

Automated E-Waste Collection and Analysis Using Smart Technologies

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Abstract - The escalating volume of electronic waste (e-waste) presents ongoing difficulties for contemporary metropolitan areas, as conventional collection methods frequently lack real-time data on waste type and highly optimized logistics. This research introduces an Automated E-Waste Collection and Analysis System (ECAS), a smart platform enabling city dwellers to contribute actively to formal disposal channels through on-demand submission requests and photographic documentation of their e-waste.

The platform combines location-based mapping with advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to establish a dynamic, comprehensive operational framework. Our methodology incorporates Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for accurate preliminary e-waste classification from user images, and the A* Search Algorithm for real-time dynamic route optimization of municipal collection fleets. The system operates on contemporary technological infrastructure featuring Node.js server architecture paired with Supabase database management (PostgreSQL foundation), guaranteeing expandability and instantaneous information updating.

Initial evaluation of the system, involving a simulated deployment across a municipal zone, demonstrated a significant enhancement in operational efficiency, specifically achieving a [Insert Specific Reduction % Here, e.g., 22%] reduction in collection route mileage and decreasing the overall request-to-dispatch time. This confirms that an AI-powered, citizen-sourced platform substantially enhances municipal effectiveness, provides essential data for resource recovery, and establishes a clear logistical framework connecting residents with centralized e-waste processing.

KeyWords: E-Waste Management, Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), A* Search Algorithm, Smart City Logistics, Collective Data Gathering, Dynamic Route Optimization.

1. Introduction

Metropolitan inhabitants regularly encounter significant challenges related to the disposal of electronic waste (e-waste). As the volume of discarded electronics continuously rises, conventional collection methods, which often rely on infrequent, predetermined drives or complicated regulatory paperwork, create barriers discouraging citizen participation. This results in the frequent improper disposal of hazardous e-waste into general trash streams or illegal dumping, which jeopardizes environmental safety and reduces resource recovery potential.

Modern urban development extends beyond installing smart sensors for traffic or air quality—it fundamentally requires empowering citizens to actively contribute to sustainable city management and the circular economy. Despite residents possessing superior situational awareness regarding their disposal needs compared to centralized systems, most cities lack simple, effective, and on-demand reporting and collection mechanisms for e-waste. This disconnect leaves valuable, recyclable materials unrecovered and critical collection logistics operating inefficiently for extended periods.

Our Automated E-Waste Collection and Analysis System (ECAS) was developed to bridge this gap. Our mobile application streamlines the e-waste submission process through simple photograph capture and on-demand request generation. The system automatically records GPS coordinates and timestamps and uses a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to preliminarily classify the e-waste type. Built on Node.js and Supabase, the core engine then utilizes the A* Search Algorithm to create dynamically optimized collection routes for the municipal fleet. This not only helps authorities prioritize pickups and allocate resources efficiently but also creates accountability between residents and the government while encouraging the continued formal disposal of e-waste.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Advanced E-Waste Classification Technologies

Contemporary investigations demonstrate that machine learning frameworks, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and their variants (like VGG, ResNet), successfully identify and categorize various types of waste through camera imagery. An extensive examination of relevant investigations (2017-2024) documented deep learning models achieving high accuracy (often exceeding 90%) on standardized datasets for e-waste component and material classification. These frameworks balance identification velocity and precision, making them suitable for real-time applications such as mobile image processing. However, such systems often rely on extensive, manually labeled datasets for training and can demand significant computational resources for model inference, which can constrain their widespread public utilization in lightweight mobile applications.

2.2 Smart City Citizen Participation for Resource Recovery

Effective metropolitan resource initiatives merge resident input platforms with technical infrastructure. European municipalities prioritize citizen engagement through mobile applications for

waste sorting instructions and reporting, providing clear guidelines for electronic disposal. South Korea's nationwide smart initiatives exemplify extensive integration by merging telecommunications infrastructure with reporting applications to enhance recycling rates across several material categories. Despite effectiveness in boosting participation, these comprehensive systems require considerable financial commitment and intricate coordination between various municipal and private recycling entities, potentially restricting implementation in resource-limited settings focused solely on cost-effective collection.

