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Drone-Based Anomaly and Person Detection System

Dr.K.Malarvizhi,Professor,B.Tech (IT) & CIT

M.Kohila,Student,B.Tech(IT) & CIT

S.Sherlin,Student,B.Tech(IT) & CIT

M.Arivu Selvan,Student,B.Tech(IT) & CIT

K.Praveen Kumar,Student,B.Tech(IT) & CIT

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Abstract - The rapid adoption of drones across diverse sectors demands intelligent systems capable of real-time anomaly and person detection. This paper presents a study on integrating artificial intelligence techniques, including computer vision and deep learning, to design an autonomous drone system for enhanced situational awareness. The work reviews recent developments in drone-based anomaly detection and person identification, focusing on four domains: sensor fusion, AI-driven detection, identification frameworks, and real-time communication mechanisms. The analysis outlines the effectiveness and challenges of existing models, emphasizing their high detection accuracy under controlled settings and reduced reliability in dynamic environments. To address these limitations, a unified architecture is proposed that combines vision-based anomaly detection, intelligent identification, and efficient data transmission for improved surveillance performance. The study concludes by highlighting future research opportunities such as adaptive multi-environment detection, context-aware analytics, and low-latency real-time operation, contributing to the advancement of reliable and intelligent drone surveillance systems.

Key Words: Drones, Anomaly Detection, Person Identification, Artificial Intelligence, Deep Learning, Real-Time Processing.

1.INTRODUCTION

Drones have become integral in applications such as surveillance, search and rescue, traffic monitoring, and security enforcement. However, the increasing reliance on drone technology necessitates the development of intelligent systems capable of detecting anomalies and identifying individuals in real time. Traditional methods often fall short due to limitations in processing power, accuracy, and adaptability to dynamic environments. Recent advancements in AI, ML, and CV offer promising solutions to these challenges, enabling drones to autonomously detect and classify anomalies and persons with high accuracy and efficiency.

2. Objectives

The primary objectives of this project are:

- To design an AI-powered drone system capable of detecting anomalies and identifying persons in real time.
- To integrate machine learning and deep learning models for accurate object classification and motion analysis.
- To implement sensor fusion using visual and thermal data for improved detection under varying conditions.
- To ensure low-latency communication and efficient processing through edge computing or onboard inference.
- To evaluate model performance using standard metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score.

3. Technological Foundations

3.1 Machine Learning (ML)

ML algorithms are pivotal in classifying and detecting anomalies and persons based on features extracted from drone-captured data. Algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVMs), K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN), and Random Forests are employed for static object detection and anomaly classification. Feature extraction involves analyzing object shapes, sizes, and motion patterns from images or videos captured by drones. Preprocessing techniques like normalization and dimensionality reduction enhance model accuracy. ML models are suitable for scenarios with limited computational resources and can operate effectively on embedded systems within drones.

3.2 Deep Learning (DL)

DL techniques, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), are utilized for automatic feature extraction from raw drone imagery. CNNs excel in detecting and classifying objects and anomalies in complex environments. Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks are employed to capture temporal dependencies in video sequences, facilitating dynamic anomaly detection. Transfer learning with pre-trained models accelerates training processes and improves accuracy. DL models require substantial computational resources but can be optimized for real-time processing on modern drone platforms equipped with GPUs or specialized processors.

3.3 Computer Vision (CV)

CV techniques are essential for interpreting visual data captured by drones. Object detection frameworks like YOLO (You Only Look Once) and Faster R-CNN are employed to identify and localize persons and anomalies within drone imagery. Optical Flow and background subtraction methods are used to detect motion and identify unusual activities. Semantic segmentation aids in understanding the context of detected objects, enhancing the accuracy of anomaly detection. Real-time processing capabilities are crucial for timely responses in dynamic environments.

3.4 Sensor Integration

Drones are equipped with various sensors, including RGB cameras, thermal infrared cameras, LiDAR, and GPS, to capture diverse data types. Sensor fusion techniques combine data from multiple sources to provide comprehensive situational awareness. For instance, thermal cameras can detect heat signatures of individuals, while LiDAR provides precise 3D mapping of the environment. Integrating these sensors enhances the robustness and reliability of anomaly and person detection systems.

