with respect to the elements of $\mathbf{d} = (v_1, v_2)$
- Find **d** where

$$\left(rac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial v_1} \\ rac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial v_2}
ight) = \mathbf{0}$$



Determining **d**

$$\begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial v_1} \\ \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial v_2} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d} \right) \frac{\partial I}{\partial u} d\mathbf{y} \\ 2 \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d} \right) \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} d\mathbf{y} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\bigcup$$

$$\int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(\frac{\partial I}{\partial u} \right) \left(I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla^{\mathrm{T}} I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \mathbf{d} \right) \, d\mathbf{y} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$





This is *the Lucas-Kanade equation (LK-equation)*. One equation per pixel in the image (gives one **d** per pixel)



Determining **d**

• In principle, **d** can be determined from the LK-equation as

- Only works if **T** is not singular, i.e.,
 I in Ω **must not be i1D**
- Lucas & Kanade: An Iterative Image Registration Technique with an Application to Stereo Vision, IUW, 1981



Alternative derivation of LK

- The LK-equation derived here is based on finding the local displacement between two images
- An alternative derivation is provided by the brightness constancy principle



Brightness constancy

- Think of the intensity function *I* as explicitly depending on the 3 variables (*u*, *v*, *t*)
- Basic assumption:
 - If we observe intensity *I* at (*u*, *v*, *t*), this intensity remains constant over time, but it may change position as a function of time
- This is referred to as: *brightness constancy*



Mathematical formulation

Means: the total derivative of *I* w.r.t. *t* is = 0

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = 0$$

Expand in partial derivatives of *I*:

$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t}\frac{dt}{dt} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial u}\frac{du}{dt} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v}\frac{dv}{dt} = 0$$



Mathematical formulation

Cont.

$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t} \underbrace{\frac{\partial t}{\partial t}}_{=1} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial u} \underbrace{\frac{\partial u}{\partial t}}_{=v_1} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} \underbrace{\frac{\partial v}{\partial t}}_{=v_2} = 0$$

- v = (v₁, v₂) is the velocity vector of the intensity *I* at (u, v, t)
- **v** is a function of (u, v, t), **v** = **v**(**x**)
- Local estimate of the motion field **m**(**x**)



BCCE / Optic flow equation

Cont.
$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial u}v_1 + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v}v_2 = 0$$

Alternative
formulation:
$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t} + \nabla I \cdot \mathbf{v} = 0$$

- This is the *Brightness Constancy Constraint Equation* (BCCE)
- A.k.a. the optic (optical) flow equation



BCCE

- Is a differential equation
- It assumes that we can determine/estimate the temporal derivative of I at (*u*, *v*, *t*)
 - In practice, it must be estimated in terms of finite differences
 - Compare to the two-image derivation of the LK-eq
- BCCE is one equation per pixel (and time)
 - But it has 2 unknowns: (v_1, v_2)
 - Cannot be solved at the pixel level



Determining v

• At a pixel **x** = (*u*, *v*), at time *t*, we can formulate a cost function

$$\epsilon = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(\frac{\partial I}{\partial t} + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{v} \right)^2 \, d\mathbf{y}$$

- Assumes that **v** is constant within Ω
- This cost function is very similar to the one used for the 2-image case, Equation (A), slide 14



LK-equation, again...

Minimizing ϵ , therefore, implies finding v such that ullet

Where where $\mathbf{T}(\mathbf{x}) = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \nabla^{\mathrm{T}} I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) d\mathbf{y}$ $\mathbf{s}(\mathbf{x}) = -\int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \frac{\partial I}{\partial t} \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \, d\mathbf{y}$



The aperture problem

- Regardless of how the LK-eq has been derived, it cannot be solved robustly for pixels where *I* in Ω is i1D
- Even approximately i1D may cause problems
- This is related to the so-called aperture problem:
 - In a i1D region we cannot determine the local displacement/velocity along a line/edge



The aperture problem

• Is the pattern in the circle moving down, right, or right-down?



- Since the pattern is i1D, its velocity cannot be completely determined
- We can, however, determine a unique *normal velocity*
 - -How?



