AN ADAPTIVE ALGORITHM FOR RESTORING IMAGE CORRUPTED BY MIXED NOISE

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Abstract

Image denoising is one of the fundamental problems in image processing. Digital images are often contaminated by noise due to the image acquisition process under poor conditions. In this paper, we propose an effective approach to remove mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise in digital images. Particularly, we propose to use a spatially adaptive total variation regularization term in order to enhance the ability of edge preservation. We also propose an instance of the alternating direction algorithm to solve the proposed denoising model as an optimization problem. The experiments on popular natural images demonstrate that our approach achieves superior accuracy than other recent state-of-the-art techniques.

Key words

Image denoising, total variation, adaptive regularization.

1 Introduction

Image degradation is the result of defects of the imaging system and noise coming from the formation, transmission and recording processes. Let $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ be a bounded open set, and let $u(x) : \Omega \to \mathbb{R}$ be a true image describing a real scene, and let f(x) be the observed image of the same scene ($x = (x_1, x_2) \in \Omega$), which is a degraded image of u. In general, image restoration is often formulated as the problem of reconstructing a true image u with the size of $(M \times N)$ corrupted by random noise η , from an observed image f. The sought-for image u is a solution of the corresponding inverse problem [Pham, 2015; Pham, 2018].

A number of algorithms, some of which are based on total variation (TV) regularization, have been proposed for solving the denoising problem. One of successful edge preserving image denoising models is the wellknown ROF model [Rudin, 1992]. The ROF model is defined by the following unconstrained discrete minimization problem:

$$\min_{u} \left(\|u\|_{TV} + \frac{\lambda}{2} \|u - f\|_2^2 \right) \tag{1}$$

where the first term stands for the total variation of u corresponding to the image prior, and the second term is the data fidelity term measuring the error between the true and observed images; λ is a positive regularization parameter, $\|.\|_{TV}$ is the total variation regularization term given later, cf. Eq. (8).

Recently, the authors in [Huang, 2008] introduced a auxiliary variable z and proposed a fast total variation minimization method to solve problem (1) as follows:

$$\min_{u,z} \left(\|z\|_{TV} + \frac{\gamma}{2} \|u - z\|_2^2 + \frac{\lambda}{2} \|u - f\|_2^2 \right)$$
(2)

The ROF models (1) and (2) are appropriate to remove additive Gaussian noise. However, many imaging devices, such as digital cameras, TEP and SPECT tomography, measure scene irradiance by counting the number

$$\min_{u} \left(\|u\|_{TV} + \beta \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right), \tag{3}$$

where β is a regularization parameter; u must be positive almost everywhere over Ω .

Compared to the ROF model, the regularization parameter of the functional described in (3) depends on the reconstructed image u, that better suits for Poisson noise, which increases with image intensity. To better improve the edge-preserving removal of Poisson noise, the authors in [Zhou, 2012] proposed an adaptive model of (3) described as follows (**M1**):

$$\min_{u} \left(\alpha(x) \|u\|_{TV} + \beta \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right), \quad (4)$$

where $\alpha(x)$ is an edge-detection function given later, cf. Eq. (7).

As suggested in [Calatroni, 2017; Reyes, 2013], Eq. (1) and (3) can be combined to denoise an image corrupted by mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise (**M2**):

$$\min_{u} \left(\|u\|_{TV}\| + \frac{\lambda_1}{2} \|u - f\|_2^2 + \lambda_2 \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right).$$
(5)

where λ_1 and λ_2 are positive regularization parameters; u must be positive almost everywhere over Ω

Inspired by models (2), (4) and (5), we propose the following unconstrained minimization problem to denoise an image corrupted by mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise (M3):

$$\min_{u} \left(\alpha(x) \|z\|_{TV} + \frac{\gamma}{2} \|u - z\|_{2}^{2} + \frac{\lambda_{1}}{2} \|u - f\|_{2}^{2} + \lambda_{2} \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right).$$
(6)

where u must be positive almost everywhere over Ω ; λ_1 and λ_2 are positive regularization parameters, $\alpha(x)$ is an edge detection function defined in (7).

Overall the years, many efficient methods have been proposed, for instance, gradient descent method [Rudin, 1992; Wang, 2011], Chambolle's projection algorithm [Chambolle, 2004], Split Bregman method [Goldstein, 2009], alternating direction algorithms[Huang, 2008; He, 2014], which can be used to obtain the solution of the resulting convex optimization problem (6).

