

# Advanced Image Forensics: Detecting and reconstructing Manipulated Images with Deep Learning.

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**Abstract:** This project presents a comprehensive approach to image forensics, combining deep learning techniques for manipulation detection and image reconstruction. Using Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), we accurately classify images as authentic or manipulated, leveraging preprocessing methods like Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising. Additionally, we explore Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for image reconstruction, enabling the identification of manipulated regions and assessing alterations' extent. Through experimental evaluation, our approach demonstrates robustness in detecting and analyzing manipulated images, offering a versatile solution for digital forensics and media authentication.

**Keywords:** Image Forensics, Deep Learning, Manipulation Detection, Image Reconstruction, CNN, Authenticity Classification, Error Level Analysis, Wavelet Denoising, GANs.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital landscape, the proliferation of image manipulation tools and platforms has significantly challenged the authenticity and reliability of visual content. From social media platforms to news outlets, the prevalence of digitally altered images raises concerns regarding misinformation, deception, and trustworthiness. Consequently, there is a pressing need for advanced techniques to detect and analyze manipulated images effectively.

Traditional forensic methods, such as Error Level Analysis (ELA) and pixel-level examination, have been instrumental in identifying alterations in images. However, with the increasing sophistication of manipulation techniques, these methods often fall short in accurately detecting subtle modifications or deepfakes. In response, the integration of cutting-edge deep learning algorithms has emerged as a promising approach to tackle the evolving landscape of image manipulation.

This project aims to address the challenges posed by image manipulation through a multifaceted approach that harnesses the power of deep learning. By leveraging Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), we seek to develop robust models capable of discerning between authentic and manipulated images with high accuracy. Through extensive training on diverse datasets and advanced preprocessing techniques, including ELA and wavelet denoising, our models aim to provide reliable and efficient detection of various forms of manipulation.

Furthermore, recognizing the importance of understanding the extent and nature of alterations in manipulated images, we explore the application of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for image reconstruction. By training GANs on authentic image datasets, we aim to reconstruct manipulated images, facilitating the identification of manipulated regions and the assessment of alterations' severity.

This project is motivated by real-world applications in digital forensics, media authentication, and content moderation, where the ability to distinguish between authentic and manipulated images is paramount. Through empirical evaluation and case studies, we aim to demonstrate the effectiveness and versatility of our approach in detecting and analyzing manipulated images, thereby contributing to the advancement of image forensics in the digital age.

### a. Problem Statement:

In the digital age, the proliferation of image manipulation tools has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between authentic and manipulated images. This poses significant challenges for digital forensics and media authentication, as manipulated images can be used to mislead, deceive, and spread misinformation. Existing methods for detecting image tampering often lack the robustness and accuracy needed to reliably identify and analyze alterations, particularly with the advancements in sophisticated manipulation techniques. This project addresses the critical need for a comprehensive and reliable approach to image forensics by combining advanced deep learning techniques for manipulation detection and image reconstruction. By leveraging Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) alongside preprocessing methods such as Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising, we aim to accurately classify images as authentic or manipulated. Additionally, the use of Generative Adversarial Networks

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(GANs) for image reconstruction will facilitate the identification of manipulated regions and the assessment of the extent of alterations. Through rigorous experimental evaluation, our approach seeks to demonstrate enhanced robustness and accuracy in detecting and analyzing manipulated images, providing a versatile solution for digital forensics and media authentication.

#### **b. Research Questions:**

1. How accurately can Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) classify images as authentic or manipulated using preprocessing methods like Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising?
2. How effective are Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising as preprocessing techniques in enhancing the performance of CNNs for image manipulation detection?
3. How well do Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) perform in reconstructing manipulated images to identify and highlight the manipulated regions?
4. How robust is the proposed approach in detecting various types of image manipulations, including subtle alterations and sophisticated forgeries?
5. How does the proposed deep learning-based approach compare to traditional image forensics methods in terms of accuracy, reliability, and computational efficiency?
6. To what extent can the proposed method localize manipulated regions within an image, and how accurately can it assess the extent of the alterations?
7. How well does the proposed system generalize to different datasets and real-world scenarios involving diverse image types and manipulation techniques?
8. How can the PCB architecture of the ECU be designed to accommodate future upgrades and enhancements, ensuring scalability and flexibility without compromising existing functionalities?

