

*Software That Sees*

**2nd Edition**  
Covers OpenCV 2.5



*Learning*

# OpenCV

*Computer Vision in C++ with  
the OpenCV Library*

**O'REILLY®**

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# Overview

## What Is OpenCV?

OpenCV [OpenCV] is an open source (see <http://opensource.org>) computer vision library available from <http://opencv.org>. The library is written in C and C++<sup>1</sup> and runs under Linux, Windows, Mac OS X, iOS, and Android. Interfaces are available for Python, Java, Ruby, Matlab, and other languages.

OpenCV was designed for computational efficiency with a strong focus on real-time applications: optimizations were made at all levels, from algorithms to multicore and CPU instructions. For example, OpenCV supports optimizations for SSE, MMX, AVX, NEON, OpenMP, and TBB. If you desire further optimization on Intel architectures [Intel] for basic image processing, you can buy Intel's Integrated Performance Primitives (IPP) libraries [IPP], which consist of low-level optimized routines in many different algorithmic areas. OpenCV automatically uses the appropriate instructions from IPP at runtime. The GPU module also provides CUDA-accelerated versions of many routines (for Nvidia GPUs) and OpenCL-optimized ones (for generic GPUs).

One of OpenCV's goals is to provide a simple-to-use computer vision infrastructure that helps people build fairly sophisticated vision applications quickly. The OpenCV library contains over 500 functions that span many areas, including factory product inspection, medical imaging, security, user interface, camera calibration, stereo vision, and robotics. Because computer vision and machine learning often go hand-in-hand, OpenCV also contains a full, general-purpose Machine Learning Library (MLL). This sub-library is focused on statistical pattern recognition and clustering. The MLL is highly useful for the vision tasks that are at the core of OpenCV's mission, but it is general enough to be used for any machine learning problem.

## Who Uses OpenCV?

Most computer scientists and practical programmers are aware of some facet of the role that computer vision plays. But few people are aware of all the ways in which computer vision is used. For example, most people are somewhat aware of its use in surveillance, and many also know that it is increasingly being used for images and video on the Web. A few have seen some use of computer vision in game interfaces. Yet few people realize that most aerial and street-map images (such as in Google's Street View) make heavy use of camera calibration and image stitching techniques. Some are aware of niche applications in safety monitoring, unmanned aerial vehicles, or biomedical analysis. But few are aware how pervasive machine vision has become in manufacturing: virtually everything that is mass-produced has been automatically inspected at some point using computer vision.

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<sup>1</sup> The legacy C interface is still supported, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

The BSD [BSD] open source license for OpenCV has been structured such that you can build a commercial product using all or part of OpenCV. You are under no obligation to open-source your product or to return improvements to the public domain, though we hope you will. In part because of these liberal licensing terms, there is a large user community that includes people from major companies (Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Nvidia, SONY, and Siemens, to name only a few) and research centers (such as Stanford, MIT, CMU, Cambridge, Georgia Tech and INRIA). OpenCV is also present on the web for users at <http://opencv.org>, a website that hosts documentation, developer information, and other community resources including links to compiled binaries for various platforms. For vision developers, code, development notes and links to GitHub are at <http://code.opencv.org>. User questions are answered at <http://answers.opencv.org/questions/> but there is still the original Yahoo groups user forum at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OpenCV>; it has almost 50,000 members. OpenCV is popular around the world, with large user communities in China, Japan, Russia, Europe, and Israel. OpenCV has a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/opencvlibrary>.

Since its alpha release in January 1999, OpenCV has been used in many applications, products, and research efforts. These applications include stitching images together in satellite and web maps, image scan alignment, medical image noise reduction, object analysis, security and intrusion detection systems, automatic monitoring and safety systems, manufacturing inspection systems, camera calibration, military applications, and unmanned aerial, ground, and underwater vehicles. It has even been used in sound and music recognition, where vision recognition techniques are applied to sound spectrogram images. OpenCV was a key part of the vision system in the robot from Stanford, “Stanley”, which won the \$2M DARPA Grand Challenge desert robot race [Thrun06], and continues to play an important part in other many robotics challenges.

## What Is Computer Vision?

Computer vision<sup>2</sup> is the transformation of data from 2D/3D stills or videos into either a decision or a new representation. All such transformations are done for achieving some particular goal. The input data may include some contextual information such as “the camera is mounted in a car” or “laser range finder indicates an object is 1 meter away”. The decision might be “there is a person in this scene” or “there are 14 tumor cells on this slide”. A new representation might mean turning a color image into a grayscale image or removing camera motion from an image sequence.

Because we are such visual creatures, it is easy to be fooled into thinking that computer vision tasks are easy. How hard can it be to find, say, a car when you are staring at it in an image? Your initial intuitions can be quite misleading. The human brain divides the vision signal into many channels that stream different pieces of information into your brain. Your brain has an attention system that identifies, in a task-dependent way, important parts of an image to examine while suppressing examination of other areas. There is massive feedback in the visual stream that is, as yet, little understood. There are widespread associative inputs from muscle control sensors and all of the other senses that allow the brain to draw on cross-associations made from years of living in the world. The feedback loops in the brain go back to all stages of processing including the hardware sensors themselves (the eyes), which mechanically control lighting via the iris and tune the reception on the surface of the retina.

In a machine vision system, however, a computer receives a grid of numbers from the camera or from disk, and, in most cases, that’s it. For the most part, there’s no built-in pattern recognition, no automatic control of focus and aperture, no cross-associations with years of experience. For the most part, vision systems are still fairly naïve. Figure 1-1 shows a picture of an automobile. In that picture we see a side mirror on the driver’s side of the car. What the **computer** “sees” is just a grid of numbers. Any given number within that grid has a rather large noise component and so by itself gives us little information, but this grid of numbers is all the computer “sees”. Our task then becomes to turn this noisy grid of numbers into the perception: “side mirror”. Figure 1-2 gives some more insight into why computer vision is so hard.

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<sup>2</sup> Computer vision is a vast field. This book will give you a basic grounding in the field, but we also recommend texts by Szeliski [Szeliski2011] for a good overview of practical computer vision algorithms, and Hartley [Hartley06] for how 3D vision really works.

We perceive this:

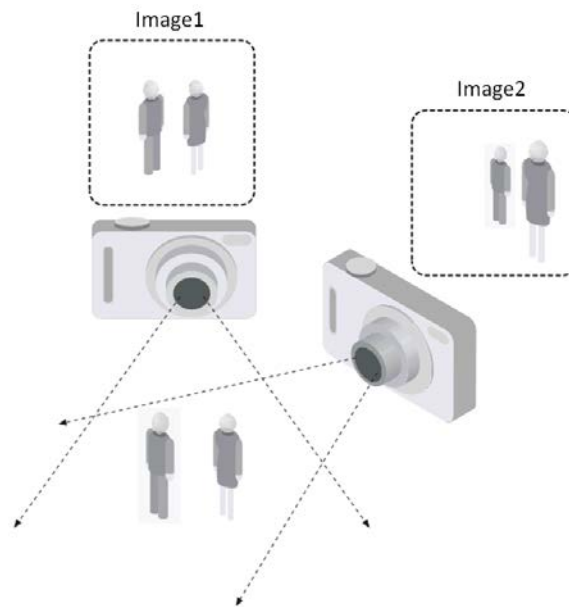


But the camera sees this:

194	210	201	212	199	213	215	195	178	158	182	209
180	189	190	221	209	205	191	167	147	115	129	163
114	126	140	188	176	165	152	140	170	106	78	88
87	103	115	154	143	142	149	153	173	101	57	57
102	112	106	131	122	138	152	147	128	84	58	66
94	95	79	104	105	124	129	113	107	87	69	67
68	71	69	98	89	92	98	95	89	88	76	67
41	56	68	99	63	45	60	82	58	76	75	65
20	43	69	75	56	41	51	73	55	70	63	44
50	50	57	69	75	75	73	74	53	68	59	37
72	59	53	66	84	92	84	74	57	72	63	42
67	61	58	65	75	78	76	73	59	75	69	50

*Figure 1-1. To a computer, the car's side mirror is just a grid of numbers*

In fact, the problem, as we have posed it thus far, is worse than hard; it is formally impossible to solve. Given a two-dimensional (2D) view of a 3D world, there is no unique way to reconstruct the 3D signal. Formally, such an ill-posed problem has no unique or definitive solution. The same 2D image could represent any of an infinite combination of 3D scenes, even if the data were perfect. However, as already mentioned, the data is corrupted by noise and distortions. Such corruption stems from variations in the world (weather, lighting, reflections, movements), imperfections in the lens and mechanical setup, finite integration time on the sensor (motion blur), electrical noise and compression artifacts after image capture. Given these daunting challenges, how can we make any progress?



*Figure 1-2: The ill-posed nature of vision: the 2D appearance of objects can change radically with viewpoints*

In the design of a practical system, additional contextual knowledge can often be used to work around the limitations imposed on us by visual sensors. Consider the example of a mobile robot that must find and pick up staplers in a building. The robot might use the facts that a desk is an object found inside offices and that staplers are mostly found on desks. This gives an implicit size reference; staplers must be able to fit on desks. It also helps to eliminate falsely “recognizing” staplers in impossible places (e.g., on the ceiling or a window). The robot can safely ignore a 200-foot advertising blimp shaped like a stapler because the blimp

lacks the prerequisite wood-grained background of a desk. In contrast, with tasks such as image retrieval, all stapler images in a database may be of real staplers and so large sizes and other unusual configurations may have been implicitly precluded by the assumptions of those who took the photographs. That is, the photographer perhaps took pictures only of real, normal-sized staplers. Also, when taking pictures, people tend to center objects and put them in characteristic orientations. Thus, there is often quite a bit of unintentional implicit information within photos taken by people.

Contextual information can also be modeled explicitly with machine learning techniques. Hidden variables such as size, orientation to gravity, and so on can then be correlated with their values in a labeled training set. Alternatively, one may attempt to measure hidden bias variables by using additional sensors. The use of a laser range finder to measure depth allows us to accurately infer the size of an object.

The next problem facing computer vision is noise. We typically deal with noise by using statistical methods. For example, it may be impossible to detect an edge in an image merely by comparing a point to its immediate neighbors. But if we look at the statistics over a local region, edge detection becomes much easier. A real edge should appear as a string of such immediate neighbor responses over a local region, each of whose orientation is consistent with its neighbors. It is also possible to compensate for noise by taking statistics over time. Still, other techniques account for noise or distortions by building explicit models learned directly from the available data. For example, because lens distortions are well understood, one need only learn the parameters for a simple polynomial model in order to describe—and thus correct almost completely—such distortions.

The actions or decisions that computer vision attempts to make based on camera data are performed in the context of a specific purpose or task. We may want to remove noise or damage from an image so that our security system will issue an alert if someone tries to climb a fence or because we need a monitoring system that counts how many people cross through an area in an amusement park. Vision software for robots that wander through office buildings will employ different strategies than vision software for stationary security cameras because the two systems have significantly different contexts and objectives. As a general rule: the more constrained a computer vision context is, the more we can rely on those constraints to simplify the problem and the more reliable our final solution will be.

OpenCV is aimed at providing the basic tools needed to solve computer vision problems. In some cases, high-level functionalities in the library will be sufficient to solve the more complex problems in computer vision. Even when this is not the case, the basic components in the library are complete enough to enable creation of a complete solution of your own to almost any computer vision problem. In the latter case, there are some tried-and-true methods of using the library; all of them start with solving the problem using as many available library components as possible. Typically, after you've developed this first-draft solution, you can see where the solution has weaknesses and then fix those weaknesses using your own code and cleverness (better known as “solve the problem you actually have, not the one you imagine”). You can then use your draft solution as a benchmark to assess the improvements you have made. From that point, whatever weaknesses remain can be tackled by exploiting the context of the larger system in which your problem solution is embedded, or by setting out to improve some component of the system with your own novel contributions.

## The Origin of OpenCV

OpenCV grew out of an Intel Research initiative to advance CPU-intensive applications. Toward this end, Intel launched many projects including real-time ray tracing and 3D display walls. One of the authors (Gary) working for Intel at that time was visiting universities and noticed that some top university groups, such as the MIT Media Lab, had well-developed and internally open computer vision infrastructures—code that was passed from student to student and that gave each new student a valuable head start in developing his or her own vision application. Instead of reinventing the basic functions from scratch, a new student could begin by building on top of what came before.

Thus, OpenCV was conceived as a way to make computer vision infrastructure universally available. With the aid of Intel's Performance Library Team,<sup>3</sup> OpenCV started with a core of implemented code and algorithmic specifications being sent to members of Intel's Russian library team. This is the "where" of OpenCV: it started in Intel's research lab with collaboration from the Software Performance Libraries group together with implementation and optimization expertise in Russia.

Chief among the Russian team members was Vadim Pisarevsky, who managed, coded, and optimized much of OpenCV and who is still at the center of much of the OpenCV effort. Along with him, Victor Eruhimov helped develop the early infrastructure, and Valery Kuriakin managed the Russian lab and greatly supported the effort. There were several goals for OpenCV at the outset:

- Advance vision research by providing not only open but also optimized code for basic vision infrastructure. No more reinventing the wheel.
- Disseminate vision knowledge by providing a common infrastructure that developers could build on, so that code would be more readily readable and transferable.
- Advance vision-based commercial applications by making portable, performance-optimized code available for free—with a license that did not require commercial applications to be open or free themselves.

Those goals constitute the "why" of OpenCV. Enabling computer vision applications would increase the need for fast processors. Driving upgrades to faster processors would generate more income for Intel than selling some extra software. Perhaps that is why this open and free code arose from a hardware vendor rather than a software company. Sometimes, there is more room to be innovative at software within a hardware company.

In any open source effort, it is important to reach a critical mass at which the project becomes self-sustaining. There have now been around seven million downloads of OpenCV, and this number is growing by hundreds of thousands every month<sup>4</sup>. The user group now approaches 50,000 members. OpenCV receives many user contributions, and central development has long since moved outside of Intel.<sup>5</sup> OpenCV's past timeline is shown in Figure 1-3. Along the way, OpenCV was affected by the dot-com boom and bust and also by numerous changes of management and direction. During these fluctuations, there were times when OpenCV had no one at Intel working on it at all. However, with the advent of multicore processors and the many new applications of computer vision, OpenCV's value began to rise. Similarly, rapid growth in the field of robotics has driven much use and development of the library. After becoming an open source library, OpenCV spent several years under active development at Willow Garage and Itseez, and now is supported by the OpenCV foundation at <http://opencv.org>. Today, OpenCV is actively being developed by the OpenCV.org foundation, Google supports on order of 15 interns a year in the Google Summer of Code program<sup>6</sup>, and Intel is back actively supporting [development](#). For more information on the future of OpenCV, see Chapter 14.

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<sup>3</sup> Shinn Lee was of key help as was Stewart Taylor.

<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy, that at the time of the publication of "Learning OpenCV" in 2006, this rate was 26,000 per month. Seven years later, the download rate has grown to over 160,000 downloads per month.

<sup>5</sup> As of this writing, Itseez (<http://itseez.com/>) is the primary maintainer of OpenCV

<sup>6</sup> Google Summer of Code <https://developers.google.com/open-source/soc/>

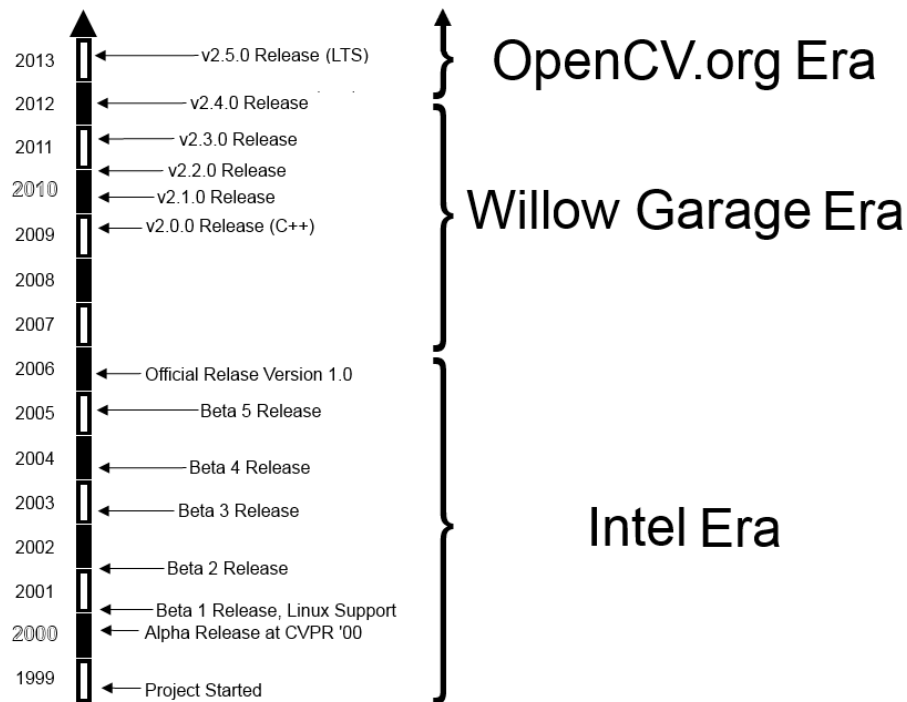


Figure 1-3: OpenCV timeline

## Who Owns OpenCV?

Although Intel started OpenCV, the library is and always was intended to promote commercial and research use. It is therefore open and free, and the code itself may be used or embedded (in whole or in part) in other applications, whether commercial or research. It does not force your application code to be open or free. It does not require that you return improvements back to the library—but we hope that you will.

## Downloading and Installing OpenCV

The main OpenCV site is at <http://opencv.org>, from which you can download the complete source code for the latest release, as well as many recent releases. The downloads themselves are found at the downloads page: <http://opencv.org/downloads.html>. However, if you want the very most up-to-date version it is always found on GitHub at <https://github.com/Itseez/opencv>, where the active development branch is stored. The computer vision developer's site (with links to the above) is at <http://code.opencv.org/>.

## Installation

In modern times, OpenCV uses Git as its development version control system, and CMake to build<sup>7</sup>. In many cases, you will not need to worry about building, as compiled libraries exist for supported environments. However, as you become a more advanced user, you will inevitably want to be able to recompile the libraries with specific options tailored to your application and environment. On the tutorial pages at <http://docs.opencv.org/doc/tutorials/tutorials.html> under “introduction to OpenCV”, there are descriptions of how to set up OpenCV to work with a number of combinations of operating systems and development tools.

<sup>7</sup> In olden times, OpenCV developers used Subversion for version control and automake to build. Those days, however, are long gone.

## Windows

At the page: <http://opencv.org/downloads.html>, you will see a link to download the latest version of OpenCV for Windows. This link will download an executable file which you can run, and which will install OpenCV, register DirectShow filters, and perform various post-installation procedures. You are now almost ready to start using OpenCV.<sup>8</sup>

The one additional detail is that you will want to add is an `OPENCV_DIR` environment variable to make it easier to tell your compiler where to find the OpenCV binaries. You can set this by going to a command prompt and typing<sup>9</sup>:

```
| setx -m OPENCV_DIR D:\OpenCV\Build\x86\vc10
```

If you built the library to link statically, this is all you will need. If you built the library to link dynamically, then you will also need to tell your system where to find the library binary. To do this, simply add `%OPENCV_DIR%\bin` to your library path. (For example, in Windows 7, right-click on your Computer icon, select Properties, and then click on Advanced System Settings. Finally select Environment Variables and add the OpenCV binary path to the Path variable.)

To add the commercial IPP performance optimizations to Windows, obtain and install IPP from the Intel site (<http://www.intel.com/software/products/ipp/index.htm>); use version 5.1 or later. Make sure the appropriate binary folder (e.g., `c:/program files/intel/ipp/5.1/ia64/bin`) is in the system path. IPP should now be automatically detected by OpenCV and loaded at runtime (more on this in Chapter 3).

## Linux

Prebuilt binaries for Linux are not included with the Linux version of OpenCV owing to the large variety of versions of GCC and GLIBC in different distributions (SuSE, Debian, Ubuntu, etc.). In many cases however, your distribution will include OpenCV. If your distribution doesn't offer OpenCV, you will have to build it from sources. As with the Windows installation, you can start at the <http://opencv.org/downloads.html> page, but in this case the link will send you to Sourceforge<sup>10</sup>, where you can select the tarball for the current OpenCV source code bundle.

To build the libraries and demos, you'll need GTK+ 2.x or higher, including headers. You'll also need *pkgconfig*, *libpng*, *libjpeg*, *libtiff*, and *libjasper* with development files (i.e., the versions with *-dev* at the end of their package names). You'll need Python 2.6 or later with headers installed (developer package). You will also need *libavcodec* and the other *libav\** libraries (including headers) from *ffmpeg* 1.0 or later.

