Hough Transform

lecturer: Jiří Matas, matas@cmp.felk.cvut.cz
authors: Jiří Matas, Ondřej Drbohlav
Czech Technical University, Faculty of Electrical Engineering
Department of Cybernetics, Center for Machine Perception

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Why HT and not Recognition with Local Features?

Strengths:
- applicable to many objects (e.g. in image stitching)
- is real-time
- scales well to very large problems (retrieval of millions of images)
- handles occlusion well
- insensitive to a broad class of image transformations

Weaknesses:
- applicable to recognition of specific objects (no categorization)
- applicable only to objects with distinguished local features
Why HT and not the Scanning Window (Viola-Jones) Method?

Strengths:
- applicable to many classes of objects
- not restricted to specific objects
- often real-time

Weaknesses:
- extension to a large number of classes not straightforward (standard implementation: linear complexity in the number of classes)
- occlusion handling not easy
- full 3D recognition requires too many windows to be checked
- training time is potentially very long
Hough Transform

- A method for detecting geometric primitives based on evaluation of an objective function:

\[ J(\Omega_c) = \sum_{i=1}^{M} p(x_i, \Omega_c) \]

\( \Omega_c \in \mathcal{R}^N \) is the parameter space, \( x_i \) are tokens (image points of interest)

- Origin: Detection of straight lines

- Examples of \( \Omega_c \) for different geometric primitives:
  - Straight line: \( \Omega_c = (a, b) \in \mathcal{R}^2 \quad y - ax - b = 0 \)
  - Circle: \( \Omega_c = (x_c, y_c, r) \in \mathcal{R}^3 \quad (y - y_c)^2 + (x - x_c)^2 - r^2 = 0 \)

- Parameters evaluated on a grid
  - Discretization of \( \Omega_c \): \( \Omega = N_1 \times N_2 \times N_3 \times ... \)
Comparison: Template Matching and HT

- **Template Matching:**

  for all $\omega \in \Omega$

  $J(\omega) = 0$

  for all $x = (x, y) \in \text{Image}$ // for all $x_i \sim$ tokens

  if $\omega \in \Omega(x//x_i)$

  $J(\omega) = J(\omega) + p(x//x_i)$

  else

  /* nothing */

  - Complexity: $O(|\Omega| \times |P|)$

- **HT:** (basic idea: each “token” votes for all primitives it is consistent with)

  for all $x_i$

  find $\Omega(x_i)$

  $J(\omega) = J(\omega) + p(x_i)$

  - Complexity: $O(|\Omega(x_i)| \times |P|)$; $|\Omega(x_i)| \ll |\Omega|$
HT for Straight Lines: Parametrization (1)

- Line parametrization:
  \[ ax + by + c = 0, \quad (a \neq 0 \lor b \neq 0) \] (1)
  \((x, y)\) : point coordinates (2)
  \((a, b, c)\) : line parameters (3)

- There are 3 line parameters \((a, b, c)\) in this equation.

- The equation is homogeneous. Parameters \((a, b, c)\) and \((ka, kb, kc)\) \((k \neq 0)\) represent the same line. Thus, there are only 2 degrees of freedom (2 DOFs) as expected (orientation and shift).

- A 2-DOF representation:
  \[ x \cos \theta + y \sin \theta - r = 0, \quad (\theta \in [0, 2\pi[, \ r \geq 0), \quad \text{or} \] (4)

  that’s what we’ll use \(\rightarrow\) \(\theta \in [0, \pi[, \ r \in \mathbb{R})\) (5)
HT for Straight Lines: Parametrization (2)

\[ x \cos \theta + y \sin \theta = r, \quad (1) \]
\[ (\theta \in [0, \pi[, \ r \in \mathbb{R}) \]  

or,

\[ (x, y) \cdot (\cos \theta, \sin \theta) = r \quad (3) \]
\[ \theta \in [0, \pi[, \ r \in \mathbb{R}) \]  

Note: \( n = (\cos \theta, \sin \theta) \) (thus \( \|n\| = 1 \))
HT for Straight Lines (3)

A point $p$ votes for all lines it can be incident with.

Subset of lines incident with $p$

Corresponding line parameters
HT for Straight Lines (4)

A point \( p \) votes for all lines it can be incident with.

Image with a single point

Accumulator storing votes
HT for Straight Lines (5)

Multiple points; accumulating votes

Image with multiple points

Accumulated votes from all points
HT for Straight Lines (6)

Multiple points; accumulating votes

Line with maximum number of votes

Accumulator maximum

$(\theta, r) = (45 \text{deg}, 15)$
HT for Straight Lines (7)

1. Define the \textit{minimal} parametrization \((p, q)\) of the space of lines:
   - Most common: angle \(- distance from origin \((\theta, r)\)
   - Other options: tangent of angle \(- intercept \((a, b)\), nearest point to center, ...