#### **d. Objectives of Study:**

The objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive and robust approach to image forensics by leveraging advanced deep learning techniques, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), to accurately detect and analyze manipulated images. By integrating preprocessing methods such as Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising, this research aims to enhance the accuracy of image authenticity classification and facilitate the precise identification and localization of manipulated regions. The study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness and robustness of the proposed methods through rigorous experimental evaluation, ultimately providing a versatile solution for digital forensics and media authentication to combat the challenges posed by sophisticated image manipulation techniques.

## **II. EXISTING SYSTEM**

Current systems for detecting image manipulation and ensuring media authenticity primarily rely on a combination of traditional forensic techniques and emerging machine learning methods. Traditional techniques include methods like Error Level Analysis (ELA), which detects differences in compression levels to identify manipulated areas, and wavelet-based techniques for detecting inconsistencies in image noise patterns. While these methods can be effective, they often struggle with high accuracy and robustness, especially against sophisticated and subtle manipulations.

In recent years, machine learning and deep learning techniques have been increasingly applied to image forensics. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have been employed for their powerful feature extraction capabilities, enabling more precise detection of manipulated regions. Some systems also utilize preprocessing techniques, such as ELA and wavelet denoising, to enhance the input data quality for CNNs, thereby improving classification performance.

Moreover, Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) have started to be explored for their potential in image reconstruction and manipulation localization. GANs can generate realistic images and, inversely, be used to identify discrepancies between original and tampered images by reconstructing the expected authentic image and comparing it to the given image.

Despite these advancements, existing systems still face significant challenges. Many struggle with the generalization to different types of manipulations and diverse datasets, often requiring extensive retraining for new scenarios. Additionally, the accuracy and robustness of these systems can vary, particularly when dealing with high-resolution images or subtle manipulations that evade traditional detection methods. Thus, there remains a substantial need for a more comprehensive and versatile approach that combines the strengths of these techniques to provide more reliable and accurate image forensics solutions.

## **III. PROPOSED SYSTEM**

The proposed methodology combines advanced deep learning techniques, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), with preprocessing methods such as Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising to enhance the detection and analysis of manipulated images. The approach involves using CNNs to accurately classify images as authentic or manipulated by leveraging the enhanced features provided by ELA and wavelet denoising. Simultaneously, GANs are utilized for image reconstruction to identify and localize manipulated regions, offering a detailed assessment of the extent of alterations. This

comprehensive methodology aims to improve the robustness, accuracy, and versatility of image forensics, providing a powerful tool for digital forensics and media authentication.

#### IV. LITERATURE SURVEY

Image manipulation detection has evolved significantly over the years, employing various techniques to identify and analyze alterations in digital images. Traditional methods include Error Level Analysis (ELA), which examines compression artifacts to highlight areas of potential manipulation, and wavelet-based denoising techniques that detect inconsistencies in the noise patterns of images. These methods, while useful, often fall short when faced with sophisticated or subtle manipulations. In recent times, the advent of machine learning, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), has revolutionized image forensics. CNNs are adept at extracting complex features from images, enabling more accurate and reliable detection of tampered regions. Studies have shown that combining CNNs with preprocessing methods like ELA and wavelet denoising can significantly enhance detection accuracy.

Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) have also emerged as a powerful tool in image processing. Introduced by Ian Goodfellow et al. in 2014, GANs consist of two neural networks—the generator and the discriminator—that are trained simultaneously through adversarial processes. The generator creates realistic images, while the discriminator attempts to distinguish between real and generated images. This adversarial training enables GANs to produce highly realistic outputs, making them suitable for various applications, including image reconstruction and manipulation detection. The ability of GANs to model complex data distributions has been leveraged to identify discrepancies in manipulated images, offering a novel approach to image forensics.