Download ffmpeg from <http://ffmpeg.mplayerhq.hu/download.html>.<sup>11</sup> The ffmpeg program has a lesser general public license (LGPL). To use it with non-GPL software (such as OpenCV), build and use a shared libmpg library:

```
| $> ./configure --enable-shared  
| $> make  
| $> sudo make install
```

You will end up with: `/usr/local/lib/libavcodec.so.*`, `/usr/local/lib/libavformat.so.*`, `/usr/local/lib/libavutil.so.*`, and include files under various `/usr/local/include/libav*`.

To build OpenCV once it is downloaded:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to know that, although the Windows distribution contains binary libraries for release builds, it does not contain the debug builds of these libraries. It is therefore likely that, before developing with OpenCV, you will want to open the solution file and build these libraries for yourself.

<sup>9</sup> Of course, the exact path will vary depending on your installation, for example if you are installing on an ia64 machine, then the path will not include "x86", but rather "ia64".

<sup>10</sup> OpenCV has all of its many builds and versions available from Sourceforge. See links at <http://opencv.org/downloads.html>

<sup>11</sup> You can check out ffmpeg by: `svn checkout svn://svn.mplayerhq.hu/ffmpeg/trunk ffmpeg`.

```
$> mkdir build && cd build
$> cmake .. && make
$> sudo make install
$> sudo ldconfig
```

After installation is complete, the default installation path is `/usr/local/lib/` and `/usr/local/include/opencv2/`. Hence you need to add `/usr/local/lib/` to `/etc/ld.so.conf` (and run `ldconfig` afterwards) or add it to the `LD_LIBRARY_PATH` environment variable; then you are done.

To actually build the library, you will need to go unpack the `.tgz` file and go into the created source directory, and do the following:

```
mkdir release
cd release
cmake -D CMAKE_BUILD_TYPE=RELEASE -D CMAKE_INSTALL_PREFIX=/usr/local ..
make
sudo make install
```

The first and second commands create a new subdirectory and move you into it. The third command tells CMake how to configure your build. The example options we give are probably the right ones to get you started, but other options allow you to enable various options, determine what examples are built, python support, CUDA GPU support, etc. The last two commands actually build the library and install the results into the proper places.

To add the commercial IPP performance optimizations to Linux, install IPP as described previously. Let's assume it was installed in `/opt/intel/ipp/5.1/ia32/`. Add `<your_install_path>/bin/` and `<your_install_path>/bin/linux32` `LD_LIBRARY_PATH` in your initialization script (`.bashrc` or similar):

```
LD_LIBRARY_PATH=/opt/intel/ipp/5.1/ia32/bin:/opt/intel/ipp/5.1
/ia32/bin/linux32:$LD_LIBRARY_PATH
export LD_LIBRARY_PATH
```

Alternatively, you can add `<your_install_path>/bin` and `<your_install_path>/bin/linux32`, one per line, to `/etc/ld.so.conf` and then run `ldconfig` as root (or use `sudo`).

That's it. Now OpenCV should be able to locate IPP shared libraries and make use of them on Linux. See `../opencv/INSTALL` for more details.

## MacOS X

As of this writing, full functionality on MacOS X is a priority but there are still some limitations (e.g., writing AVIs); these limitations are described in `../opencv/INSTALL`.

The requirements and building instructions are similar to the Linux case, with the following exceptions:

- By default, Carbon is used instead of GTK+.
- By default, QuickTime is used instead of ffmpeg.
- pkg-config is optional (it is used explicitly only in the `samples/c/build_all.sh` script).
- RPM and ldconfig are not supported by default. Use `configure+make+sudo make install` to build and install OpenCV, update `DYLD_LIBRARY_PATH` (unless `./configure --prefix=/usr` is used).

For full functionality, you should install `libpng`, `libtiff`, `libjpeg` and `libjasper` from `darwinports` and/or `fink` and make them available to `./configure` (see `./configure --help`). Then:

```
sudo port selfupdate
sudo port install opencv
```

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<sup>12</sup> To build OpenCV using Red Hat Package Managers (RPMs), use `rpmbuild -ta OpenCV-x.y.z.tar.gz` (for RPM 4.x or later), or `rpm -ta OpenCV-x.y.z.tar.gz` (for earlier versions of RPM), where `OpenCV-x.y.z.tar.gz` should be put in `/usr/src/redhat/SOURCES/` or a similar directory. Then install OpenCV using `rpm -i OpenCV-x.y.z.*.rpm`.

## Notes on Building with CMake

The modern OpenCV library relies on CMake in its build system. This has the advantage of making the platform much easier to work with in a cross-platform environment. Whether you are using the command line version of CMake on Linux (or on Windows using a command line environment such as Cygwin), or using a visual interface to CMake such as *cmake-gui*, you can build OpenCV in just about any environment in the same way.

If you are not already familiar with CMake, the essential concept behind CMake is to allow the developers to specify all of the information needed for compilation in a platform independent way (files called *CMakeLists.txt* files), which CMake then converts to the platform dependent files used in your environment (e.g., makefiles on Unix and projects or workspaces in the Windows visual environment).

When you use CMake, you can supply additional options which tell CMake how to proceed in the generation of the build files. For example, it is CMake which you tell if you want a debug or release library or if you do or do not want to include a feature like the Intel Performance Primitives (IPP). An example CMake command line invocation, which we encountered earlier, might be:

```
| cmake -D CMAKE_BUILD_TYPE=RELEASE -D CMAKE_INSTALL_PREFIX=/usr/local ..
```

The last argument ‘..’ is actually a directory specification, which tells CMake where the root of the source directory to build is. In this case it is set to ‘..’ (the directory above) because it is conventional in OpenCV to actually do the build in a subdirectory of the OpenCV root.

In this case, the `-D` option is used to set environment variables which CMake will use to determine what to put in your build files. These environment variables might be essentially enumerated values (such as `RELEASE` or `DEBUG` for `CMAKE_BUILD_TYPE`), or they might be strings (such as ‘*/usr/local*’ for `CMAKE_INSTALL_PREFIX`). Below is a partial list<sup>13</sup> containing many of the common options that you are likely to want.

*Table 1-1: Basic CMake options you will probably need.*

Option	Definition	Accepted Values
<code>CMAKE_BUILD_TYPE</code>	Controls release vs. debug build	<code>RELEASE</code> or <code>DEBUG</code>
<code>CMAKE_INSTALL_PREFIX</code>	Where to put installed library	Path, e.g. <i>/usr/local</i>
<code>CMAKE_VERBOSE</code>	Lots of extra information from CMake	<code>ON</code> or <code>OFF</code>

*Table 1-2: Options which introduce features into the library. All of these can be either `ON` or `OFF`.*

Option	Definition	Default
<code>WITH_1394</code>	Use libdc1394	<code>ON</code>
<code>WITH_CUDA</code>	CUDA support, requires toolkit	<code>OFF</code>
<code>WITH_EIGEN2</code>	Use Eigen library for linear algebra	<code>ON</code>
<code>WITH_FFMPEG</code>	Use ffmpeg for video I/O	<code>ON</code>

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<sup>13</sup> You are probably wondering: “why not a complete list?” The reason is simply that the available options fluctuate with the passage of time. The ones we list here are some of the more important ones however which are likely to stay intact into the foreseeable future.

WITH_OPENGL	enable wrappers for OpenGL objects in the core module and the function: <code>cv::setOpenGLDrawCallback()</code>	OFF
WITH_GSTREAMER	Include Gstreamer support	ON
WITH_GTK	Include GTK support	ON
WITH_IPP	Intel Performance Primitives <sup>14</sup>	OFF
WITH_JASPER	JPEG 2000 support for imread()	ON
WITH_JPEG	JPEG support for imread()	ON
WITH_MIKTEX	PDF documentation on Windows	OFF
WITH_OPEN_EXR	EXR support for imread()	ON
WITH_OPENCL	OpenCL support (similar to CUDA)	OFF
WITH_OPENNI	Support for Kinect cameras	OFF
WITH_PNG	PNG support for loading	ON
WITH_QT	Qt based Highgui functions	OFF
WITH_QUICKTIME	Use Quicktime for video I/O (instead of QTKit – Mac only)	OFF
WITH_TBB	Intel Thread Building Blocks	OFF
WITH_TIFF	TIFF support for imread()	ON
WITH_UNICAP	Use Unicap library, provides I/O support for cameras using this standard.	OFF
WITH_V4L	Video for Linux support	ON
WITH_VIDEOINPUT	Use alternate library for video I/O (Windows only)	OFF
WITH_XIMEA	Support for Ximea cameras	OFF
WITH_XINE	Enable Xine multimedia library for video	OFF
ENABLE_SOLUTION_FOLDERS	Categorize binaries inside directories in Solution Explorer	OFF

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<sup>14</sup> Associated with the WITH\_IPP option, there is also the IPP\_PATH option. The IPP\_PATH can be set to any normal path name and indicates where the IPP libraries should be found. However, it should not be necessary if you have these libraries in the “usual” place for your platform.

Table 1-3: Options passed by CMake to the compiler.

Option	Definition	Default
ENABLE_SSE	Enable Streaming SIMD (SSE) instructions	ON
ENABLE_SSE2	Enable Intel SSE 2 instructions	ON
ENABLE_SSE3	Enable Intel SSE 3 instructions	OFF
ENABLE_SSSE3	Enable Supplemental SSE 3 instructions	OFF
ENABLE_SSE41	Enable Intel SSE 4.1 instructions	OFF
ENABLE_SSE42	Enable Intel SSE 4.1 instructions	OFF
USE_O3	Enable high optimization (i.e. -O3)	ON
USE_OMIT_FRAME_POINTER	Enable omit frame pointer (i.e. -fomit-frame-pointer)	ON

Table 1-4: ‘Build’ options control exactly what gets created at compile time. All of these can be either ON or OFF. In most all cases the default is OFF.

Option	Definition	Default
BUILD_DOCS	Generate OpenCV documentation	OFF
BUILD_EXAMPLES	Generate example code	OFF
BUILD_JAVA_SUPPORT	Create Java OpenCV libraries	OFF
BUILD_PYTHON_SUPPORT	Deprecated (use BUILD_NEW_PYTHON_SUPPORT)	OFF
BUILD_NEW_PYTHON_SUPPORT	Create Python OpenCV libraries	ON
BUILD_PACKAGE	Create zip archive with OpenCV sources	OFF
BUILD_SHARED_LIBS	Build OpenCV as dynamic library (default is static)	ON
BUILD_TESTS	Build test programs for each OpenCV module	ON
BUILD_PERF_TESTS	Build available function performance tests	OFF

*Table 1-5: 'Install' options determine what compiled executables get placed in your binaries area.*

INSTALL_C_EXAMPLES	Install the C and C++ examples in the “usual” place for binaries	OFF
INSTALL_PYTHON_EXAMPLES	Install the Python examples in the “usual” place for binaries	OFF

Not listed in these tables are additional variables which can be set to indicate the locations of various libraries (e.g., libjasper, etc.) in such case as they are not in their default locations. For more information on these more obscure options, a visit to the online documentation at <http://opencv.org> is recommended.

## Getting the Latest OpenCV via Git

OpenCV is under active development, and bugs are often fixed rapidly when reports contain accurate descriptions and code that demonstrates the bug. However, official major OpenCV releases only occur two to four times a year. If you are seriously developing a project or product, you will probably want code fixes and updates as soon as they become available. To do this, you will need to access OpenCV’s Git repository on Github.

This isn’t the place for a tutorial in Git usage. If you’ve worked with other open source projects then you’re probably familiar with it already. If you haven’t, check out **Version Control with Git** by Jon Loeliger (O’Reilly). A command-line Git client is available for Linux, OS X, and most UNIX-like systems. For Windows users, we recommend TortoiseGit (<http://code.google.com/p/tortoisegit/>).

On Windows, if you want the latest OpenCV from the Git repository then you’ll need to clone the OpenCV repository on <https://github.com/Itseez/opencv.git>.

On Linux and Mac, you can just use the following command:

```
| git clone https://github.com/Itseez/opencv.git
```

## More OpenCV Documentation

The primary documentation for OpenCV is the HTML documentation available at: <http://opencv.org>. In addition to this, there are extensive tutorials on many subjects at <http://docs.opencv.org/doc/tutorials/tutorials.html>, and an OpenCV Wiki (currently located at <http://code.opencv.org/projects/opencv/wiki>).

### Online Documentation and the Wiki

As briefly mentioned earlier, there is extensive documentation as well as a wiki available at <http://opencv.org>. The documentation there is divided into several major components:

- Reference (<http://docs.opencv.org/>): This section contains the functions, their arguments, and some information on how to use them.
- Tutorials (<http://docs.opencv.org/doc/tutorials/tutorials.html>): There is a large collection of tutorials, these tell you how to accomplish various things. There are tutorials for basic subjects, like how to install OpenCV or create OpenCV projects on various platforms, and more advanced topics like background subtraction of object detection.
- Quick Start (<http://opencv.org/quickstart.html>): This is really a tightly curated subset of the tutorials, containing just ones that help you get up and running on specific platforms.

- Cheat Sheet ([http://docs.opencv.org/trunk/opencv\\_cheatsheet.pdf](http://docs.opencv.org/trunk/opencv_cheatsheet.pdf)): This is actually a single .pdf file which contains a truly excellent compressed reference to almost the entire library. Thank Vadim Pisarevsky for this excellent reference as you pin these two beautiful pages to your cubicle wall.
- Wiki (<http://code.opencv.org/projects/opencv/wiki>): The wiki contains everything you could possibly want and more. This is where the roadmap can be found, as well as news, open issues, bugs tracking, and countless deeper topics like how to become a contributor to OpenCV.
- Q&A (<http://answers.opencv.org/questions>): This is a vast archive of literally thousands of questions people have asked, and answered. You can go there to ask questions of the OpenCV community, or to help others by answering their questions.

All of these are accessible under the “Documentation” button on the OpenCV.org homepage. Of all of those great resources, one warrants a little more discussion here, which is the Reference. The reference is divided into several sections, each of which pertains to what is called a *module* in the library. The exact module list has evolved over time, but the modules are the primary organizational structure in the library. Every function in the library is part of one module. Here are the current modules:

- core: The “core” is the section of the library which contains all of the basic object types and their basic operations.
- imgproc: The image processing module contains basic transformations on images, including filters and similar convolutional operators.
- highgui: This HighGUI module contains user interface functions which can be used to display images or take simple user input. It can be thought of as a very light weight window UI toolkit.
- video: The video library contains the functions you need to read and write video streams.
- calib3d: This module contains implementations of algorithms you will need to calibrate single cameras as well as stereo or multi-camera arrays.
- features2d: The features2d module contains algorithms for detecting, describing, and matching keypoint features.
- objdetect: This module contains algorithms for detecting specific objects, such as faces or pedestrians. You can train the detectors to detect other objects as well.
- ml: The Machine Learning Library is actually an entire library in itself, and contains a wide array of machine learning algorithms implemented in such a way as to work with the natural data structures of OpenCV.
- flann: FLANN stands for “Fast Library for Approximate Nearest Neighbors”. This library contains methods you will not likely use directly, but which are used by other functions in other modules for doing nearest neighbor searches in large data sets.
- gpu: The GPU library contains implementations of most of the rest of the library functions optimized for operation on CUDA GPUs. There are also some functions which are only implemented for GPU operation. Some of these provide excellent results but require computational resources sufficiently high that implementation on non-GPU hardware would provide little utility.
- photo: This is a relatively new module which contains tools useful for computational photography.
- stitching: This entire module implements a sophisticated image stitching pipeline. This is new functionality in the library but, like the ‘photo’ module is a place where future growth is expected.
- nonfree: OpenCV contains some implementations of algorithms which are patented or are otherwise burdened by some usage restrictions (e.g., the SIFT algorithm). Those algorithms are segregated off to their own module, so that you will know that you will need to do some kind of special work in order to use them in a commercial product.

- contrib: This module contains new things that have yet to be blessed into the whole of the library.
- legacy: This module contains old things that have yet to be banished from the library altogether.
- ocl: The OCL module is a newer module, which could be considered analogous to the GPU module, except that it relies on OpenCL, a Khronos standard for open parallel computing. Though less featured than the GPU module at this time, the OCL module aims to provide implementations which can run on any GPU or other device supporting OpenCL. (This is in contrast to the GPU module which explicitly makes use of the Nvidia CUDA toolkit and so will only work on Nvidia GPU devices.)

Despite the ever-increasing quality of this online documentation, one task which is not within their scope is to provide a proper understanding of the algorithms implemented or of the exact meaning of the parameters these algorithms require. This book aims to provide this information, as well as a more in depth understanding of all of the basic building blocks of the library.

## Exercises

1. Download and install the latest release of OpenCV. Compile it in debug and release mode.
2. Download and build the latest trunk version of OpenCV using Git.
3. Describe at least three ambiguous aspects of converting 3D inputs into a 2D representation. How would you overcome these ambiguities?
4. What shapes can a rectangle take when you look at it with perspective distortion (that is, when you look at it in the real world)?
5. Describe how you might start processing the image in Figure 1-1 to identify the mirror on the car?
6. How might you tell the difference between a edges in an image created by:
  - a) A shadow?
  - b) Paint on a surface?
  - c) Two sides of a brick?
  - d) The side of an object and the background?

# 2

## Introduction to OpenCV 2.x

### Include files

After installing the OpenCV library and setting up our programming environment, our next task is to make something interesting happen with code. In order to do this, we'll have to discuss header files. Fortunately, the headers reflect the new, modular structure of OpenCV introduced in Chapter 1. The main header file of interest is `../include/opencv2/opencv.hpp`. This header file just calls the header files for each OpenCV module:

```
#include "opencv2/core/core_c.h"
```

Old C data structures and arithmetic routines.

```
#include "opencv2/core/core.hpp"
```

New C++ data structures and arithmetic routines.

```
#include "opencv2/flann/miniflann.hpp"
```

Approximate nearest neighbor matching functions. (Mostly for internal use)

```
#include "opencv2/imgproc/imgproc_c.h"
```

Old C image processing functions.

```
#include "opencv2/imgproc/imgproc.hpp"
```

New C++ image processing functions.

```
#include "opencv2/video/photo.hpp"
```

Algorithms specific to handling and restoring photographs.

```
#include "opencv2/video/video.hpp"
```

Video tracking and background segmentation routines.

```
#include "opencv2/features2d/features2d.hpp"
```

Two-dimensional feature tracking support.

```
#include "opencv2/objdetect/objdetect.hpp"
```

Cascade face detector; latent SVM; HoG; planar patch detector.

`#include "opencv2/calib3d/calib3d.hpp"`

Calibration and stereo.

`#include "opencv2/ml/ml.hpp"`

Machine learning: clustering, pattern recognition.

`#include "opencv2/highgui/highgui_c.h"`

Old C image display, sliders, mouse interaction, I/O.

`#include "opencv2/highgui/highgui.hpp"`

New C++ image display, sliders, buttons, mouse, I/O.

`#include "opencv2/contrib/contrib.hpp"`

User-contributed code: flesh detection, fuzzy mean-shift tracking, spin images, self-similar features.

You may use the include file `opencv.hpp` to include any and every possible OpenCV function but, since it includes everything, it will cause compile time to be slower. If you are only using, say, image processing functions, compile time will be faster if you only include `opencv2/imgproc/imgproc.hpp`. These include files are located on disk under the `../modules` directory. For example, `imgproc.hpp` is located at `../modules/imgproc/include/opencv2/imgproc/imgproc.hpp`. Similarly, the sources for the functions themselves are located under their corresponding `src` directory. For example, `cv::Canny()` in the `imgproc` module is located in `../modules/imgproc/src/canny.cpp`.

With the above include files, we can start our first C++ OpenCV program.

---

Legacy code such as the older blob tracking, hmm face detection, condensation tracker, and eigen objects can be included using `opencv2/legacy/legacy.hpp`, which is located in `../modules/legacy/include/opencv2/legacy/legacy.hpp`.

---

## First Program—Display a Picture

OpenCV provides utilities for reading from a wide array of image file types, as well as from video and cameras. These utilities are part of a toolkit called HighGUI, which is included in the OpenCV package. On the <http://opencv.org> site, you can go to the tutorial pages off of the documentation links at <http://docs.opencv.org/doc/tutorials/tutorials.html> to see tutorials on various aspects of using OpenCV.

In the tutorial section, the “introduction to OpenCV” tutorial explains how to set up OpenCV for various combinations of operating systems and development tools.

We will use an example from the “highgui module” to create a simple program that opens an image and displays it on the screen (Example 2-1).