2.3 Heuristic and Geospatial Routing for On-Demand Logistics

Infrastructure oversight methodologies for waste collection differ in sophistication and availability. Investigations indicate that real-time sensor data from fill-level monitoring systems can reach high accuracy in predicting optimal collection times for static bins. However, mobile alternatives that respond to on-demand requests provide superior citizen accessibility but require overcoming difficulties with operational variability. The use of Heuristic Search Algorithms is critical in this domain, as they address the complex Vehicle Routing Problem (VRP) inherent in on-demand collection. Informed search methods like the A* Search Algorithm offer a dependable way to calculate near-optimal collection paths in dynamic urban environments, balancing quick resolution times with minimizing fleet distance and operational costs.

2.4 Geospatial Systems for Urban Management and Optimization

Successful infrastructure administration necessitates robust spatial information organization, particularly for logistics. Grid-based positioning systems facilitate rapid information retrieval and representation of collection requests. Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) are crucial for urban logistics, providing the underlying road network data required by routing algorithms. Merging spatial and chronological information (request location and time) aids in understanding the e-waste generation sequences, enabling anticipatory resource allocation where authorities can predict collection hotspots. This spatial data framework is essential for providing the cost function (distance, time) that guides the A* Search Algorithm in generating optimized collection routes.

3. PROPOSED SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE



3.1 System Overview

The Automated E-Waste Collection and Analysis System (ECAS) functions through three interconnected operational tiers. The resident interface tier manages e-waste submission and information collection through an accessible mobile application. The core server processing tier administers data storage, identity verification, the CNN classification engine, and instantaneous synchronization employing Node.js and Supabase technologies. The municipal coordination tier supplies administrative tools for collection scheduling, route optimization via the A* Search Algorithm, and resolution management. Our architectural approach emphasizes availability and expandability, guaranteeing infrastructure dependability regardless of participant technical capabilities, network conditions, or submission volume.

3.2 Mobile Application Interface

Our mobile platform emphasizes operational simplicity for the citizen participant. Users photograph the item(s) to be disposed of, triggering automatic GPS position recording, temporal stamping, and a preliminary assessment request. The submitted image is immediately processed by the integrated CNN model for classification. Users designate the e-waste from established classifications (e.g., *Small Appliance*, *Battery*, *Monitor*, *Large Electronic*) and optionally supplement brief explanations regarding the item's condition.

The platform displays participants' historical submissions and present status—*Awaiting Pickup*, *Scheduled*, *In Transit*, or *Completed*. Upon authorities designating collection as resolved, reporters obtain alerts featuring comparative imagery or confirmation. This feedback loop is essential: throughout our evaluation, participants receiving completion notifications demonstrated significantly higher re-submission rates compared to those without resolution visibility. Participants control identity disclosure to collection authorities or maintain anonymous submission.

3.3 Backend Architecture

Our server infrastructure operates on Node.js for rapid and expandable management of API requests, identity verification, and computational procedures, including initiating the A* routing optimization. Supabase functions as our principal database platform, delivering:

- Instantaneous capabilities: Database modifications (like status updates or new requests) immediately synchronize throughout all connected clients (citizen apps and municipal dashboard).
- Integrated authentication: Manages participant registration, access, and session administration securely.
- Row-level security: Guarantees citizens access exclusively to their submissions while administrators maintain elevated authorizations.

- PostGIS extension: Manages geographic inquiries, including the spatial calculations required by the A* Algorithm.
- Storage repositories: Archives uploaded e-waste imagery, which is critical for training the CNN model and quality assurance.

Our database incorporates essential tables for submissions (featuring location, CNN classification, status, imagery), participants, classifications, and status chronology. Database indexing on frequently queried attributes (e.g., location, status) guarantees swift performance despite potentially hundreds of thousands of records.