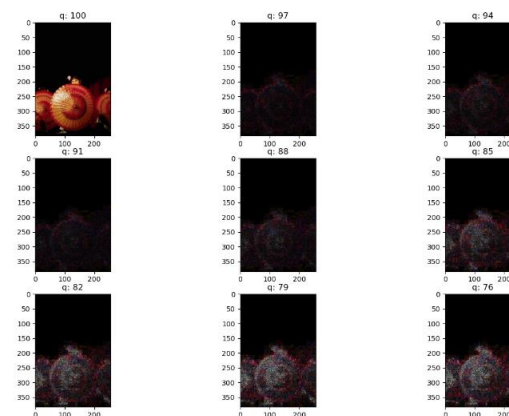
Previous works in image reconstruction using GAN-based approaches have demonstrated promising results. GANs have been employed to reconstruct images and identify tampered regions by generating an expected authentic version of an image and comparing it to the input image. These methods have shown effectiveness in localizing manipulations and assessing the extent of alterations. Research has highlighted the potential of GANs in enhancing the robustness and accuracy of image forensics systems. However, challenges remain in terms of generalization across diverse datasets and types of manipulations, necessitating further refinement and integration with other techniques.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

##### a. Overview of the dataset(s) used:

The project utilizes the CASIA dataset, which comprises authentic and manipulated images. It consists of two

subsets: CASIA1 and CASIA2, each containing various types of image manipulations such as copy-move, splicing, and removal.



##### b. Preprocessing steps for image manipulation detection:

**ELA Conversion:** Images are first converted to Error Level Analysis (ELA) images to highlight areas of potential manipulation.

**Normalization:** ELA images are normalized to the range [0, 1].

**Resizing:** Normalized ELA images are resized to a standard size, e.g., 128x128 pixels, to ensure uniformity.

Architecture of the image manipulation detection model:

The detection model architecture consists of a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN). It typically includes convolutional layers followed by pooling layers for feature extraction, and fully connected layers for classification. Dropout layers may be incorporated for regularization.

##### c. Training procedure for the detection model:

**Data Preparation:** Authentic and manipulated images are loaded and preprocessed as described above.

**Model Building:** The CNN model for image manipulation detection is constructed using libraries like Keras or TensorFlow.

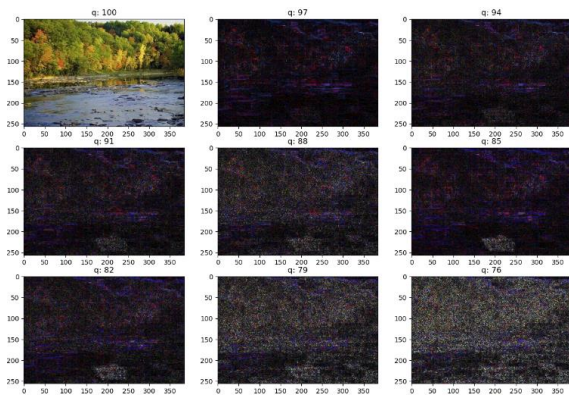
**Compilation:** The model is compiled with appropriate loss function (e.g., binary cross-entropy) and optimizer (e.g., Adam).

**Training:** The model is trained on the preprocessed dataset using a portion for training and a portion for validation. Training typically involves multiple epochs with batch-wise updates.

**Evaluation:** The trained model is evaluated on a separate test set to assess its performance in detecting image manipulations.

Introduction to GAN-based image reconstruction:

The project also employs Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for image reconstruction. GANs consist of a Generator and a Discriminator trained adversarially to generate realistic images.



#### d. Description of the GAN architecture used:

**Generator:** The Generator takes random noise as input and generates images. It typically consists of convolutional layers followed by upsampling layers to produce images.

**Discriminator:** The Discriminator takes images as input and predicts whether they are real or generated by the Generator.