*Example 2-1: A simple OpenCV program that loads an image from disk and displays it on the screen*

```
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp> //Include file for every supported OpenCV function

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {
    cv::Mat img = cv::imread(argv[1],-1);
    if( img.empty() ) return -1;
    cv::namedWindow( "Example1", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::imshow( "Example1", img );
    cv::waitKey( 0 );
    cv::destroyWindow( "Example1" );
}
```

Note that OpenCV functions live within a namespace called `cv`. To call OpenCV functions, you must explicitly tell the compiler that you are talking about the `cv` namespace by prepending `cv::` to each function

call. To get out of this bookkeeping chore, we can employ the `using namespace cv;` directive as shown in [Example 2-2](#)<sup>1</sup>. This tells the compiler to assume that functions might belong to that namespace. Note also the difference in include files between [Example 2-1](#) and [Example 2-2](#); in the former, we used the general include `opencv.hpp`, whereas in the latter, we used only the necessary include file to improve compile time.

*Example 2-2: Same as [Example 2-1](#) but employing the “using namespace” directive. For faster compile, we use only the needed header file, not the generic `opencv.hpp`.*

```
#include "opencv2/highgui/highgui.hpp"

using namespace cv;

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {
    Mat img = imread( argv[1], -1 );
    if( img.empty() ) return -1;
    namedWindow( "Example2", WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    imshow( "Example2", img );
    waitKey( 0 );
    destroyWindow( "Example2" );
}
```

When compiled and run from the command line with a single argument, [Example 2-1](#) loads an image into memory and displays it on the screen. It then waits until the user presses a key, at which time it closes the window and exits. Let’s go through the program line by line and take a moment to understand what each command is doing.

```
| cv::Mat img = cv::imread( argv[1], -1 );
```

This line loads the image.<sup>2</sup> The function `cv::imread()` is a high-level routine that determines the file format to be loaded based on the file name; it also automatically allocates the memory needed for the image data structure. Note that `cv::imread()` can read a wide variety of image formats, including BMP, DIB, JPEG, JPE, PNG, PBM, PGM, PPM, SR, RAS, and TIFF. A `cv::Mat` structure is returned. This structure is the OpenCV construct with which you will deal the most. OpenCV uses this structure to handle all kinds of images: single-channel, multichannel, integer-valued, floating-point-valued, and so on. The line immediately following

```
| if( img.empty() ) return -1;
```

checks to see if an image was in fact read. Another high-level function, `cv::namedWindow()`, opens a window on the screen that can contain and display an image.

```
| cv::namedWindow( "Example2", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
```

This function, provided by the HighGUI library, also assigns a name to the window (in this case, `"Example2"`). Future HighGUI calls that interact with this window will refer to it by this name.

The second argument to `cv::namedWindow()` defines window properties. It may be set either to `0` (the default value) or to `cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE`. In the former case, the size of the window will be the same regardless of the image size, and the image will be scaled to fit within the window. In the latter case, the window will expand or contract automatically when an image is loaded so as to accommodate the image’s true size but may be resized by the user.

---

<sup>1</sup> Of course, once you do this, you risk conflicting names with other potential namespaces. If the function `foo()` exists, say, in the `cv` and `std` namespaces, you must specify which function you are talking about using either `cv::foo()` or `std::foo()` as you intend. In this book, other than in our specific example of [Example 2-2](#), we will use the explicit form `cv::` for objects in the OpenCV namespace, as this is generally considered to be better programming style.

<sup>2</sup> A proper program would check for the existence of `argv[1]` and, in its absence, deliver an instructional error message for the user. We will abbreviate such necessities in this book and assume that the reader is cultured enough to understand the importance of error-handling code.

```
| cv::imshow( "Example2", img );
```

Whenever we have an image in a `cv::Mat` structure, we can display it in an existing window with `cv::imshow()`.<sup>3</sup> On the call to `cv::imshow()`, the window will be redrawn with the appropriate image in it, and the window will resize itself as appropriate if it was created using the `cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE` flag.

```
| cv::waitKey( 0 );
```

The `cv::waitKey()` function asks the program to stop and wait for a keystroke. If a positive argument is given, the program will wait for that number of milliseconds and then continue even if nothing is pressed. If the argument is set to 0 or to a negative number, the program will wait indefinitely for a key-press. This function has another very important role: It handles any windowing events, such as creating windows and drawing their content. So it must be used after `cv::imshow()` in order to display that image.

With `cv::Mat`, images are automatically deallocated when they go out of scope, similar to the STL-style container classes. This automatic deallocation is controlled by an internal reference counter. For the most part, this means we no longer need to worry about the allocation and deallocation of images, which relieves the programmer from much of the tedious bookkeeping that the OpenCV 1.0 `IplImage` imposed.

```
| cv::destroyWindow( "Example2" );
```

Finally, we can destroy the window itself. The function `cv::destroyWindow()` will close the window and deallocate any associated memory usage. For short programs, we will skip this step. For longer, complex programs, the programmer should make sure to tidy up the windows before they go out of scope to avoid memory leaks.

Our next task will be to construct a very simple—almost as simple as this one—program to read in and display a video file. After that, we will start to tinker a little more with the actual images.

## Second Program—Video

Playing a video with OpenCV is almost as easy as displaying a single picture. The only new issue we face is that we need some kind of loop to read each frame in sequence; we may also need some way to get out of that loop if the movie is too boring. See [Example 2-3](#).

*Example 2-3: A simple OpenCV program for playing a video file from disk. In this example we only use specific module headers, rather than just `opencv.hpp`. This speeds up compilation, and so is sometimes preferable.*

```
#include "opencv2/highgui/highgui.hpp"
#include "opencv2/imgproc/imgproc.hpp"

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {
    cv::namedWindow( "Example3", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::VideoCapture cap;
    cap.open( string(argv[1]) );
    cv::Mat frame;
    while( 1 ) {
        cap >> frame;
        if( !frame.data ) break;           // Ran out of film
        cv::imshow( "Example3", frame );
        if( cv::waitKey(33) >= 0 ) break;
    }
    return 0;
}
```

---

<sup>3</sup> In the case where there is no window in existence at the time you call `imshow()`, one will be created for you with the name you specified in the `imshow()` call. This window can still be destroyed as usual with `destroyWindow()`.

Here we begin the function `main()` with the usual creation of a named window (in this case, named “`Example3`”). The video capture object `cv::VideoCapture` is then instantiated. This object can open and close video files of as many types as *ffmpeg* supports.

```
| cap.open(string(argv[1]));  
| cv::Mat frame;
```

The capture object is given a string containing the path and filename of the video to be opened. Once opened, the capture object will contain all of the information about the video file being read, including state information. When created in this way, the `cv::VideoCapture` object is initialized to the beginning of the video. In the program, `cv::Mat frame` instantiates a data object to hold video frames.

```
| cap >> frame;  
| if( !frame.data ) break;  
| cv::imshow( "Example3", frame );
```

Once inside of the `while()` loop, the video file is read frame by frame from the capture object stream. The program checks to see if data was actually read from the video file (`if(!frame.data)`) and quits if not. If a video frame is successfully read in, it is displayed using `cv::imshow()`.

```
| if( cv::waitKey(33) >= 0 ) break;
```

Once we have displayed the frame, we then wait for 33 ms<sup>4</sup>. If the user hits a key during that time then we will exit the read loop. Otherwise, 33 ms will pass and we will just execute the loop again. On exit, all the allocated data is automatically released when they go out of scope.

## Moving Around

Now it's time to tinker around, enhance our toy programs, and explore a little more of the available functionality. The first thing we might notice about the video player of [Example 2-3](#) is that it has no way to move around quickly within the video. Our next task will be to add a slider trackbar, which will give us this ability. For more control, we will also allow the user to single step the video by pressing the ‘s’ key, to go into run mode by pressing the ‘r’ key, and whenever the user jumps to a new location in the video with the slider bar, we pause there in single step mode.

The HighGUI toolkit provides a number of simple instruments for working with images and video beyond the simple display functions we have just demonstrated. One especially useful mechanism is the trackbar, which enables us to jump easily from one part of a video to another. To create a trackbar, we call `cv::createTrackbar()` and indicate which window we would like the trackbar to appear in. In order to obtain the desired functionality, we need a callback that will perform the relocation. [Example 2-4](#) gives the details.

*Example 2-4: Program to add a trackbar slider to the basic viewer window for moving around within the video file*

```
| #include "opencv2/highgui/highgui.hpp"  
| #include "opencv2/imgproc/imgproc.hpp"  
| #include <iostream>  
| #include <fstream>  
  
| using namespace std;  
  
| int g_slider_position = 0;  
| int g_run = 1, g_dontset = 0; //start out in single step mode  
| cv::VideoCapture g_cap;
```

---

<sup>4</sup> You can wait any amount of time you like. In this case, we are simply assuming that it is correct to play the video at 30 frames per second and allow user input to interrupt between each frame (thus we pause for input 33 ms between each frame). In practice, it is better to check the `cv::VideoCapture` structure in order to determine the actual frame rate of the video (more on this in Chapter 4).

```

void onTrackbarSlide( int pos, void *) {
    g_cap.set( cv::CAP_PROP_POS_FRAMES, pos );
    if( !g_dontset )
        g_run = 1;
    g_dontset = 0;
}

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {
    cv::namedWindow( "Example2_4", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    g_cap.open( string(argv[1]) );
    int frames = (int) g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_COUNT);
    int tmpw   = (int) g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_WIDTH);
    int tmph   = (int) g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_HEIGHT);
    cout << "Video has " << frames << " frames of dimensions("
        << tmpw << ", " << tmph << ")." << endl;
    cv::createTrackbar("Position", "Example2_4", &g_slider_position, frames,
        onTrackbarSlide);
    cv::Mat frame;
    while(1) {
        if( g_run != 0 ) {
            g_cap >> frame; if(!frame.data) break;
            int current_pos = (int)g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_POS_FRAMES);
            g_dontset = 1;
            cv::setTrackbarPos("Position", "Example2_4", current_pos);
            cv::imshow( "Example2_4", frame );
            g_run--1;
        }
        char c = (char) cv::waitKey(10);
        if(c == 's') // single step
            {g_run = 1; cout << "Single step, run = " << g_run << endl;}
        if(c == 'r') // run mode
            {g_run = -1; cout << "Run mode, run = " << g_run << endl;}
        if( c == 27 )
            break;
    }
    return(0);
}

```

In essence, the strategy is to add a global variable to represent the trackbar position and then add a callback that updates this variable and relocates the read position in the video. One call creates the trackbar and attaches the callback, and we are off and running.<sup>5</sup> Let's look at the details starting with the global variables.

```

int g_slider_position = 0;
int g_run = 1, g_dontset = 0;    // start out in single step mode
VideoCapture g_cap;

```

First we define a global variable, `g_slider_position`, to keep the trackbar slider position state. The callback will need access to the capture object `g_cap`, so we promote that to a global variable as well. Because we are considerate developers and like our code to be readable and easy to understand, we adopt the convention of adding a leading `g_` to any global variable. We also instantiate another global variable, `g_run`, which displays new frames as long it is different from zero. A positive number tells how many frames are displayed before stopping; a negative number means the system runs in continuous video mode.

To avoid confusion, when the user clicks on the trackbar to jump to a new location in the video, we'll leave the video paused there in the single step state by setting `g_run = 1`. This, however, brings up a subtle problem: as the video advances, we'd like the slider trackbar position in the display window to advance according to our location in the video. We do this by having the main program call the trackbar callback

---

<sup>5</sup> Note that some AVI and mpeg encodings do not allow you to move backward in the video.

function to update the slider position each time we get a new video frame. However, we don't want these programmatic calls to the trackbar callback to put us into single step mode. To avoid this, we introduce a final global variable, `g_dontset` to allow us to update trackbar position without triggering single state mode.

```
void onTrackbarSlide(int pos, void *) {
    g_cap.set(cv::CAP_PROP_POS_FRAMES, pos);
    if(!g_dontset)
        g_run = 1;
    g_dontset = 0;
}
```

Now we define a callback routine to be used when the user pokes the trackbar. This routine will be passed a 32-bit integer, `pos`, which will be the new trackbar position. Inside this callback, we use the new requested position in `cv::g_cap.set()` to actually advance the video playback to the new position. The `if` statement just sets the program to go into single step mode after the next new frame comes in, but only if the callback was triggered by a user click, not if the callback was called from the main function (which sets `g_dontset`).

The call to `cv::g_cap.set()` is one we will see often in the future, along with its counterpart `cv::g_cap.get()`. These routines allow us to configure (or query in the latter case) various properties of the `cv::VideoCapture` object. In this case, we pass the argument `cv::CAP_PROP_POS_FRAMES`, which indicates that we would like to set the read position in units of frames.<sup>6</sup>

```
int frames = (int) g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_COUNT);
int tmpw   = (int) g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_WIDTH);
int tmph   = (int) g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_HEIGHT);
cout << "Video has " << frames << " frames of dimensions("
      << tmpw << ", " << tmph << ")." << endl;
```

The core of the main program is the same as in [Example 2-3](#), so we'll focus on what we've added. The first difference after opening the video is that we use `cv::g_cap.get()` to determine the number of frames in the video and the width and height of the video images. These numbers are printed out. We'll need the number of frames in the video to calibrate the slider (in the next step).

```
createTrackbar("Position", "Example2_4", &g_slider_position, frames,
              onTrackbarSlide);
```

Next we create the trackbar itself. The function `cv::createTrackbar()` allows us to give the trackbar a label<sup>7</sup> (in this case, `Position`) and to specify a window to put the trackbar in. We then provide a variable that will be bound to the trackbar, the maximum value of the trackbar (the number of frames in the video), and a callback (or NULL if we don't want one) for when the slider is moved.

```
if( g_run != 0 ) {
    g_cap >> frame; if(!frame.data) break;
    int current_pos = (int)g_cap.get(cv::CAP_PROP_POS_FRAMES);
    g_dontset = 1;
    cv::setTrackbarPos("Position", "Example2_4", current_pos);
    cv::imshow( "Example2_4", frame );
    g_run--1;
}
```

<sup>6</sup> Because HighGUI is highly civilized, when a new video position is requested, it will automatically handle such issues as the possibility that the frame we have requested is not a key-frame; it will start at the previous key-frame and fast forward up to the requested frame without us having to fuss with such details.

<sup>7</sup> Because HighGUI is a lightweight, easy-to-use toolkit, `cv::createTrackbar()` does not distinguish between the name of the trackbar and the label that actually appears on the screen next to the trackbar. You may already have noticed that `cv::namedWindow()` likewise does not distinguish between the name of the window and the label that appears on the window in the GUI.

In the while loop, in addition to reading and displaying the video frame, we also get our current position in the video, set the `g_dontset` so that the next trackbar callback will not put us into single step mode, and then invoke the trackbar callback to update the position of the slider displayed to the user. The global `g_run` is decremented, which has the effect of either keeping us in single step mode or of letting the video run depending on its prior state set by user interaction via keyboard, as we'll see next.

```
char c = (char) cv::waitKey(10);
if(c == 's') // single step
    {g_run = 1; cout << "Single step, run = " << g_run << endl;}
if(c == 'r') // run mode
    {g_run = -1; cout << "Run mode, run = " << g_run << endl;}
if( c == 27 )
    break;
```

At the bottom of the while loop, we look for keyboard input from the user. If 's' has been pressed, we go into single step mode (`g_run` is set to 1 which allows reading of a single frame above). If 'r' is pressed, we go into continuous video mode (`g_run` is set to -1 and further decrementing leaves it negative for any conceivable sized video). Finally, if ESC is pressed, the program will terminate. Note again, for short programs, we've omitted the step of cleaning up the window storage using `cv::destroyWindow()`.

## A Simple Transformation

Great! Now you can use OpenCV to create your own video player, which will not be much different from countless video players out there already. But we are interested in computer vision, and we want to do some of that. Many basic vision tasks involve the application of filters to a video stream. We will modify the program we already have to do a simple operation on every frame of the video as it plays.

One particularly simple operation is the smoothing of an image, which effectively reduces the information content of the image by convolving it with a Gaussian or other similar kernel function. OpenCV makes such convolutions exceptionally easy to do. We can start by creating a new window called "**Example4-out**", where we can display the results of the processing. Then, after we have called `cv::showImage()` to display the newly captured frame in the input window, we can compute and display the smoothed image in the output window. See **Example 2-5**.

*Example 2-5: Loading and then smoothing an image before it is displayed on the screen*

```
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>

void example2_5( cv::Mat & image ) {
    // Create some windows to show the input
    // and output images in.
    //
    cv::namedWindow( "Example2_5-in", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::namedWindow( "Example2_5-out", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );

    // Create a window to show our input image
    //
    cv::imshow( "Example2_5-in", image );

    // Create an image to hold the smoothed output
    cv::Mat out;

    // Do the smoothing
    // Could use GaussianBlur(), blur(), medianBlur() or bilateralFilter().
    cv::GaussianBlur( image, out, cv::Size(5,5), 3, 3);
    cv::GaussianBlur( out, out, cv::Size(5,5), 3, 3);

    // Show the smoothed image in the output window
    //
    cv::imshow( "Example2_5-out", out );
```

```

// Wait for the user to hit a key, windows will self destruct
//
cv::waitKey( 0 );
}

```

The first call to `cv::showImage()` is no different than in our previous example. In the next call, we allocate another image structure. Next, the C++ object `cv::Mat` makes life simpler for us; we just instantiate an output matrix “out” and it will automatically resize/reallocate and deallocate itself as necessary as it is used. To make this point clear, we use it in two consecutive calls to `cv::GaussianBlur()`. In the first call, the input images is blurred by a  $5 \times 5$  Gaussian convolution filter and written to out. The size of the Gaussian kernel should always be given as odd numbers since the Gaussian kernel (specified here by `cv::Size(5,5)`) is computed at the center pixel in that area. In the next call to `cv::GaussianBlur()`, out is used as both the input and output since temporary storage is assigned for us in this case. The resulting double-blurred image is displayed and the routine then waits for any user keyboard input before terminating and cleaning up allocated data as it goes out of scope.

## A Not-So-Simple Transformation

That was pretty good, and we are learning to do more interesting things. In [Example 2-5](#), we used Gaussian blurring for no particular purpose. We will now use a function that uses Gaussian blurring to downsample it by a factor of 2 [Rosenfeld80]. If we downsample the image several times, we form a scale space, or image pyramid that is commonly used in computer vision to handle the changing scales in which a scene or object is observed.

For those who know some signal processing and the Nyquist-Shannon Sampling Theorem [Shannon49], when you downsample a signal (in this case, create an image where we are sampling every other pixel), it is equivalent to convolving with a series of delta functions (think of these as “spikes”). Such sampling introduces high frequencies into the resulting signal (image). To avoid this, we want to first run a high-pass filter over the signal first to band limit its frequencies so that they are all below the sampling frequency. In OpenCV, this Gaussian blurring and downsampling is accomplished by the function `cv::pyrDown()`. We use this very useful function in [Example 2-6](#).

*Example 2-6: Using `cv::pyrDown()` to create a new image that is half the width and height of the input image*

```

#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {
    cv::Mat img = cv::imread( argv[1] ),img2;
    cv::namedWindow( "Example1", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::namedWindow( "Example2", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::imshow( "Example1", img );
    cv::pyrDown( img, img2);
    cv::imshow( "Example2", img2 );
    cv::waitKey(0);
    return 0;
};

```

Let’s now look at a similar but slightly more involved example involving the *Canny edge detector* [Canny86] `cv::Canny()` (see [Example 2-7](#)). In this case, the edge detector generates an image that is the full size of the input image but needs only a single-channel image to write to and so we convert to a gray scale, single-channel image first using `cv::cvtColor()` with the flag to convert blue, green, red images to gray scale: `cv::BGR2GRAY`.

*Example 2-7: The Canny edge detector writes its output to a single-channel (grayscale) image*

```

#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {

```

```

cv::Mat img_rgb = cv::imread( argv[1] );
cv::Mat img_gry, img_cny;
cv::cvtColor( img_rgb, img_gry, cv::BGR2GRAY);
cv::namedWindow( "Example Gray", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
cv::namedWindow( "Example Canny", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
cv::imshow( "Example Gray", img_gry );
cv::Canny( img_gry, img_cny, 10, 100, 3, true );
cv::imshow( "Example Canny", img_cny );
cv::waitKey(0);
}

```

This allows us to string together various operators quite easily. For example, if we wanted to shrink the image twice and then look for lines that were present in the twice-reduced image, we could proceed as in [Example 2-8](#).

*Example 2-8: Combining the pyramid down operator (twice) and the Canny subroutine in a simple image pipeline*

```

cv::cvtColor( img_rgb, img_gry, cv::BGR2GRAY );
cv::pyrDown( img_gry, img_pyr );
cv::pyrDown( img_pyr, img_pyr2 );
cv::Canny( img_pyr2, img_cny, 10, 100, 3, true );
// do whatever with 'img_cny'
//
...

```

In [Example 2-9](#), we show a simple way to read and write pixel values from [Example 2-8](#).

