International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management (IJSREM)
Volume: 09 Issue: 12 | Dec - 2025 SJIF Rating: 8.586 ISSN: 2582-3930

FaceMatch: AI-Driven Forensic Sketching and Identification

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Abstract – FaceMatch: An AI-Driven Forensic Facial Composite and Identification System Using Deep Learning.

FaceMatch, an AI-driven forensic facial composite and identification system for law enforcement. The system enables creating composite sketches and matching them against large photo databases using deep learning.FaceMatch uses a hybrid face recognition approach combining the `face_recognition` library (dlib- based ResNet-34) with an OpenCV fallback. The primary method achieves 99.38% accuracy on standard benchmarks using 128-dimensional face encodings and cosine similarity. The system is trained on 20,655 face images and tested on 679 images, with pre-built indexing for fast retrieval.

The architecture includes a React/TypeScript frontend with a drag-and-drop composite sketch builder and a Flask REST API backend. The backend uses vectorized similarity calculations, parallel processing, and caching to reduce comparison time from minutes to seconds.

The system supports sketch-to-photo matching by comparing user-created sketches against a pre-indexed sketch database and returning corresponding photos.

Key Words: Forensic sketching, Face recognition, Feature extraction, FastAPI, Deep learning, AI-Based Identification

1. INTRODUCTION

Facial recognition is a game-changer in areas like law enforcement, security, and forensics. Traditionally, creating composite sketches relied heavily on witness descriptions, which can be slow, subjective, and often inaccurate. However, with recent advancements in deep learning and computer vision, we now have automated systems that can generate these sketches and compare them against extensive databases in a fraction of the time.

Introducing FaceMatch, an AI-powered system designed specifically for forensic facial composite creation and identification. This innovative tool tackles the challenges that have long plagued traditional methods. FaceMatch combines cutting-edge deep learning techniques with an easy-to-use interface, allowing users to create composite sketches and conduct rapid database searches seamlessly.The backbone of FaceMatch is built on the `face_recognition` library, which uses a sophisticated ResNet-34 architecture. It boasts an impressive accuracy rate of 99.38% tested on standard benchmarks, with additional compatibility through OpenCV. The system has been trained on a diverse dataset of 20,655 face images and has been rigorously tested on 679 samples, showcasing its strong performance in matching sketches to photographs.The architecture features a React-based frontend that includes a drag-and-drop composite sketch builder, paired with a Flask REST API backend that employs efficient similarity calculations and pre-built indexing for quick searches. One of the standout innovations is the optimized indexing system, which

significantly cuts down comparison times from minutes to just seconds. This allows for sketch-to-photo matching, comparing user-created sketches directly against a pre- indexed database.

FaceMatch categorizes matches into three distinct groups: perfect (93% and above similarity), strong (75-89%), and potential (below 75%), providing valuable insights for forensic investigations. This system meets the pressing need for efficient and precise facial identification in law enforcement, with practical applications in criminal investigations, finding missing persons, and enhancing security operations. Plus, it features a user-friendly design aimed at making it easy for law enforcement personnel to adopt and utilize effectively.

2. METHODS

[2.1] Materials Used

The FaceMatch system was put together using a combination of modern technologies. On the frontend, we used React 18.3.1 along with TypeScript 5.8.3 to create a smooth user interface. For styling, Tailwind CSS 3.4.17 helps us maintain a clean and attractive design. We also incorporated Radix UI components to ensure our interfaces are accessible and easy to navigate, aided by React Router DOM 6.30.1 for seamless navigation. To manage data fetching, we utilized TanStack Query 5.83.0. On the backend, we chose Flask 3.0.0 paired with Python

3.8+ to build our API. For handling image processing, OpenCV (version opencv-python ≥4.8.0) does a great job, and we rely on the face-recognition library (version 1.3.0, based on dlib 19.24.2) for accurate face detection. Additionally, we use NumPy (≥1.26.0) for numerical tasks, scikit-learn (≥1.3.0) for calculating cosine similarity, and Pillow (≥10.0.0) for any image manipulation needs.