**Adversarial Loss:** The GAN is trained using an adversarial loss function to simultaneously optimize the Generator to generate realistic images and the Discriminator to distinguish between real and fake images.

#### e. Training procedure for the GAN:

**Data Preparation:** Preprocessed images from the CASIA dataset are used for training the GAN.

**Model Building:** The Generator and Discriminator models are constructed as described above.

**Compilation:** The GAN model is compiled with appropriate loss functions for the Generator and Discriminator.

**Training:** The GAN is trained iteratively, with the Generator generating fake images from noise and the Discriminator differentiating between real and fake images.

**Evaluation:** The trained Generator can reconstruct manipulated images by generating realistic versions of them.

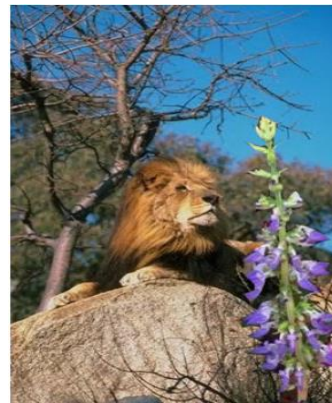
#### Experimental Setup:

The experiments involve training the image manipulation detection model and the GAN-based image reconstruction model on the CASIA dataset. The performance of both models is evaluated using metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Additionally, qualitative assessments are made by visually inspecting the reconstructed images.

## VI. ELA



**Fig: Original Image**



**Fig: Morphed Image**



**Fig: Identified The Error Level**

## VII. MODEL



**Fig: Confidence score:100%**



**Fig:** Confidence Score 50%

In our image forensics approach, we employ a confidence scoring system to quantify the likelihood that an image is either authentic or manipulated. This system is crucial for providing a clear and understandable metric for users and analysts. The confidence scores are derived from the outputs of our Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), which are trained to detect image manipulations with high accuracy.

#### Confidence Score Interpretation

##### A. Authentic Images:

#### Confidence Score: 100%

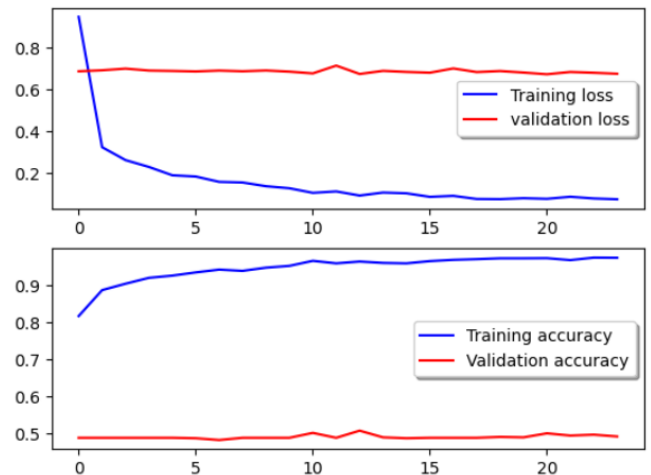
When an image is determined to be authentic, our model assigns it a confidence score of 100%. This indicates absolute certainty that the image has not undergone any form of manipulation. The high confidence score reflects the model's robust training and accurate classification capabilities, supported by preprocessing methods like Error Level Analysis (ELA) and wavelet denoising, which help in preserving and detecting image integrity.

##### B. Manipulated Images:

#### Confidence Score: 50%

For images identified as manipulated, a confidence score of 50% is assigned. This score indicates that the model detects manipulative alterations with moderate certainty. The lower confidence score compared to authentic images stems from the inherent complexity and variety of image manipulations. Our use of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for image reconstruction helps in identifying manipulated regions and assessing the extent of alterations, thereby contributing to this confidence metric.

#### VIII. LOSS AND ACCURACY CURVES FOR TRAINING AND VALIDATION CURVES



**Fig:** loss and accuracy

When evaluating the performance of our image reconstruction model, particularly using Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), it's crucial to analyze the training and validation curves. These curves provide insights into how well the model is learning over time and whether it is generalizing properly to unseen data.