In this paper, we study an effective method for image restoration corrupted by mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise. We propose to use a spatially adaptive total variation regularization term in order to enhance the ability of edge preservation. To solve the energy minimization problem (6), we employ an alternating direction algorithm which is highly efficient in terms of computational time.

The remaining of the paper is organized as follows: in Section (2), which is the main of our contributions, we discuss the proposed model and numerical method to solve the minimization problem. Section (3) consists of experiments and discussions. Finally, conclusions are made in Section (4).

2 The Proposed Approach

In this paper, our objective is to solve the optimization problem (6):

$$\min_{u,z} \left(\alpha(x) \|z\|_{TV} + \frac{\gamma}{2} \|u - z\|_2^2 + \frac{\lambda_1}{2} \|u - f\|_2^2 + \lambda_2 \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right).$$

The function $\alpha(x)$ can be chosen typically as follows [Catte, 1992]:

$$\alpha(x) = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{|v(x)|}{K}},\tag{7}$$

where $v(x) = (|\nabla G_{\sigma}(x) * f|)^2$, K is a threshold value, operator * denotes the convolution,

 $G_{\sigma}(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi\sigma^2} \exp\left(-\frac{x^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$ - stands for the Gaussian filter with standard deviation σ .

We can write $u_{i,j}$ for the pixel at coordinates (i, j)in image u (i = 1, ..., M; j = 1, ..., N). The operator $\|\nabla u\|_{TV}$ is defined as follows:

$$\nabla u_{i,j} = (\nabla_1 u(i,j), \nabla_2 u(i,j)),
\nabla_1 u(i,j) = u(i+1,j) - u(i-1,j),
\nabla_2 u(i,j) = u(i,j+1) - u(i,j-1),
||u||_{TV} = \sum_{j,k} ||\nabla u(i,j)||_2
= \sqrt{|\nabla_1 u(i,j)|^2 + |\nabla_2 u(i,j)|^2 + \varepsilon^2}.$$
(8)

where ε is a small positive quantity, added for considerations of numerical stability.

We have two decoupled variables u, z in (6). The alternating minimization method to solve problem (6) can be expressed as follows. Given initial values $u^{(0)}$ and $z^{(0)}$, solving the unconstrained problem (6) is performed via the following iterative scheme:

$$u^{(k+1)} = \arg\min_{u} \left(\frac{\gamma}{2} ||u - z^{(k)}||^2 + \frac{\lambda_1}{2} ||u - f||^2 + \lambda_2 \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right),$$

$$z^{(k+1)} = \arg\min_{z} \left(\alpha(x) \|z\|_{TV} + \frac{\gamma}{2} \|u^{(k)} - z\|^2 \right)$$

In fact, the problem (6) is constructed by making the substitutions u by z in (5). Here, we add an auxiliary variable b on the update of variables u and z. The auxiliary variable b controls the residual between u and z, improving the convergence and stability of the solution. This yields a new scheme described as follows:

$$u^{(k+1)} = \arg\min_{u} \left(\frac{\gamma}{2} \|u - z^{(k)} - b^{(k)}\|^{2} + \frac{\lambda_{1}}{2} \|u - f\|^{2} + \lambda_{2} \langle 1, u - f \log u \rangle \right),$$
(9)

$$z^{(k+1)} = \arg\min_{z} \left(\alpha(x) \|z\|_{TV} + \frac{\gamma}{2} \|u^{(k)} - z - b^{(k)}\|^2 \right),$$
(10)

$$b^{(k+1)} = b^{(k)} + \left(z^{(k+1)} - u^{(k+1)}\right), \qquad (11)$$

where k = 0, 1, 2, ... is iteration number.

The u subproblem (9) is a quadratic optimization problem. Therefore, we have the following optimality condition:

$$\gamma(u - z^{(k)} - b^{(k)}) + \lambda_1(u - f) + \lambda_2(1 - \frac{f}{u}) = 0$$

Multiplying both sides of this equation by u, we get:

$$(\gamma + \lambda_1)u^2 - (\gamma z^{(k)} + \gamma b^{(k)} + \lambda_1 f - \lambda_2)u - \lambda_2 f = 0.$$
(12)

The solution u of the equation (9) is a positive solution of Eq. (12) given by:

$$u^{(k+1)} = q^{(k)} + \sqrt{(q^{(k)})^2 + \frac{\lambda_2 f}{\lambda_1 + \gamma}},$$
 (13)

where

$$q^{(k)} = \frac{\gamma z^{(k)} + \gamma b^{(k)} + \lambda_1 f - \lambda_2}{2(\lambda_1 + \gamma)}.$$

Clearly, the problem (10) can be solved by different TV denoising methods. In this work, we employ the Chambolles projection algorithm [Chambolle, 2004] to solve the z subproblem (see Algorithm 1).