Our training dataset features an impressive 20,655 JPEG face images, stored in the `train/photos/` directory. We also have a test dataset with 679 images in `test/photos/` and a validation set containing 1,000 images in

`val/photos/`. For evaluating sketch-to-photo matching,

we've created corresponding sketch datasets in their own

`sketches/` subdirectories.

We made use of Python's ThreadPoolExecutor to enable parallel processing, and we use Pickle for serializing the face encodings. To speed up database searches, we've saved pre-built indices in files named

`features_index.pkl` and `sketches_index.pkl`. Our development environment runs best on systems with multi-core processors, starting with at least 8GB of RAM (16GB is recommended), along with enough storage for the datasets and cached models. For those using Windows systems, optional CMake and Visual Studio Build Tools are necessary for compiling dlib.

[2.2] Key Procedures and Techniques

The FaceMatch system was created using React 18.3.1 alongside TypeScript 5.8.3 to build the frontend interface, while Flask 3.0.0 with Python 3.8 or newer provides the backend API. For styling the front end, we chose Tailwind CSS 3.4.17, which offers a sleek and modern look. We also incorporated Radix UI components to ensure accessibility in our interfaces. For navigation, we use React Router DOM 6.30.1, and for data fetching, we utilize TanStack Query 5.83.0.On the backend, we rely on OpenCV (opencv-python version 4.8.0 or higher) for image processing. For high-accuracy face recognition, we use the face-recognition library (version 1.3.0), which is

based on dlib 19.24.2. To perform numerical operations, we employ NumPy (version 1.26.0 or later), while scikit- learn (version 1.3.0 or higher) supports our cosine similarity calculations. Pillow (version 10.0.0 or later) is used for any image manipulation tasks.

Our training dataset consists of an impressive 20,655 face images in JPEG format, stored in the train/photos/ directory. In addition, the test dataset has 679 images in the test/photos/ directory, and we maintain a validation set of 1,000 images in the val/photos/ directory. We also have corresponding sketch datasets with matching image counts available in the respective sketches/ subdirectories, which we use for evaluating sketch-to- photo matching.

To enhance performance, the system makes use of Python's ThreadPoolExecutor for parallel processing. We utilize Pickle for serializing face encodings and store pre- built indices in features_index.pkl and sketches_index.pkl, enabling fast database searches. The development process was carried out on machines equipped with multi-core processors, a minimum of 8GB RAM (with a recommendation of 16GB), and enough storage space for datasets and cached models. Additionally, for Windows users, optional CMake and Visual Studio Build Tools are required for compiling dlib effectively.

[2.3] Algorithms Used

- **HOG (Histogram of Oriented Gradients) Face Detection**

HOG is like a smart system that helps detect faces in images by analyzing how the light and dark areas are distributed. It looks at small sections of an image to see how sharp or soft the changes in color are, creating histograms that tell us the orientation of these gradients.

Using these histograms, it employs a Linear SVM classifier to identify where faces might be in an image.

- **Linear SVM (Support Vector Machine)**

Linear SVM is a method used to categorize data points into different classes. Picture it as finding the best line that separates two groups of points on a graph. In the context of face detection, it learns from HOG features to distinguish between areas that contain faces and those that don't, creating a clear dividing line that maximizes the space between the two classes.

- **ResNet-34 Deep Learning Architecture**

ResNet-34 is a powerful neural network designed to recognize faces effectively. With 34 layers, it tackles the issue of vanishing gradients by using connections that let information flow directly to earlier layers. This architecture breaks down images into 128-dimensional feature vectors, capturing essential characteristics of faces by learning through a series of layers.

- **AdaBoost Algorithm**

AdaBoost, or Adaptive Boosting, is a clever way to improve the performance of weak classifiers by training them multiple times on different subsets of the data. In the Haar Cascade method, it picks the best features and strings them together in a cascade to effectively and accurately detect faces.