3.5 Real-Time Communication Interfaces

Efficient communication interfaces are vital for transmitting data between drones and ground control stations. Low-latency communication protocols ensure timely delivery of detection results and enable real-time decision-making. Technologies such as 5G, Wi-Fi 6, and dedicated short-range communication (DSRC) are explored for their potential to support high-speed data transmission in drone networks. Edge computing frameworks are also integrated to process data locally on drones, reducing the dependency on remote servers and enhancing response times.

4. Machine Learning and Deep Learning Algorithms

4.1 Support Vector Machines (SVM)

SVMs are employed for classifying static anomalies and persons based on extracted features. They work by finding the optimal hyperplane that separates different classes in feature space. SVMs are effective for scenarios with clear class boundaries and are suitable for applications with limited computational resources.

4.2 K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN)

KNN classifies objects based on the majority class of their nearest neighbors in feature space. It is a simple and intuitive algorithm that requires no explicit training phase. KNN is effective for anomaly detection in environments with well. Defined patterns and is computationally efficient for real-time applications.

4.3 Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) RNNs and LSTMs are utilized for processing sequential data, capturing temporal dependencies in video sequences. They are particularly useful for detecting dynamic anomalies and tracking individuals over time. LSTMs address the vanishing gradient problem in RNNs, enabling them to learn long-term dependencies in sequences.

4.4 Random Forest

Random Forest is an ensemble learning method that constructs multiple decision trees and merges them to obtain a more accurate and stable prediction. It is robust to overfitting and can handle large datasets with high dimensionality. Random Forest is suitable for complex anomaly detection tasks where interpretability and accuracy are paramount.

4.5 Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs)

CNNs are deep learning models designed for processing structured grid data, such as images. They are employed for detecting and classifying objects and anomalies in drone imagery. CNNs automatically learn spatial hierarchies of features, making them highly effective for visual recognition tasks.

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4.6 Transformers and Attention Mechanisms

Transformers, equipped with attention mechanisms, model relationships between elements in a sequence, allowing the system to focus on important features. They are employed for complex anomaly detection tasks and can capture global dependencies in data. Transformers have shown superior performance in various sequence modeling tasks and are being explored for real-time anomaly detection in drone applications.

4.7 Paper analysis

The comparative study reveals that deep learning-based systems, especially CNN-LSTM and Transformer architectures, outperform traditional ML approaches in both accuracy and adaptability. However, lightweight edge-based models such as those by Li & Wang (2022) demonstrate the potential for real-time onboard deployment. Recent integration of Vision Transformers (ViT) and Large Language Models (LLM) indicates a shift toward context-aware, explainable AI systems capable of interpreting complex aerial scenes.

4.8 Evaluation Metrics

- The performance of the proposed system can be assessed using the following metrics:
- **Accuracy:** Ratio of correctly detected anomalies/persons to total instances.
- **Precision and Recall:** Evaluate the reliability of detections and ability to identify all relevant targets.
- **F1-Score:** Harmonic mean of precision and recall for balanced evaluation.
- **Latency:** Average time taken to process and transmit detection data.
- **Frame Rate (FPS):** Determines real-time performance capability.

5.1 Current Challenges

5.1.1 Limited datasets

Most drone-based anomaly and person detection datasets are small, domain-specific, and sometimes proprietary. Collecting high-quality aerial video data is expensive and time-consuming. Limited datasets reduce AI model accuracy and hinder generalization across diverse environments, altitudes, and weather conditions.

5.1.2 Environmental Variability

Drone operations face varying lighting, weather, terrain, and background conditions. Objects and people appear differently depending on altitude, camera angle, and occlusions. AI models may misclassify or fail to detect anomalies and individuals in such dynamic scenarios. Maintaining robust detection is challenging.

5.1.3 Real-Time Processing and Latency

Processing high-resolution drone imagery and video streams in real time requires significant computational resources. Many drones have limited onboard processing capabilities, which can cause delays in anomaly detection and person tracking. Low-latency performance is critical for safety-critical applications.

5.2 Future Directions

5.2.1 Multi-Modal Sensor Integration

Future systems can integrate multiple sensors, such as RGB, thermal, LiDAR, and acoustic sensors, to improve detection reliability. Combining diverse data sources enables accurate identification of anomalies and individuals under different environmental conditions. Multi-modal fusion enhances robustness and situational awareness.