BCCE revisited

• A consequence of BCCE:

In the 3D spatio-temporal volume, *I* must be constant in a direction given by $\mathbf{v}_{\text{ST}} = (v_1, v_2, 1)$

• This implies that $\nabla_{ST}I$, the 3D spatio-temporal gradient of *I*, is orthogonal to \mathbf{v}_{ST}



Example





Horisontal position



A new cost function

• We define a new cost function ε_{ST} as

$$\epsilon_{\rm ST} = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left(\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\rm ST}^{\rm T} \nabla_{\rm ST} I \right)^2 \, d\mathbf{y}$$

where

$$\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathrm{ST}} = \begin{pmatrix} r_1 \\ r_2 \\ r_3 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathrm{ST}}\| = 1, \quad \nabla_{\mathrm{ST}}I = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial I}{\partial x_1} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial x_2} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial x_3} \end{pmatrix}$$



Spatio-temporal motion vector

- \hat{v}_{ST} (and v_{ST}) is called the *spatio-temporal motion vector* (it is 3-dimensional)
- $\nabla_{ST}I$ is the spatio-temporal gradient of *I* (also 3-dimensional)
- We will minimize ε_{ST} over \hat{v}_{ST} , with the additional constraint

$$\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}\| = 1$$

• This is a *total least squares* formulation of how to determine $\mathbf{v}(\mathbf{x})$



Finding the minimum of \mathcal{E}_{ST}

• The constraint can be expressed as

$$c = \|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}\|^2 = r_1^2 + r_2^2 + r_3^2 = 1$$

• The solution is given by $\hat{v}_{ST} = (r_1, r_2, r_3)$ that satisfies

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial r_k} \varepsilon = \lambda \, \frac{\partial}{\partial r_k} \, c$$

for *k* = 1, 2, 3 (why?)

Lagrange's method for minimisation with constraints



The 3D structure tensor revisited

• These 3 equations can be rewritten as

$$\begin{bmatrix} \int_{\Omega} w(\mathbf{x}) \nabla_{ST} I \nabla_{ST}^{T} I \, d\mathbf{x} \end{bmatrix} \, \hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} = \lambda \, \hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST}$$
(why?)

• Note that the expression inside the bracket is a 3D structure tensor!



The 3D structure tensor revisited

• We rewrite this as

$$\mathbf{T}_{\mathsf{3D}}\,\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} = \lambda\,\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST}$$

- This means that the \hat{v}_{ST} which minimizes ε must be an eigenvector of T_{3D}
- It should also be normalized: $\|\widehat{v}_{\mathsf{ST}}\|=1$
- The eigenvector that minimizes ε is the one of smallest eigenvalue (why?)



The 3D structure tensor revisited

- Once $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} = (r_1, r_2, r_3)$ has been determined we can find \mathbf{v}_{ST} that is
 - Parallel to $\widehat{\mathbf{v}}_{\text{ST}}$
 - Has its last component = 1
- The first two components of \mathbf{v}_{ST} are the motion vector $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2)$

$$v_1 = \frac{r_1}{r_3}$$
 $v_2 = \frac{r_2}{r_3}$



Summary

- We now have 2 alternatives to local motion estimation based on BCCE:
 - 1. least squares minimization (based on T_{2D} and s)
 - 2. total least squares minimization (based on T_{3D})



Summary: Least squares minimization

• Minimize

$$\varepsilon_{ST} = \int_{\Omega} w(\mathbf{x}) \left[\mathbf{v}_{ST} \cdot \nabla_3 I \right]^2 d\mathbf{x}$$

where $\mathbf{v}_{\text{ST}} = (v_1, v_2, 1)$ over the motion components $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2)$

- Find **v** by solving \mathbf{T}_{2D} **v** = **s**
- We can see \mathbf{v}_{ST} as a homogeneous representation of \mathbf{v}



Summary: Total least squares minimization

• Minimize

$$\varepsilon_{ST} = \int_{\Omega} w(\mathbf{x}) \left[\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} \cdot \nabla_3 I \right]^2 \, d\mathbf{x}$$

over all components of $\hat{v}_{ST} = (r_1, r_2, r_3)$ and with the constraint $\|\hat{v}_{ST}\| = 1$