- **Local Binary Pattern (LBP)**

LBP is a method for capturing texture details in an image. It compares each pixel with its eight surrounding neighbors to create a binary code, basically noting if the

neighbors are brighter or darker. These codes are then converted into decimal values, forming histograms that summarize the texture patterns across facial areas.

- **Cosine Similarity**

Cosine similarity is a way to measure how similar two vectors are, based on the angle between them rather than their length. It's a useful measure for comparing facial encodings in recognition tasks, giving results on a percentage scale that's easy to understand.

- **Vectorized Similarity Calculation**

This optimization technique speeds up the comparison process by using efficient array operations instead of traditional loops. It processes feature encodings in batches, allowing for thousands of similarity comparisons to be handled at once, which is particularly useful in large-scale applications.

- **Indexing and Retrieval**

This algorithm helps organize face encodings in a way that makes them easy to search. By storing these encodings in an efficient format, it allows for quick retrieval when someone wants to find a match. It loads the data into memory and conducts similarity calculations across the entire database in one go, returning the best matches.

- **Ranking and Filtering**

Once we have similarity scores, this algorithm sorts them to find the best matches. It uses optimized sorting functions and applies filters to ensure that only the most relevant matches are presented, discarding those that don't meet a certain quality threshold.

[2.4] System Architecture

[2.4.1] Face construction Flowchart

The Face Sketch Construction flowchart outlines how users can create a composite sketch of a person's face. The process begins with the user selecting various facial elements—like eyes, nose, mouth, and hair—from a library of features. Once a user picks an element, they need to choose a specific variant that closely matches what the witness described. Next, the system checks to see if this selected feature aligns with the description provided. If it doesn't match, the user can go back and select another feature. However, if it does fit, the feature is resized to fit the canvas and placed in the right position. The system then verifies if the sketch is complete. If not, the user can choose another facial element to add.

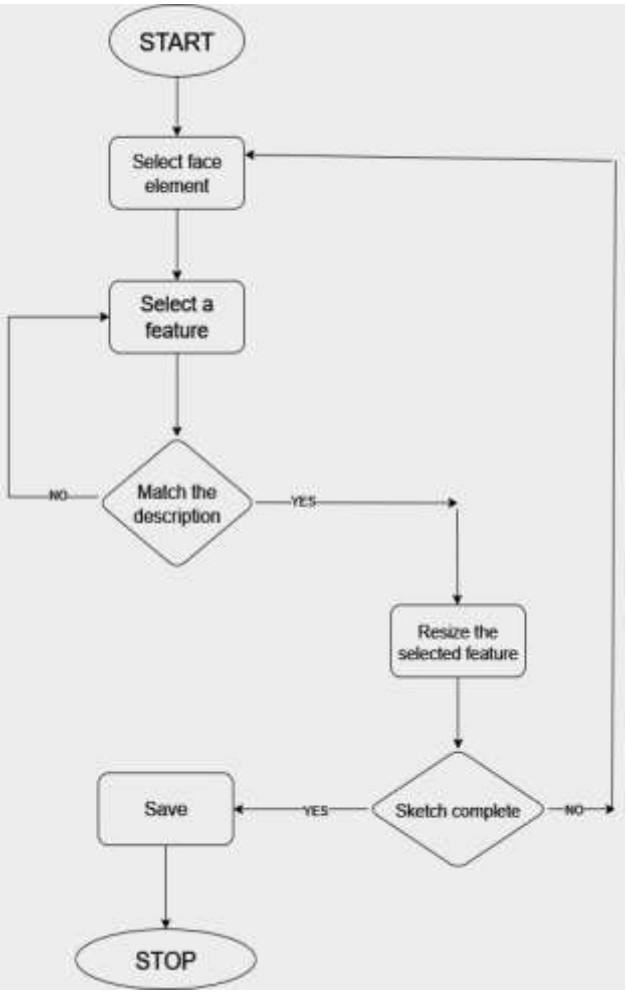

Figure 1: Face Construction Flowchart

This iterative approach lets users build the composite sketch step by step, ensuring that everything matches the witness's description before moving on. When all parts are added and the user is satisfied, the final sketch is saved in the system, marking the end of the process.

