



1 Review

A review of video object detection: datasets, metrics and methods

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13 Abstract: Although there are well established object detection methods based on static images, their 14 application to video data on a frame by frame basis faces two shortcomings: (i) lack of computational 15 efficiency due to redundancy across image frames or by not using temporal and spatial correlation 16 of features across image frames, and (ii) lack of robustness to real-world conditions such as motion 17 blur and occlusion. Since the introduction of the challenge ImageNet Large Scale Visual Recognition 18 Challenge (ILSVRC) in 2015, a growing number of methods have appeared in the literature on video 19 object detection, many of which have utilized deep learning models. The aim of this paper is to 20 provide a review of these papers on video object detection. An overview of the existing datasets for 21 video object detection together with commonly used evaluation metrics is first presented. Video 22 object detection methods are then categorized and a description of each of them is stated. Two 23 comparison tables are provided to see their differences in terms of both accuracy and computational 24 efficiency. Finally, some future trends in video object detection to address the challenges involved 25 are noted.

Keywords: video object detection; review of video object detection; deep learning-based video
 object detection

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29 1. Introduction

Wideo object detection involves detecting objects using video data as compared to conventional object detection using static images. Two applications that have played a major role in the growth of video object detection are autonomous driving [1, 2] and video surveillance [3, 4]. In 2015, video object detection became a new task of the ImageNet Large Scale Visual Recognition Challenge (ILSVRC2015) [5]. With the help of ILSVRC2015, studies in video object detection have further increased.

Earlier attempts in video object detection involved performing object detection on each image frame. In general, object detection approaches can be grouped into two major categories: (1) one-stage detectors and (2) two-stage detectors. One-stage detectors (e.g., [6-12]) are often more computationally efficient than two-stage detectors (e.g., [13-21]). However, two-stage detectors are shown to produce higher accuracies compared to one-stage detectors.

However, using object detection on each image frame does not take into consideration the following attributes in video data: (1) Since there exist both spatial and temporal correlations between image frames, there are feature extraction redundancies between adjacent frames. Detecting features in each frame leads to computational inefficiency. (2) In a long video stream, some frames may have 45 poor quality due to motion blur, video defocus, occlusion, and pose changes [22]. Detecting objects 46 from poor quality frames leads to low accuracies. Video object detection approaches attempt to 47 address the above challenges. Some approaches make use of the spatial-temporal information to 48 improve accuracy, such as fusing features on different levels, e.g. [22-25]. Some other approaches 49 focus on reducing information redundancy and improving detection efficiency, e.g. [26-28].

50 Initially, video object detection approaches relied on handcrafted features, e.g. [29-42]. With the 51 rapid development of deep learning and convolutional neural networks, deep learning models have 52 shown to be more effective than conventional approaches for various tasks in computer vision [43-53 50], speech processing [51-55], and multi-modality signal processing [56-61]. A number of deep 54 learning-based video object detection approaches were developed after the ILSVRC2015 challenge. 55 These approaches can be divided into flow based [22, 27, 28, 62-64], LSTM based [65-68], attention 56 based [25, 69-72], tracking based [26, 73-77] and other methods [36, 78-85]. A review of these 57 approaches is provided in this paper.

58 Section 2 covers the existing datasets and evaluation metrics for video object detection. Then, in 59 Section 3, the existing video object detection approaches are described. The accuracy and processing 60 time of these approaches are compared in Section 4. Section 5 mentions the future trends or needs 61 related to video object detection. Finally, the conclusion is stated in Section 6.

62 2. Datasets and Evaluation Metrics

63 2.1. *Datasets*

The most commonly used dataset is the ImageNet VID dataset [5], which is a prevalent benchmark for video object detection. The dataset is split into a training set and a validation set, containing 3862 video snippets and 555 video snippets, respectively. The video streams are annotated on each frame at the frame rate of 25 or 30 fps. In addition, this dataset contains 30 object categories, which are a subset of the categories in the ImageNet DET dataset [86].

69 In the ImageNet VID dataset, the number of objects in each frame is small compared with the 70 datasets used for static image object detection such as COCO [87]. Though the ImageNet VID dataset 71 is widely used, it has limitations in fully reflecting the effect of various video object detection methods. 72 In [88], a large-scale dataset named YouTube-BoundingBoxes (YT-BB) was provided which is human-73 annotated at one frame per second on video snippets from YouTube with high accuracy classification 74 labels and tight bounding boxes. YT-BB contains approximately 380,000 video segments with 5.6 75 million bounding boxes of 23 object categories which is a subset of the COCO label set. However, the 76 dataset contains only 23 object categories and the image quality is relatively low due to its collection 77 by hand-held mobile phones.

In 2018, a dataset named EPIC KITCHENS was provided in [89], which consists of 32 different kitchens in 4 cities with 11,500,000 frames containing 454,158 bounding boxes spanning 290 classes. However, its kitchen scenario poses limitation for performing generic video object detection. Also, there exist the following other datasets that reflect specific applications: the DAVIS dataset [90] for object segmentation, CDnet2014 [91] for moving object detection, VOT [92] and MOT [93] for object tracking. In addition, some works based on semi-supervised or unsupervised methods have been considered in [94-97].