*Example 2-9: Getting and setting pixels in [Example 2-8](#)*

```

int x = 16, y = 32;
cv::Vec3b intensity = img_rgb.at< cv::Vec3b >(y, x);
uchar blue = intensity.val[0]; // We could write img_rgb.at< cv::Vec3b >(x,y)[0]
uchar green = intensity.val[1];
uchar red = intensity.val[2];
std::cout << "At (x,y) = (" << x << ", " << y <<
    "): (blue, green, red) = (" <<
    (unsigned int)blue <<
    ", " << (unsigned int)green << ", " <<
    (unsigned int)red << ")" << std::endl;

std::cout << "Gray pixel there is: " <<
    (unsigned int)img_gry.at<uchar>(x, y) << std::endl;

x /= 4; y /= 4;
std::cout << "Pyramid2 pixel there is: " <<
    (unsigned int)img_pyr2.at<uchar>(x, y) << std::endl;

img_cny.at<uchar>(x, y) = 128; // Set the Canny pixel there to 128

```

## Input from a Camera

Vision can mean many things in the world of computers. In some cases, we are analyzing still frames loaded from elsewhere. In other cases, we are analyzing video that is being read from disk. In still other cases, we want to work with real-time data streaming in from some kind of camera device.

OpenCV—more specifically, the HighGUI portion of the OpenCV library—provides us with an easy way to handle this situation. The method is analogous to how we read videos from disk since the `cv::VideoCapture` object works the same for files on disk or from camera. For the former, you give it a path/filename, and for the latter, you give it a camera ID number (typically “0” if only one camera is connected to the system). The default value is `-1`, which means “just pick one”; naturally, this also works

quite well when there is only one camera to pick (see Chapter 4 for more details). Camera capture from file or from camera is demonstrated in [Example 2-10](#).

*Example 2-10: The same object can load videos from a camera or a file*

```
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>
#include <iostream>

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {
    cv::namedWindow( "Example2_10", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::VideoCapture cap;
    if (argc==1) {
        cap.open(0);           // open the default camera
    } else {
        cap.open(argv[1]);
    }
    if( !cap.isOpened() ) { // check if we succeeded
        std::cerr << "Couldn't open capture." << std::endl;
        return -1;
    }
    // The rest of program proceeds as in Example 2-3
    ...
}
```

In [Example 2-10](#), if a filename is supplied, it opens that file just like in [Example 2-3](#), and if no filename is given, it attempts to open camera zero (0). We have added a check that something actually opened that will report an error if not.

## Writing to an AVI File

In many applications, we will want to record streaming input or even disparate captured images to an output video stream, and OpenCV provides a straightforward method for doing this. Just as we are able to create a capture device that allows us to grab frames one at a time from a video stream, we are able to create a writer device that allows us to place frames one by one into a video file. The object that allows us to do this is `cv::VideoWriter`.

Once this call has been made, we may stream each frame to the `cv::VideoWriter` object, and finally call its `cv::VideoWriter.release()` method when we are done. Just to make things more interesting, [Example 2-11](#) describes a program that opens a video file, reads the contents, converts them to a log-polar format (something like what your eye actually sees, as described in Chapter 6), and writes out the log-polar image to a new video file.

*Example 2-11: A complete program to read in a color video and write out the log-polar transformed video*

```
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>
#include <iostream>

int main( int argc, char* argv[] ) {
    cv::namedWindow( "Example2_10", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::namedWindow( "Log_Polar", cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE );
    cv::VideoCapture capture;
    double fps = capture.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FPS );
    cv::Size size(
        (int)capture.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_WIDTH ),
        (int)capture.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_HEIGHT )
    );
    cv::VideoWriter writer;
    writer.open( argv[2], CV_FOURCC('M','J','P','G'), fps, size );
    cv::Mat logpolar_frame(size,CV_8UC3), bgr_frame;
    for(;;) {
        capture >> bgr_frame;
        if( bgr_frame.empty() ) break; // end if done
    }
}
```

```

cv::imshow( "Example2_10", bgr_frame );
cv::logPolar(
    bgr_frame,                // Input color frame
    logpolar_frame,          // Output log-polar frame
    cv::Point2f(              // Centerpoint for log-polar transformation
        bgr_frame.cols/2,    // x
        bgr_frame.rows/2     // y
    ),
    40,                       // Magnitude (scale parameter)
    cv::WARP_FILL_OUTLIERS    // Fill outliers with 'zero'
);
cv::imshow( "Log_Polar", logpolar_frame );
writer << logpolar_frame;
char c = cv::waitKey(10);
if( c == 27 ) break;         // allow the user to break out
}
capture.release();
}

```

Looking over this program reveals mostly familiar elements. We open one video and read some properties (frames per second, image width and height) that we'll need to open a file for the `cv::VideoWriter` object. We then read the video frame by frame from the `cv::VideoReader` object, convert the frame to log-polar format, and write the log-polar frames to this new video file one at a time until there are none left or until the user quits by pressing ESC. Then we close up.

The call to `cv::VideoWriter` object contains several parameters that we should understand. The first is just the filename for the new file. The second is the *video codec* with which the video stream will be compressed. There are countless such codecs in circulation, but whichever codec you choose must be available on your machine (codecs are installed separately from OpenCV). In our case, we choose the relatively popular *MJPEG* codec; this is indicated to OpenCV by using the macro `CV_FOURCC()`, which takes four characters as arguments. These characters constitute the “four-character code” of the codec, and every codec has such a code. The four-character code for *motion jpeg* is “MJPG,” so we specify that as `CV_FOURCC('M','J','P','G')`. The next two arguments are the replay frame rate and the size of the images we will be using. In our case, we set these to the values we got from the original (color) video.

## Summary

Before moving on to the next chapter, we should take a moment to take stock of where we are and look ahead to what is coming. We have seen that the OpenCV API provides us with a variety of easy-to-use tools for reading and writing still images and videos from and to files along with capturing video from cameras. We have also seen that the library contains primitive functions for manipulating these images. What we have not yet seen are the powerful elements of the library, which allow for more sophisticated manipulation of the entire set of abstract data types that are important to practical vision problem solving.

In the next few chapters, we will delve more deeply into the basics and come to understand in greater detail both the interface-related functions and the image data types. We will investigate the primitive image manipulation operators and, later, some much more advanced ones. Thereafter, we will be ready to explore the many specialized services that the API provides for tasks as diverse as camera calibration, tracking, and recognition. Ready? Let's go!

## Exercises

Download and install OpenCV if you have not already done so. Systematically go through the directory structure. Note in particular the *docs* directory, where you can load *index.htm*, which further links to the main documentation of the library. Further explore the main areas of the library. The *core* module contains the basic data structures and algorithms, *imgproc* contains the image processing and vision algorithms, *ml*

includes algorithms for machine learning and clustering, and *highgui* contains the I/O functions. Check out the *../samples/cpp* directory, where many useful examples are stored.

1. Using the install and build instructions in this book or on the website <http://opencv.org>, build the library in both the debug and the release versions. This may take some time, but you will need the resulting library and *dll* files. Make sure you set the *cmake* file to build the samples *../opencv/samples/* directory.
2. Go to where you built the *../opencv/samples/* directory (the authors build in *../trunk/eclipse\_build/bin*) and look for *lkdemo.c* (this is an example motion tracking program). Attach a camera to your system and run the code. With the display window selected, type “r” to initialize tracking. You can add points by clicking on video positions with the mouse. You can also switch to watching only the points (and not the image) by typing “n.” Typing “n” again will toggle between “night” and “day” views.
3. Use the capture and store code in **Example 2-11** together with the `cv::PyrDown()` code of **Example 2-6** to create a program that reads from a camera and stores down-sampled color images to disk.
4. Modify the code in Exercise 3 and combine it with the window display code in **Example 2-2** to display the frames as they are processed.
5. Modify the program of Exercise 4 with a slider control from **Example 2-4** so that the user can dynamically vary the pyramid downsampling reduction level by factors of between 2 and 8. You may skip writing this to disk, but you should display the results.

---

# Getting to Know OpenCV

## OpenCV Data Types

OpenCV has many data types, which are designed to make the representation and handling of important concepts of computer vision relatively easy and intuitive. At the same time, many algorithm developers require a set of relatively powerful primitives that can be generalized or extended for their particular needs. OpenCV attempts to address both of these needs through the use of templates for fundamental data types, and specializations of those templates that make everyday operations easier.

From an organizational perspective, it is convenient to divide the data types into three major categories. First, the *basic data types* are those that are assembled directly from C++ primitives (`int`, `float`, etc.). These types include simple vectors and matrices, as well as representations of simple geometric concepts like points, rectangles, sizes, and the like. The second category contains *helper objects*. These objects represent more abstract concepts such as the garbage collecting pointer class, range objects used for slicing, and abstractions such as termination criteria. The third category is what might be called *large array types*. These are objects whose fundamental purpose is to contain arrays or other assemblies of primitives or, more often, the basic data types mentioned first. The star example of this latter group is the `cv::Mat` class, which is used to represent arbitrary-dimensional arrays containing arbitrary basic elements. Objects such as images are specialized uses of the `cv::Mat` class but, unlike in earlier versions of OpenCV (i.e., before version 2.1), such specific use does not require a different class or type. In addition to `cv::Mat`, this category contains related objects such as the sparse matrix `cv::SparseMat` class, which is more naturally suited to non-dense data such as histograms.

In addition to these types, OpenCV also makes heavy use of the *Standard Template Library* (STL) [STL]. This vector class is particularly relied on by OpenCV, and many OpenCV library functions now have vector template objects in their argument lists. We will not cover STL in this book, other than as necessary to explain relevant functionality. If you are already comfortable with STL, many of the template mechanisms used “under the hood” in OpenCV will be familiar to you.

## Overview of the Basic Types

The most straightforward of the basic data types is the template class `cv::Vec<>`. `cv::Vec<>` is a container class for primitives,<sup>1</sup> which we will refer to as “the fixed vector classes.” Why not just use

---

<sup>1</sup> Actually, this is an oversimplification that we will clear up a little later in the chapter. In fact, `cv::Vec<>` is a vector container for anything, and uses templating to create this functionality. As a result, `cv::Vec<>` can contain other

---

---

standard template library classes? The key difference is that the fixed vector classes are classes intended for small vectors whose dimensions are known at compile time. This allows for efficient code. What “small” means in practice is that if you have more than just a few elements, you are probably using the wrong class. (In fact, as of version 2.2, this number cannot exceed nine in any case). We will look shortly at the `cv::Mat` class, which is the right way to handle big arrays of any number of dimensions, but for now, think of the fixed vector classes as being handy and speedy for little guys.

Even though `cv::Vec<>` is a template, you will not tend to see or use it in that form most of the time. Instead, there are aliases (typedef’s) for common instantiations of the `cv::Vec<>` template. They have names like `cv::Vec2i`, `cv::Vec3i`, or `cv::Vec4d` (for a two-element integer vector, a three-element integer vector, or a four-element double-precision floating-point vector, respectively). In general, anything of the form `cv::Vec{2,3,4,6}{b,s,i,f,d}` is valid for any combination of two to six dimensions<sup>2</sup> and the five data types.

In addition to the fixed vector class, there are also “fixed matrix classes.” They are associated with the template `cv::Matx<>`. Just like the fixed vector classes, `cv::Matx<>` is not intended to be used for large arrays, but rather is designed for the handling of certain specific small matrix operations. In computer vision, there are a lot of 2-by-2 or 3-by-3 matrices running around, and a few 4-by-4, which are used for various transformations and the like. `cv::Matx<>` is designed to hold these sorts of objects. As with `cv::Vec<>`, `cv::Matx<>` is normally accessed through aliases of the form `cv::Matx{1,2,3,4,6}{1,2,3,4,6}{f,d}`. It is important to notice that with the fixed matrix classes (like the fixed vector classes, but unlike `cv::Mat`, which we will come to shortly), the dimensionality of the fixed matrix classes must be known at compile time. Of course, it is precisely this knowledge that makes it possible to make operations with the fixed matrix classes highly efficient.

Closely related to the fixed vector classes are the point classes. The point classes are containers for two or three values of one of the primitive types. The point classes are derived from their own template, so they are not directly descended from the fixed vector classes, but they can be cast to and from them. The main difference between the point classes and the fixed vector classes is that their members are accessed by named variables (`mypoint.x`, `mypoint.y`, etc.) rather than by a vector index (`myvec[0]`, `myvec[1]`, etc.). As with `cv::Vec<>`, the point classes are typically invoked using aliases for the instantiation of an appropriate template. Those aliases have names like `cv::Point2i`, `cv::Point2f`, or `cv::Point2d`, or `cv::Point3i`, `cv::Point3f`, or `cv::Point3d`.

The class `cv::Scalar` is essentially a four-dimensional point. As with the point classes, `cv::Scalar` is actually associated with a template that can generate an arbitrary four-component vector, but the keyword `cv::Scalar` specifically is aliased to a four-component vector with double-precision components. Unlike the point classes, the elements of a `cv::Scalar` object are accessed with an integer index, the same as `cv::Vec<>`. This is because `cv::Scalar` is directly derived from an instantiation of `cv::Vec<>` (specifically, from `cv::Vec<double,4>`).

Next on our tour are `cv::Size` and `cv::Rect`. As with the point classes, these two are derived from their own templates. `cv::Size` is mainly distinguished by having data members `width` and `height` rather than `x` and `y`, while `cv::Rect` has all four. The class `cv::Size` is actually an alias for `cv::Size2i`, which is itself an alias of a more general template in the case of `width` and `height` being integers. For floating-point values of `width` and `height`, use the alias `cv::Size2f`. Similarly, `cv::Rect` is an alias for the integer form of rectangle. There is also a class to represent a rectangle that is not axis-aligned. It is called `cv::RotatedRect` and contains a `cv::Point2f` called `center`, a `cv::Size2f` called `size`, and one additional `float` called `angle`.

---

class objects, either from OpenCV or elsewhere. In most usages, however, `cv::Vec` is used as a container for C primitive types like `int` or `float`.

<sup>2</sup> Except five, for some reason five is not an option.

---

---

## Basic Types: Getting Down to Details

Each of the basic types is actually a relatively complicated object, supporting its own interface functions, overloaded operators, and the like. In this section, we will take a somewhat more encyclopedic look at what each type offers, and how some of the otherwise similar appearing types differ from one another.

As we go over these classes, we will try to hit on the high points of their interfaces, but not get into every gory detail. Instead, we will provide examples that should convey what you can and can't do with these objects. For the lowest-level details, you should consult [../opencv2/core/core.hpp](http://docs.opencv.org/2.4/core/core.hpp).

### The Point Classes

Of the OpenCV basic types, the point classes are probably the simplest. As we mentioned earlier, these are implemented based on a template structure, such that there can be points of any type: integer, floating-point, and so on. There are actually two such templates, one for two-dimensional and one for three-dimensional points. The big advantage of the point classes is that they are simple and have very little overhead. Natively, they do not have a lot of operations defined on them, but they can be cast to somewhat more generalized types, such as the fixed vector classes or the fixed matrix classes (discussed later), when needed.

In most programs, the point classes are instantiated using aliases that take forms like `cv::Point2i` or `cv::Point3f`, with the last letter indicating the desired primitive from which the point is to be constructed. (Here, `b` is an unsigned character, `s` is a short integer, `i` is a 32-bit integer, `f` is a 32-bit floating-point number, and `d` is a 64-bit floating-point number.)

Table 3-1 is the (relatively short) list of functions natively supported by the point classes. It is important to note that there are several important operations that are supported, but they are supported indirectly through implicit casting to the fixed vector classes (see below). These operations notably contain all of the vector and singleton<sup>3</sup> overloaded algebraic operators and comparison operators.

*Table 3-1: Operations supported directly by the point classes*

Operation	Examples
Default constructors	<code>cv::Point2i p();</code> <code>cv::Point3f p();</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Point3f p2( p1 );</code>
Value constructors	<code>cv::Point2i p( x0, x1 );</code> <code>cv::Point3d p( x0, x1, x2 );</code>
Cast to the fixed vector classes	<code>(cv::Vec3f) p;</code>
Member access	<code>p.x; p.y; // and for three-dimensional</code> <code>// point classes: p.z</code>
Dot product	<code>float x = p1.dot( p2 )</code>
Double-precision dot	<code>double x = p1.ddot( p2 )</code>

---

<sup>3</sup> You might have expected us to use the word “scalar” here, but we avoided doing so because `cv::Scalar` is an existing class in the library. As you will see shortly, a `cv::Scalar` in OpenCV is (somewhat confusingly) an array of four numbers, approximately equivalent to a `cv::Vec` with four elements! In this context, the word “singleton” can be understood to mean “a single object of whatever type the vector is an array of.”

---

product

Cross product

```
p1.cross( p2 ) // (for three-dimensional point
               // classes only)
```

```
Query if point p is inside of  p.inside( r )  // (for two-dimensional point
rectangle r                  // classes only)
```

These types can be cast to and from the old C interface types `CvPoint` and `CvPoint2D32f`. In the case in which a floating-point-valued instance of one of the point classes is cast to `CvPoint`, the values will automatically be rounded.

```
class cv::Scalar
```

The class `cv::Scalar` is really a four-dimensional point class. Like the others, it is actually associated with a template class, but the alias for accessing it returns an instantiation of that template in which all of the members are double-precision floating-point numbers. The `cv::Scalar` class also has some special member functions associated with uses of four-component vectors in computer vision.

*Table 3-2: Operations supported directly by class `cv::Scalar`*

Operation	Example
Default constructors	<code>cv::Scalar s();</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Scalar s2( s1 );</code>
Value constructors	<code>cv::Scalar s( x0 );</code> <code>cv::Scalar s( x0, x1, x2, x3 );</code>
Element-wise multiplication	<code>s1.mul( s2 );</code>
(Quaternion) conjugation	<code>s.conj();</code> // (returns <code>cv::Scalar(s0,-s1,-s2,-s2)</code> )
(Quaternion) real test	<code>s.isReal();</code> // (returns true iff <code>s1==s2==s3==0</code> )

You will notice that for `cv::Scalar`, the operation “cast to the fixed vector classes” does not appear in *Table 3-2* (as it did in the case of the point classes). This is because, unlike the point classes, `cv::Scalar` inherits directly from an instantiation of the fixed vector class template. As a result, it inherits all of the vector algebra operations, member access functions (i.e., `operator[]`), and other properties from the fixed vector classes. We will get to that class later, but for now, just keep in mind that `cv::Scalar` is shorthand for a four-dimensional double-precision vector that has a few special member functions attached that are useful for various kinds of four-vectors.

The class `cv::Scalar` can be freely cast to and from the old C interface `CvScalar` type.

## The Size Classes

The size classes are, in practice, similar to the corresponding point classes, and can be cast to and from them. The primary difference between the two is that the point class' data members are named `x` and `y`, while the corresponding data members in the size classes are named `width` and `height`. The three aliases for the size classes are `cv::Size`, `cv::Size_2i`, and `cv::Size_2f`. The first two of these are equivalent and imply integer size, while the last is for 32-bit floating-point sizes. As with the point classes, the size classes can be cast to and from the corresponding old-style OpenCV classes (in this case, `CvSize` and `CvSize2D32f`).

*Table 3-3: Operations supported directly by the size classes*

---

Operation	Example
Default constructors	<code>cv::Size sz();</code> <code>cv::Size2i sz();</code> <code>cv::Point2f sz();</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Size sz2( sz1 );</code>
Value constructors	<code>cv::Size2f sz( w, h );</code>
Member access	<code>sz.width; sz.height;</code>
Compute area	<code>sz.area();</code>

Unlike the point classes, the size classes do not support casting to the fixed vector classes. This means that the size classes have more restricted utility. On the other hand, the point classes and the fixed vector classes can be cast to the size classes without any problem.

#### **class cv::Rect**

The rectangle classes include the members `x` and `y` of the point class (representing the upper-left corner of the rectangle) and the members `width` and `height` of the size class (representing the extent of the rectangle). The rectangle classes, however, do not inherit from the point or size classes, and so in general they do not inherit operators from them.

*Table 3-4: Operations supported directly by class cv::Rect\**

Operation	Example
Default constructors	<code>cv::Rect r();</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Rect r2( r1 );</code>
Value constructors	<code>cv::Rect( x, y, w, h );</code>
Construct from origin and size	<code>cv::Rect( p, sz );</code>
Construct from two corners	<code>cv::Rect( p1, p2 );</code>
Member access	<code>r.x; r.y; r.width; r.height;</code>
Compute area	<code>r.area();</code>
Extract upper-left corner	<code>r.tl();</code>
Extract lower-right corner	<code>r.br;</code>
Determine if point <i>p</i> is inside of rectangle <i>r</i>	<code>r.contains( p );</code>

Cast operators and copy constructors exist to allow `cv::Rect` to be computed from or cast to the old-style `cv::CvRect` type as well. `cv::Rect` is actually an alias for a rectangle template instantiated with integer members.

The class `cv::Rect` also supports a variety of overloaded operators that can be used for the computation of various geometrical properties of two rectangles or a rectangle and another object.