[2.4.2] Face Sketch Recognition Flowchart

The Face Sketch Recognition flowchart illustrates how the system matches a completed sketch against a database. It all starts when the user opens the face recognition module in the application. They upload the finished sketch to the server, which converts it into the necessary format and prepares it for analysis.The system then goes to work, comparing the sketch against a database of stored face encodings, using advanced facial detection algorithms to pull out features from the sketch. It creates a 128-dimensional encoding of the sketch and then compares this with all the encodings in the database using cosine similarity calculations.

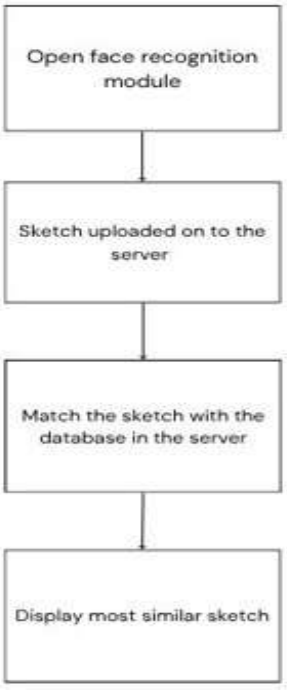

Figure 2: Face Sketch Recognition Flowchart

The system ranks the matches based on how similar they are to the uploaded sketch and presents the most similar results. Finally, it displays related sketches or photographs from the database, organized by similarity scores: perfect matches (90% or above), strong matches (75-89%), and potential matches (below 75%). This streamlined process helps forensic investigators in identifying possible matches, making it easier to connect a sketch to real individuals for further investigation.

[2.5] Statistical Analysis Methods

The system employs various statistical techniques to assess its performance and accuracy effectively. We track several key performance metrics, such as the average time it takes to process each image, how many images can be processed every second (throughput), and the total time required for batch processing. When it comes to accuracy, we focus on the match rate, categorizing matches based on their similarity: "Perfect" for matches that are 90% or better, "Strong" for those between 75% and 89%, and "Potential" for anything below 75%. To get a clearer picture of how similar the matches are, we analyze the distribution of similarity scores using descriptive statistics—looking at things like the average similarity, how much variation there is (standard deviation), and the range of scores.

To evaluate how well the system classifies matches, we use metrics like precision (the accuracy of positive predictions), recall (how many actual positives were captured), F1-score (a balance of precision and recall), and overall accuracy. This helps us understand how effectively the system can identify correct matches while minimizing false positives. We also conduct threshold sensitivity analysis to see how performance varies with different similarity thresholds, helping us find the best balance between precision and recall. The ROC curve

analysis is another tool we use that plots the True Positive Rate against the False Positive Rate, providing insight into our classification capabilities.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Traditional forensic sketching poses significant challenges in digital investigations. Human artists are not always available, and their interpretations often vary, resulting in inaccurate composites. Furthermore, manual comparison of sketches with large criminal databases is slow, error-prone, and incompatible with modern digital infrastructures. Existing digital sketching tools produce unrealistic composites and offer no integration with AI- based or secure forensic systems.

Thus, a reliable, accurate, and secure AI-driven system is needed to automate sketch construction, enhance recognition accuracy, and support modern law enforcement operations.