- Find $\,\widehat{v}_{S\,{\sf T}}\,$ as the eigenvector of smallest eigenvalue with respect to $T_{\rm 3D}$
- Find **v** from $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}$ as $v_1 = \frac{r_1}{r_3}$ $v_2 = \frac{r_2}{r_3}$



The 3D tensor

• In the 3D case, we compute a structure tensor T_{3D} , a symmetric 3 \times 3 matrix, that can be decomposed as (the spectral theorem)

$$\mathbf{T}_{\mathsf{3D}} = \lambda_1 \,\widehat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \,\widehat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T + \lambda_2 \,\widehat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \,\widehat{\mathbf{e}}_2^T + \lambda_3 \,\widehat{\mathbf{e}}_3 \,\widehat{\mathbf{e}}_3^T$$

where $\lambda_1 \ge \lambda_2 \ge \lambda_3 \ge 0$ are the eigenvalues of \mathbf{T}_{3D} and $\mathbf{\hat{e}}_k$ are the corresponding eigenvectors (an orthonormal set)



The 3D structure tensor

- In general (*not only in the case of motion*) we can distinguish between three cases of the local 3D signal
 - The signal is constant on parallel planes (i1D)
 - The signal is constant on parallel lines (i2D)
 - The signal is isotropic
- Remember that **T** is formed as

$$\mathbf{T}(\mathbf{x}) = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \nabla^{\mathrm{T}} I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \, d\mathbf{y}$$



The signal is constant on parallel planes

- (Case 1) The 3D signal is i1D
 - The gradient $\nabla_3 I$ is always parallel to the normal vector of the planes

$$\mathbf{T} = \lambda_1 \, \widehat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \, \widehat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T$$

– **T** has rank 1



(Lasagna)

- $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1$ is a normal vector to the planes
- A moving 2D line generates a 3D signal that is i1D \Rightarrow T has rank 1



The signal is constant on parallel planes

 In this case, the Fourier transform of *I* is concentrated along a line through the origin, in the direction of ê₁



The signal is constant on parallel lines (Spaghetti)

- (Case 2) The 3D signal is intrinsic 2D (i2D)
 - The gradient $\nabla_3 I$ is always perpendicular to the direction $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3$ of the lines

$$\mathbf{T} = \lambda_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T + \lambda_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2^T$$

- $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3$ is an eigenvector of eigenvalue 0 relative to T
 T has rank 2
- A moving point generates a 3D signal that is i2D \Rightarrow T has rank 2



The signal is constant on parallel lines

- In this case, the Fourier transform of *I* is concentrated to a plane through the origin, that has **ê**₃ as its normal vector
- In other words, the plane is spanned by $\boldsymbol{\hat{e}}_1$ and $\boldsymbol{\hat{e}}_2$



The signal is isotropic (Dumpling)

- (Case 3) The signal varies uniformly in all directions
 - The gradient $\nabla_3 I$ is not restricted to some subspace



$$\mathbf{T} = \lambda_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T + \lambda_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2^T + \lambda_3 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3^T$$

where λ_1 , λ_2 and λ_3 all are $\neq 0$.

- T has rank 3
- Not consistent with the BCCE



The signal is isotropic

- In the isotropic case, variations in all directions are uniformly distributed
- Implies that $\lambda_1 = \lambda_2 = \lambda_3 = \lambda$
- We can write $\mathbf{T} = \lambda \mathbf{I}$ (I is the identity tensor)
- The Fourier transform of the signal extends into all 3 dimensions



Confidence measures

• As confidence measures for the three cases we can use, *for example*:





Confidence measures

- They satisfy $c_1 + c_2 + c_3 = 1$.
- Furthermore

- i1D-signal
$$\Rightarrow$$
 T has rank 1 \Rightarrow
 $\lambda_1 > 0, \lambda_2 = \lambda_3 = 0 \Rightarrow c_1 = 1, c_2 = c_3 = 0.$
- i2D-signal \Rightarrow **T** has rank 2 \Rightarrow
 $\lambda_1 \ge \lambda_2 > 0, \lambda_3 = 0 \Rightarrow c_2 \neq 0, c_3 = 0.$
- Isotropic signal \Rightarrow **T** has rank 3 \Rightarrow c₃ \neq 0