2. Quantize the Hough space:
   - Identify the maximum and minimum values of \(a\) and \(b\), and the number of cells,

3. Create an accumulator array \(A(p,q)\); set all values to zero

4. (if gradient available) : For all edge points \((x_i, y_i)\) in the image
   - Use gradient direction
   - Compute \(a\) from the equation
   - Increment \(A(p,q)\) by one

   (if gradient not available): For all edge points \((x_i, y_i)\) in the image
   - Increment \(A(p,q)\) by one for all lines incident on \(x,y\)

5. For all cells in \(A(p,q)\)
   - Search for the maximum value of \(A(p,q)\)
   - Calculate the equation of the line

6. To reduce the effect of noise more than one element \((\text{elements in a neighborhood})\) in the accumulator array are increased
Besides the discussed representation:

- The form $y = a x + b$ has a singularity around $90^\circ$. Can be overcome by considering two cases, $y = a x + b$ and $x = a y + b$

Using gradient orientation

- Uses not only point but also orientation consistent with the edge orientation
- Variables: $P, \Omega, \phi : P \rightarrow (0, \pi)$
- In HT: for $\Omega(\mathbf{x}_i, \phi(\mathbf{x}_i))$
- Can be used by weighting the strength of the vote by: $|\phi - \psi|$
  
  $\psi$ ... line orientation, $\phi$ ... gradient orientation
Examples

- Hough transform for a square (left) and a circle (right)
Problem: Finding the true maximum
Hough Transform: Noisy Input

- Problem: Lots of spurious maxima
HT for different primitives (1)

Circles with known, fixed radius

Figure 5.29  Hough transform - example of circle detection. (a) Original image of a dark circle (known radius \( r \)) on a bright background, (b) for each dark pixel, a potential circle-center locus is defined by a circle with radius \( r \) and center at that pixel, (c) the frequency with which image pixels occur in the circle-center loci is determined; the highest-frequency pixel represents the center of the circle (marked by ●), (d) the Hough transform correctly detects the circle (marked by ●) in the presence of incomplete circle information and overlapping structures (see Figure 5.34 for a real-life example).
HT for different primitives (2)

Circles with unknown radius

\[(x - x_c)^2 + (y - y_c)^2 = r^2\]

\((x, y)\) : point coordinates

\((x_c, y_c)\) : circle centre

\(r\) : circle radius

The accumulator is 3-dimensional

Voting surface for a point at (0,0) and at (0, 40)
HT for multiple instances

1. \( p_1 = HT(P, \Omega) \): strongest result of HT

2. Set \( P_1 = P \setminus p_1 \)

3. Unvote

4. \( p_2 = HT(P_1, \Omega) \)

5. Cont. to get as many instances as required

- Greedy
- Sequential
Hough Transform Problems

1. Search space (accumulator size) gets prohibitively large easily
   - Line segments: $\theta, \rho, t_1, t_2$
   - Circular arc: $r, c_x, c_y, t_1, t_2$

2. Cost function must be additive.

3. Greedy assignment rule of a token to primitive

4. No global objective function for multiple primitives
   (global optimization for one primitive only)
When is the Hough transform useful?

- Textbooks often imply that it is useful mostly for finding lines
  - In fact, it can be very effective for recognizing arbitrary shapes or objects (Generalized HT)

- The key to efficiency is to have each feature (token) determine as many parameters as possible
  - For example, lines can be detected much more efficiently from small edge elements (or points with local gradients) than from just points
  - For object recognition, each token should predict location, scale, and orientation (4D array)

- Bottom line: The Hough transform can extract feature groupings from clutter in linear time!
Generalized Hough Transform [Ballard81]

- Generalization for an arbitrary contour or shape
  - Choose reference point for the contour (e.g. center)
  - For each point on the contour remember where it is located w.r.t. to the reference point
  - Remember radius $r$ and angle $\phi$ relative to the contour tangent
  - Recognition: whenever you find a contour point, calculate the tangent angle and ‘vote’ for all possible reference points

- Instead of reference point, can also vote for transformation
  $\Rightarrow$ The same idea can be used with local features!
Gen. Hough Transform with Local Features

- For every feature, store possible “occurrences”

For new image, let the matched features vote for possible object positions

- Object identity
- Pose
- Relative position
Finding Consistent Configurations

- Global spatial models
  - Generalized Hough Transform [Lowe99]
  - RANSAC [Obdrzalek02, Chum05, Nister06]
  - Basic assumption: object is planar