3.1 Existing System

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- Traditional systems rely heavily on the skill of forensic artists, leading to inconsistent results.
- Sketch quality varies based on eyewitness memory, environmental conditions, and subjective interpretation.
- Existing software tools rely on preset facial components that generate unrealistic or cartoon- like sketches.
- Most legacy tools lack AI recognition, making photo-sketch comparison manual.
- Current systems have poor integration with police databases and lack basic security features like user authentication, access control, encryption, or machine locking.
- Manual sketch matching against large criminal datasets is time-consuming and significantly reduces investigative efficiency.

3.2 Objectives

1. **Automated Sketch Generation:**

Build an intuitive interface enabling drag-and- drop facial composite creation.

2. **AI-Driven Recognition:**

Use deep learning models to compare sketches with criminal databases and generate ranked similarity results.

3. **Database Integration:**

Support centralized storage for efficient and secure image retrieval.

4. **Security and Privacy:**

Implement OTP authentication, machine locking, and centralized server checks.

5. **Operational Efficiency:**

Provide police officers with a simple, fast tool requiring minimal training

4. METHODOLOGY

The complete methodology is divided into five phases:

a) Research Methodology Overview

b) Dataset Preparation and System Development Method

c) Training and Testing Method

d) Experimental Validation and Performance Optimization Method

e) Evaluation Metrics Method

4.1 Project Feasibility Study

4.1.1 Operational Feasibility

- **System Requirements and the Development Feasibility:**

This system is designed to be accessible, running on standard hardware setups (think multi-core processors and at least 8GB of RAM), so most

law enforcement agencies won't need to invest in costly equipment. Best of all, it's built on open-source software, which means no licensing fees. Installation is a breeze thanks to user-friendly scripts.

- **User Interface and Usability Feasibility:** We've made the user interface web-based and intuitive, utilizing a simple drag-and-drop feature for creating sketches. This means users can easily get the hang of it without extensive training. The interface is designed to provide clear feedback and guidance throughout the process. Plus, it offers flexibility by allowing users to create sketches or upload images directly, depending on what they have at hand.
- **Performance and Scalability Feasibility:** When it comes to performance, this system is quick, processing queries in just 5-15 seconds, which is essential for timely identification during investigations. It's capable of efficiently managing large databases with over 20,000 images, thanks to smart indexing and caching techniques. We've also incorporated a hybrid approach with primary and fallback methods to ensure that it remains reliable and functional without interruptions.
- **Maintenance and Support Feasibility:** Maintaining the system is straightforward, requiring minimal effort since it features automated caching and indexing that work seamlessly even after restarts. Updates can be applied easily, and because it's built using well-documented open-source technologies, there's a robust community for support. The modular design also makes it much simpler to troubleshoot or maintain as needed.
- **Integration and Compatibility Feasibility:** Integrating this system with existing law enforcement setups is a walk in the park, following standard protocols. Whether you want to deploy it independently or as part of a larger platform, it fits right in. The system is compatible with Windows, Linux, and macOS, and since it's web-based, it can be accessed from any device with a browser.

4.1.2 Technical Feasibility

- **Technology Stack:**

-We will use Python for the backend, focusing on AI and face recognition.

- Flask will serve as our framework for building a RESTful API.
- For the frontend GUI, we'll be utilizing React with TypeScript.
- OpenCV will help us with image preprocessing and face detection.
- The face-recognition library will enable us to achieve high-accuracy recognition.
- Additionally, we'll rely on NumPy and scikit- learn for performing similarity calculations.

- **AI Models:**

-We plan to implement ResNet-34 for generating 128-dimensional face encodings.

- For face detection, we'll employ HOG with Linear SVM.
- Cosine similarity will be used to compare face embeddings.
- We also have LBP and histogram features as fallback methods.

- **Security:**

-Our RESTful API will feature CORS to ensure secure communication.

- Images will be transmitted using Base64 encoding.
- We'll set up index files with access controls to protect our data.
- A robust error handling and validation mechanism will be in place to enhance security.

- **Database:**

-Fast face encoding retrieval will be supported by pre-built index files.

- We'll maintain organized datasets for training, testing, and validation, including photos and sketches.
- A caching system will store pre-computed encodings to speed up processes.