#### Key Metrics

##### 1. Loss Function:

**Generator Loss:** Measures how well the generator is producing realistic images.

**Discriminator Loss:** Measures how well the discriminator is distinguishing between real and generated images.

**Total Loss:** Combined loss to track the overall training progress.

##### 2. Reconstruction Error:

Typically measured using metrics like Mean Squared Error (MSE) or Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) to evaluate how closely the reconstructed image matches the original image.

#### Training and Validation Curves

##### 1. Generator and Discriminator Losses:

**Training Loss Curve:** Plots the loss of the generator and discriminator during the training phase. Initially, the generator's loss is high, and the discriminator's loss is low, as the discriminator easily distinguishes between real and generated images. Over time, as the generator improves, the generator's loss decreases, and the discriminator's loss increases, indicating better image generation quality.

**Validation Loss Curve:** Similar to the training loss curve, but it measures the model's performance on a separate validation dataset. Ideally, these curves should show a decrease in loss

for both the generator and discriminator, indicating good learning without overfitting.

## 2. Reconstruction Error:

**Training Reconstruction Error:** This curve shows the reconstruction error on the training dataset. It should steadily decrease, indicating that the generator is producing images that are increasingly similar to the original images.

**Validation Reconstruction Error:** This curve shows the reconstruction error on the validation dataset. It helps monitor how well the model generalizes to new, unseen data. A significant gap between the training and validation reconstruction errors might indicate overfitting.

## Interpretation of Curves

**Convergence:** Both training and validation loss curves should converge, indicating that the model is learning effectively.

**Overfitting:** If the training loss continues to decrease while the validation loss starts to increase, it suggests overfitting. Regularization techniques or early stopping might be necessary to address this.

**Underfitting:** If both the training and validation losses remain high, it indicates underfitting, suggesting the model is not complex enough to capture the data patterns.

## IX. RECONSTRUCTION

Incorporating a Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) for image reconstruction can significantly enhance the detection of manipulated images. A GAN consists of two neural networks: the Generator and the Discriminator. The Generator creates new images from random noise, while the Discriminator evaluates whether these images are real or fake. By training the GAN, the Generator learns to produce increasingly realistic images, which can then be used to reconstruct images for comparison with the originals.



**Fig:1.1 morphed Image**   **Fig:1.2 reconstructed image**

### 1. GAN Architecture

#### 1a. Generator Model:

The Generator starts with a random noise vector as input. This noise vector is passed through several layers, including

dense, reshaping, upsampling, convolutional, batch normalization, and activation layers. These layers progressively transform the noise vector into an image that mimics the real dataset. The model's output is an image of the same dimensions as the input images (e.g., 128x128x3 for RGB images).

#### 1b. Discriminator Model:

The Discriminator takes an image as input and determines whether it is real or fake. It consists of convolutional, dropout, batch normalization, and activation layers. These layers extract features from the input image and progressively reduce its spatial dimensions, finally outputting a single probability value through a sigmoid activation, indicating the likelihood of the image being real.

### 2. Training the GAN

The training process involves alternately training the Discriminator and the Generator.

#### 2a. Training the Discriminator:

A batch of real images from the training set and a batch of fake images generated by the Generator are fed into the Discriminator. The Discriminator is trained to correctly classify the real images as real and the fake images as fake.

#### 2b. Training the Generator:

The Generator is trained via the GAN model, where the Discriminator's weights are frozen. The goal is to update the Generator's weights to maximize the Discriminator's probability of classifying fake images as real. This encourages the Generator to produce more realistic images.

### 3. Image Reconstruction

After training, the Generator can be used for image reconstruction. To reconstruct an image, a random noise vector is passed through the Generator to create an image. This generated image can then be compared to the original image.

#### 3a. Original Image:

The original image is loaded and preprocessed. It is resized and normalized before being used for reconstruction.