---

*Table 3-5. Overloaded operators that take objects of type `cv::Rect`*

Operation	Example
Intersection of rectangles <code>r1</code> and <code>r2</code>	<code>cv::Rect r3 = r1 &amp; r2;</code> <code>r1 &amp;= r2;</code>
Minimum area rectangle containing rectangles <code>r1</code> and <code>r2</code>	<code>cv::Rect r3 = r1   r2;</code> <code>r1  = r2;</code>
Translate rectangle <code>r</code> by an amount <code>x</code>	<code>cv::Rect rx = r + v; // v is a cv::Point2i</code> <code>r += v;</code>
Enlarge a rectangle <code>r</code> by an amount given by size <code>s</code>	<code>cv::Rect rs = r + s; // s is a cv::Point2i</code> <code>r += s;</code>
Compare rectangles <code>r1</code> and <code>r2</code> for exact equality	<code>bool eq = (r1 == r2);</code>
Compare rectangles <code>r1</code> and <code>r2</code> for inequality	<code>bool ne = (r1 != r2);</code>

#### **class `cv::RotatedRect`**

The `cv::RotatedRect` class is one of the few classes in the C++ OpenCV interface that is not a template underneath. It is a container, which holds a `cv::Point2f` called `center`, a `cv::Size2f` called `size`, and one additional `float` called `angle`, with the latter representing the rotation of the rectangle around `center`. One very important difference between `cv::RotatedRect` and `cv::Rect` is the convention that a `cv::RotatedRect` is located in “space” relative to its center, while the `cv::Rect` is located relative to its upper-left corner.

*Table 3-6: Operations supported directly by class `cv::RotatedRect`*

Operation	Example
Default constructors	<code>cv::RotatedRect rr();</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::RotatedRect rr2( rr1 );</code>
Construct from two corners	<code>cv::RotatedRect( p1, p2 );</code>
Value constructors; takes a point, a size, and an angle	<code>cv::RotatedRect rr( p, sz, theta );</code>
Member access	<code>rr.center; rr.size; rr.angle;</code>
Return a list of the corners	<code>rr.points( pts[4] );</code>

#### **The Fixed Matrix Classes**

The fixed matrix classes are for matrices whose dimensions are known at compile time (hence “fixed”). As a result, all memory for their data is allocated on the stack, which means that they allocate and clean up quickly. Operations on them are fast and there are specially optimized implementations for small matrices (2-by-2, 3-by-3, etc.). The fixed matrix classes are also central to many of the other basic types in the C++ interface to OpenCV. The fixed vector class derives from the fixed matrix classes and other classes either derive from the fixed vector class (like `cv::Scalar`), or they rely on casting to the fixed vector class for many important operations. As usual, the fixed matrix classes are really a template. The template is called

---

`cv::Matx<>`, but individual matrices are usually allocated using aliases. The basic form of such an alias is `cv::Matx{1,2,...}{1,2,...}{f,d}`, where the numbers can be any number from one to six, and the trailing letter has the same meaning as with the previous types.<sup>4</sup>

In general, you should use the fixed matrix classes when you are representing something that is really a matrix with which you are going to do matrix algebra. If your object is really a big data array, like an image, or a huge list of points or something like that, the fixed matrix classes are not the correct solution; you should be using `cv::Mat` (which we will get to shortly). Fixed matrix classes are for small matrices where you know the size at compile time: (e.g., a camera matrix).

*Table 3-7: Operations supported by class `cv::Matx`*

Operation	Example
Default constructor	<code>cv::Matx33f m33f(); cv::Matx43d m43d();</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Matx22d m22d( n22d );</code>
Value constructors	<code>cv::Matx21f m(x0,x1); cv::Matx44d m(x0,x1,x2,x3,x4,x5,x6,x7,x8,x9,x10,x11,x12,x13,x14,x15);</code>
Matrix of identical elements	<code>m33f = cv::Matx33f::all( x );</code>
Matrix of zeros	<code>m23d = cv::Matx23d::zeros();</code>
Matrix of ones	<code>m16f = cv::Matx16f::ones();</code>
Create a unit matrix	<code>m33f = cv::Matx33f::eye();</code>
Create a matrix that can hold the diagonal of another	<code>m31f = cv::Matx33f::diag(); // create a matrix of // size 3-by-1 of floats</code>
Create a matrix with uniformly distributed entries	<code>m33f = cv::Matx33f::randu( min, max );</code>
Create a matrix with normally distributed entries	<code>m33f = cv::Matx33f::randn( mean, variance );</code>
Member access	<code>m( i, j ), m( i ); // one argument for // one-dimensional matrices only</code>
Matrix algebra	<code>m1 = m0; m0 * m1; m0 + m1; m0 - m1;</code>
Singleton algebra	<code>m * a; a * m; m / a;</code>
Comparison	<code>m1 == m2; m1 != m2;</code>
Dot product	<code>m1.dot( m2 ); // (sum of element-wise</code>

---

<sup>4</sup> At the time of writing, the relevant header file called `core.hpp` does not actually contain every possible combination of these integers. For example, there is no 1-by-1 matrix alias, nor is there a 5-by-5. This may or may not change in later releases, but you will pretty much never want the missing ones anyway. If you really do want one of the odd ones, you can just instantiate the template yourself (e.g., `cv::Matx<5,5,float>`).

---

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	<code>// multiplications, precision of m)</code>
Dot product	<code>m1.ddot( m2 ); // (sum of element-wise multiplications, // double precision)</code>
Reshape a matrix	<code>m91f = m33f.reshape&lt;9,1&gt;();</code>
Cast operators	<code>m44f = (Matx44f) m44d</code>
Extract i,j-th algebraic minor	<code>m44f.get_minor( i, j );</code>
Extract row <i>i</i>	<code>m14f = m44f.row( i );</code>
Extract column <i>j</i>	<code>m41f = m44f.col( j );</code>
Extract matrix diagonal	<code>m41f = m44f.diag();</code>
Compute transpose	<code>n44f = m44f.t();</code>
Invert matrix	<code>n44f = m44f.inv( method ); // (default method is // cv::DECOMP_LU)</code>
	<code>m31f = m33f.solve( rhs31f, method )</code>
Solve linear system	<code>m32f = m33f.solve&lt;2&gt;( rhs32f, method ); // (template // form<sup>5</sup>; default method is DECOMP_LU)</code>
Per-element multiplication	<code>m1.mul( m2 );</code>

Note that many of the fixed matrix functions are static relative to the class (i.e., you access them directly as members of the class rather than as members of a particular object). For example, if you would like to construct a 3-by-3 identity matrix, you have a handy class function for it: `cv::Mat33f::eye()`. Note that, in this example, `eye()` does not need any arguments because it is a member of the class, and the class is already a specialization of the `cv::Matx<>` template to 3-by-3.

### The Fixed Vector Classes

The fixed vector classes are derived from the fixed matrix classes. They are really just convenience functions for `cv::Matx<>`. In the proper sense of C++ inheritance, it is correct to say that the fixed vector template `cv::Vec<>` is a `cv::Matx<>` whose number of columns is one. The readily available aliases for specific instantiations of `cv::Vec<>` are of the form `cv::Vec{2,3,4,6}{b,s,w,i,f,d}`, where the last character has the usual meanings (with the addition of `w`, which indicates an `unsigned short`).

*Table 3-8: Operations supported by class `cv::Vec`*

Operation	Example
Default constructor	<code>Vec2s v2s(); Vec6f v6f(); // etc...</code>

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<sup>5</sup> The template form is used when the right hand side of the implied matrix equation has multiple columns. In this case, we are essentially solving for ‘k’ different systems at once. This value of ‘k’ must be supplied as the template argument to `solve<>()`. It will also determine the number of columns in the result matrix.

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Copy constructor	<code>Vec3f u3f( v3f );</code>
Value constructors	<code>Vec2f v2f(x0,x1); Vec6d v6d(x0,x1,x2,x3,x4,x5);</code>
Member access	<code>v4f[ i ]; v3w( j ); // (operator() and operator[] // both work)</code>
Vector cross-product	<code>v3f.cross( u3f );</code>

The primary conveniences of the fixed vector classes are the ability to access elements with a single ordinal, and a few specific additional functions that would not make sense for a general matrix (e.g., cross product). We can see this in Table 3-8 by the relatively small number of novel methods added to the large number of methods inherited from the fixed matrix classes.

### The Complex Number Classes

One more class type should be included in the basic types: the complex number classes. The OpenCV complex number classes are not identical to, but are compatible with, and can be cast to and from, the classes associated with the STL complex number class template `complex<>`. The most substantial difference between the OpenCV and STL complex number classes is in member access. In the STL classes, the real and imaginary parts are accessed through the member functions `real()` and `imag()`, while in the OpenCV class, they are directly accessible as (public) member variables `re` and `im`.

*Table 3-9: Operations supported by the OpenCV complex number classes*

Operation	Example
Default constructor	<code>cv::Complexf z1; cv::Complexd z2;</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Complexf z2( z1 );</code>
Value constructors	<code>cv::Complexd z1(re0); cv::Complexd(re0,im1) ;</code>
Copy constructor	<code>cv::Complexf u2f( v2f );</code>
Member access	<code>z1.re; z1.im;</code>
Complex conjugate	<code>z2 = z1.conj();</code>

Like many basic types, the complex classes are aliases for underlying templates. `cv::Complexf` and `cv::Complexd` are aliases for single- and double-precision complex floating point numbers, respectively.

### Helper Objects

In addition to the basic types and the big containers (which we will get to in the next section), there is a family of helper objects, which are important for controlling various algorithms (such as termination criteria) or for doing various operations on the containers (such as “ranges” or “slices”). There is also one very important object, the “smart” pointer object `cv::Ptr`. Looking into `cv::Ptr`, we will examine the garbage collecting system, which is integral to the C++ interface to OpenCV. This system allows us to not have to worry about the details of allocation and deallocation of objects in the manner that was once so onerous in the earlier C-based OpenCV interface (i.e., before version 2.1).

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## **class cv::TermCriteria**

Many algorithms require a stopping condition to know when to quit. Generally, stopping criteria take the form of either some finite number of iterations that are allowed (called `COUNT` or `MAX_ITER`) or some kind of error parameter that basically says “if you are this close, you can quit” (called `EPS`—short for “epsilon,” everyone’s favorite tiny number). In many cases, it is desirable to have both of these at once, so that if the algorithm never gets “close enough,” then it will still quit at some point.

`cv::TermCriteria` objects encapsulate one, the other, or both of the stopping criteria so that they can be passed conveniently to an OpenCV algorithm function. They have three member variables, `type`, `maxCount`, and `epsilon`, which can be set directly (they are public) or, more often, are just set by the constructor with the form `TermCriteria( int type, int maxCount, double epsilon )`. The variable `type` is set to one of the following values: `cv::TermCriteria::COUNT` or `TermCriteria::EPS`. You can also “or” (i.e., `|`) the two together. The value `cv::TermCriteria::COUNT` is a synonym for `cv::TermCriteria::MAX_ITER`, so you can use that if you prefer. If the termination criterion includes `cv::TermCriteria::COUNT`, then you are telling the algorithm to terminate after `maxCount` iterations. If the termination criterion includes `cv::TermCriteria::EPS`, then you are telling the algorithm to terminate after some metric associated with the algorithm’s convergence falls below `epsilon`<sup>6</sup> The `type` argument has to be set accordingly for `maxCount` or `epsilon` to be used.

## **class cv::Range**

The `cv::Range` class is used to specify a continuous sequence of integers. `cv::Range` objects have two elements, `start` and `end`, which—similar to `cv::TermCriteria`—are often set with the constructor `cv::Range( int start, int end )`. Ranges are inclusive of their start value, but not inclusive of their end value, so `cv::Range rng( 0, 4 )` includes the values 0, 1, 2, 3, but not 4.

Using `size()`, one can find the number of elements in a range. From the above, `rng.size()` would be equal to 4. There is also a member `empty()` that tests if a range has no elements. Finally, `cv::Range::all()` can be used anywhere a range is required to indicate whatever range the consumer has available.

## **The cv::Ptr template, and Garbage Collection 101**

One very useful object type in C++ is a “smart” pointer.<sup>7</sup> This pointer allows us to create a reference to a thing, and then pass that around. You can create more references to that thing, and then all of those references will be counted. As references go out of scope, the reference count for the smart pointer is decremented. Once all of the references (instances of the pointer) are gone, the “thing” will automatically be cleaned up (deallocated). The programmer doesn’t have to do this bookkeeping anymore.

The way this all works is as follows: first, you define an instance of the pointer template for the class object that you want to “wrap.” You do this with a call like `cv::Ptr<Matx33f> p( new cv::Matx33f )`. The constructor for the template object takes a pointer to the object to be pointed to. Once you do this, you have your smart pointer `p`, which is a sort of pointer-like object that you can pass around and use just like a normal pointer (i.e., it supports operators such as `operator*()` and `operator->()`). Once you have `p`, you can create other objects of the same type without passing them a pointer to a new object. For example, you could create: `Ptr<Mat33f> q`, and when you assign the value of `p` to `q`, somewhere behind the scenes, the “smart” action of the smart pointer comes into play. You see, just like a usual pointer, there is still only one actual `cv::Mat33f` object out there that `p` and `q` both point to. The

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<sup>6</sup> The exact termination criteria are clearly algorithm dependent, but the documentation will always be clear how a particular algorithm interprets `epsilon`.

<sup>7</sup> If you are familiar with some of the more recent additions to the C++ standard, you will recognize a similarity between the OpenCV `cv::Ptr<>` template and the `smart_ptr<>` template. Similarly, there is a smart pointer `shared_ptr<>` in the Boost library. Ultimately, they all function more or less the same.

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difference is that both `p` and `q` *know* that they are each one of two pointers. Should `p` disappear (such as by falling out of scope), `q` knows that it is the only remaining reference to the original matrix. If `q` should then disappear and its destructor is called (implicitly), `q` will know that is the last one left, and that it should deallocate the original matrix. You can think of this like the last person out of a building being responsible for turning out the lights and locking the door (and in this case, burning the building to the ground as well).

The `cv::Ptr<>` template class supports several additional functions in its interface related to the reference counting functionality of the smart pointer. Specifically, the functions `addref()` and `release()` increment and decrement the internal reference counter of the pointer. These are relatively dangerous functions to use, but are available in case you need to micromanage the reference counters yourself.

There is also a function `empty()`, which can be used to determine if a smart pointer is pointing to an object that has been deallocated. This could happen if you called `release()` on the object one or more times. In this case, you would still have a smart pointer around, but the object pointed to might already have been destroyed. There is a second application of `empty()`, which is to determine if the internal object pointer inside of the smart pointer object happens to be `NULL` for some other reason. This might occur if you assigned the smart pointer by calling a function that might just return `NULL` in the first place (`cvLoadImage()`, `fopen()`, etc.)<sup>8</sup>

The final member of `Ptr<>` that you will want to know about is `delete_obj()`. This is a function that gets called automatically when the reference count gets to zero. By default, this function is defined but does nothing. It is there so that you can overload it in the case of instantiation of `cv::Ptr<>`, which points to a class that requires some specific operation in order to clean up the class to which it points. For example, let's say that you are working with an old-style (pre-version 2.1) `IplImage`.<sup>9</sup> In the old days, you might, for example, have called `cvLoadImage()` to load that image from disk. In the C interface, that would have looked like:

```
| IplImage* img_p = cvLoadImage( ... );
```

The modern version of this (while still using `IplImage`, rather than `cv::Mat`, which we are still working our way up to) would look like:

```
| Ptr<IplImage> img_p = cvLoadImage( "an_image" );
```

or (if you prefer):

```
| Ptr<IplImage> img_p( cvLoadImage("an_image" ) );
```

Now you can use `img_p` in exactly the same way as a pointer (which is to say, for readers experienced with the pre-version 2.1 interface, “exactly as you would have back then”). Conveniently, this particular template instantiation is actually already defined for you somewhere in the vast sea of header files that make up OpenCV. If you were to go search it out, you would find the following template function defined:

```
| template<> inline void cv::Ptr<IplImage>::delete_obj() {  
|     cvReleaseImage(&obj);  
| }
```

(The variable `obj` is the name of the class member variable inside of `Ptr<>` that actually holds the pointer to the allocated object.) As a result of this definition, you will not need to deallocate the `IplImage*` pointer you got from `cvLoadImage()`. Instead, it will be automatically deallocated for you when `img_p` falls out of scope.

---

<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this example, we will make reference to `IplImage` and `cvLoadImage()`, both constructs from the ancient pre-version 2.1 interface that are now deprecated. We won't really cover them in detail in this book, but all you need to know for this example is that `IplImage` is the old data structure for images, and `cvLoadImage()` was the old function to get an image from disk and return a pointer to the resulting image structure.

<sup>9</sup> This example might seem a bit artificial, but in fact, if you have a large body of pre-v2.1 code you are trying to modernize, you will likely find yourself doing an operation like this quite often.

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This example was a somewhat special (though highly relevant) situation, in that the case of a smart pointer to `IplImage` is sufficiently salient that it was defined for you by the library. In a somewhat more typical case, when the clean-up function does not exist for what you want, you will have to define it yourself. Consider the example of creating a file handle using a smart pointer to `FILE`.<sup>10</sup> In this case, we define our own overloaded version of `delete_obj()` for the `cv::Ptr<FILE>` template:

```
template<> inline void cv::Ptr<FILE>::delete_obj() {
    fclose(obj);
}
```

Then you could go ahead and use that pointer to open a file, do whatever with it, and later, just let the pointer fall out of scope (at which time the file handle would automatically be closed for you):

```
{
    Ptr<FILE> f(fopen("myfile.txt", "r"));
    if(f.empty())
        throw ...; // Throw an exception, we will get to this later on...
    fprintf(f, ...);
    ...
}
```

At the final brace, `f` falls out of scope, the internal reference count in `f` goes to zero, `delete_obj()` is called by `f`'s destructor, and (thus) `fclose()` is called on the file handle pointer (stored in `obj`).

---

A tip for gurus: a serious programmer might worry that the incrementing and decrementing of the reference count might not be sufficiently atomic for the `Ptr<>` template to be safe in multithreaded applications. This, however, is not the case, and `Ptr<>` is thread safe. Similarly, the other reference counting objects in OpenCV are all thread-safe in this same sense.

---

### class `cv::Exception` and Exception Handling

OpenCV uses exceptions to handle errors. OpenCV defines its own exception type `cv::Exception`, which is derived from the STL exception class `std::exception`. Really, this exception type has nothing special about it, other than being in the `cv::` namespace and so distinguishable from other objects that are also derived from `std::exception`.

The type `cv::Exception` has members `code`, `err`, `func`, `file`, and `line`, which are (respectively) a numerical error code, a string indicating the nature of the error that generated the exception, the name of the function in which the error occurred, the file in which the error occurred, and an integer indicating the line on which the error occurred in that file. `err`, `func`, and `file` are all STL strings.

There are several built-in macros for generating exceptions yourself. `CV_Error( errorcode, description )` will generate and throw an exception with a fixed text description. `CV_Error_( errorcode, printf_fmt_str, [printf-args] )` works the same, but allows you to replace the fixed description with a printf-like format string and arguments. Finally, there is `CV_Assert( condition )` and `CV_DbgAssert( condition )`. Both will test your condition and throw an exception if the condition is not met. The latter version, however, will only operate in debug builds. These macros are the strongly preferred method of throwing exceptions, as they will automatically take care of the fields `func`, `file`, and `line` for you.

### The `cv::DataType<>` Template

When OpenCV library functions need to communicate the concept of a particular data type, they do so by creating an object of type `cv::DataType<>`. `cv::DataType<>` itself is a template, and so the actual objects passed around are specializations of this template. This is an example of what in C++ are generally called *traits*. This allows the `cv::DataType<>` object to both contain runtime information about the

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<sup>10</sup> In this case, by `FILE` we mean `struct FILE`, as defined in the C standard library.

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type, as well as to contain `typedef` statements in its own definition that allow it to refer to the same type at compile time.

This might sound a bit confusing, and it is, but that is an inevitable consequence of trying to mix runtime information and compile-time information in C++.<sup>11</sup> An example will help clarify.