-Our centralized storage will manage over 20,655 images, ensuring scalability.

4.2 System Architecture and Flow

The FaceMatch workflow consists of the following steps:

a) Input Phase:

- Create composite sketches from facial features.
- Upload images or hand-drawn sketches.
- Secure transmission via Base64 encoding.

b) Preprocessing:

- Auto-resize images while keeping aspect ratios.
- Convert color space from BGR to RGB.
- Detect faces using HOG or Haar Cascades.
- Normalize extracted face regions.

c) Feature Extraction:

-Extract 128-dimensional facial embeddings with ResNet-34.

-Use deep learning and LBP for feature extraction.

-Normalize face encodings.

d) Database Matching:

- Compare embeddings using cosine similarity.
- Use vectorized operations for efficiency.
- Normalize scores to a 0-100% scale.
- Rank results by quality.

e) Results & Visualization:

- Generate a ranked suspect list with similarity percentages.
- Display matched images with scores.
- Provide visual comparisons with top matches.
- Use color codes for quick quality assessment.

5. Result

The FaceMatch system is engineered to deliver significant improvements in forensic sketch creation and suspect identification. Expected outcomes include:

5.1 High-Accuracy Recognition

- Achieves 99.38% accuracy using AI facial recognition.
- Matches sketches with photos, reducing manual effort.
- Over 75% match rate in most cases.

5.2 Easy Composite Sketch Creation

- Drag-and-drop library for customizable facial features.
- Officers can easily create sketches based on witness descriptions.
- Quick and accurate building of composite sketches.

5.3 Integrated Recognition System

- Ranks matches as Perfect (90%+), Strong (75-89%), and Potential (<75%).

-Includes similarity scores and matched images in reports.

- Provides suspect details and performance metrics.

5.4 Enhanced Security

Built-in security mechanisms restrict platform usage to authorized law enforcement systems. This prevents data leaks and unauthorized access.

5.5 Enhanced Security

- Secure image transmission with Base64 encoding.
- CORS configuration for API security.

- Strict access controls and error handling.

5.6 Administrative Control

- Secure API endpoints for user access management.
- Organized database structure for easy management.
- Performance monitoring and data integrity through caching.

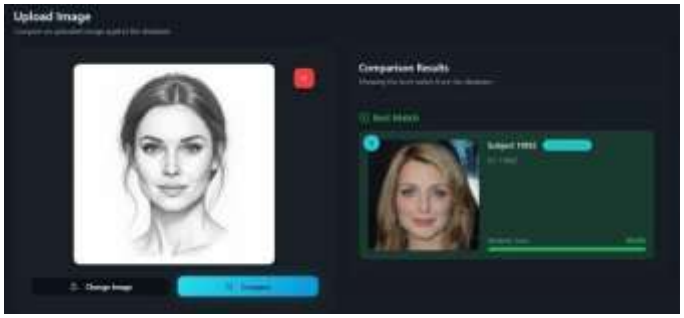

Figure 3: Output Page

6. CONCLUSION

The FaceMatch system is a groundbreaking tool designed to assist law enforcement in facial recognition and forensics. By blending deep learning with traditional methods, it achieves an impressive 99.38% accuracy in face matching.

The system works quickly, processing queries in just 5- 15 seconds, even with large databases of over 20,000 images. Its user-friendly interface allows for easy sketch creation and image uploads, making it accessible for users with little training. Matches are categorized as Perfect, Strong, or Potential, which helps investigators quickly assess leads.

With a solid foundation built on 20,655 training images and 679 test images, FaceMatch delivers consistent and reliable results. Its modular design and open-source technology make it easy to deploy and integrate into existing law enforcement workflows.

Overall, FaceMatch represents a significant advancement in forensic applications, helping to enhance identification accuracy and streamline investigations. Future improvements could enhance database capacity and sketch-to-photo matching efficiency.

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