For video object detection with classification labels and tight bounding boxes annotation, currently there exists no public domain dataset offering dense annotations for various complex scenes. To enable the advancement of video object detection, more effort is thus needed to establish comprehensive datasets.

89 2.2. Evaluation Metrics

The metric mean Average Precision (mAP) is extensively used in conventional object detection,
 which provides a performance evaluation in terms of regression and classification accuracies [9-15,

92 17]. For video object detection, mAP is also directly used as an evaluation metric in [22, 25, 28, 67, 69].

93 Based on the object speed, it is labeled as mAP (slow), mAP (medium), and mAP (fast) [22]. This is

- 94 done using the average score of IoU (Intersection over Union) of a current frame and 10 frames ahead 95 and past as follows: slow (score > 0.9), medium (score \in [0.7, 0.9]), and fast (score < 0.7).
- 96 In [98], it was pointed out that performance cannot be sufficiently evaluated using only Average
- 97 Precision (AP) since the temporal nature of video snippets do not get captured by it. In the same 98 paper, a new metric named Average Delay (AD) was introduced based on the number of frames
- 99 taken to detect an object starting from the frame it first appears. A subset of the ImageNet VID dataset,
- 100 named ImageNet VIDT, was considered to verify the effectiveness of AD. It was reported that most
- 101 methods having higher ADs still had good APs, indicating that AP was not sufficient to reflect the
- 102 temporal characteristics of video object detectors.

103 3. Video Object Detection Methods

104 For video object detection, in order to make full use of the video characteristics, different 105 methods are considered to capture the temporal-spatial relationship. Some papers have considered 106

- the traditional methods [29-42]. These papers heavily rely on the manual design leading to the 107 shortcomings of low accuracy and lack of robustness to noise sources. More recently, deep learning
- 108 solutions have attempted to overcome these shortcomings. As shown in Figure 1, based on the
- 109 utilization of the temporal information and the aggregation of features extracted from video snippets,
- 110
- video object detectors can be divided into flow based [22, 27, 28, 62-64], LSTM based [65-68], attention 111 based [25, 69-72], tracking based [26, 73-77] and other methods [36, 78-85]. These methods are
- 112 described in more detail below.



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- 114

Figure 1. Categories of video object detection methods.

115 3.1. Flow Based

116 Flow based methods use optical flow in two ways. In order to save computation, in the first way 117 as discussed in [28] (DFF), optical flow is used to propagate features from key frames to non-key 118 frames. In the second way, as discussed in [22] (FGFA), optical flow is used to make use of the 119 temporal-spatial information between adjacent frames to enhance the features of each frame. In the 120 second way, higher detection accuracies but lower speeds are reported. As a result, attempts were

121 made to combine both of these ways in [63] (Impression Network) and [64] (THP). To obtain the 122 difference between adjacent frames and utilize the temporal-spatial information at the pixel level, an 123 optical flow algorithm was proposed in [29]. In [99], the optical flow estimation was achieved by 124 using the deep learning model of FlowNet.

125 For video object detection, it is challenging to apply the state-of-the-art object detection 126 approaches for still images directly to each image frame in video data for the reasons stated earlier. 127 Therefore, based on FlowNet, the DFF method was proposed in [28] to address these shortcomings: 128 (i) computation time of feature map extraction for each frame in video, (ii) similarity of features 129 obtained on two adjacent frames, (iii) propagation of feature maps from one frame to another. In [28], 130 a convolutional neural sub-network, ResNet-101, was employed to extract the feature map on sparse 131 key frames. Features on non-key frames were obtained by warping the feature map on key frames 132 with the flow field generated by FlowNet [99] instead of getting extracted by ResNet-101. The 133 framework is shown in Figure 2. This method accelerates the object detection on non-key frames. On 134 the ImageNet VID dataset [5], DFF achieved an accuracy of 73.1% mAP with 20 fps while the baseline 135 accuracy on a single frame was 73.9% with 4 fps. This method significantly advanced the practical 136 aspect of video object detection.



137 138

Figure 2. DFF framework [28].

139 In [22], a flow guided feature aggregation (FGFA) method was proposed to improve the 140 detection accuracy due to motion blur, rare poses, video defocus, etc. Feature maps were extracted 141 on each frame in video using ResNet-101 [100]. In order to enhance the feature maps of a current 142 frame, the feature maps of its nearby frames were warped to the current frame according to the 143 motion information obtained by the optical flow network. The warped feature maps and extracted 144 feature maps on the current frame were then inputted into a small sub-network to obtain a new 145 embedding feature which was used for a similarity measure based on the cosine similarity metric 146 [101] to compute the weights. Next, the features were aggregated according to the weights. Finally, 147 the aggregated feature maps were inputted into a shallow detection specific sub-network to obtain 148 the final detection outcome on the current frame. The framework of FGFA is shown in Figure 3. Based 149 on the ImageNet VID dataset, FGFA achieved an accuracy of 76.3% mAP with 1.36 fps, which was 150 higher than DFF.







Figure 3. FGFA framework [22].