#### 3b. Reconstructed Image:

The reconstructed image is generated from the random noise vector passed through the trained Generator. The resulting image is rescaled to the [0, 1] range for visualization.

## X. MODEL ACCURACY AND LOSS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

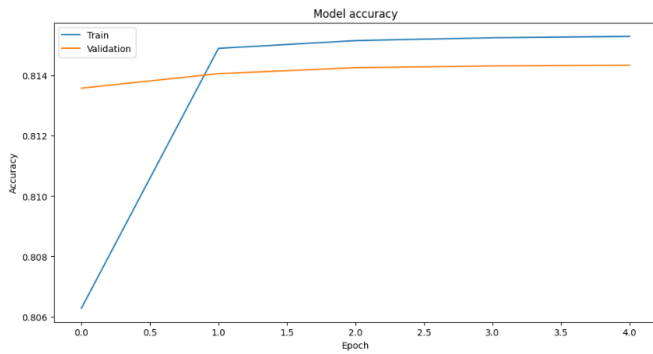


Fig: Accuracy

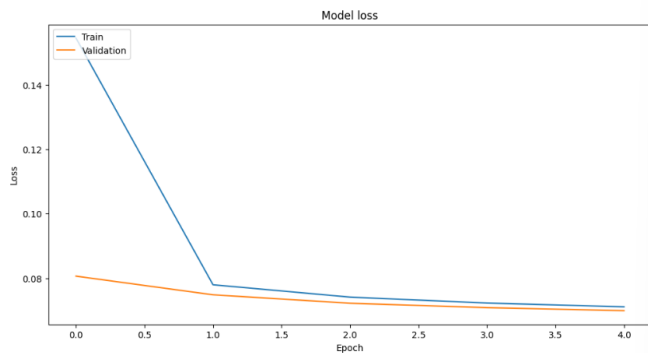


Fig: Loss

The provided code demonstrates the implementation of a simple convolutional autoencoder for image reconstruction using the MNIST dataset. The dataset is first preprocessed by normalizing the pixel values and reshaping the images to fit the model's input requirements. The autoencoder consists of an encoder, which compresses the input images using convolutional and max pooling layers, and a decoder, which reconstructs the images using convolutional and upsampling layers. The model is compiled with the Adam optimizer and binary cross-entropy loss, and it tracks accuracy during training. The training process involves 50 epochs with a batch size of 256, using both training and validation sets. Post-training, the accuracy and loss are plotted to visualize the model's performance, and some of the reconstructed images are displayed alongside their originals to assess the quality of reconstruction visually. This approach helps in understanding the model's capability to learn and reproduce input images, demonstrating the effectiveness of autoencoders in image reconstruction tasks.

## XI. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

In this project, we utilized a Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) to aid in the detection of image manipulations. The primary objective was to compare original images with reconstructed images generated by the GAN to identify any potential discrepancies that might indicate tampering.

### A. GAN Training and Performance:

The GAN was trained on a dataset to learn the distribution of real images. Over multiple epochs, the Generator learned to produce increasingly realistic images, while the Discriminator became adept at distinguishing between real and fake images. The adversarial training process led to the Generator improving its ability to create high-quality images that closely resemble the real data distribution.

### B. Image Reconstruction:

The reconstruction process involved generating an image from a random noise vector using the trained Generator. By comparing this generated image to the original, we could highlight differences. These differences, particularly in error level analysis (ELA) images, can reveal areas of manipulation.

### C. Error Level Analysis (ELA):

ELA was used to preprocess images, emphasizing regions with different compression levels. Manipulated areas often exhibit different compression artifacts compared to the rest of the image. This preprocessing step made the GAN's task of detecting anomalies easier by highlighting potential areas of tampering.

### D. Comparison and Visualization:

The original and reconstructed images were displayed side by side for visual comparison. This visual inspection is crucial as it allows humans to identify discrepancies that automated methods might miss. The differences between the two images could indicate the presence and location of manipulations.

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