•

Decomposing **T**

• Based on these confidence measures, **T** can be decomposed as

$$T = \lambda_{1} \hat{e}_{1} \hat{e}_{1}^{T} + \lambda_{2} \hat{e}_{2} \hat{e}_{2}^{T} + \lambda_{3} \hat{e}_{3} \hat{e}_{3}^{T}$$

= $(\lambda_{1} - \lambda_{2}) \hat{e}_{1} \hat{e}_{1}^{T} +$
+ $(\lambda_{2} - \lambda_{3}) (\hat{e}_{1} \hat{e}_{1}^{T} + \hat{e}_{2} \hat{e}_{2}^{T}) +$
+ $\lambda_{3} (\hat{e}_{1} \hat{e}_{1}^{T} + \hat{e}_{2} \hat{e}_{2}^{T} + \hat{e}_{3} \hat{e}_{3}^{T})$
= $\lambda_{1} [c_{1} T_{rang1} + c_{2} T_{rang2} + c_{3} I]$



Summary

- Given a local picture of the signal:
 - The directions along which the signal is constant correspond to the null space of T
 - **T** has a range that is orthogonal to this null space
 - In the Fourier domain: the energy is concentrated to the range of T



Summary

- The rank of **T** equals the dimension of its range
- The range represent the dimensions in the Fourier domain where there is energy
- We can define confidence measures (in various ways) that indicate which rank or case that **T** represents
- In general, **T** can be a combination of the different cases



- At each point (*x*₁, *x*₂, *t*) we can estimate the local 3D structure tensor **T**
- If **T** has rank 2 it corresponds to a non-i1D signal in the 2D image
- Since **T** has rank 2 we can "uniquely" determine an eigenvector of smallest eigenvalue:

$$\widehat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}} = (r_1 \ r_2 \ r_3)$$



• From the previous derivations we know that

$$\widehat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}} \sim \mathbf{v}_{\mathsf{ST}} = (v_1 v_2 1)$$

• Consequently, we can compute the motion components as

$$v_1 = \frac{r_1}{r_3}$$
 $v_2 = \frac{r_2}{r_3}$



- If **T** has rank 1 it means that the corresponding 2D-signal is i1D
 - A moving line or edge
- The null space of \mathbf{T} is 2-dimensional
- We cannot uniquely determine \mathbf{v}_{ST} , and therefore \mathbf{v} cannot be uniquely determined
- Related to the aperture problem



- However, in this case we can determine the *normal motion* of the 2D-signal
- Let p=(p₁, p₂, p₃) be an eigenvector of largest eigenvalue relative to T



– The spatio-temporal normal motion vector \mathbf{v}_{ST} must satisfy

$$\mathbf{p}^{T}\mathbf{v}_{ST} = 0$$

$$p_{1} v_{1} + p_{2} v_{2} + p_{3} = 0$$

$$\mathbf{v} = \begin{pmatrix} v_{1} \\ v_{2} \end{pmatrix} = \kappa \begin{pmatrix} p_{1} \\ p_{2} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$(\text{why?})$$

$$\mathbf{v} = \begin{pmatrix} v_{1} \\ v_{2} \end{pmatrix} = k \begin{pmatrix} p_{1} \\ p_{2} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{z} = \begin{pmatrix} v_{1} \\ v_{2} \end{pmatrix} = k \begin{pmatrix} p_{1} \\ p_{2} \end{pmatrix}$$



• From these two relations, the normal motion is given as

$$\mathbf{v}_{\text{norm}} = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} = -\frac{p_3}{p_1^2 + p_2^2} \begin{pmatrix} p_1 \\ p_2 \end{pmatrix}$$



• Finally, if **T** has rank 3 this implies that the local signal does not satisfy the conditions expressed in BCCE. (why?)



A strategy for motion estimation

- Compute the 3D tensor **T**₃
- Determine its eigenvalues
- Classify the tensor into each of the three cases, based on some confidence measures (how?)
- If rank 1: compute the normal motion
- If rank 2: compute the "true" motion
- If rank 3: no motion can be determined