The template class definition for `DataType` is the following:

```
template<typename _Tp> class DataType
{
    typedef _Tp      value_type;
    typedef value_type work_type;
    typedef value_type channel_type;
    typedef value_type vec_type;

    enum {
        generic_type = 1,
        depth         = -1,
        channels       = 1,
        fmt           = 0,
        type           = CV_MAKETYPE(depth, channels)
    };
};
```

Let's try to understand what this means, and then follow it with an example. First, we can see that `cv::DataType<>` is a template, and expects to be specialized to a class called `_Tp`. It then has four `typedef` statements that allow the type of the `cv::DataType<>`, as well as some other related types, to be extracted from the `cv::DataType<>` instantiated object at compile time. In the template definition, these are all the same, but we will see in our example of a specialization of the template that they do not have to be (and often should not be). The next section is an `enum` that contains several components.<sup>12</sup> These are the `generic_type`, the `depth`, the number of `channels`, the format `fmt`, and the `type`. To see what all of these things mean, we'll look at two example specializations of `cv::DataType<>`, from `core.hpp`. The first is the `cv::DataType<>` definition for `float`:

```
template<> class DataType<float>
{
public:
    typedef float      value_type;
    typedef value_type work_type;
    typedef value_type channel_type;
    typedef value_type vec_type;

    enum {
        generic_type = 0,
        depth         = DataDepth<channel_type>::value,
        channels       = 1,
        fmt           = DataDepth<channel_type>::fmt,
        type           = CV_MAKETYPE(depth, channels)
    };
};
```

The first thing to notice is that this is a definition for a C++ built-in type. It is useful to have such definitions for the built-in types, but we can also make them for more complicated objects. In this case, the `value_type` is of course `float`, and the `work_type`, `channel_type`, and `vec_type` are all the same. We will see more clearly what these are for in the next example. For the constants in the `enum`, this

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<sup>11</sup> You don't have this sort of problem in languages (e.g., Python) that support variable introspection and have an intrinsic runtime concept of data types.

<sup>12</sup> If this construct is awkward to you, remember that you can always assign integer values to the "options" in an `enum` declaration. In effect, this is a way of stashing a bunch of integer constants that will be fixed at compile time.

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example will do just fine. The first variable `generic_type` is set to 0, as it is zero for all types defined in `core.hpp`. The `depth` variable is the data type identifier used by OpenCV. For example, `cv::DataDepth<float>::value` resolves to the constant `cv::F32`. The entry `channels` is one because `float` is just a single number; we will see an alternative to this in the next example. The variable `fmt` gives a single character representation of the format. In this case, `cv::DataDepth<float>::fmt` resolves to `f`. The last entry is `type`, which is a representation similar to `depth`, but which includes the number of channels (in this case, one). `CV_MAKETYPE(cv::F32,1)` resolves to `cv::F32C1`.

The important thing about `DataType<>`, however, is to communicate the nature of more complicated constructs. This is essential, for example, for allowing algorithms to be implemented in a manner that is agnostic to the incoming data type (i.e., algorithms that use introspection to determine how to proceed with incoming data).

Consider the example of an instantiation of `cv::DataType<>` for a `cv::Rect<>` (itself containing an as yet unspecialized type `_Tp`):

```
template<typename _Tp> class DataType<Rect_<_Tp> >
{
public:
    typedef Rect_<_Tp> value_type;
    typedef Rect_<typename DataType<_Tp>::work_type> work_type;
    typedef _Tp channel_type;
    typedef Vec<channel_type, channels> vec_type;

    enum {
        generic_type = 0,
        depth = DataDepth<channel_type>::value,
        channels = 4,
        fmt = ((channels-1)<<8) + DataDepth<channel_type>::fmt,
        type = CV_MAKETYPE(depth, channels)
    };
};
```

This is a much more complicated example. First, notice that `cv::Rect` itself does not appear. You will recall that earlier we mentioned that `cv::Rect` was actually an alias for a template, and that template is called `cv::Rect_<>`. So this template could be specialized as `cv::DataType<Rect>` or, for example, `cv::DataType<Rect_<float>>`. For the case `cv::DataType<Rect>`, we recall that all of the elements are integers, so if we consider that case, all of the instantiations of the template parameter `_Tp` resolve to `int`. We can see that the `value_type` is just the compile-time name of the thing that the `cv::DataType<>` is describing (namely `Rect`). The `work_type`, however, is defined to be the `work_type` of `cv::DataType<int>` (which, not surprisingly is `int`). What we see is that the `work_type` is telling us what kind of variables the `cv::DataType<>` is made of (i.e., what we “do work” on). The channel type is also `int`. This means that if we want to represent this variable as a multichannel object, it should be represented as some number of `int` objects. Finally, just as `channel_type` tells us how to represent this `cv::DataType<>` as a multichannel object, `vec_type` tells us how to represent it as an object of type `cv::Vec<>`. The alias `cv::DataType<Rect>::vec_type` will resolve to `cv::Vec<int,4>`. Moving on to the runtime constants: `generic_type` is again 0, `depth` is `CV::S32`, `channels` is 4 (because there are actually four values, the same reason the `vec_type` instantiated to a `cv::Vec<>` of size 4), `fmt` resolves to `0x3069` (since `i` is `0x69`), and `type` resolves to `cv::S32C4`.

### class InputArray and class OutputArray

Many OpenCV functions take arrays as arguments and return arrays as return values, but in OpenCV, there are many kinds of arrays. We have already seen that OpenCV supports some small array types (`cv::Scalar`, `cv::Vec`, `cv::Matx`), and STL’s `std::vector<>` in addition to the large array types in the next section (`cv::Mat` and `cv::SparseMat`). In order to keep the interface from becoming onerously complicated (and repetitive), OpenCV defines the types `cv::InputArray` and

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`cv::OutputArray`. In effect, these types mean “any of the above” with respect to the many array forms supported by the library. There is even a `cv::InputOutputArray`, specifying an array for in place computation.

The primary difference between `cv::InputArray` and `cv::OutputArray` is that the former is assumed to be `const` (i.e., read only). You will typically see these two types used in the definitions of library routines. You will not tend to use them yourself, but when being introduced to library functions, their presence means that you can use any array type, including a single `cv::Scalar`, and the result should be what you expect.

Related to `cv::InputArray` is the special function `cv::noArray()` that returns `cv::InputArray`. The returned object can be passed to any input requiring `cv::InputArray` to indicate that this input is not being used.

## Large Array Types

Finally, our journey brings us to the *large array types*. Chief among these is `cv::Mat`, which could be considered the epicenter of the entire C++ implementation of the OpenCV library. The overwhelming majority of functions in the OpenCV library are members of the `cv::Mat` class or take a `cv::Mat` as an argument or return `cv::Mat` as a return value.

---

If you are familiar with the C interface (pre-version 2.1 implementation) of the OpenCV library, you will remember the data types `IplImage` and `CvMat`. You might also recall `CvArr`. In the C++ implementation, these are all gone, replaced with `cv::Mat`. This means no more dubious casting of `void*` pointers in function arguments, and in general a tremendous enhancement in the cleanliness of the library internally.

---

The `cv::Mat` class is used to represent *dense* arrays of any number of dimensions. In this context, dense means that for every entry in the array, there is a data value stored in memory corresponding to that entry, even if that entry is zero. Most images, for example, are stored as dense arrays. The alternative would be a *sparse* array. In the case of a sparse array, only nonzero entries are typically stored. This can result in a great savings of storage space if many of the entries are in fact zero, but can be very wasteful if the array is relatively dense. A common case for using a sparse array rather than a dense array would be a histogram. For many histograms, most of the entries are zero, and storing all those zeros is not necessary. For the case of sparse arrays, OpenCV has the alternative data structure `cv::SparseMat`.

### class `cv::Mat`: N-Dimensional Dense Arrays

The class `cv::Mat` can be used for arrays of any number of dimensions. The data is stored in the array in what can be thought of as an *n*-dimensional analog of “raster scan order.” This means that in a one-dimensional array, the elements are sequential. In a two-dimensional array, the data is organized into rows, and each row appears one after the other. For three-dimensional arrays, each plane is filled out row by row, and then the planes are packed one after the other.

Each matrix contains an element signaling the contents of the array called `flags`, an element that indicates the number of dimensions called `dims`, two elements that indicate the number of rows and columns called `rows` and `cols` (these are not valid for `dims>2`), a pointer to where the array data is stored called `data`, and a reference counter analogous to the reference counter used by `cv::Ptr<>` called `refcount`. This latter member allows `cv::Mat` to behave very much like a smart pointer for the data contained in `data`. The memory layout in `data` is described by the array `step[]`. The data array is laid out such that the address of an element whose indices are given by  $(i_0, i_1, \dots, i_{N_d-1})$  is:

$$\begin{aligned} & \&(mtx_{i_0, i_1, \dots, i_{N_d-1}}) \\ = & mtx.data + mtx.step[0] * i_0 + mtx.step[1] * i_1 + \dots + mtx.step[N_d - 1] * i_{N_d-1} \end{aligned}$$

In the simple case of a two-dimensional array, this reduces to:

$$\&(mtx_{i,j}) = mtx.data + mtx.step[0] * i + mtx.step[1] * j$$

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---

The data itself contained in `cv::Mat` is not required to be simple primitives. Each element of the data in a `cv::Mat` can itself be either a single number, or multiple numbers. In the case of multiple numbers, this is what the library refers to as a *multichannel* array. In fact, an  $n$ -dimensional array and an  $(n-1)$ -dimensional multichannel array are actually very similar objects, but because of the frequency of occasions in which it is useful to be able to think of an array as a *vector valued* array, the library contains special provisions for such structures.<sup>13</sup>

One reason why this distinction is made is because of memory access. By definition, an *element* of an array is the part that may be vector-valued. For example, an array might be said to be a two-dimensional three-channel array of 32-bit floats; in this case, the element of the array is the three 32-bit floats with a size of 12 bytes. When laid out in memory, rows of an array may not be absolutely sequential; there may be small gaps that buffer each row before the next. The difference between an  $n$ -dimensional single-channel array and an  $(n-1)$ -dimensional multichannel array is that this padding will always occur at the end of full rows (i.e., the channels in an element will always be sequential).

### Creating an Array

An array can be created simply by instantiating a variable of type `cv::Mat`. An array created in this manner has no size and no data type. It can, however, later be asked to allocate data by using a member function such as `create()`. One variation of `create()` takes as arguments a number of rows, a number of columns, and a type, and configures the array to represent a two-dimensional object. The type of an array determines what kind of elements it has. Valid types in this context specify both the fundamental type of element as well as the number of channels. All such types are defined in the library header, and have the form `cv::{U8,S16,U16,S32,F32,F64}C{1,2,3}`.<sup>14</sup> For example, `cv::F32C3` would imply a 32-bit floating-point three-channel array.

You can also specify these things when you first allocate the matrix if you prefer. There are many constructors for `cv::Mat`, one of which takes the same arguments as `create()` (and an optional fourth argument with which to initialize all of the elements in your new array).

```
cv::Mat m;  
m.create( 3, 10, cv::F32C3 );           // 3 rows, 10 columns of 3-channel 32-bit floats  
m.setTo( cv::Scalar( 1.0f, 0.0f, 1.0f ) ); // 1st channel is 1.0, 2nd 0.0, 3rd 1.0
```

is equivalent to

```
cv::Mat m( 3, 10, cv::F32C3, cv::Scalar( 1.0f, 0.0f, 1.0f ) );
```

It is important to understand that the data in an array is not *attached* rigidly to the array object. The `cv::Mat` object is really a header for a data area, which—in principle—is an entirely separate thing. For example, it is possible to assign one matrix `n` to another matrix `m` (i.e., `m=n`). In this case, the data pointer inside of `m` will be changed to point to the same data as `n`. The data pointed to previously by the data element of `m` (if any) will be deallocated<sup>15</sup>. At the same time, the reference counter for the data area that they both now share will be incremented. Last, but not least, the members of `m` that characterize the data in `m` (such as `rows`, `cols`, and `flags`) will be updated to accurately describe the data now pointed to by `data` in `m`. This all results in a very convenient behavior, in which arrays can be assigned to one another, and the work necessary to do this is done automatically behind the scenes to give the correct result.

---

<sup>13</sup> Pre-2.1 OpenCV array types had an explicit element `IplImage::nChannels`, which indicated the number of channels. Because of the more general way in which such concepts are captured in the `cv::Mat` object, this information is no longer directly stored in a class variable. Rather, it is returned by a member function `cv::channels()`.

<sup>14</sup> OpenCV allows for arrays with more than three channels, but to construct one of these, you will have to call one of the functions `cv::{U8,S16,U16,S32,F32,F64}C()`. These functions take a single argument, which is the number of channels. So `cv::U8C(3)` is equivalent to `cv::U8C3`, but since there is no macro for `cv::U8C7`, to get this you would have to call `cv::U8C(7)`.

<sup>15</sup> Technically, it will only be deallocated if `m` was the last `cv::Mat` around which pointed to that particular data.

---

The following is a complete list of the constructors available for `cv::Mat`. The list appears rather unwieldy, but in fact you will only use a small fraction of these most of the time. Having said that, when you need one of the more obscure ones, you will probably find that you are glad it is there.

*Table 3-10: `cv::Mat` constructors that do not copy data*

Constructor	Description
<code>cv::Mat();</code>	Default constructor
<code>cv::Mat( int rows, int cols, int type );</code>	Two-dimensional arrays by type
<code>cv::Mat( int rows, int cols, int type, const Scalar&amp; s );</code>	Two-dimensional arrays by type with initialization value
<code>cv::Mat( int rows, int cols, int type, void* data, size_t step=AUTO_STEP );</code>	Two-dimensional arrays by type with preexisting data
<code>cv::Mat( cv::Size sz, int type );</code>	Two-dimensional arrays by type (size in <code>sz</code> )
<code>cv::Mat( cv::Size sz, int type, const Scalar&amp; s );</code>	Two-dimensional arrays by type with initialization value (size in <code>sz</code> )
<code>cv::Mat( cv::Size sz, int type, void* data, size_t step=AUTO_STEP );</code>	Two-dimensional arrays by type with preexisting data (size in <code>sz</code> )
<code>cv::Mat( int ndims, const int* sizes, int type );</code>	Multidimensional arrays by type
<code>cv::Mat( int ndims, const int* sizes, int type, const Scalar&amp; s );</code>	Multidimensional arrays by type with initialization value
<code>cv::Mat( int ndims, const int* sizes, int type, void* data, size_t step=AUTO_STEP );</code>	Multidimensional arrays by type with preexisting data

Table 3-10 lists the basic constructors for the `cv::Mat` object. Other than the default constructor, these fall into three basic categories: those that take a number of rows and a number of columns to create a two-dimensional array, those that use a `cv::Size` object to create a two-dimensional array, and those that construct `n`-dimensional arrays and require you to specify the number of dimensions and pass in an array of integers specifying the size of each of the dimensions.

In addition, some of these allow you to initialize the data, either by providing a `cv::Scalar` (in which case, the entire array will be initialized to that value), or by providing a pointer to an appropriate data block that can be used by the array. In this latter case, you are essentially just creating a header to the existing data (i.e., no data is copied; the data member is set to point to the data indicated by the `data` argument).

*Table 3-11: `cv::Mat` constructors that copy data from other `cv::Mat`'s*

Constructor	Description
<code>cv::Mat( const Mat&amp; mat );</code>	Copy constructor

---

<code>cv::Mat( const Mat&amp; mat,           const cv::Range&amp; rows,           const cv::Range&amp; cols );</code>	Copy constructor that copies only a subset of rows and columns
<code>cv::Mat( const Mat&amp; mat,           const cv::Rect&amp; roi );</code>	Copy constructor that copies only a subset of rows and columns specified by a region of interest
<code>cv::Mat( const Mat&amp; mat,           const cv::Range* ranges );</code>	Generalized region of interest copy constructor that uses an array of ranges to select from an <i>n</i> -dimensional array
<code>cv::Mat( const cv::MatExpr&amp; expr );</code>	Copy constructor that initializes <i>m</i> with the result of an algebraic expression of other matrices

The copy constructors (Table 3-11) show how to create an array from another array. In addition to the basic copy constructor, there are three methods for constructing an array from a sub-region of an existing array and one constructor that initializes the new matrix using the result of some matrix expression.

The sub-region (also known as “region of interest”) constructors come in three flavors: one that takes a range of rows and a range of columns (this works only on a two-dimensional matrix), one that uses a `cv::Rect` to specify a rectangular sub-region (also works only on a two-dimensional matrix), and a final one that takes an array of ranges. In this latter case, the number of valid ranges pointed to by the pointer argument *ranges* is required to be equal to the number of dimensions of the array *mat*. It is this third option that you must use if *mat* is a multidimensional array with *ndim* greater than 2.

*Table 3-12: cv::Mat constructors for pre-version 2.1 data types*

Constructor	Description
<code>cv::Mat( const CvMat* old,           bool copyData=false );</code>	Constructor for <i>m</i> that creates <i>m</i> from an old-style <i>CvMat</i> , with optional data copy
<code>cv::Mat( const IplImage* old,           bool copyData=false );</code>	Constructor for <i>m</i> that creates <i>m</i> from an old-style <i>IplImage</i> , with optional data copy

If you are modernizing or maintaining pre-version 2.1 code that still contains the C-style data structures, you may want to create a new C++-style `cv::Mat` structure from an existing *CvMat* or *IplImage* structure. In this case, you have two options. You can construct a header on the existing data (by setting *copyData* to false) or you can set *copyData* to true (in which case, new memory will be allocated for *m* and all of the data from *old* will be copied into *m*).

---

These objects do a lot more for you than you might realize at first. In particular, they allow for expressions that mix the C++ and C data-types by functioning as implicit constructors for the C++ data types on demand. Thus, it is possible to simply use a pointer to one of the C structures wherever a `cv::Mat` is expected and have a reasonable expectation that things will work out correctly. (This is why the *copyData* member defaults to *false*.)

In addition to these constructors, there are corresponding cast operators that will convert a `cv::Mat` into *CvMat* or *IplImage* on demand. These also do not copy data.

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*Table 3-13: cv::Mat template constructors*

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Constructor	Description
<code>cv::Mat( const cv::Vec&lt;T,n&gt;&amp; vec,           bool copyData=true );</code>	Construct a one-dimensional array of type <code>T</code> and size <code>n</code> from a <code>cv::Vec</code> of the same type
<code>cv::Mat(           const cv::Matx&lt;T,m,n&gt;&amp; vec,           bool copyData=true );</code>	Construct a two-dimensional array of type <code>T</code> and size <code>m-by-n</code> from a <code>cv::Matx</code> of the same type
<code>cv::Mat( const std::vector&lt;T&gt;&amp; vec,           bool copyData=true );</code>	Construct an one-dimensional array of type <code>T</code> from an STL <code>vector</code> containing elements of the same type

The last set of constructors is the template constructors. These constructors are template not because they construct a template form of `cv::Mat`, but because they construct an instance of `cv::Mat` from something that is itself template. These constructors allow either an arbitrary `cv::Vec<>` or `cv::Matx<>` to be used to create a `cv::Mat` array of corresponding dimension and type, or to use an STL `vector<>` object of arbitrary type to construct an array of that same type.

*Table 3-14: static functions that create cv::Mat*

Function	Description
<code>cv::Mat::zeros( rows, cols, type );</code>	Create a <code>cv::Mat</code> of size <code>rows-by-cols</code> , which is full of zeros, with type <code>type</code> ( <code>cv::F32</code> , etc.)
<code>cv::Mat::ones( rows, cols, type );</code>	Create a <code>cv::Mat</code> of size <code>rows-by-cols</code> , which is full of ones, with type <code>type</code> ( <code>cv::F32</code> , etc.)
<code>cv::Mat::eye( rows, cols, type );</code>	Create a <code>cv::Mat</code> of size <code>rows-by-cols</code> , which is an identity matrix, with type <code>type</code> ( <code>cv::F32</code> , etc.)

The class `cv::Mat` also provides a number of static member functions to create certain kinds of commonly used arrays. These include functions like `zeros()`, `ones()`, and `eye()`, which construct a matrix full of zeros, a matrix full of ones, or an identity matrix, respectively.<sup>16</sup>

### Accessing Array Elements Individually

There are several ways to access a matrix, which are designed to be convenient in different contexts. In recent versions of OpenCV, however, a great deal of effort has been invested to make them all comparably, if not identically, efficient. The two primary options for accessing individual elements are to access them by location, or to access them through iteration.

The basic means of direct access is the (template) member function `at<>()`<sup>17</sup>. There are many variations of this function that take different arguments for arrays of different numbers of dimensions. The way this

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<sup>16</sup> In the case of `cv::Mat::eye()` and `cv::Mat::ones()`, if the array created is multi-channel, only the first channel will be set `1.0` while the other channels will be `0.0`.

<sup>17</sup> For two channels, the order is (row, col), `at<>(row, col)`.

---

---

function works is that you specialize the `at<>()` template to the type of data that the matrix contains, then access that element using the row and column locations of the data you want. Here is a simple example:

```
cv::Mat m = cv::Mat::eye( 10, 10, 32FC1 );
printf(
    "Element (3,3) is %f\n",
    m.at<float>(3,3) //(row, col)
);
```

For a multichannel array, the analogous example would look like this:

```
cv::Mat m = cv::Mat::eye( 10, 10, 32FC2 );
printf(
    "Element (3,3) is (%f,%f)\n",
    m.at<cv::Vec2f>(3,3)[0],
    m.at<cv::Vec2f>(3,3)[1]
);
```

Note that when you want to specify a template function like `at<>()` to operate on a multichannel array, the best way to do this is to use a `cv::Vec<>` object (either a premade alias or the template form).

