

Automatic detection of salient objects and spatial relations in videos for a video database system

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Abstract

Multimedia databases have gained popularity due to rapidly growing quantities of multimedia data and the need to perform efficient indexing, retrieval and analysis of this data. One downside of multimedia databases is the necessity to process the data for feature extraction and labeling prior to storage and querying. Huge amount of data makes it impossible to complete this task manually. We propose a tool for the automatic detection and tracking of salient objects, and derivation of spatio-temporal relations between them in video. Our system aims to reduce the work for manual selection and labeling of objects significantly by detecting and tracking the salient objects, and hence, requiring to enter the label for each object only once within each shot instead of specifying the labels for each object in every frame they appear. This is also required as a first step in a fully-automatic video database management system in which the labeling should also be done automatically. The proposed framework covers a scalable architecture for video processing and stages of shot boundary detection, salient object detection and tracking, and knowledge-base construction for effective spatio-temporal object querying.

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1. Introduction

The rapid increase in the amount of multimedia data has resulted in the development of various technologies for handling large volumes of data. These technologies concentrate on efficient compression and storage of the multimedia data. One of the particularly interesting storage systems is the “multimedia database”, which stores multimedia content that can be queried by various features [1]. Some examples of prototype multimedia database systems include QBIC [2], VisualSeek [3], and VideoQ [4]. If the media is video, the queried features are spatial, spatio-temporal, semantic, motion (e.g., object trajectories) and

object features (e.g., color, shape, texture) [5]. Before retrieval, the videos need to be processed to extract the features that can be queried. Since the first appearance of multimedia databases, research on efficient means of feature extraction has become popular. To this end, some manual, semi-automatic and automatic tools have been developed [3,4,6–8].

This paper proposes a framework for automatic salient object extraction. The framework is used to detect and track salient objects in a given video automatically and construct a list of spatio-temporal features for our video database system, *BSVideo* [9]. This process aims to reduce the huge amount of time and effort required for manual selection and labeling of objects for video indexing.

We first use a color histogram-based shot boundary detector to find the shot boundaries. Then, each video is processed on a shot basis following the common practice: salient objects within each shot are detected and tracked. At the end of processing each shot, tracked objects satisfying

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