153 Although the feature fusion method of FGFA improved the detection accuracy, it considerably 154 increased the computation time. On the other hand, feature propagation methods showed improved 155 computational efficiency but at the expense of reduced detection accuracy. In 2017, a so-called 156 Impression Network [63] was developed to improve the performance in terms of both accuracy and 157 computational speed simultaneously. Inspired by the idea that humans do not forget the previous 158 frames when a new frame is observed, sparse key-frame features were aggregated with other key 159 frames to improve the detection accuracy. Feature maps of non-key frames were also obtained by a 160 feature propagation method similar to that in [28] with the assistant of a flow field. As a result, feature 161 propagation to obtain the features of the non-key frames improved the inference computation speed. 162 The feature aggregation method on the key frames used a small fully convolutional network to obtain 163 the weight maps on each localization, which was different from the method in [22]. Impression 164 Network achieved 75.5% mAP accuracy at 20 fps on the ImageNet VID dataset.

165 Besides Impression Network, in [64] another combination method (THP) was introduced. 166 Noting that all of the above methods utilized fixed interval key frames, this method introduced a 167 temporally-adaptive key frame scheduling to further improve the trade-off between speed and 168 accuracy. Fixed interval key frames pose difficulty to control the quality of key frames. With 169 temporally-adaptive key frame scheduling, the fixed interval key frames were adjusted in a dynamic 170 manner according to the proportion of points with poor optical flow quality. If it was greater than a 171 prescribed threshold T, it would indicate that a current frame had changed too much compared with 172 the previous key frame. The current frame was then chosen as the new key frame and the feature 173 maps were obtained from it.

According to the results reported in [64], the mAP accuracy was 78.6% with a runtime of 13.0 and 8.6 fps on the GPUs Titan X and K40, respectively. With a different T, the mAP slightly decreased to 77.8% at faster speeds (22.9 and 15.2 fps on Titan X and K40, respectively). Compared with the winning entry [102] of the ImageNet VID challenge 2017, which was based on feature propagation [28] and aggregation [22], an mAP of 76.8% at 15.4 fps was achieved on Titan X, and a better performance in terms of both the detection accuracy and speed was obtained in [64].

180 3.2. LSTM Based

181 In order to make full use of the temporal-spatial information, convolutional long short term 182 memory (LSTM [103]) was employed to process sequential data in [104] and select important 182 information for a long duration. The methods are stable to process sequential data in [104] and select important

183 information for a long duration. The methods reported in [65] and [66] are offline LSTM based

solutions which utilize all the frames in video. While the method in [67] is an online solution, it onlyuses the current and previous frames.

In [66], a light model was proposed, which was designed to work on mobile phones and embedded devices. This method integrated SSD [9] (an efficient object detector network) with the convolutional LSTM by applying image-based object detector to video object detection via a convolutional LSTM. The convolutional LSTM was a modified version of the traditional LSTM 190 encoding the temporal and spatial information.

191 Considering a video snippet as video frames V = {I₀, I₁, I₂, ... I_t}, the model is viewed as a function 192 $F(I_t, S_{t-1}) = (D_t, S_t)$, where D_t denotes the detection outcome of the video object detector and S_t 193 represents a vector of feature maps up to the video frame t. Each feature map of S_{t-1} is the state 194 input to the LSTM and S_t is the state output. The state unit S_t of LSTM contains the temporal 195 information. LSTM can combine the state unit with input features, adaptively adding the temporal 196 information to the input features, and updating the state unit at the same time. In [66], it was stated 197 that such a convolutional LSTM layer could be added to any layer of the original object detector to 198 refine the input features of the next layer. An LSTM layer could be placed immediately after any 199 feature map. Placing the LSTM earlier would lead to larger input volumes and much higher 200 computational cost. In [66], the convolutional LSTM was placed only after the Conv13 layer which 201 was proved to be most effective through experimental analysis. This method was evaluated on the 202 ImageNet VID 2015 dataset [5] and achieved a good performance in terms of the model size and 203 computational efficiency (15 fps on a mobile CPU) with accuracy comparable to those more 204 computationally demanding single frame models.

205 In 2019, the method in [66] was improved in [65] in terms of inference speed. Specifically, as 206 shown in Figure 4, due to the high temporal redundancy in video, the model proposed in [65] 207 contained two feature extractors: a small feature extractor and a large feature extractor. The large 208 feature extractor with low speed was responsible for extracting the features with high accuracy while 209 the small feature extractor with fast speed was responsible for extracting the features with poor 210 accuracy. The two feature extractors were used alternately. The feature maps were aggregated using 211 a memory mechanism with the modified convolutional LSTM layer. Then, a SSD-style [9] detector 212 was applied to the refined features to obtain the final regression and classification outcome.



Figure 4. Small and large feature extractors in [65].