5.2.2 Context-Aware Detection

Incorporating context, such as movement patterns, crowd behavior, and environmental cues, can improve anomaly classification and person detection. Context-aware AI models can reduce false positives, preserve temporal consistency, and make decisions more aligned with real-world scenarios.

5.2.3 Lightweight, Edge-Enabled Systems

Optimized AI models running on edge devices or onboard drones can enable near real-time detection. Lightweight architectures allow collaborative swarm detection, interactive monitoring, and efficient deployment in low-power, mobile platforms. This approach ensures practical usability in field operations.

6. Ethical and Regulatory Considerations

Deploying drone-based surveillance systems requires strict compliance with ethical and legal frameworks:

- **Data Privacy:** Ensure anonymization of captured data to protect individual identities.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Follow aviation authority regulations (e.g., DGCA in India, FAA in the U.S.) for drone operations.
- **Operational Safety:** Include geofencing and collision avoidance features to prevent misuse or accidents.
- **Transparency:** Establish accountability in data handling and algorithmic decision-making.

6. Conclusion

Drone-based anomaly and person detection using AI has the potential to greatly enhance safety, security, and operational efficiency across multiple applications. This study demonstrates that a system combining computer vision, machine learning, and edge computing can detect anomalies and identify individuals in real time, making drone operations more intelligent and reliable. While challenges such as limited datasets, environmental variability, and real-time processing constraints remain, the integration of adaptive AI techniques can address these issues effectively. Future improvements, including multi-modal sensor fusion, context-aware detection, and lightweight edge-enabled models, can further enhance accuracy, responsiveness, and usability. Overall, AI-powered drone detection systems represent a promising .

In the future, integrating generative AI and large multimodal models (LMMs) can further improve the interpretability and decision-making capabilities of drones. Collaborative drone swarms equipped with federated learning could operate autonomously in large areas while preserving data privacy. These advancements will transform drone surveillance into a fully intelligent, adaptive, and context-aware ecosystem.Advancement toward safer, smarter, and more autonomous aerial monitoring solution.
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Table -1:Comparative Analysis

Ref	Paper / System	Technology Used	Algorithm / Model	Features	Performance / Outcome
1	Bozcan & Kayacan – UAV-AdNet	Deep Learning, UAV Vision	Unsupervised DNN (UAV-AdNet)	Detects anomalies without labeled data; adaptable to unseen environments	Achieved strong detection capability with reduced dependency on annotations
2	Jiao et al. – Video Anomaly Detection for Moving UAVs	Aerial Video Analysis	Spatio-temporal CNN	Learns dynamic patterns from moving UAV footage	Reliable anomaly detection in moving scenes
3	Zhang et al. – Deep Learning for Drone Surveillance	AI-based Surveillance	CNN + RNN	Extracts temporal & spatial features jointly	Increased precision and faster detection
4	Li & Wang – UAV Edge AI System	Edge AI, Onboard Processing	Edge Inference Model	Executes model locally on drone	Low latency, energy-efficient analysis
5	Kumar et al. – MARL for UAV Swarm Coordination	Reinforcement Learning	Multi-Agent RL	Distributed decision-making	Efficient coordination and area coverage
6	Zheng et al. – Contextual Surveillance using LLMs	Vision + Language AI	LLM Integration	Interprets visual scenes semantically	Enables contextual understanding and anomaly description
7	Ekechi et al. – Swarm Intelligence in UAVs	Distributed AI	Swarm Optimization	Cooperative UAV data sharing	Improves reliability in large-area monitoring
8	Verma et al. – Context-Aware Anomaly Detection	Deep Video Learning	Context-aware CNN	Considers background and scene context	Accurate detection across varying conditions
9	Ahn & Chung – Collaborative Deep Learning for Swarms	Multi-UAV Learning	Cooperative DL	Shared model weights between UAVs	Fewer missed detections, improved coordination
10	Yu et al. – UAV Network Security Framework	Cybersecurity	Intrusion Detection	Detects network anomalies	Protects UAVs from spoofing/jamming attacks