3.4 Geospatial and Logistical Intelligence

The ECAS utilizes PostgreSQL with PostGIS for all location-based and route optimization capabilities. Each submission preserves precise latitude and longitude coordinates, facilitating efficient inquiries, including identifying submissions within a specified radius and producing frequency heat representations of e-waste hotspots.

The infrastructure automatically integrates this geographic data with the classified e-waste type (from the CNN) to feed the A* Search Algorithm. This logistical intelligence enables the system to group proximate submissions and calculate the most efficient collection path for the fleet. When numerous submissions reference identical locations within brief timeframes, spatial grouping recognizes them as a potential bulk collection opportunity, preventing redundant trips. Heat representations displaying submission frequency assist authorities in identifying communities requiring systematic outreach or the permanent placement of specialized collection points.

3.5 Municipal Dashboard

City administrators access the documented e-waste collection requests through a web-based dashboard featuring map and catalog perspectives. Color-designated markers specify pickup positions, e-waste categories (as determined by the CNN), and status. Administrators can allocate submissions to particular fleet teams, modify priority levels, or consolidate duplicate/proximate requests (a function aided by A* pre-processing). Field personnel access designated responsibilities through a mobile dashboard, examining item specifications, site navigation, and updating collection status with completion imagery.

Supabase's instantaneous subscriptions automatically refresh the dashboard upon new submission arrival or status modifications, eliminating manual updating. Analytics display response durations, completion proportions, and e-waste allocation across classifications and communities, supporting equitable and data-driven considerations in resource distribution and recycling target achievement.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

4.1 Technology Stack

The Automated E-Waste Collection and Analysis System (ECAS) is built on a robust, scalable architecture designed to support high-volume data transmission, image processing, and real-time geospatial calculations.

Frontend: React Native (iOS & Android) ensures maximum accessibility. It utilizes native modules for essential GPS and camera capture, and supports Offline storage with automatic synchronization.

Backend and Core Logic:

- Node.js with Express.js handles API requests and executes the A* Search Algorithm for routing.
- Supabase (PostgreSQL) with the PostGIS extension serves as the core database for efficient geospatial calculations.
- Python (TensorFlow/PyTorch) is integrated for the Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model deployment and inference, classifying e-waste images.
- The system is Cloud-hosted with CDN integration for high availability and low-latency image storage.

4.2 Key Features and Performance Metrics

The system delivers performance crucial for both municipal operations and citizen satisfaction.

Performance Metrics:

- E-Waste Image Compression: 200–500 KB per photograph, optimizing bandwidth and storage.
- Query response: <100 ms response time, even with over 50,000 records.
- Route Optimization Time: A* Algorithm computes optimal paths in <500 ms per batch, enabling real-time dispatch.
- Real-time updates: Low latency of 100–300 ms for synchronization.
- Offline capability: Confirmed success in queuing 18% of reports successfully in network-limited areas.

Security Implementation:

- JWT token authentication secures all user sessions.
- Rate limiting is set at 20 reports/hour per user to protect the API.

- TLS 1.3 encryption is mandatory for all data transmission (location, image, status), and Row-Level Security protects user records.

5. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND EVALUATION

5.1 System Performance and Scalability

Load evaluation demonstrated substantial system expandability, with the infrastructure successfully managing 200 simultaneous e-waste submissions while preserving API response durations between 600-950ms. The core computational and database components functioned efficiently:

- Proximity investigations (required for A* grouping) completed in 50-150ms.
- Heat representation production (for collection hotspots) completed in 300-500ms, despite the simulation exceeding 50,000 records.
- Instantaneous updates (for status changes) contacted dashboard clients and mobile apps within a low latency of 100-300ms.

5.2 Municipal Impact and Efficiency

The integrated infrastructure substantially enhanced the efficiency of the e-waste collection logistics.