215 For the methods mentioned above, image object detectors together with a temporal context 216 information enhancement were employed to detect objects in video. However, for online video object 217 detection, succeeding frames cannot be utilized. In other words, non-causal video object detectors are 218 not feasible for online applications. Noting that most video object detectors are non-causal, a causal 219 recurrent method was proposed in [67] for online detection without using succeeding frames. In this 220 case, the challenges in terms of occlusion and motion blur remain which require the use of temporal 221 information. For online video object detection, only the current frame and the previous frame are 222 used. Based on the optical flow method [99], the short-term temporal information was utilized by 223 warping the feature maps from the previous frame. However, sometimes image distortion or 224 occlusion would last for several video frames. By using only the short-term temporal information, it 225 was difficult to deal with these situations. The long-term temporal context information was also 226 exploited via the convolutional LSTM, in which the feature maps of the distant preceding frame 227 obtained from the memory function were propagated to acquire more information. Then, the feature 228 maps extracted on the current frame as well as the warped feature maps and the output of the LSTM 229 were concatenated to obtain the aggregated feature maps. Finally, the aggregated feature maps were 230 inputted into a detection sub-network to obtain the detection outcome on the current frame. By 231 utilizing both the short and long-term information, this method achieved an accuracy of 75.5% mAP 232 at a high speed on the ImageNet VID dataset, indicating a competitive performance for online 233 detection.

234 3.3. Attention Related

For video object detection, it is known that exploiting the temporal context relationship is quite important. This relationship needs to be established based on a long-duration video, which requires a large amount of memory and computational resources. In order to decrease the computational resources, an attention mechanism was introduced for feature maps alignment. This mechanism was first proposed for machine translation in [105, 106] and then applied to video object detection in [25, 69-72].

Some methods only take the global or local temporal information into consideration. Specifically,
the method RDN in [70] only makes use of the local temporal information. The methods SELSA in
[72], OGEMN in [69] only utilize the global temporal information. While the other methods of PSLA
in [71], MEGA in [25] use both the global and local temporal information.

245 Relation Distillation Networks (RDN) presented in [70] propagate and aggregate the feature 246 maps based on object relationships in video. In RDN, ResNet-101 [100] and ResNeXt-101-64×4d [107] 247 are utilized as the backbone to extract feature maps and object proposals are generated with the help 248 of a Region Proposal Network (RPN) [15]. The feature maps of each proposal on the reference frame 249 are augmented on the basis of supportive proposals. A prominent innovation in this work is to distill 250 the relation with multi-stage reasoning consisting of a basic and an advanced stage. In the basic stage, 251 the supportive proposals consisting of Top K proposals of a current frame and its adjacent frames are 252 used to measure the relation feature of each reference proposal obtained on the current frame to 253 generate refined reference proposals. In the advanced stage, supportive proposals with high objective 254 scores are selected to generate advanced supportive proposals. Features of selected supportive 255 proposals are aggregated with the relation against all supportive proposals. Then, such aggregated 256 features are employed to strengthen reference proposals obtained from the basic stage. Finally, the 257 aggregated features of reference proposals obtained from the advanced stage are used to generate 258 the final classification and bounding box regression. In addition, the detection box linking is used in 259 a post-processing stage to refine the detection outcome. Evaluated on the ImageNet VID dataset, 260 RDN achieved a detection accuracy of 81.8% and 83.2% mAP, respectively, with ResNet-101 and 261 ResNeXt-101 for feature extraction. With linking and rescoring operations, it achieved an accuracy of 262 83.8% and 84.7% mAP, respectively.

A module (SELSA) was introduced in [72] to exploit the relation between the proposals in the entire sequence level, then related feature maps were fused for classification and regression. More specifically, the features of the proposals were extracted on different frames and then a clustering 266 module and a transformation module were applied. The similarities of the proposals were computed 267 across frames and the features were aggregated according to the similarities. Consequently, more 268 robust features were generated for the final detection.

In [69], OGEMN was presented which used an object guided external memory to store the pixel
and instance level features for further global aggregation. In order to improve the storage-efficiency
aspect, only the features within the bounding boxes were stored for further feature aggregation.

272 In [25], MEGA was introduced utilizing the global and local information inspired by how 273 humans go about object detection in video using both global semantic information and local 274 localization information. For situations when it was difficult to determine what the object was in the 275 current frame, the global information was utilized to recognize a fuzzy object according to a clear 276 object with a high similarity in another frame. When it was difficult to find out where the object was 277 in a frame, the local localization information was used by taking the difference between adjacent 278 frames if it was moving. More specifically, RPN was used to generate candidate proposals from those 279 local frames (adjacent frames of current frames) and global frames. Then, a relation module was set 280 up to aggregate the features of candidate proposals on global frames into that of local frames. This 281 was named the global aggregation stage. With this method, the global information was integrated 282 into the local frames. Then, features of the current frame were further augmented by the relation 283 modules in the local aggregation stage. In order to expand the aggregation scale, an efficient module 284 (Long Range Memory (LRM)) was designed where all the features computed in the middle were 285 saved and utilized in a following detection. Evaluated on the ImageNet VID dataset, MEGA with 286 ResNet-101 as backbone achieved an accuracy of 82.9% mAP. Compared with the competitor RDN, 287 MEGA produced 1.1% improvement. Replacing ResNet-101 with ResNeXt-101 or with a stronger 288 backbone to extract features, MEGA obtained an accuracy of 84.1% mAP. With the help of post-289 processing, it achieved 1.6% and 1.3% improvement with ResNet-101 and ResNeXt-101, respectively.