11	Dai et al. – Learning-Based Visual Detection	Vision-based AI	Unsupervised DNN	Self-learning feature extraction	Real-time anomaly detection without manual labels
12	Zhang et al. – VisDrone Dataset	UAV Benchmark	Dataset	Large dataset of drone footage	Enables benchmarking of models for fairness
13	Bozcan et al. – Hybrid Anomaly Detection	Deep Learning	CNN-RNN Hybrid	Combines frame-wise and sequence learning	Improves detection in continuous video streams
14	Zhang & Li – MARL in UAV Swarms	Multi-agent RL	MARL Framework	Communication between drones	Optimized area exploration and task division
15	Nguyen et al. – Edge AI for UAV Inspection	Edge Computing	CNN on Edge Device	Onboard processing	Fast and autonomous defect inspection
16	Liu et al. – Transformer-based Anomaly Detection	Vision Transformer	Transformer Architecture	Attention-based feature linking	Captures long-term temporal relationships
17	Chen & Wu – Swarm Deep Collaboration	Swarm AI	Cooperative CNN	Multi-view detection from multiple UAVs	Enhanced accuracy through view fusion
18	Jiao et al. – High-Resolution UAV Cameras	Imaging Technology	HD Vision + Tracking	Tracks moving humans at high altitude	Improved clarity and detection rate
19	Singh & Chen – Hybrid CNN-RNN Model	Hybrid Deep Learning	CNN + RNN	Extracts spatial-temporal dependencies	Boosts detection in dynamic environments
20	Zhao & Kim – UAV Cybersecurity	Network Security	Security Model	Secure data transmission	Protects against hijacking or data loss
21	Liu et al. – Transformer Models for Surveillance	Vision Transformer	Transformer Network	Learns global context	Precise object localization and anomaly spotting
22	Wu et al. – Hybrid CNN-Transformer	Hybrid Vision AI	CNN + Transformer	Spatial-temporal fusion	Combines strengths of CNN & Transformer for robust output
23	Singh & Chen – Person Detection in UAV Imagery	Vision-based AI	R-CNN	Detects humans in aerial imagery	High precision under varying angles

24	Wu et al. – Vision-Language Models for UAV Surveillance	Multimodal AI	Vision-Language Model + LLM	Understands image with text reasoning	Explains events in natural language
25	Kumar et al. – MARL for Multi-UAV Coordination	Reinforcement Learning	MARL	Cooperative communication	Improved team-based surveillance
26	Li et al. – Deep Learning for Person Detection	Vision AI	Faster R-CNN	Localizes humans in complex scenes	Stable detection under occlusion
27	Jones et al. – Edge AI with LLMs	Edge + LLM	Hybrid Model	Runs AI locally with LLM reasoning	Smart context-aware inspection
28	Nguyen et al. – LLM-based Visual Inspection	Vision + Language	LLM Fusion	Integrates perception & explanation	Human-like analysis of anomalies
29	OpenReview – UAV Object Detection Learning	Deep Vision	CNN/DNN	Learns diverse UAV data	Robust detection under real conditions
30	Microsoft Research – ChatGPT for Robotics/UAVs	LLM + Robotics	AI Agent Model	Text-based control and reasoning	Enables autonomous planning
31	He et al. – Real-Time Person Detection	Computer Vision	YOLOv5	Real-time detection of multiple persons	High detection speed and reliability
32	ScienceDirect – Hybrid CNN-RNN Detection	Hybrid DL	CNN-RNN	Combines static & temporal cues	Adaptable to complex UAV scenes
33	Nature – Autonomous UAV Detection Systems	Multi-Agent + Edge AI	Multi-Agent DL	Distributed processing	Achieves real-time collaboration
34	RSS 2020 – Drone-Based Anomaly Detection	Deep Learning	DNN	Learns motion irregularities	Detects anomalies efficiently
35	ArXiv 2022 – Person Detection for UAVs	Computer Vision	CNN + R-CNN	Handles crowd and occlusion	Maintains accuracy in crowded scenes
36	Caputo et al., 2021	Vision AI	YOLO	Detects humans in	Fast and accurate in

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	– YOLO for Drone Rescue			disasters	rescue tasks
37	Mantau et al., 2022 – YOLOv5 on Thermal UAV Data	Thermal Vision	YOLOv5 + Transfer Learning	Detects in darkness	Robust detection in thermal imagery
38	Bindemann et al., 2017 – Aerial Person Identification	Vision-based Analysis	Person Re-ID Model	Identifies individuals via facial/shape cues	Accuracy drops with distance or motion
39	Jiang et al., 2022 – Deep CNN on Thermal Videos	Deep Vision	CNN	Detects humans in thermal streams	Performs well in fog and low-light

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