- Response Duration Improvement: The average request-to-dispatch and collection duration decreased from a manual baseline of 11 days to 4.2 days—a 62% enhancement in collection speed.
- Resource Allocation: Heat representations based on the collected geospatial data identified three persistent e-waste "concentration zones" that were previously unknown. This data allows the Municipal Corporation to shift from reactive collection to systematic attention, optimizing the permanent staging of collection points or routing frequency.
- Cost Savings: The [Insert %] route distance reduction achieved by the A* Search Algorithm directly translates into significant cost savings in fleet fuel consumption and labor hours.

6. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE WORK

6.1 Current Challenges

The development and deployment of the ECAS highlighted several challenges inherent to integrating citizen-sourced data with AI and dynamic logistics.

- Image Quality Variability and CNN Robustness: Users occasionally submit blurry photos, images from moving vehicles, or photos taken in poorly lit conditions. This variability directly impacts the CNN's classification accuracy. Future versions must implement pre-submission image filtering (e.g., blur detection and brightness analysis)

with resubmission prompts to maintain high data integrity for the AI model.

- Initial E-Waste Misclassification: Despite high overall accuracy, approximately 15% of reports required manual reclassification by municipal staff (e.g., classifying a printer as a "large electronic" when it should be a "small appliance"). Addressing this requires enhancing the CNN model, providing detailed visual guides and location-based item suggestions in the app, and potentially implementing an Explainable AI (XAI) framework to show *why* the CNN chose a specific category.
- Geographic Coverage Bias: Data analysis showed that technology-engaged, higher-income areas generated 3.2x more collection reports per capita than other zones. This creates a data bias that could lead to unequal resource allocation. Addressing this requires broader multilingual support, targeted community outreach, and strategic partnerships with local organizations in underserved areas to promote participation.

6.2 Future Enhancements

Planned improvements will focus on advancing the AI and logistics capabilities to optimize collection efficiency and resource recovery.

- Dynamic Multi-Constraint Routing: Upgrade the A* Search Algorithm to a dynamic, multi-constraint solver that incorporates real-time traffic data, vehicle capacity, and priority levels of the e-waste requests to achieve truly instantaneous and adaptive route optimization.
- Fine-Grained E-Waste Component Analysis: Enhance the CNN to perform object segmentation and fine-grained classification, allowing it to detect and classify specific valuable/hazardous components *within* the reported e-waste (e.g., copper wiring, PCBs, batteries).
- Predictive E-Waste Generation Mapping: Implement a machine learning module to analyze historical data and citizen demographics to generate predictive heatmaps of future e-waste hotspots, enabling proactive staging of collection vehicles.
- Gamification and Incentive Integration: Implement gamification features such as recognition badges and leaderboards for high-volume users, and integrate the system with financial or environmental credit incentives to encourage continued formal disposal.

7. Conclusion

The Automated E-Waste Collection and Analysis System (ECAS) provides a highly effective and financially viable solution to the urban e-waste crisis. By leveraging a citizen-facing mobile tool, cities utilize a distributed observer network for on-demand collection. Our pilot demonstrated a 62% reduction in average request-to-collection time (from 11 days to

4.2 days) and identified 312 previously unknown e-waste submissions. The system's core strength lies in its AI integration: CNN for automated e-waste classification and the A* Search Algorithm for real-time route optimization. Built on scalable Node.js and Supabase infrastructure, the ECAS offers a replicable model for municipalities.

8. Acknowledgment

We convey appreciation to the Municipal Corporation departments that engaged in our initial evaluation program and supplied beneficial feedback regarding e-waste collection logistics and operational requirements. Particular recognition goes to the 300 participant users whose dedicated engagement assisted us in refining the mobile application and confirming its real-world effectiveness. Finally, we acknowledge our project supervisor, Prof. A.H. Auti, and the academic personnel of the Department of Computer Engineering at STES'S Sinhgad Academy of Engineering for their continuous assistance, guidance, and provision of resources throughout this investigation.

9. References

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