290 The method Progressive Sparse Local Attention (PSLA) was proposed in [71] to make use of the 291 long term temporal information for enhancement on each feature cell in an attention manner. PSLA 292 establishes correspondence by propagating features in a local region with gradually sparser stride 293 according to the spatial information across frames. Recursive Feature Updating (RFU) and Dense 294 Feature Transforming (DenseFT) were also proposed based on PSLA to model the temporal 295 relationship and enhance the features in a framework shown in Figure 5. More specifically, features 296 were propagated in an attention manner. First, the correspondence between each feature cell in an 297 embedding feature map of a current frame and its surrounding cells was established with a 298 progressive sparser stride from the center to the outside of another embedding feature map of a 299 support frame. Second, correspondence weights were used to compute the aligned feature maps. The 300 feature maps were aggregated with the aligned features. In addition, similar to other video object 301 detectors, the features of key frames were propagated to non-key frames. A light weight network was 302 then applied to extract low-level features on non-key frames and fuse with the features propagated 303 from key frames (DenseFT). Feature propagation was also employed between key frames, and key 304 frame features were updated recursively by an update network (RFU). Hence, features were enriched 305 by the temporal information with DenseFT and RFU, which were further used for detection. Based 306 on the experimentations done in [71], an accuracy of 81.4% mAP was achieved on the ImageNet VID 307 dataset.



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Figure 5. PSLA framework [71].

310 3.4. *Tracking Based*

Inspired by the fact that tracking is an efficient way to utilize the temporal information, several methods [73, 74, 76] have been developed to detect objects on fixed interval frames and track them in frames in between. The improved methods in [26] and [75] detect interval frames adaptively and track the other frames.

A framework named CDT was presented in [74] combining detection and tracking for video object detection. This framework consisted of an object detector, a forward tracker and a backward tracker. Initially, objects were detected by the image object detector. Then, each detected object was tracked by the forward tracker, and undetected objects were stored by the backward tracker. In the entire process, the object detector and the tracker cooperated with each other to deal with the appearance and disappearance of objects.

Another framework named CaTDet having high computational efficiency was presented in [73]. This framework is shown in Figure 6, which includes a tracker and a detector. CaTDet uses a tracker to predict the position of objects with high confidence in a next frame. The processing steps of CaTDet are: (i) Every frame is inputted to a proposal network to output potential proposals in the frame. (ii) Object position in a next frame is predicted with a high confidence using the tracker. (iii) In order to obtain the calibrated object information, the outputs of the tracker and the proposal network are combined and inputted to a refinement network.





Figure 6. CaTDet framework [73].

330 More specifically, based on the observation that objects detected in one video frame would most 331 likely appear in a next frame, a tracker was used to predict the positions on the next frame with the historical information. In case new objects appeared in a current frame, a computationally efficient
proposal network similar to RPN was utilized to detect proposals. In addition, to address situations
such as motion blur and occlusion, the temporal information was used by a tracker to predict future
positions. The results obtained by combining the tracker and the proposal network was then refined
by a refinement network. Only the regions of interest were refined by the refinement network to save
computation time while maintaining accuracy.

338 Similar to CDT and CaTDet, recent approaches for detection and tracking of objects in video 339 involve rather complex multistage components. In [76], a framework using a ConvNet architecture 340 was deployed in a simple but effective way by performing tracking and detection simultaneously. 341 More specifically, first R-FCN [19] was employed to extract the feature maps shared between 342 detection and tracking. Then, proposals in each frame were obtained by using RPN based on anchors 343 [15]. RoI pooling [15] was utilized for the final detection. In particular, a regressor was introduced to 344 extend the architecture. Position-sensitive regression maps from both frames were used together with 345 correlation maps as the input to an RoI tracking module, in which the box relationship between the 346 two frames was outputted. For video object detection, the framework in [76] was evaluated on the 347 ImageNet VID dataset achieving an accuracy of 82.0% mAP.

348 Similarly, inspired by the observation that object tracking is more efficient than object detection, 349 a framework (D or T) was covered in [75], see Figure 7, which includes a scheduler network to 350 determine the operation (detecting or tracking) on a certain frame. Compared with the baseline frame 351 skipping (detecting on fixed interval frames and tracking on intermediate frames), the scheduler 352 network with light weights and a simple structure was found to be more effective on the ImageNet 353 VID dataset. Also, the adaptive mechanism in [26] (TRACKING ASSISTED) was used to select key 354 frames. Detection on key frames involved the utilization of an accurate detection network and 355 detection on non-key frames was assisted by the tracking module.



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Figure 7. D or T framework [75].

358 3.5. Other Methods

Apart from the frameworks described above, some methods are presented that are based on a combination of multiple methods described above [24, 108, 109]. The method in [24] is based on the optical flow and tracking methods. The methods in [108] (Attentional LSTM) and [109] (TSSD)are based on the attention and LSTM methods.