- Assumption is often justified in practice
  - Valid for many structures on buildings
  - Sufficient for small viewpoint variations on 3D objects
3D Object Recognition

- Gen. HT for Recognition
  - Typically only 3 feature matches needed for recognition
  - Extra matches provide robustness
  - Affine model can be used for planar objects

Slide credit: David Lowe

[Lowe99]
Comparison

Gen. Hough Transform

- Advantages
  - Very effective for recognizing arbitrary shapes or objects
  - Can handle high percentage of outliers (>95%)
  - Extracts groupings from clutter in linear time

- Disadvantages
  - Quantization issues
  - Only practical for small number of dimensions (up to 4)

- Improvements available
  - Probabilistic Extensions
  - Continuous Voting Space

RANSAC

- Advantages
  - General method suited to large range of problems
  - Easy to implement
  - Independent of number of dimensions

- Disadvantages
  - Only handles moderate number of outliers (<50%)

- Many variants available, e.g.
  - PROSAC: Progressive RANSAC [Chum05]
  - Preemptive RANSAC [Nister05]
RHT = Randomized Hough Transform [Xu93]

In: \( E = \{e_i\}, m(\Omega, e) = 0 \)

Out: \( \Omega_{S_1}, \Omega_{S_2}, \ldots, \Omega_{S_N} \)

Repeat:

I. Hypothesis
   1. Select random \( M \) feature points \( e_{k_1}, \ldots, e_{k_M} \)
   2. Compute \( \Omega_k : m(\Omega_k, e_{k_j}) = 0, j = 1, \ldots, M \)

II. Pre-Verification
   3. Add 1 to accumulator \( \Omega_k \)
   4. If (accumulator(\( \Omega_k \)) > T_1) goto III.
      Else goto I.

III. Verification
   5. Find support for \( \Omega_k \)
   6. If (support(\( \Omega_k \)) > T_2) output \( \Omega_k \)
   7. Reset accumulator

Proc v Out Omega-S-N, a v algoritmu Omega-N
Probabilistic Hough Transform [Kiryati et al. 91]

Idea: Evaluate \( \sum_{i=1}^{N} p(x_i, \Omega) \) using only a fraction \( f = \frac{k_{\text{MAX}}}{N} \) of \( N \) points \( x_i \)

Algorithm:
1. Select \( k_{\text{MAX}} \) points at random
2. Perform standard HT

Analysis:
- Selection of \( k_{\text{MAX}} \) is incorrect
  \( \Rightarrow \) the number \( L \) of selected points from \( L_N \) points of a line in a random subset of \( k_{\text{MAX}} \) points is governed by hypergeometric, not binomial distance

\[
P(L_N) = \frac{\binom{L}{L_N} \binom{N-L}{k_{\text{MAX}}-L_N}}{\binom{N}{k_{\text{MAX}}}}
\]

\[
\mu = \bar{N} \quad \sigma^2 = k_{\text{MAX}} \frac{L_N(N-L_N)}{N^2} \left( 1 - \frac{k_{\text{MAX}}-1}{N-1} \right)
\]
PHT = Monte Carlo Evaluation of \( \sum_{i=1}^{N} p(x_i, \Omega) \)

Idea:

1. Evaluate \( \sum_{i=1}^{N} p(x_i, \Omega) \) using only a fraction \( f = \frac{k_{\text{MAX}}}{N} \) of \( N \) points \( x_i \)

2. Apply standard MC analysis to find \( k_{\text{MAX}} \) in PHT to guarantee
   \[ P\{\text{false positive}\} \text{ and } P\{\text{false negative}\} < \epsilon \]

Algorithm:

1. Select a random point
2. Vote and return it
3. Finish if \( k_{\text{MAX}} \) reached
CHT = Cascaded Hough Transform [Tuytelaars et al. 97]

- Finds structures at different hierarchical levels by iterating one kind of HT (fixed points, fixed lines, lines of fixed points, pencils of fixed lines)
- Uses duality of lines and points in image and parameter spaces
- Algorithm:

1. First HT: detects lines in the image and keeps dominant peaks in the parameter space
2. Second HT: detects lines of collinear peaks in parameter space and keeps vertices where several straight lines in the original image intersect (vanishing points)
3. Third HT: applied to the peaks of thto detect collinear vertices (vanishing lines)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>layer</th>
<th>meaning of detected features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>layer 0</td>
<td>(the original image)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>layer 1</td>
<td>points ~ lines lines ~ convergent lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>layer 2</td>
<td>points ~ intersection points lines ~ collinear intersection points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>layer 3</td>
<td>points ~ lines of intersection points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHT: Experiments

Lines belonging to one of the three detected vanishing points

Aerial image of buildings and streets (left), the corresponding edges (right)
Thank you for your attention.