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Human and Algorithm Facial Recognition Performance: Face in a Crowd

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Date

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Abstract

Developing a method of identifying persons of interest (POIs) in uncontrolled environments, accurately and rapidly, is paramount in the 21st century. One such technique to do this is by using automated facial recognition systems (FRS). To date, FRS have mainly been tested in laboratory conditions (controlled) however there is little publically available research to indicate the performance levels, and therefore the feasibility of using FRS in public, uncontrolled environments, known as face-in-a-crowd (FIAC). This research project was hence directed at determining the feasibility of FIAC technology in uncontrolled, operational environments with the aim of being able to identify POIs. This was done by processing imagery obtained from a range of environments and camera technologies through one of the latest FR algorithms to evaluate the current level of FIAC performance. The hypothesis was that FR performance with higher resolution imagery would produce better FR results and that FIAC will be feasible in an operational environment when certain variables are controlled, such as camera type (resolution), lighting and number of people in the field of view. Key findings from this research revealed that although facial recognition algorithms for FIAC applications have shown improvement over the past decade, the feasibility of its deployment into uncontrolled environments remains unclear. The results support previous literature regarding the quality of the imagery being processed largely affecting the FRS performance, as imagery produced from high resolution cameras produced better performance results than imagery produced from CCTV cameras. The results suggest the current FR technology can potentially be viable in a FIAC scenario, if the operational environment can be modified to become better suited for optimal image acquisition. However, in areas where the environmental constraints were less controlled, the performance levels are seen to decrease significantly. The essential conclusion is that the data be processed with new versions of the algorithms that can track subjects through the environment, which is expected to vastly increase the performance, as well as potentially run an additional trial in alternate locations to gain a greater understanding of the feasibility of FIAC generically.

List of Figures:

- Figure 1: The reduction in FRR for the state-of-the-art face recognition algorithms as documented through the FERET, the FRVT 2002 and the FRVT 2006 evaluations. Extracted from Philips et al. 2010..... 17
- Figure 2: A Diagram of a General Biometric System as extracted from Mansfield et al. (2002)..... 22
- Figure 3: Histogram of 2002 Operational Uncontrolled CCTV Imagery Performance..... 34
- Figure 4: Histogram of Laboratory (CCTV) Imagery Performance 38
- Figure 5: Histogram of Laboratory (High Resolution) Performance..... 40
- Figure 6: Detection Error Trade-off (DET) Curve Comparing the Performance of Laboratory (High Resolution), Laboratory (CCTV) and 2002 Operational Chokepoint (CCTV) Imagery. 41
- Figure 7: Cumulative Probability Plot Comparing the Performance of Laboratory (High Resolution), Laboratory (CCTV) and 2002 Operational Chokepoint (CCTV) Imagery. 42
- Figure 8: Cumulative Match Characteristic Comparing the Performance of Laboratory (High Resolution), Laboratory (CCTV) and 2002 Operational Chokepoint (CCTV) Imagery 43
- Figure 9: Distribution Scatter Plot Comparing CCTV and High Resolution Match Score and Corresponding Pixel/Resolution..... 45
- Figure 10: Histogram of Operational High Resolution Imagery from the differing Locations 52
- Figure 11: Detection Error Trade-off (DET) Curve Comparing the Performance of the 2002 Operational Uncontrolled (CCTV), Laboratory (CCTV and High Resolution) and the 2012 Operational Imagery 53
- Figure 12: Cumulative Match Characteristic Comparing the Performance of the 2002 Operational Uncontrolled (CCTV), Laboratory (CCTV and High Resolution) and 2012 Operational Imagery..... 55

Figure 13: Rank Distribution Histogram Comparing the Performance of the 2002
Operational Uncontrolled (CCTV), Laboratory (CCTV and High Resolution)
and 2012 Operational Imagery 56

List of Tables:

Table 1: Specifications of the Camera Types Used for Imagery Collection 36
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Score Results and Pixels between the Eyes for
Laboratory (CCTV) and Laboratory (High Resolution) Imagery 46