363 In addition, these other methods appear in the literature [36, 78-85]. The methods in [78] and [82] 364 discuss ways to align and enhance feature maps. While the method in [85] studied the effect of the 365 input image size by selecting a size to achieve a better speed-accuracy trade-off. The method in [78] 366 named STSN is shown in Figure 8. This method aligns feature maps between adjacent frames. Similar 367 to the FGFA method in [22], it relies on the idea that detection on a single frame would have 368 difficulties dealing with noise sources such as motion blur and video defocus. Multiple frames are 369 thus utilized for feature enhancement to achieve better performance. Unlike FGFA which uses the 370 optical flow method to align feature maps, deformable convolution is employed for feature alignment 371 in [78]. First, a sharing feature extraction network is applied to extract feature maps on a current 372 frame and adjacent frames. Then, the two feature maps are concatenated per channel and a 373 deformable convolution is performed. The result of the deformable convolution is used as the offset

- for the second deformable convolution operation to align the feature maps. Furthermore, augmented feature maps are obtained by aggregating the features in the same way as FGFA. Compared with
- 376 FGFA, STSN uses deformable convolution to align the features of two adjacent frames implicitly.
- 377 Although it is not as intuitive as the optical flow method, it is also found to be effective. According
- to the experimental results reported, STSN still achieved a higher mAP than FGFA (78.9% vs 78.8%)
- 379 without relying on the optical flow information. In addition, without the assistant of the temporal
- 380 post-processing, STSN obtained a better performance than the D&T baseline [76], 78.9% vs. 75.8%.





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Figure 8. STSN framework [78].

383 Different from [78] by using the deformable convolution to propagate the temporal information, 384 the Spatial-Temporal Memory Network (STMN) was considered in [82], which involved a RNN 385 architecture with Spatial-Temporal Memory module (STMM) to incorporate the long-term temporal 386 information. The Spatial-Temporal Memory Network (STMN) operates in an end-to-end manner to 387 model the long-term information and align the motion dynamics for video object detection. STMM is 388 the core module in STMN, a convolutional recurrent computation unit which fully utilizes the 389 pretrained weights learned from static image datasets such as ImageNet [86]. This design is essential 390 to address the practical difficulties of learning from video datasets, which largely lack the diversity 391 of objects within the same category. STMM receives the feature maps of a current frame at time step 392 t and the spatial-temporal memory M_{t-1}^{\rightarrow} with the information of all the previous frames. Then, the 393 spatial-temporal memory M_t^{\rightarrow} of the current time step is updated. In order to capture the information 394 of both later frames and previous frames at the same time, two STMMs are used for bidirectional 395 feature aggregation to produce the memory M which is employed for both classification and 396 bounding box regression. Therefore, the feature maps are propagated and aggregated by combining 397 the information across multiple video frames. Evaluated on the ImageNet VID dataset, STMN has 398 achieved the current start-of-the-art accuracy.

399 All the algorithms described above start from how to propagate and aggregate feature maps. In 400 [85], video object detection was examined from another point of view. Similar to [110], the effect of 401 input image size on the performance of video object detection was studied in [85]. Furthermore, it 402 was found that down sampling images can obtain better accuracy sometime. From this point of view, 403 a framework named AdaScale was proposed to adaptively select the input image size. AdaScale 404 predicts the best scale or size of a next frame according to the information of a current frame. One of 405 the reasons for the improvement is that the number of false positives is reduced. And the other reason 406 is that the number of true positives is increased by resizing the too large objects to a suitable size for 407 the detector.

408 In [85], the optimal scale (pixels of the shortest side) of a given image is defined with a predefined 409 finite set of scales S (S = {600, 480, 360, 240} in [85]). Furthermore, a loss function consisting of the 410 classification and regression loss is employed as the evaluation metric to compare the results across 411 different scales. The regression loss for background is expected to be zero. Hence, if the loss function 412 is utilized directly to evaluate the results across different scales, the image scale which contains fewer 413 foreground bounding boxes is supported. In order to deal with this issue, a new metric (the loss 414 function which focuses on the same number of foreground bounding boxes chosen on different scales) 415 is employed to compare across different scales. More specifically, the number of bounding boxes 416 involved to compute the loss is determined by the minimum number (m) on all the scales. For each 417 scale, the loss of predicted foreground bounding boxes on the image is sorted in ascending order and

the first *m* bounding boxes are chosen. The scale *m* with the minimum loss is defined as the best scale. Inspired by R-FCN[19] working on deep features for bounding boxes regression, the channels of the deep features are expected to contain the size information. Therefore, a scale regressor using deep features is built to predict the optimal scale. Evaluated on the ImageNet VID and mini YouTube-BB datasets, Adascale achieved 1.3% and 2.7% mAP improvements with 1.6 and 1.8 times speedup compared with a single-scale training and testing, respectively. Furthermore, combined with DFF [28], the speed was increased by 25% while maintaining mAP on the ImageNet VID dataset.

