

HUMAN DETECTION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS USING
EMBEDDED ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, who taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have been that which is learned for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my mother, who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

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ABSTRACT

Unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) have been increasingly used in search and rescue operations as a tool to detect humans in an area of disaster where the rescue team is unable to reach them. Human detection is the most important task in a rescue plan. Currently, deep learning and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies are used to automatically detect humans from footage taken from drones, however, the hardware used in such methods consumes high power, requires high processing capability, long computational time, and a constant internet connection which are not effective to be deployed in all scenarios. This project aims to utilize transfer learning to build a human detection model with mean average precision (mAP@0.5) above 90% and compare deep learning models in aspects of the size of the model, computational requirement, and mAP. Furthermore, to compress the final model to be deployed to an edge device for the propose of using edge computing where the computation requirement for the deep learning model is all made on-chip. The development of this project is based on multi-datasets using the TensorFlow v2 framework and virtual machine Google Colaboratory. The dataset used in this project is extracted from two datasets named SARD and SeaDroneSee both are aerial images of humans, and the labeling of the dataset is made using the Roboflow platform. The models used are pre-trained single shot detector models namely MobileNet v2 and EfficientDet-D1, the last shows a better accuracy of 97.3% mAP@0.5 however MobileNet v2 consumes much less GPU for training at around 4.6 GB while maintaining relatively high accuracy of 95.5% mAP@0.5. Lastly, the trained MobileNet v2 model is quantized to 6.4 MB. At the end of this project, a deep learning model for human detection for search and rescue operations is compressed and ready to be deployed to an embedded artificial intelligence device.

ABSTRAK

Kenderaan udara tanpa pemandu (drone) semakin banyak digunakan dalam operasi mencari dan menyelamatkan sebagai alat untuk mengesan manusia di kawasan bencana di mana pasukan penyelamat tidak dapat mencapai mereka. Pengesanan manusia adalah tugas paling penting dalam rancangan menyelamatkan. Pada masa ini, pembelajaran mendalam dan teknologi Internet of Things (IoT) digunakan untuk mengesan manusia secara automatik daripada rakaman yang diambil daripada dron, namun, perkakasan yang digunakan dalam kaedah sedemikian menggunakan kuasa tinggi, memerlukan keupayaan pemprosesan yang tinggi, masa pengiraan yang panjang dan sambungan internet yang berterusan yang tidak berkesan untuk digunakan dalam semua senario. Projek ini bertujuan untuk menggunakan pembelajaran pemindahan untuk membina model pengesanan manusia dengan purata ketepatan purata (mAP@0.5) melebihi 90% dan membandingkan model pembelajaran mendalam dalam aspek saiz model, keperluan pengiraan dan mAP. Tambahan pula, untuk memampatkan model akhir yang akan digunakan pada peranti tepi untuk cadangan menggunakan pengkomputeran tepi di mana keperluan pengiraan untuk model pembelajaran mendalam semuanya dibuat pada cip. Pembangunan projek ini adalah berdasarkan berbilang set data menggunakan rangka kerja TensorFlow v2 dan mesin maya Google Colaboratory. Set data yang digunakan dalam projek ini diekstrak daripada dua set data bernama SARD dan SeaDroneSee kedua-duanya adalah imej udara manusia dan pelabelan set data dibuat menggunakan platform Roboflow. Model yang digunakan adalah model pengesanan pukulan tunggal terlatih iaitu MobileNet v2 dan EfficientDet-D1, yang terakhir menunjukkan ketepatan yang lebih baik iaitu 97.3% mAP@0.5 namun MobileNet v2 menggunakan lebih sedikit GPU untuk latihan pada sekitar 4.6 GB sambil mengekalkan ketepatan yang agak tinggi 95.5% mAP@0.5. Akhir sekali, model MobileNet v2 terlatih dikuantisasikan kepada 6.4 MB. Pada penghujung projek ini, model pembelajaran mendalam untuk pengesanan manusia untuk operasi mencari dan menyelamatkan dimampatkan dan sedia untuk digunakan pada peranti kecerdasan buatan terbenam.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IoT	-	Internet of Things
AI	-	Artificial Intelligence
UAV	-	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
CV	-	Computer Vision
DL	-	Deep Learning
ML	-	Machine Learning
TF	-	TensorFlow
TinyML	-	Tiny Machine Learning
CNN	-	Convolutional Neural Network
RNN	-	Recurrent Neural Networks
ANN	-	Artificial Neural Network
GPU	-	Graphics Processor Unit
CPU	-	Central Processing Unit
TPU	-	Tensor Processing Unit
YOLO	-	You Only Look Once
FOMO	-	Fast Object More Object
LTE	-	Long Term Evolution
IP SAR	-	Image Processing for Search and Rescue
SAR		Search and Rescue
mAP	-	Mean Average Precision