Algorithm 1: Adaptive Chambolles projection algorithm for solving Eq. (10)

1. Initialize:
$$u^{(k+1)}$$
, $b^{(k)}$, $k = 0$, $p^{(0)} = 0$
2. while $(||p^{(k+1)} - p^{(k)}||_2 > \varsigma)$ do
3. for all values at coordinates (i, j) do
4.
 $p^{(k+1)}_{(i,j)} = \frac{p^{(k)}_{(i,j)} + \Delta t (\nabla (div(\alpha(x)p^{(k)}) - \gamma(u^{(k+1)} + b^{(k)})))_{(i,j)}|}{1 + \Delta t |\nabla (div(\alpha(x)p^{(k)}) - \gamma(u^{(k+1)} + b^{(k)}))_{(i,j)}|}$
5. end for
6. $k = k + 1$
7. end while
8. return $z^{(k+1)} = u^{(k+1)} + b^{(k)} - \frac{1}{\gamma} div(p^{(k+1)})$

The operator $div(p^{(k+1)})$ in Algorithm 1 is defined as follows [Chambolle, 2004]:

$$div(p)_{i,j} = p_1(i,j) - p_1(i-1,j) + p_2(i,j) - p_2(i,j-1),$$

where $p_1(i, j), p_2(i, j)$ is the dual variable at the (i, j) pixel location, $p_1(0, j), p_2(i, 0) = 0$.

Finally, we update the auxiliary variable b by (11) :

$$b^{(k+1)} = b^{(k)} + (z^{(k+1)} - u^{(k+1)}).$$
(14)

The resulting image denoising algorithm is described in **Algorithm 2**.

Algorithm 2: Adaptive Algorithm for solving the proposed model (6)

1. Initialize:
$$u^{(0)} = z^{(0)} = f$$
; $b^{(0)} = 0$; $k = 0$
2. while $||u^{(k+1)} - u^{(k)}||_2 > \varsigma$) do
3. Compute $u^{(k+1)}$ according to (13)
4. Compute $z^{(k+1)}$ according to Algorithm 1
5. Update $b^{(k+1)}$ according to (14)
6. $k = k + 1$
7. end while
8. return $u^* = u^{(k+1)}$



Figure 1. Standard test images

3 Experimental results

In this section, we show some numerical reconstructions obtained by applying our proposed method to mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise. For illustrations, we use the gray level images with size 256×256 : Boat, Parrot, Man, Brain. The original images are presented in Fig. (1).

The Peak Signal-to-Noise Ratio (PSNR) and Structure Similarity Index (SSIM) [Bovik, 2006] used in comparison are defined as:

$$PSNR = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{MNI_{max}^2}{\|u^* - u\|_2^2} \right)$$

$$SSIM(u, u^*) = \frac{(2\mu_u \mu_{u^*} + c_1)(2\sigma_{u, u^*} + c_2)}{(\mu_u^2 + \mu_{u^*}^2 + c_1)(\sigma_u^2 + \sigma_{u^*}^2 + c_2)}$$

where u, u^* are the original image, the reconstructed or noisy image accordingly; I_{max} is the maximum intensity of the original image; M and N are the number of image pixels in rows and columns; μ_u , μ_{u^*} - means of images; σ_u, σ_{u^*} - standard deviations (the square root of variance) of images; σ_{u,u^*} - covariance of two images u and u^* ; $c_1 = (K_1L)^2$, $c_2 = (K_2L)^2$, L is the dynamic range of the pixel values (255 for 8-bit grayscale images), and $K_1 \ll 1$, $K_2 \ll 1$ are small constants.

We show the performance of our proposed method for restoring images contaminated with mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise. Noisy observations are generated by Poisson noise with some fixed peak I_{max} , and by Gaussian noise with standard deviation σ_G to the test images (see [Pham, 2018] for more details).