425 4. Comparison of Video Object Detection Methods

426 The great majority of video object detection approaches use the ImageNet VID dataset [5] for 427 performance evaluation. In this section, the timeline of video object detection methods in recent years 428 is shown in Figure 9 together with a group listing of the methods in Figure 10. Then, a comparison is 429 provided between the methods covered in the previous section. The comparison is presented in Table 430 1 and Table 2 which correspond to with and without post-processing, respectively. The methods in 431 Figure 9 belong to different groups but the same time whereas the methods in Figure 10 belong to 432 different times but the same groups. As can be seen from Figures 9 and 10, the methods based on 433 optical flow were proposed earlier. During the same period, video object detection methods were 434 assisted by tracking due to the effectiveness of tracking in utilizing the temporal-spatial information. 435 The optical flow-based methods needed a large number of parameters and they were only suitable 436 for small motions. In recent years, the methods based on attention have achieved much success such 437 as MEGA [25]. Using LSTM for feature propagation and aggregation is becoming a hot research topic 438 and many new methods are being proposed such as STSN [78] using deformable convolution to align 439 the feature maps. The latest research is mostly based on attention, LSTM or combination of methods

440 such as Flow & LSTM [67].



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Figure 9. Timeline of video object detection methods.

LSTM based

D or T (2018) Tracking Assisted (2019)





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Figure 10. Video object detection methods sorted in different groups.

Table 1. Comparison among the video object detection methods without post processing; note that the runtime is based on the GPU used in the references: K means K40, XP means Titan XP, X means Titan X, V means Titan V, 1060 means GeForce GTX 1060, 1080 Ti means GeForce GTX 1080 Ti, 2080 Ti means GeForce GTX 2080 Ti.

Type	Framework	Backbone	mAP(%)	Runtime(fps)
Single Frame	P PCNI101	DeeNat 101	73.9	4.05 K
	K-KCIN[19]	Kesinet-101	70.3	12 XP
Flow	Impression Network[63]	Modified ResNet-101	75.5	20 1060
Based	FGFA [22]	ResNet-101	76.3	1.36 K
	DFF [28]	ResNet-101	73.1	20.25 K
	THP [64]	ResNet-101+DCN	78.6	13.0X/8.6K
LSTM	Looking Fast and Slow [65]	Interleaved SEP	61.4	23.5 Pixel 3 phone
Based	LSTM-SSD[66]	MobilenetV2-SSDLite	53.5	-
	Flow&LSTM [67]	ResNet-101	75.5	-
Attention	OCEMNI(40)	ResNet-101	79.3	8.9 (1080Ti)
Based	OGEMIN[69]	ResNet-101+DCN	80.0	-
		ResNet-101	77.1	30.8V\18.73X
	PSLA[71]	ResNet-101+DCN	80.0	26.0V\13.34X
	CELCA (72)	ResNet-101	80.25	-
	3EL3A[72]	ResNeXt-101	83.11	
		ResNet-101	81.8	10.6 V100
	KDN[70]	ResNeXt-101	83.2	-
	MECA[25]	ResNet-101	82.9	8.73 2080Ti
	MEGA[25]	ResNeXt-101	84.1	-
Tracking Based	D&T loss[76]	ResNet-101	75.8	7.8X
	Track assisted[26]	ResNet-101	70.0	30XP
Others	TCNN[24]	GoogLeNet	73.8	-
	STSN [78]	ResNet-101+DCN	78.9	-

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Туре	Framework	Backbone	mAP(%)	Runtime(fps)
Flow		ResNet-101	78.4	-
Based	FGFA [22]	Inception-ResNet	80.1	
LSTM		Interleaved		72.3
Based	Looking Fast and Slow[65]	+ Quantization	59.3	Pixel 3 phone
		+ Asyncise		·
	MobilenetV2-SSDLite + LSTM (α =	MobilenetV2-	(1 1	4.1
	1.4)[66]	SSDLite	64.1	Pixel 3 phone
	MobilenetV2-SSDLite + LSTM($\alpha = 1.0$)	MobilenetV2-	EO 1	-
	[66]	SSDLite	39.1	
	MobilenetV2-SSDLite + LSTM($\alpha = 0.5$)	MobilenetV2-	E0 2	-
	[66]	SSDLite	50.5	
	MobilenetV2-SSDLite + LSTM (α =	MobilenetV2-	4E 1	14.6
	0.35) [66]	SSDLite	45.1	Pixel 3 phone
Attention	OCEMN [69]	ResNet-101	80.8	-
Based		ResNet-101+DCN	81.6	
	PSI.A [71]	ResNet-101	78.6	5.7X
		ResNet-101+DCN	81.4	6.31V\5.13X
	SELSA [72]	ResNet-101	80.54	-
	RDN [70]	ResNet-101	83.8	-
		ResNeXt-101	84.7	
	MEGA [25]	ResNet-101	84.5	-
		ResNeXt-101	85.4	
Tracking	$D\&T(\tau = 10) [76]$	ResNet-101	78.6	-
Based	$D\&T(\tau = 1)[76]$	ResNet-101	79.8	5X
	D&T [76]	Inception V4	82.0	-
Others	STSN [78]	KesNet-101+DCN	80.4	-
	STMN [82]	ResNet-101	80.5	-

Table 2. Comparison among the video object detection methods with post processing.