LIST OF SYMBOLS

mAP@ - Mean Average Precision at Intersection over Union
Threshold

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Background

A search and rescue (SAR) operation is the process of finding and helping those who are in need or immediate danger. Numerous specialized sub-fields fall under the broad category of search and rescue, and these are often decided by the type of terrain the search is done over. These include land and sea search and rescue. The most common disaster in Malaysia is a flood, it is a natural disaster often caused by heavy rainfall, rapid snowmelt, or a storm surge such as the one that occurred more recently in Malaysia in December 2021. It is one of the most destructive events that might happen, causing loss of life, severe damage to properties, and huge economic and environmental impact. Due to global climate change flood events are expected to occur more frequently and more damaging. Therefore, a real-time automated system is needed for disaster rescue planning to analyse, and plan more efficiently.

Conventional rescue plan involves the deployment of helicopters and inflatable boats to search and evacuate people stranded, recently the technology of the internet of things (IoT) and drones have been used to replace the conventional rescue plan but these techniques have many challenges such as the dependence on internet connectivity at all time and data privacy another issue might be facing is when the drone take footage of the affected area the drone needs to send the collected data to the on-ground station so the can be analyzed using machine learning algorithm either on a powerful computer to locate any humans in the area before sending it to the rescue team or using cloud computing.

Internet of things (IoT) sensors are such sensors installed on the ground and are still used in some cases, but it has some disadvantages sensors must always be connected to the internet and they only cover a limited area, that's what drives AI to

be introduced. Artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool used to mimic human intelligence by machines, especially by computers. Recently there has been a continuous study to put AI into use to analyze disasters damages and predict them more specifically using computer vision (CV) which is a system that is used to teach computers to interpret the visual world by mimicking the capability of the human visual system by using deep learning (DL) to resemble human eyes functionality.

Embedded AI is an emerging subfield of AI, it is a technique of using machine learning (ML) and DL at devices such as microcontrollers via software without requiring huge computing ability, in other words, embedded AI is the combination of an embedded system equipped with an application of AI. More recently embedded AI has brought more opportunities to develop a self-reliance application, for instance when using a drone for rescue disaster management, the drone can decide on its own instantly.

TensorFlow (TF) is an open-source library for numerical computation and used for machine learning, it was developed by Google in 2015 since then google and many other companies use it. TF provides the tools needed for developers to build machine learning applications, it is also highly portable to a variety of devices and platforms which makes it one of the keys for building embedded AI.

Tiny machine learning (TinyML) is the most promising type of machine learning due to its capability to compress deep learning networks such CNNs into a 45x18mm microcontroller which brings the sense of embedded AI so when it is attached to a drone, it enables it to become a self-reliance system to detect human stranded in flooded areas without depending on the internet connectivity nor the need for powerful computing equipment.

1.2 Problem Statement

Current rescue operation lacks real-time monitoring due to the requirement of current technology to make inference using cloud and on-ground station inference

while delaying the rescue operation response. Furthermore, the current method used is far from being a cost-effective and mainly internet-connection dependency.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

- (a) To utilize transfer learning for a deep learning model to detect humans in SAR operation
- (b) To compare deep learning models for human detection for SAR operation
- (c) To evaluate and validate the system.

1.4 Research Scopes

The project begins with data extraction a total of 800 images from SeaDroneSee and SARD datasets to be labelled and used during the development of the deep learning models then research on transfer learning for object detection using TensorFlow version 2 and which will be developed using Python and then quantize to be deployed to embedded artificial intelligence device using TensorFlow Lite. Lastly, validation and comparison of both deep learning models, in this project single shot detector models are used namely MobileNet v2 and EfficientDet-D1 models.

1.5 Project Outlines

This project report contains five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the project, including the problem statement, the objective of the project, and the project specification. The second chapter is a literature review of the important components of the project topologies as well as the research gap from previous work done by other researchers. The discussion of the method used in this project is represented in the third chapter of this thesis. The outcome of the project work is represented in the fourth chapter before being concluded in the fifth chapter.

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