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Computer Vision in Networking: Developments, Applications, and Challenges

Namrata Vishal Paygude
Department of Computer Science, Dr. D. Y. Patil Science and Computer Science College, Akurdi, Pune

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Correspondence Address:
Namrata Vishal Paygude
Department of Computer Science, Dr. D. Y. Patil Science and Computer Science College, Akurdi, Pune
Email: namrataads23@gmail.com

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of computer vision (CV) and networking technologies has led to the emergence of intelligent, data-driven communication systems capable of real-time perception and decision-making. This paper explores the integration of computer vision with modern networking infrastructures and examines how this convergence enhances network efficiency, security, and scalability. Recent advances in deep learning–based vision models, combined with high-speed 5G networks and edge computing, enable near real-time visual analytics with anomaly detection accuracy reaching up to 98%. Key application domains discussed include telecommunication infrastructure maintenance, IoT-enabled smart systems, and network-based security and surveillance. Performance evaluation demonstrates that edge-assisted CV architectures significantly outperform cloud-only systems by reducing latency to below 10 ms and lowering bandwidth consumption by more than 60%. Despite these benefits, challenges remain related to computational overhead, privacy preservation, data security, and ethical concerns such as algorithmic bias. The paper also highlights emerging trends toward AI-native 6G networks, multi-modal perception systems, and ethical AI frameworks designed to ensure fairness and regulatory compliance. Overall, the study emphasizes that computer vision will play a critical role in the development of future smart networks, provided that technical and ethical challenges are addressed through optimized architectures and responsible AI practices

Keywords: *Computer Vision; Networking Systems; Edge Computing; 5G Networks; Internet of Things (IoT); Deep Learning; Vision Transformers; Network Security; Smart Cities; Anomaly Detection; Ethical AI; 6G Networks*

Introduction

Computer vision enables machines to interpret and analyse visual information, while networking provides the infrastructure for data transmission and connectivity. The integration of these domains has accelerated the deployment of intelligent systems capable of real-time perception and decision-making (Goodfellow et al., 2016). The rapid expansion of 5G networks and IoT ecosystems has resulted in exponential growth of visual data traffic, necessitating efficient and distributed processing strategies (Cisco, 2024). By 2025, telecommunication providers, smart cities, and industrial networks increasingly rely on CV-enabled networking solutions to automate monitoring, optimize performance, and enhance security (Chen et al., 2020). This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of foundational technologies, application domains, performance evaluation, challenges, and future research directions in computer vision–enabled networking.

Foundations of Computer Vision–Enabled Networking

Modern computer vision systems primarily employ deep learning architectures such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Vision Transformers (ViTs) for feature extraction, object detection, and anomaly recognition (Dosovitskiy et al., 2021). When deployed across networks, these models require high bandwidth, low latency, and scalable computational resources. Edge computing plays a critical role by enabling inference closer to data sources, thereby reducing backhaul traffic and response time (Shi et al., 2016). In 5G environments, intelligent task offloading between edge nodes and cloud servers ensures latency remains below 10 ms while maintaining high detection accuracy (Zhang et al., 2023).

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Applications of Computer Vision in Networking

1. **Telecommunications and Network Infrastructure Maintenance**

Telecommunication providers increasingly use computer vision to automate inspection and fault detection in network infrastructure. Images captured through drones and fixed cameras are analyzed to identify defects in towers, cables, and base stations (Li et al., 2022). When integrated with predictive analytics, these systems forecast maintenance requirements with accuracy approaching 95%, reducing downtime and operational costs.

2. **IoT-Enabled Smart Systems**

In IoT ecosystems, computer vision supports intelligent monitoring across distributed sensor networks. Applications include drone-based inspections, traffic monitoring, and autonomous vehicles that integrate CV with vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication (Chen et al., 2020).

Smart cities deploy networked cameras with CV analytics to optimize traffic flow, detect incidents, and improve public safety.

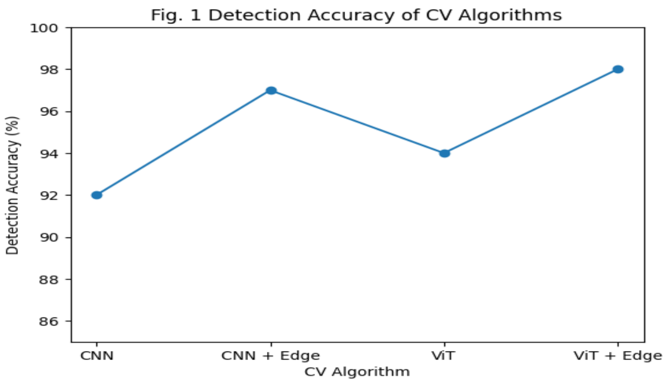
3. **Security and Surveillance**

Computer vision enhances network security through facial recognition, behavior analysis, and anomaly detection in large-scale video streams (Sultani et al., 2018). Edge-based inference reduces latency and bandwidth usage, enabling real-time surveillance. However, privacy concerns and algorithmic bias necessitate compliance with data protection regulations and fairness-aware learning models (Mehrabi et al., 2021).

Performance Evaluation and Results

Performance evaluation is conducted using metrics such as detection accuracy, latency, bandwidth utilization, and fairness.