We compare reconstructions using our model with other results using model **M1** [Zhou, 2012] and model **M2** [Calatroni, 2017; Pham, 2018]. For our model, we perform experiments with two cases: the model (6) with constant function $\alpha(x) = 1$ and the model (6) with function $\alpha(x)$ given by (7). For simplicity, we name (6) with $\alpha(x) = 1$: model **M3**; and we name (6) with $\alpha(x)$ given by (7): model α -**M3**.

Meanwhile, all algorithms are implemented using MATLAB on a HP laptop with Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-CPU 2.0 GHz and 8 GB of RAM, Windows 10 (64 bit). For our experiments, we set tolerance $\varsigma = 10^{-5}$.

For a fair comparison, we set the regularization parameters of compared methods with their optimal values: $\lambda = 0.2, \lambda_2 = \beta = 0.8$. We set the threshold value in (7) K = 10.

In Fig. (2), we show the denoising results using our models **M3** and α -**M3** for noise level $I_{max} = 120$ and $\sigma_G = 10$. In Fig. (3), we show the denoising results noise level $I_{max} = 60$ and $\sigma_G = 5$. As shown in Fig.(2) and Fig. (3), our model α -**M3** is highly effective for restoring piecewise constant images. This shows that using the proposed model (6) with α function yields better denoising results.

In Fig. (4), we show the denoising results using the compared models for the noise level $I_{max} = 90$ and $\sigma_G = 10$. Particularly, the first row represents the noisy image, in the others we show respectively the reconstructions using model **M1**, model **M2**, our models: **M3** and α -**M3**.

An important factor to measure the effectiveness of the denoising methods is run time. Table (1) shows the computational time (in seconds) in case of mixed noise $I_{max} = 90$, $\sigma_G = 10$ (Fig. 4). It can be observed from the table that the computation time of the restored images using our models and model **M1** is about the same. The cost time of the restored images using our models is shorter than those of the model **M2**. Fig. (5) shows that the restored pixel intensity curves from the proposed models actually provide a better approximation to the smooth fragments of original pixel intensity curves than those from the other models.

Table 1. Computational time (in seconds) results of the compared methods on test images with $I_{max} = 90, \sigma_G = 10$

Image	Model M1	Model M2	Model M3	Model α -M3
Boat	0.5063	1.9605	0.4820	0.4967
Parrot	0.5084	2.1860	0.4932	0.5138
Man	0.5032	2.0943	0.4879	0.4835
Brain	0.5490	2.0544	0.5720	0.5284

For the comparison of the performance quantitatively, in Table (2) and Table (3), we report the values of the PSNR, SSIM for the noisy and recovered images.



Figure 2. Recovered results. First row (a - d): Noisy image f with $I_{max} = 120$, $\sigma = 10$; Second row (e - h): restored images using model **M3** ($\gamma = 12$); Third row (i - l): f - u with our model **M3**; Fourth row (m-p): restored images using model α -**M3** ($\gamma = 12$); Fifth row (q - t): f - u with our model α -**M3**



Figure 3. Recovered results. First row (a - d): Noisy image f with $I_{max} = 60$, $\sigma = 5$; Second row (e - h): restored images with model **M1** ($\gamma = 8$); Third column (i - 1): restored images using our model α -**M3** ($\gamma = 8$)

As shown in Table (2) and Table (3), The PSNR and SSIM results using our model **M3** are better than the results of the model **M1**. The PSNR and SSIM results using our model **M3** and the model **M2** are about the same. However, the PSNR and SSIM results using our model α -M3 are better than the other methods. Thus, we can clearly see that our method outperforms the other relative methods for mixed Poisson-Gaussian noise removal.

4 Conclusion

This paper proposes an instance of the alternating minimization method to solve the image denoising problem which is formulated as an unconstrained optimization task with an adaptive total variation smoothing term. Our approach automatically reduces the weight of total variation term near an edge so that it makes the edges less affected by the smoothing term, and, hence, better preserved. The experiments show that our methods yields better results in mixed Poison-Gaussian removal in comparison to other relative methods.