Similar to the vector case, you can create an array made of a more sophisticated type, such as complex numbers:

```
cv::Mat m = cv::Mat::eye( 10, 10, cv::DataType<cv::Complexf>::type );
printf(
    "Element (3,3) is %f + i%f\n",
    m.at<cv::Complexf>(3,3).re,
    m.at<cv::Complexf>(3,3).im,
);
```

It is also worth noting the use of the `cv::DataType<>` template here. The matrix constructor requires a runtime value that is a variable of type `int` that happens to take on some “magic” values that the constructor understands. By contrast, `cv::Complexf` is an actual object type, a purely compile-time construct. The need to generate one of these representations (runtime) from the other (compile time) is precisely why the `cv::DataType<>` template exists. [Table 3-15](#) lists the available variations of the `at<>()` template.

*Table 3-15: Variations of the `at<>()` accessor function*

Example	Description
<code>M.at&lt;int&gt;( i );</code>	Element <i>i</i> from integer array <i>M</i>
<code>M.at&lt;float&gt;( i, j );</code>	Element ( <i>i</i> , <i>j</i> ) (row, col) from float array <i>M</i>
<code>M.at&lt;int&gt;( pt );</code>	Element at location ( <i>pt.x</i> , <i>pt.y</i> ) in integer matrix <i>M</i>
<code>M.at&lt;float&gt;( i, j, k );</code>	Element at location ( <i>i</i> , <i>j</i> , <i>k</i> ) in three-dimensional float array <i>M</i>
<code>M.at&lt;uchar&gt;( idx );</code>	Element at <i>n</i> -dimensional location indicated by <i>idx[]</i> in array <i>M</i> of unsigned characters

---

---

To access a two-dimensional array, you can also extract a C-style pointer to a specific row of the array. This is done with the `ptr<>()` template member function of `cv::Mat`. (Recall that the data in the array is contiguous by row, thus accessing a specific column in this way would not make sense; we will see the right way to do that shortly.) As with `at<>()`, `ptr<>()` is a template function instantiated with a type name. It takes an integer argument indicating the row you wish a pointer to. The function returns a pointer to the primitive type of which the array is constructed (i.e., if the array type is `F32C3`, the return value will be of type `float*`). Thus, given a three-channel matrix `mtx` of type `float`, the construction `mtx.ptr<Vec3f>(3)` would return a pointer to the first (floating-point) channel of the first element in row 3 of `mtx`. This is generally the fastest way to access elements of an array,<sup>18</sup> because once you have the pointer, you are right down there with the data.

---

There are thus two ways to get a pointer to the data in a matrix `mtx`. One way is to go about it with the `ptr<>()` member function. The other is to directly use the member pointer `data`, and to use the member array `step[]` to compute addresses. The latter option is similar to what one tended to do in the C interface, but is generally no longer preferred over access methods such as `at<>()`, `ptr<>()`, and the iterators. Having said this, direct address computation may still be most efficient, particularly when dealing with arrays of dimension greater than two.

---

There is one last important point to keep in mind about C-style pointer access. If you want to access everything in an array, you will likely iterate one row at a time, because the rows may or may not be packed continuously in the array. However, there is a member function `isContinuous()` that will tell you if the members are continuously packed. If they are, you can just grab the pointer to the very first element of the first row and cruise through the entire array as if it were a giant one-dimensional array.

The other form of sequential access is to use the iterator mechanism built into `cv::Mat`. This mechanism is based on, and works more or less identically to, the analogous mechanism provided by the STL containers. The basic idea is that OpenCV provides a pair of iterator templates, one for `const` and one for non-`const` arrays. These iterators are named `cv::MatIterator<>` and `cv::MatConstIterator<>`, respectively. The `cv::Mat` methods `begin()` and `end()` return objects of this type. This method of iteration is convenient because the iterators are smart enough to handle the continuous packing as well as the non-continuous packing cases automatically, as well as handling any number of dimensions in the array.

Each iterator must be declared and specified to the type of object from which the array is constructed. Here is a simple example of the iterators being used to compute the “longest” element in a three-dimensional array of three-channel elements (a three-dimensional vector field):

```
int sz[3] = { 4, 4, 4 };
cv::Mat m( 3, sz, cv::F32C3 ); // A three-dimensional array of size 4-by-4-by-4
cv::randu( m, -1.0f, 1.0f ); // fill with random numbers from -1.0 to 1.0

float max = 0.0f; // minimum possible value of L2 norm
cv::MatConstIterator<cv::Vec3f> it = m.begin();
while( it != m.end() ) {
    len2 = (*it)[0]*(*it)[0]+(*it)[1]*(*it)[1]+(*it)[2]*(*it)[2];
    if( len2 > max ) max = len2;
    it++;
}
```

---

<sup>18</sup> The difference in performance between using `at<>()` and direct pointer access depends on compiler optimization. Access through `at<>()` will tend to be comparable to (though slightly slower than) direct pointer access in code with a good optimizer, but may be more than order of magnitude slower if that optimizer is turned off (e.g., when you do a debug build). Access through iterators is almost always slower than either of these. In almost all cases, however, using built-in OpenCV functions will be faster than any loop you write regardless of the direct access methods described here, so avoid that kind of construct wherever possible.

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Iterator-based access is typically used when doing operations over an entire array, or element-wise across multiple arrays. Consider the case of adding two arrays, or of converting an array from the RGB color space to the HSV color space. In such cases, the same exact operation will be done at every pixel location.

### The *N*-ary Array Iterator: `NAryMatIterator`

There is another form of iteration which, though it does not handle discontinuities in the packing of the arrays in the manner of `cv::MatIterator<>`, allows us to handle iteration over many arrays at once. This iterator is called `cv::NAryMatIterator`, and requires only that all of the arrays that are being iterated over be of the same geometry (number of dimensions and extent in each dimension).

Instead of returning single elements of the arrays being iterated over, the *N*-ary iterator operates by returning chunks of those arrays, called *planes*. A plane is a portion (typically one- or two-dimensional slice) of the input array in which the data is guaranteed to be contiguous in memory.<sup>19</sup> This is how discontinuity is handled; you are given the contiguous chunks one by one. For each such plane, you can either operate on it using array operations, or iterate trivially over it yourself. (In this case, “trivially” means to iterate over it in a way which does not need to check for discontinuities inside of the chunk.)

The concept of the plane is entirely separate from the concept of multiple arrays being iterated over simultaneously. Consider the following code example, in which we will sum just a single multidimensional array plane by plane:

```
const int n_mat_size = 5;
const int n_mat_sz[] = { n_mat_size, n_mat_size, n_mat_size };
cv::Mat n_mat( 3, n_mat_sz, cv::F32C1 );

cv::RNG rng;
rng.fill( n_mat, cv::RNG::UNIFORM, 0.f, 1.f );

const cv::Mat* arrays[] = { &n_mat, 0 };
cv::Mat my_planes[1];
cv::NAryMatIterator it( arrays, my_planes );
```

At this point, you have your *N*-ary iterator. Continuing our example, we will compute the sum of `m0` and `m1`, and place the result in `m2`. We will do this plane by plane, however:

```
// On each iteration, it.planes[i] will be the current plane of the
// i-th array from 'arrays'.
//
float s = 0.f; // Total sum over all planes
int n = 0; // Total number of planes
for (int p = 0; p < it.nplanes; p++, ++it) {
    s += cv::sum(it.planes[0])[0];
    n++;
}
```

In this example, we first create the three-dimensional array `n_mat` and fill it with 125 random floating point numbers between `0.0` and `1.0`. To initialize the `cv::NAryMatIterator` object, we need to have two things. First, we need a C-style array containing pointers to all of the `cv::Mat`’s we wish to iterate over (in this example, there is just one). This array must always be terminated with a `0` or `NULL`. Next, we need another C-style array of `cv::Mat`’s that can be used to refer to the individual planes as we iterate over them (in this case, there is also just one).

Once we have created the *N*-ary iterator, we can iterate over it. Recall that this iteration is over the planes that make up the arrays we gave to the iterator. The number of planes (the same for each array, because they have the same geometry) will always be given by `it.nplanes`. The *N*-ary iterator contains a C-

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<sup>19</sup> In fact the dimensionality of the “plane” is not limited to 2; it can be larger. What is always the case is that the planes will be contiguous in memory.

---

---

style array called `planes` that holds headers for the current plane in each input array. In our example, there is only one array being iterated over, so we need only refer to `it.planes[0]` (the current plane in the one and only array). In this example, we then call `cv::sum()` on each plane and accumulate the final result.

To see the real utility of the N-ary iterator, consider a slightly expanded version of this example in which there are two arrays we would like to sum over:

```
const int n_mat_size = 5;
const int n_mat_sz[] = { n_mat_size, n_mat_size, n_mat_size };
cv::Mat n_mat0( 3, n_mat_sz, cv::F32C1 );
cv::Mat n_mat1( 3, n_mat_sz, cv::F32C1 );

cv::RNG rng;
rng.fill( n_mat0, cv::RNG::UNIFORM, 0.f, 1.f );
rng.fill( n_mat1, cv::RNG::UNIFORM, 0.f, 1.f );

const cv::Mat* arrays[] = { &n_mat0, &n_mat1, 0 };
cv::Mat my_planes[2];
cv::NaryMatIterator it( arrays, my_planes );

float s = 0.f; // Total sum over all planes in both arrays
int n = 0; // Total number of planes
for(int p = 0; p < it.nplanes; p++, ++it) {
    s += cv::sum(it.planes[0])[0];
    s += cv::sum(it.planes[1])[0];
    n++;
}
```

In this second example, you can see that the C-style array called `arrays` is given pointers to both input arrays, and two matrices are supplied in the `my_planes` array. When it is time to iterate over the planes, at each step, `planes[0]` contains a plane in `n_mat0` and `planes[1]` contains the corresponding plane in `n_mat1`. In this simple example, we just sum the two planes and add them to our accumulator. In an only slightly extended case, we could use element-wise addition to sum these two planes and place the result into the corresponding plane in a third array.

Not shown in the example, but also important, is the member `it.size`, which indicates the size of each plane. The size reported is the number of elements in the plane, so it does not include a factor for the number of channels. In our previous example, if `it.nplanes` was four, then `it.size` would have been sixteen:

```
////////// compute dst[*] = pow(src1[*], src2[*]) //////////
const Mat* arrays[] = { src1, src2, dst, 0 };
float* ptrs[3];

NaryMatIterator it(arrays, (uchar**)ptrs);
for( size_t i = 0; i < it.nplanes; i++, ++it )
{
    for( size_t j = 0; j < it.size; j++ )
    {
        ptrs[2][j] = std::pow(ptrs[0][j], ptrs[1][j]);
    }
}
```

### Accessing Array Elements by Block

In the previous section, we saw ways to access individual elements of an array, either singularly or by iterating sequentially through them all. Another common situation that arises is when you need to access a subset of an array as another array. This might be to select out a row or a column, or any sub-region of the original array.

---

---

There are many methods that do this for us in one way or another; all of them are member functions of the `cv::Mat` class and return a subsection of the array on which they are called. The simplest of these methods are `row()` and `col()`, which take a single integer and return the indicated row or column of the array whose member we are calling. Clearly these make sense only for a two-dimensional array; we will get to the more complicated case momentarily.

When you use `m.row()` or `m.col()` (for some array `m`), or any of the other functions we are about to discuss, it is important to understand that the data in `m` is not copied to the new arrays. Consider an expression like `m2 = m.row(3)`. This expression means to create a new array header `m2`, and to arrange its `data` pointer, `step` array, and so on, such that it will access the data in row 3 in `m`. If you modify the data in `m2`, you will be modifying the data in `m`. Later, we will visit the `copyTo()` method, which actually will copy data. The main advantage of the way this is handled in OpenCV is that the amount of time required to create a new array that accesses part of an existing array is not only very small, but also independent of the size of either the old or the new array.

Closely related to `row()` and `col()` are `rowRange()` and `colRange()`. These functions do essentially the same thing as their simpler cousins, except that they will extract an array with multiple contiguous rows (or columns). Both functions can be called in one of two ways, either by specifying an integer start and end row (or column), or by passing a `cv::Range` object that indicates the desired rows (or columns). In the case of the two-integer method, the range is inclusive of the start index but exclusive of the end index (you may recall that `cv::Range` uses a similar convention).

The member function `diag()` works the same as `row()` or `col()`, except that the array returned from `m.diag()` references the diagonal elements of a matrix. `m.diag()` expects an integer argument that indicates which diagonal is to be extracted. If that argument is zero, then it will be the main diagonal. If it is positive, it will be offset from the main diagonal by that distance in the upper half of the array. If it is negative, then it will be from the lower half of the array.

The last way to extract a sub-matrix is with `operator()`. Using this operator, you can pass either a pair of ranges (a `cv::Range` for rows and a `cv::Range` for columns) or a `cv::Rect` to specify the region you want. This is the only method of access that will allow you to extract a sub-volume from a higher-dimensional array. In this case, a pointer to a C-style array of ranges is expected and that array must have as many elements as the number of dimensions of the array.

*Table 3-16: Block access methods of `cv::Mat`*

Example	Description
<code>m.row( i );</code>	Array corresponding to row <code>i</code> of <code>m</code>
<code>m.col( j );</code>	Array corresponding to column <code>j</code> of <code>m</code>
<code>m.rowRange( i0, i1 );</code>	Array corresponding to rows <code>i0</code> through <code>i1-1</code> of matrix <code>m</code>
<code>m.rowRange( cv::Range( i0, i1 ) );</code>	Array corresponding to rows <code>i0</code> through <code>i1-1</code> of matrix <code>m</code>
<code>m.colRange( j0, j1 );</code>	Array corresponding to columns <code>j0</code> through <code>j1-1</code> of matrix <code>m</code>
<code>m.colRange( cv::Range( j0, j1 ) );</code>	Array corresponding to columns <code>j0</code> through <code>j1-1</code> of matrix <code>m</code>
<code>m.diag( d );</code>	Array corresponding to the <code>d</code> -offset diagonal of matrix <code>m</code>

---

---

```
m( cv::Range(i0,i1), cv::Range(j0,j1) );
```

Array corresponding to the subrectangle of matrix `m` with one corner at `i0, j0` and the opposite corner at `(i1-1, j1-1)`

```
m( cv::Rect(i0,i1,w,h) );
```

Array corresponding to the subrectangle of matrix `m` with one corner at `i0, j0` and the opposite corner at `(i0+w-1, j0+h-1)`

```
m( ranges );
```

Array extracted from `m` corresponding to the subvolume that is the intersection of the ranges given by `ranges[0]-ranges[ndim-1]`

### Matrix Expressions: Algebra and `cv::Mat`

One of the things enabled by the move to C++ in version 2.1 is the overloading of operators and the ability to create algebraic expressions consisting of matrix arrays<sup>20</sup> and singletons. The primary advantage of this is code clarity, as many operations can be combined into one expression that is both more compact and often more meaningful.

In the background, many important features of OpenCV's array class are being used to make these operations work. For example, matrix headers are created automatically as needed and workspace data areas are allocated (only) as required. When no longer needed, data areas are deallocated invisibly and automatically. The result of the computation is finally placed in the destination array by `operator=()`. However, one important distinction, is that this form of `operator=()` is not assigning a `cv::Mat` or a `cv::Mat` (as it might appear), but rather a `cv::MatExpr` (the expression itself<sup>21</sup>) to a `cv::Mat`. This distinction is important because data is always copied into the result (left-hand side) array. Recall that though `m2=m1` is legal, it means something slightly different. In this first case, `m2` would be another reference to the data in `m1`. By contrast, `m2=m1+m0` means something different again. Because `m1+m0` is a *matrix expression*, it will be evaluated and a pointer to the results will be assigned in `m2`. The results will reside in a newly allocated data area.<sup>22</sup>

*Table 3-17* lists examples of the algebraic operations available. Note that in addition to simple algebra, there are comparison operators, operators for constructing matrices (such as `cv::Mat::eye()`, which we encountered earlier), and higher level operations for computing transposes and inversions. The key idea here is that you should be able to take the sorts of relatively nontrivial matrix expressions that occur when doing computer vision and express them on a single line in a clear and concise way.

*Table 3-17: Operations available for matrix expressions*

---

<sup>20</sup> For clarity, we use the word “array” when referring to a general object of type `cv::Mat`, and use the word “matrix” for those situations in which the manner in which the array is being used indicates that it is representing a mathematical object that would be called a matrix. The distinction is a purely semantic one, and not manifest in the actual design of OpenCV.

<sup>21</sup> The underlying machinery of `cv::MatExpr` is more detail than we need, but you can think of `cv::MatExpr` as being a symbolic representation of the algebraic form of the right-hand side. The great advantage of `cv::MatExpr` is that when it is time to evaluate an expression, it is often clear that some operations can be removed or simplified without evaluation (such as computing the transpose of the transpose of a matrix, adding zero, or multiplying a matrix by its own inverse).

<sup>22</sup> If you are a real expert, this will not surprise you. Clearly a temporary array must be created to store the result of `m1+m0`. Then `m2` really is just another reference, but it is another reference to that temporary array. When `operator+()` exits, its reference to the temporary array is discarded, but the reference count is not zero. `m2` is left holding the one and only reference to that array.

---

---

## Example

```
m0 + m1, m0 - m1;
```

```
m0 + s; m0 - s; s + m0, s - m1;
```

```
-m0;
```

```
s * m0; m0 * s;
```

```
m0.mul( m1 ); m0/m1;
```

```
m0 * m1;
```

```
m0.inv( method );
```

```
m0.t();
```

```
m0>m1; m0>=m1; m0==m1; m0<=m1; m0<m1;
```

```
m0&m1; m0|m1; m0^m1; ~m0;  
m0&s; s&m0; m0|s; s|m0; m0^s; s^m0;
```

```
min(m0,m1); max(m0,m1); min(m0,s);  
min(s,m0); max(m0,s); max(s,m0);
```

```
cv::abs( m0 );
```

```
m0.cross( m1 ); m0.dot( m1 );
```

```
cv::Mat::eye( Nr, Nc, type );  
cv::Mat::zeros( Nr, Nc, type );  
cv::Mat::ones( Nr, Nc, type );
```

The matrix inversion operator `inv()` is actually a frontend to a variety of algorithms for matrix inversion. There are currently three options. The first option is `cv::DECOMP_LU`, which means LU decomposition, and which works for any nonsingular matrix. The second is `cv::DECOMP_CHOLESKY`, which solves the inversion by Cholesky decomposition. Cholesky decomposition only works for symmetric, positive definite matrices, but is much faster than LU decomposition for large matrices. The last option is `cv::DECOMP_SVD`, which solves the inversion by singular value decomposition. SVD is the only workable option for matrices that are singular or not even squares (the pseudo-inverse is then computed).

Not included in [Table 3-17](#) are all of the functions like `cv::norm()`, `cv::mean()`, `cv::sum()`, and so on (some of which we have not gotten to yet, but you can probably guess what they do) that convert matrices to other matrices or to scalars. Any such object can still be used in a matrix expression.

---

## Description

Addition or subtraction of matrices

Addition or subtraction between a matrix and a singleton

Negation of a matrix

Scaling of a matrix by a singleton

Per element multiplication of `m0` and `m1`, per-element division of `m0` by `m1`

Matrix multiplication of `m0` and `m1`

Matrix inversion of `m0` (default value of `method` is `DECOMP_LU`)

Matrix transpose of `m0` (no copy is done)

Per element comparison, returns `uchar` matrix with elements 0 or 255

Bitwise logical operators between matrices or matrix and a singleton

Per element minimum and maximum between two matrices or a matrix and a singleton

Per element absolute value of `m0`

Vector cross and dot product (vector cross product is only defined for 3-by-1 matrices)

Class static matrix initializers that return fixed  $N_r$ -by- $N_c$  matrices of type `type`

---

## Saturation Casting

In OpenCV, you will often do operations that risk overflowing or underflowing the available values in the destination of some computation. This is particularly common when one is doing operations on unsigned types that involve subtraction, but it can happen anywhere. To deal with this problem, OpenCV relies on a construct called *saturation casting*.

What this means is that OpenCV arithmetic and other operations that act on arrays will check for underflows and overflows automatically; in these cases, the library functions will replace the resulting value of an operation with the lowest or highest available value, respectively. Note that this is not what C language operations normally and natively do.

You may want to implement this particular behavior in your own functions as well. OpenCV provides some handy templated casting operators to make this easy for you. These are implemented as a template function called `cv::saturate_cast<>()`, which allows you to specify the type to which you would like to cast the argument. Here is an example:

```
uchar& Vxy = m0.at<uchar>( y, x );  
Vxy = cv::saturate_cast<uchar>((Vxy-128)*2 + 128);}
```

In this example code, the variable `Vxy` is first assigned to be a reference to an element of an 8-bit array `m0`. This array then has 128 subtracted from it, multiply that by two (scale that up), and add 128 (so the result is twice as far from 128 as the original). The usual C arithmetic rules would assign `Vxy-128` to a (32-bit) signed integer; followed by integer multiplication by 2 and integer addition of 128. Notice, however, that if the original value of `Vxy` were (for example) 10, then `Vxy-128` would be -118. The value of the expression would then be -108. This number will not fit into the 8-bit unsigned variable `Vxy`. This is where `cv::saturate_cast<uchar>()` comes to the rescue. It takes the value of -108 and, recognizing that it is too low for an `unsigned char`, converts it to 0.