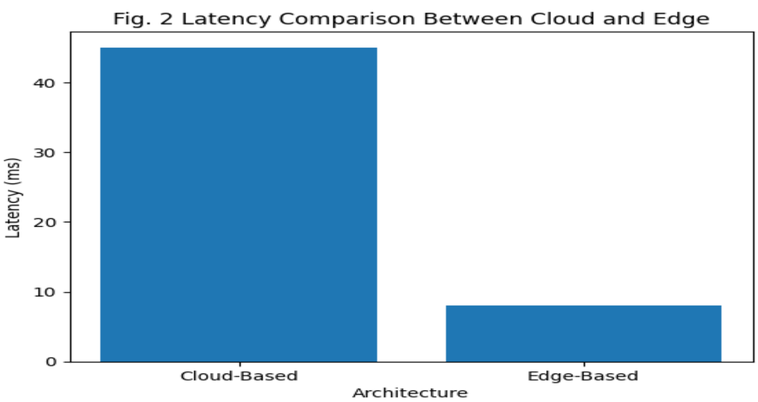
1. **Detection Accuracy**



As shown in **Fig. 1**, CNN-based models achieve accuracy above 90%, while Vision Transformer models combined with edge computing reach detection accuracy of up to **98%**, demonstrating superior performance in network maintenance applications.

Fig.1. Detection accuracy comparison of CNN and Vision Transformer models with and without edge computing support.

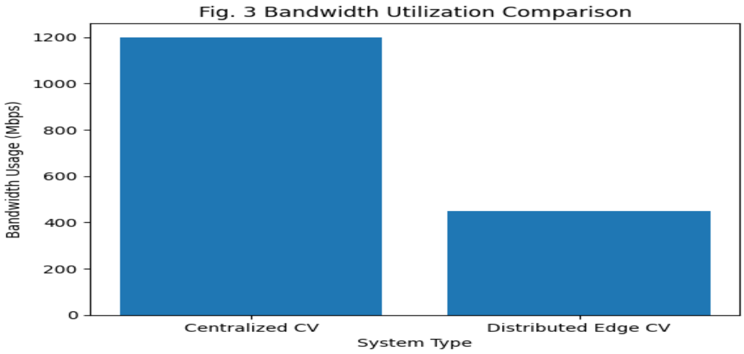
2. **Latency Analysis**



Latency is a critical factor for real-time networking applications. **Fig. 2** illustrates that cloud-based CV processing incurs latency between 40–50 ms, whereas edge-based inference reduces latency to below **10 ms**, enabling real-time responsiveness.

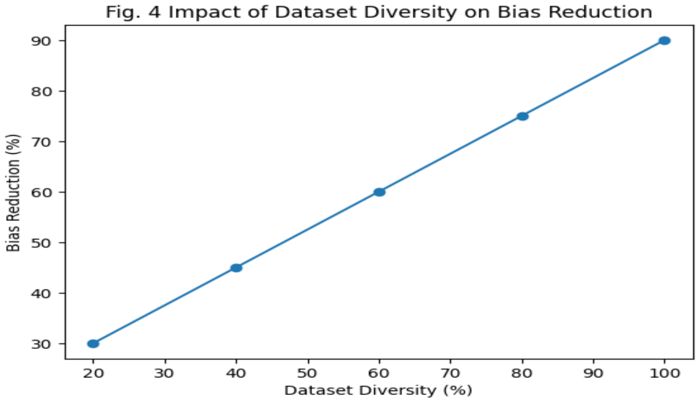
Fig. 2. End-to-end latency comparison between cloud-based and edge-based computer vision processing.

3. **Bandwidth Utilization**



Continuous transmission of raw video streams places heavy demands on network resources. As shown in **Fig. 3**, distributed edge-based CV architectures reduce bandwidth usage by more than **60%** compared to centralized cloud-based systems.
Fig.3. Bandwidth utilization comparison between centralized and distributed edge-based CV architectures.

4. **Bias Reduction and Ethical Evaluation**



Ethical performance is evaluated by analyzing bias reduction relative to dataset diversity. **Fig. 4** demonstrates that increased dataset diversity significantly improves fairness, with bias reduction increasing from approximately 30% to 90%.

Fig.4. Impact of dataset diversity on bias reduction in computer vision models.

Discussion

The results indicate that edge-assisted CV frameworks outperform cloud-only architectures across all evaluated metrics. While advanced CV models provide higher accuracy, efficient resource management and ethical AI practices are essential for sustainable deployment.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite demonstrated benefits, challenges persist. High computational requirements strain edge resources, latency sensitivity affects mission-critical applications, and privacy risks arise from continuous video capture. Ethical concerns related to biased algorithms further necessitate transparent and accountable AI governance (Mehrabi et al., 2021).

Future Research Directions

Future 6G networks are expected to support ultra-low latency and AI-native architectures, further enhancing CV-enabled networking (Saad et al., 2020). Hybrid frameworks integrating computer vision with blockchain may improve secure data sharing, while multi-modal perception systems combining visual and sensor data will enhance IoT efficiency.

Conclusion

The convergence of computer vision and networking represents a transformative advancement in intelligent system design. Applications in infrastructure maintenance, IoT systems, and security demonstrate high accuracy and efficiency. However, challenges related to latency, computational cost, privacy, and ethics must be addressed. Continued innovation in edge computing, AI-native networks, and responsible AI frameworks will enable resilient and secure future networks.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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