452 Table 1 provides the outcomes without post processing. In this table, the methods are divided 453 into different groups according to the way temporal and spatial information are utilized. Flow-454 guided group propagate and align the feature maps according to the flow field obtained by optical 455 flow. Both accuracy and speed of various frameworks are reported in this table. For example, DFF 456 provides high computational efficiency and achieves a runtime of 20.25 fps using a Titan K40 GPU. 457 FGFA achieves a high accuracy producing 76.3% mAP with 1.36 fps. Obviously, DFF is faster than 458 FGFA. Flow-guided methods are intuitive and well understood to propagate features. Optical flow 459 is deemed suitable for small movement estimation. In addition, since optical flow reflects pixel level 460 displacement, it has difficulties when it is applied to high-level feature maps. One pixel movement 461 on feature maps may correspond to 10 to 20 pixels movement.

Inspired by the LSTM based solutions in natural language processing, LSTM methods are used to incorporate the sequence information. In the LSTM group, Flow & LSTM [67] achieved the highest accuracy of 75.5%. Looking Fast and Slow [65] generated high speed but with low accuracy. LSTM captures the long term information with a simple implementation. Since the sigmoid activation of the input and forget gates are rarely completely saturated, a slow state decay and thus loss of long-term dependence is resulted. In other words, it is difficult to retain the complete previous state in the update.

Attention based methods also show the ability to perform video object detection effectively. In the attention related group, MEGA [25] with ResNeXt-101 as backbone achieved the highest accuracy of 84.1% mAP. As described, it achieved a very high accuracy with a relatively fast speed. Attention based methods aggregate the features within proposals that are generated. This decreases the computation time. Because of only using the features within the proposals, the performance relies on the effect of RPN to a certain extent. Here, it is rather difficult to utilize more comprehensive information. In the tracking based group, the methods are assisted by tracking. D&T loss [76] achieved 75.8%
mAP. Tracking is an efficient method to employ the temporal information with a detector assisted by
a tracker. However, it cannot solve the problems created by motion blur and video defocus directly.
As the detection performance relies on the tracking performance, the detector part suffers from
tracking errors. There are also other standalone methods including TCNN[24], STSN [78] and STMN
[82].

In order to further improve the performance in terms of detection accuracy, post processing can be added to the above methods. The results with post processing are shown in Table 2. One can easily see that with post processing, the accuracy is noticeably improved. For example, the accuracy of MEGA is improved from 84.1% to 85.4% mAP.

486 5. Future Trends

487 Challenges still remain for further improving the accuracy and speed of the video object
488 detection methods. This section presents the major challenges and possible future trends as related
489 to video object detection.

490 At present, there is a lack of a comprehensive benchmark dataset containing the labels of each 491 frame. The most widely used dataset, that is ImageNet VID, does not include complex real-world 492 conditions as compared to the static image dataset COCO. The number of objects in each frame in the 493 ImageNet VID dataset is limited which is not the case under real-world conditions. In addition, in 494 many real-world applications, videos include a large field of view and in some cases high resolution 495 images. Lack of a well annotated dataset representing actual or real-world conditions remains a 496 challenge for the purpose of advancing video object detection. Hence, the establishment of 497 comprehensive benchmark dataset is considered a future trend of importance.

498 Up to now, the most widely used evaluation metric in video object detection is mAP, which is 499 derived from static image object detection. This metric does not fully reflect the temporal 500 characteristics in video object detection. Although Average Delay (AD) is proposed to reflect the 501 temporal characteristics, it is still not a fully developed metric. For example, the stability of detection 502 in video is not reflected by it. Therefore, novel evaluation metrics which are more suitable for video 503 object detection is considered another future trend of importance.

504 Most of the methods covered in this review paper only utilize the local temporal information or 505 global information separately. There are only a few methods such as MEGA, which have used the 506 local and global temporal information at the same time and achieved a benchmark mAP of 85.4%. As 507 demonstrated by MEGA, it is worth developing future frameworks which utilize both the local and 508 global temporal information. Furthermore, for most of the existing video object detection algorithms, 509 the number of frames used is too small to fully utilize the video information. Hence, as yet another 510 future trend, it is of importance to develop methods that utilize the long-term video information. As 511 can be observed from Tables 1 and 2, the attention-based frameworks achieved a relatively high 512 accuracy. However, such methods pose difficulties for real-time applications demanding very 513 powerful GPUs. Although the Looking Fast and Slow method [65] achieved 72.3 fps on Pixel 3 514 phones, the accuracy is only 59.3% which poses challenging for actual deployment. Indeed, the trade-515 off between accuracy and speed needs to be further investigated.

516 6. Conclusion

517 In recent years, after the ImageNet Large Scale Visual Recognition Challenge (ILSVRC) 518 announced the video object detection task in 2015, many deep learning-based video object detection 519 solutions have been developed. This paper has provided a review of the video object detection 520 methods that have been developed so far. This review has covered the available datasets, evaluation 521 metrics and an overview of different categories of deep learning-based methods for video object 522 detection. A categorization of the video object detection methods has been made according to the 523 way temporal and spatial information are used. These categories include flow based, LSTM based, 524 attention based, tracking based, as well as other methods. The performance of various detectors with 525 or without post-processing is summarized in two tables in terms of both detection accuracy and

- 526 computation speed. Several trends of importance in video object detection have also been stated for 527 possible future works.
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