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Figure 4. Recovered results. First row (a - d): Noisy image f with $I_{max} = 90$, $\sigma = 10$; Second row (e - h): restored images using model **M1**; Third row (i - l): restored images using model **M2**; Forth row (m - p): restored images using our model **M3** $\gamma = 8$); Fifth row (q - t): restored images using our model α -**M3** ($\gamma = 8$)



Figure 5. Image 'parrot'. (a) Original image with the location of the 81th row. 1D line taken across: (b) 81th row of the original image; from (c) to (f): the 81th row of the restored image from (f), (j), (n) and (r) of the second column in Fig. (4)

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Noise levels		PSNR					
			Bo	at (256x256)			
I_{max}	σ	Noisy	Model 1	Model 2	Ours Model 3	Ours α - model 3	
120	5	22.1817	26.9722	27.4083	27.4214	27.8203	
	10	19.5590	25.5219	25.8668	25.8087	26.2691	
90	5	20.5147	26.2885	26.3563	26.3608	26.8478	
	10	17.5246	24.8378	24.8073	24.8023	25.1663	
60 -	5	18.0903	25.2249	24.9089	24.9335	25.4281	
	10	14.5424	23.7054	23.3545	23.3854	23.7755	
			Par	rot (256x256)			
120	5	22.6619	28.5616	28.6885	28.6900	28.9310	
	10	19.8727	27.0983	27.0003	27.0047	27.4130	
90	5	20.9874	27.7751	27.6360	27.6251	27.9465	
	10	17.8603	26.1740	25.7895	25.8183	26.3000	
<i>co</i>	5	18.5235	26.5617	26.0621	26.0553	26.6803	
00	10	14.9155	24.2194	23.8934	23.8581	24.5047	
			Ma	ın (256x256)			
120	5	22.6241	25.4868	25.8171	25.8033	26.5617	
	10	19.7729	24.0820	24.3303	24.3416	24.9141	
90	5	20.9975	24.8372	24.7820	24.8094	25.2636	
	10	17.7206	23.4761	23.4191	23.3999	23.9755	
60 -	5	18.4461	23.7810	23.5133	23.5145	24.0462	
	10	14.8019	22.4934	22.1475	22.1458	22.6198	
			Bra	in (256x256)			
120	5	24.1232	28.5295	28.5383	28.5061	29.0337	
	10	21.2526	26.5321	26.4516	26.5022	27.1849	
90	5	22.4320	27.3158	27.3056	27.2517	27.9494	
	10	19.2605	25.1811	25.2251	25.1725	25.9346	
60	5	19.9558	25.5354	25.4818	25.4615	26.1903	
	10	16.2397	23.2733	23.3101	23.2507	23.9841	

 Table 2.
 PSNR values for recovered images given by the compared methods with various levels

Table 3. SSIM values for recovered images given by the compared methods with various levels

Noise levels		SSIM					
Boat (256x256)							
I_{max}	σ	Noisy	Model 1	Model 2	Ours Model 3	Ours α - model 3	
120	5	0.5142	0.7607	0.7738	0.7719	0.7877	
120	10	0.4038	0.6994	0.7129	0.7107	0.7317	
00	5	0.4441	0.7308	0.7316	0.7316	0.7491	
90	10	0.3258	0.6639	0.6655	0.6647	0.6804	
60	5	0.3503	0.6805	0.6657	0.6700	0.6914	
00	10	0.2247	0.6055	0.5930	0.5953	0.6126	
Parrot (256x256)							
120	5	0.4692	0.8434	0.8504	0.8505	0.8544	
	10	0.3591	0.8150	0.8210	0.8206	0.8247	
00	5	0.4058	0.8290	0.8321	0.8328	0.8363	
90	10	0.2957	0.7928	0.7984	0.7976	0.8036	
(0)	5	0.3205	0.8003	0.8045	0.8048	0.8068	
00	10	0.2165	0.7534	0.7587	0.7577	0.7667	
Man (256x256)							
120	5	0.6122	0.7202	0.7330	0.7314	0.7637	
120	10	0.4872	0.6421	0.6589	0.6597	0.6893	
00	5	0.5440	0.6844	0.6797	0.6798	0.6960	
90	10	0.3994	0.6087	0.6048	0.6055	0.6399	
60	5	0.4344	0.6220	0.6051	0.6035	0.6354	
00	10	0.2827	0.5488	0.5260	0.5274	0.5618	
Brain (256x256)							
120	5	0.6823	0.8595	0.8541	0.8572	0.8705	
	10	0.5897	0.8051	0.7993	0.8037	0.8278	
90	5	0.6298	0.8281	0.8177	0.8231	0.8445	
	10	0.5264	0.7596	0.7478	0.7589	0.7897	
60	5	0.5525	0.7726	0.7589	0.7627	0.7931	
	10	0.4373	0.6860	0.6915	0.6840	0.7166	

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