## More Things an Array Can Do

At this point, we have touched on most of the members of the `cv::Mat` class. Of course, there are a few things that were missed, as they did not fall into any specific category that was discussed so far. In this section we will review the leftovers that you will need in your daily life of OpenCV programming.

Table 3-18: More class member functions of `cv::Mat`

Example	Description
<code>m1 = m0.clone();</code>	Make a complete copy of <code>m0</code> , copying all data elements as well; cloned array will be continuous
<code>m0.copyTo( m1 );</code>	Copy contents of <code>m0</code> onto <code>m1</code> , reallocating <code>m1</code> if necessary (equivalent to <code>m1=m0.clone()</code> )
<code>m0.copyTo( m1, mask );</code>	As <code>m0.copyTo(m1)</code> except only entries indicated in the array <code>mask</code> are copied
<code>m0.convertTo( m1, type, scale, offset );</code>	Convert elements of <code>m0</code> to <code>type</code> (i.e., <code>cv::F32</code> ) and write to <code>m1</code> after scaling by <code>scale</code> (default 1.0) and adding <code>offset</code> (default 0.0)
<code>m0.assignTo( m1, type );</code>	<i>internal use only</i> (resembles <code>convertTo</code> )
<code>m0.setTo( s, mask );</code>	Set all entries in <code>m0</code> to singleton value <code>s</code> ; if <code>mask</code> is present, only set those value corresponding to nonzero elements in <code>mask</code>

---

---

<code>m0.reshape( chan, rows );</code>	Changes effective shape of a two-dimensional matrix; <code>chan</code> or <code>rows</code> may be zero, which implies “no change”; data is not copied
<code>m0.push_back( s );</code>	Extend a $M$ -by-1 matrix and insert the singleton <code>s</code> at the end
<code>m0.push_back( m1 );</code>	Extend an $M$ -by- $N$ by $K$ rows and copy <code>m1</code> into that rows; <code>m1</code> must be $K$ -by- $N$
<code>m0.pop_back( n );</code>	Remove <code>n</code> rows from the end of an $M$ -by- $N$ (default value of <code>n</code> is one) <sup>23</sup>
<code>m0.locateROI( size, offset );</code>	Write whole size of <code>m0</code> to <code>cv::Size size</code> ; if <code>m0</code> is a “view” of a larger matrix, write location of starting corner to <code>Point&amp; offset</code>
<code>m0.adjustROI( t, b, l, r );</code>	Increase the size of a view by <code>t</code> pixels above, <code>b</code> pixels below, <code>l</code> pixels to the left, and <code>r</code> pixels to the right
<code>m0.total();</code>	Compute the total number of array elements (does not include channels)
<code>m0.isContinuous();</code>	Return <code>true</code> only if the rows in <code>m0</code> are packed without space between them in memory
<code>m0.elemSize();</code>	Return the size of the elements of <code>m0</code> in bytes (eE.g., a three-channel float matrix would return 12 bytes)
<code>m0.elemSize1();</code>	Return the size of the subelements of <code>m0</code> in bytes (eE.g., a three-channel float matrix would return 4 bytes)
<code>m0.type();</code>	Return a valid type identifier for the elements of <code>m0</code> (e.g., <code>cv::F32C3</code> )
<code>m0.depth();</code>	Return a valid type identifier for the individual channels of <code>m0</code> (e.g., <code>cv::F32</code> )
<code>m0.channels();</code>	Return the number of channels in the elements of <code>m0</code> .
<code>m0.size();</code>	Return the size of the <code>m0</code> as a <code>cv::Size</code> object.
<code>m0.empty();</code>	Return <code>true</code> only if the array has no elements (i.e., <code>m0.total()==0</code> or <code>m0.data==NULL</code> )

### **class cv::SparseMat: Sparse Arrays**

The class `cv::SparseMat` is used when an array is likely to be very large compared to the number of nonzero entries. This situation often arises in linear algebra with sparse matrices, but it also comes up when one wishes to represent data, particularly histograms, in higher-dimensional arrays, since most of space will be empty. A sparse representation only stores data that is actually present and so can save a great deal of

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<sup>23</sup> Many implementations of “pop” functionality return the popped element. This one does not; its return type is void.

---

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memory. In practice, many sparse objects would be too huge to represent at all in a dense format. The disadvantage of sparse representations is that computation with them is slower (on a per-element basis). This last point is important, in that computation with sparse matrices is not categorically slower, as there can be a great economy in knowing in advance that many operations need not be done at all.

The OpenCV sparse matrix class `cv::SparseMat` functions analogously to the dense matrix class `cv::Mat` in most ways. It is defined similarly, supports most of the same operations, and can contain the same data types. Internally, the way data is organized is quite different. While `cv::Mat` uses a data array closely related to a C data array (one in which the data is sequentially packed and addresses are directly computable from the indices of the element), `cv::SparseMat` uses a hash table to store just the nonzero elements.<sup>24</sup> That hash table is maintained automatically, so when the number of (nonzero) elements in the array becomes too large for efficient look-up, the table grows automatically.

### Accessing Sparse Array Elements

The most important difference between sparse and dense arrays is how elements are accessed. Sparse arrays provide four different access mechanisms: `cv::SparseMat::ptr()`, `cv::SparseMat::ref()`, `cv::SparseMat::value()`, and `cv::SparseMat::find()`.

The `cv::SparseMat::ptr()` method has several variations, the simplest of which has the template:

```
| uchar* cv::SparseMat::ptr( int i0, bool createMissing, size_t* hashval=0 )
```

This particular version is for accessing a one-dimensional array. The first argument `i0` is the index of the requested element. The next argument `createMissing` indicates whether the element should be created if it is not already present in the array. When `cv::SparseMat::ptr()` is called, it will return a pointer to the element if that element is already defined in the array, but `NULL` if that element is not defined. However, if the `createMissing` argument is `true`, however, that element will be created and a valid non-`NULL` pointer will be returned to that new element. To understand the final argument `hashval`, it is necessary to recall that the underlying data representation of a `cv::SparseMat` is as a hash table. Looking up objects in a hash table requires two steps: the first being the computation of the hash key (in this case, from the indices), and the second being the searching of a list associated with that key. Normally, that list will be short (ideally only one element), so the primary computational cost in a lookup is the computation of the hash key. If this key has already been computed (as with `cv::SparseMat::hash()`, which will be covered in the next section), then time can be saved by not recomputing it. In the case of `cv::SparseMat::ptr()`, if the argument `hashval` is left with its default argument of `NULL`, the hash key will be computed. If, however, a key is provided, it will be used.

There are also variations of `cv::SparseMat::ptr()` that allow for two or three indices, as well as a version whose first argument is a pointer to an array of integers (i.e., `const int* idx`), which is required to have the same number of entries as the dimension of the array being accessed.

In all cases, the function `cv::SparseMat::ptr()` returns a pointer to an unsigned character (i.e., `uchar*`), which will typically need to be recast to the correct type for the array.

The accessor template function `SparseMat::ref<>()` is used to return a reference to a particular element of the array. This function, like `SparseMat::ptr()`, can take one, two, or three indices, or a pointer to an array of indices, and also supports an optional pointer to the hash value to use in the lookup. Because it is a template function, you must specify the type of object being referenced. So, for example, if your array were of type `cv::F32`, then you might call `SparseMat::ref<>()` like this:

```
| a_sparse_mat.ref<float>( i0, i1 ) += 1.0f;
```

---

<sup>24</sup> Actually, zero elements may be stored, if those elements have become zero as a result of computation on the array. If you want to clean up such elements, you must do so yourself. This is the function of the method `SparseMat::erase()`, which we will visit shortly.

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---

The template method `cv::SparseMat::value<>()` is identical to `SparseMat::ref<>()`, except that it returns the value and not a reference to the value. As such, this method is itself a “`const` method.”<sup>25</sup>

The final accessor function is `cv::SparseMat::find<>()`, which works similarly to `cv::SparseMat::ref<>()` and `cv::SparseMat::value<>()`, but returns a pointer to the requested object. Unlike `cv::SparseMat::ptr()`, however, this pointer is of the type specified by the template instantiation of `cv::SparseMat::find<>()`, and so does not need to be recast. For purposes of code clarity, `cv::SparseMat::find<>()` is preferred over `cv::SparseMat::ptr()` wherever possible. `cv::SparseMat::find<>()`, however, is a `const` method, and returns a `const` pointer, so the two are not always interchangeable.

In addition to direct access through the four functions just outlined, it is also possible to access the elements of a sparse matrix through iterators. As with the dense array types, the iterators are normally templated. The templated iterators are `cv::SparseMatIterator_<>` and `cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<>`, together with their corresponding `cv::SparseMat::begin<>()` and `cv::SparseMat::end<>()` routines. (The `const` forms of the `begin()` and `end()` routines return the `const` iterators.) There are also non-template iterators `cv::SparseMatIterator` and `cv::SparseMatConstIterator`, which are returned by the non-template `SparseMat::begin()` and `SparseMat::end()` routines.

Here is an example in which we print out all of the nonzero elements of a sparse array:

```
// Create a 10x10 sparse matrix with a few nonzero elements
//
int size[] = {10,10};
cv::SparseMat sm( 2, size, cv::F32 );
for( int i=0; i<10; i++ ) { // Fill the array
    int idx[2];
    idx[0] = size[0] * rand();
    idx[1] = size[1] * rand();
    sm.ref<float>( idx ) += 1.0f;
}

// Print out the nonzero elements
//
cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<float> it      = sm.begin<float>();
cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<float> it_end = sm.end<float>();

for( it != it_end; ++it ) {
    const cv::SparseMat::Node* node = it.node();
    printf(" (%3d,%3d) %f\n", node->idx[0], node->idx[1], *it );
}
```

In this example, we also slipped in the method `node()`, which is defined for the iterators. `node()` returns a pointer to the internal data node in the sparse matrix that is indicated by the iterator. The returned object of type `cv::SparseMat::Node` has the following definition:

```
struct Node
{
    size_t hashval;
    size_t next;
    int idx[cv::MAX_DIM];
};
```

This structure contains both the index of the associated element (note that element `idx` is of type `int[]`), as well as the hash value associated with that node (element `hashval` is the same hash value as can be

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<sup>25</sup> For those of you not familiar with “`const` correctness,”, this means that the method is declared in its prototype such that the `this` pointer passed to `SparseMat::value<>()` is guaranteed to be a constant pointer, and thus `SparseMat::value<>()` can be called on `const` objects, while functions like `SparseMat::ref<>()` cannot. The next function `SparseMat::find<>()` is also a `const` function.

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used with `SparseMat::ptr()`, `SparseMat::ref()`, `SparseMat::value()`, and `SparseMat::find()`.)

### Functions Unique to Sparse Arrays

As stated earlier, sparse matrices support many of the same operations as dense matrices. In addition, there are several methods that are unique to sparse matrices. These are listed in Table 3-19, and include the functions mentioned in the previous sections.

Table 3-19: Additional class member functions of `cv::SparseMat`

Example	Description
<code>cv::SparseMat sm();</code>	Create a sparse matrix without initialization
<code>cv::SparseMat sm( 3, sz, cv::F32 );</code>	Create a three-dimensional sparse matrix with dimensions given by the array <code>sz</code> of type <code>float</code>
<code>cv::SparseMat sm( sm0 );</code>	Create a new sparse matrix which is a copy of existing sparse matrix <code>sm0</code>
<code>cv::SparseMat( m0, tryld );</code>	Create a sparse matrix from an existing dense matrix <code>m0</code> ; if the bool <code>tryld</code> is true, convert <code>m0</code> to a one-dimensional sparse matrix if the dense matrix was N-by-1 or 1-by-N
<code>cv::SparseMat( &amp;old_sparse_mat );</code>	Create a new sparse matrix from a pointer to a pre-version 2.1 C-style sparse matrix of type <code>CvSparseMat</code>
<code>CvSparseMat* old_sm =     (cv::SparseMat*) sm;</code>	Cast operator creates a pointer to a pre-version 2.1 C-style sparse matrix; that <code>CvSparseMat</code> object is created and all data is copied into it, then its pointer is returned
<code>size_t n = sm.nzcount();</code>	Return the number of nonzero elements in <code>sm</code>
<code>size_t h = sm.hash( i0 );</code> <code>size_t h = sm.hash( i0, i1 );</code> <code>size_t h = sm.hash( i0, i1, i2 );</code> <code>size_t h = sm.hash( idx );</code>	Return the hash value for element <code>i0</code> in a one-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1</code> in a two-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1, i2</code> in a three-dimensional sparse matrix, or the element indicated by the array of integers <code>idx</code> in an n-dimensional sparse matrix
<code>sm.ref&lt;float&gt;( i0 )               = f0;</code> <code>sm.ref&lt;float&gt;( i0, i1 )           = f0;</code> <code>sm.ref&lt;float&gt;( i0, i1, i2 ) = f0;</code> <code>sm.ref&lt;float&gt;( idx )             = f0;</code>	Assign the value <code>f0</code> to element <code>i0</code> in a one-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1</code> in a two-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1, i2</code> in a three-dimensional sparse matrix, or the element indicated by the array of integers <code>idx</code> in an n-dimensional sparse matrix
<code>f0 = sm.value&lt;float&gt;( i0 );</code> <code>f0 = sm.value&lt;float&gt;( i0, i1 );</code> <code>f0 = sm.value&lt;float&gt;( i0, i1, i2 );</code>	Assign the value to <code>f0</code> from element <code>i0</code> in a one-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1</code> in a two-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1, i2</code> in a three-dimensional sparse matrix, or the element indicated by the array of integers <code>idx</code> in an n-

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<code>f0 = sm.value&lt;float&gt;( idx );</code>	dimensional sparse matrix
<code>p0 = sm.find&lt;float&gt;( i0 );</code>	Assign to <code>p0</code> the address of element <code>i0</code> in a one-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1</code> in a two-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1, i2</code> in a three-dimensional sparse matrix, or the element indicated by the array of integers <code>idx</code> in an n-dimensional sparse matrix
<code>p0 = sm.find&lt;float&gt;( i0, i1 );</code>	
<code>p0 = sm.find&lt;float&gt;( i0, i1, i2 );</code>	
<code>p0 = sm.find&lt;float&gt;( idx );</code>	
<code>sm.erase( i0, &amp;hashval );</code>	
<code>sm.erase( i0, i1, &amp;hashval );</code>	Remove the element <code>i0, i1</code> in a two-dimensional sparse matrix, <code>i0, i1, i2</code> in a three-dimensional sparse matrix, or the element indicated by the array of integers <code>idx</code> in an n-dimensional sparse matrix. If <code>hashval</code> is not <code>NULL</code> , use the provided value instead of computing it
<code>sm.erase( idx, &amp;hashval );</code>	
<code>cv::SparseMatIterator&lt;float&gt; it</code> <code>= sm.begin&lt;float&gt;();</code>	
<code>cv::SparseMatIterator&lt;uchar&gt; it_end</code> <code>= sm.end&lt;uchar&gt;();</code>	Create a sparse matrix iterator <code>it</code> and point it at the first value of the floating-point array <code>sm</code>
	Create a sparse matrix iterator <code>it_end</code> and initialize it to the value succeeding the final value in the byte array <code>sm</code>

## The Template Structure

Thus far in this chapter, we have regularly eluded to the existence of template forms for almost all of the basic types. In fact, most programmers can get quite far into OpenCV without ever digging down into the templates. However, knowing how to use the templates directly can be of great help in getting things done. In this section, we will look at how that all works. If your C++ programming skills are not entirely up to par, you can probably just skim or skip over this section entirely.

OpenCV version 2.1 and later is built on a template meta-programming style similar to STL, Boost, and similar libraries. This sort of library design can be extremely powerful, both in terms of the quality and speed of the final code, as well as the flexibility it allows the developer. In particular, template structures of the kind used in OpenCV allow for algorithms to be implemented in an abstracted way that does not specifically rely on the primitive types that are native to C++ or even native to OpenCV.

As an example, consider the `cv::Point` class. When you instantiate an object of type `cv::Point`, you are actually instantiating a template object of type `cv::Point_<int>`. (Note the trailing underscore—this is the general convention in the library used to indicate a template.) This template could have been instantiated with a different type than `int`, obviously. In fact, it could have been instantiated with any type that supports the same basic set of operators as `int` (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication, etc.). For example, OpenCV provides a type `cv::Complex` that you could have used. You also could have used the STL complex type `std::complex`, which has nothing to do with OpenCV at all. The same is true for some other types of your own construction. This same concept generalizes to other type templates such as `cv::Scalar_<>` and `cv::Rect_<>`, as well as `cv::Matx_<>` and `cv::Vec_<>`.

### `cv::Mat_<>` and `cv::SparseMat_<>` Are a Little Bit Different

This concept also generalizes to `cv::Mat_<>` and `cv::SparseMat_<>`, but in a somewhat nontrivial way. When you use `cv::Point2i`, recall that this is nothing more or less than an alias (`typedef`) for `cv::Point_<int>`. In the case of the template `cv::Mat` and `cv::Mat_<>`, their relationship is not so simple. Recall that `cv::Mat` already has the capability of representing essentially any type, but that this is done at construction time by explicitly specifying the base type. In the case of `cv::Mat_<>`, the

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instantiated template is actually *derived from* the `cv::Mat` class, and in effect specializes that class. This simplifies access and other member functions that would otherwise need to be templated.

This is worth reiterating. The purpose of using the template forms `cv::Mat_<>` and `cv::SparseMat_<>` are so you don't have to use the template forms of their member functions. Consider this example, where we have a matrix defined by:

```
| cv::Mat m( 10, 10, cv::F32C2 );
```

Individual element accesses to this matrix would need to specify the type of the matrix, as in the following:

```
| m.at< Vec2f >( i0, i1 ) = cv::Vec2f( x, y );
```

Alternatively, if you had defined the matrix `m` using the template class, you could use `at()` without specialization, or even just use `operator()`:

```
| cv::Mat_<Vec2f> m( 10, 10 );  
| m.at( i0, i1 ) = cv::Vec2f( x, y );  
| // or...  
| m( i0, i1 ) = cv::Vec2f( x, y );
```

There is a great deal of simplification in your code that results from using these template definitions and because if this, it is the preferred way to code.

---

These two ways of declaring a matrix and their associated `.at` methods are equivalent in efficiency. The second method is more “correct” because it allows the compiler to detect type mismatches when `m` is passed into a function that requires a certain type of matrix. If

```
cv::Mat m(10, 10, cv::F32C2 );
```

is passed into

```
void foo((cv::Mat_<char> *)myMat);
```

failure would occur during runtime in perhaps nonobvious ways. If you instead used

```
cv::Mat_<Vec2f> m( 10, 10 );
```

failure would be detected at compile time.

---

Template forms can be used to create template functions that operate on an array of a particular type. Consider our example from the previous section, where we created a small sparse matrix and then printed out its nonzero elements. We might try writing a function to achieve this as follows:

```
| void print_matrix( const cv::SparseMat* sm ) {  
|  
|     cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<float> it      = sm.begin<float>();  
|     cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<float> it_end = sm.end<float>();  
|  
|     for(; it != it_end; ++it) {  
|         const cv::SparseMat::Node* node = it.node();  
|         printf(" (%3d,%3d) %f\n", node->idx[0], node->idx[1], *it );  
|     }  
| }
```

Though this function would compile and work when it is passed a two-dimensional matrix of type `cv::F32`, it would fail when a matrix of unexpected type was passed in. Let's look at how we could make this function more general.

The first thing we would want to address is the issue of the underlying data type. We could explicitly use the `cv::SparseMat_<float>` template, but it would be better still to make the function a template function. We would also need to get rid of the use of `printf()`, as it makes an explicit assumption that `*it` is a `float`. A better function might look like this:

```
| template <class T> void print_matrix( const cv::SparseMat_<T>* sm ) {
```

---

---

```

cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<T> it      = sm->begin();
cv::SparseMatConstIterator_<T> it_end = sm->end();

for(; it != it_end; ++it) {
    const typename cv::SparseMat_<T>::Node* node = it.node();
    cout <<"( " <<node->idx[0] <<" , " <<node->idx[1]
        <<" ) = " <<*it <<endl;
}
}

void calling_function1( void ) {
    ...
    cv::SparseMat_<float> sm( ndim, size );
    ...
    print_matrix<float>( &sm );
}

void calling_function2( void ) {
    ...
    cv::SparseMat sm( ndim, size, cv::F32 );
    ...
    print_matrix<float>( (cv::SparseMat_<float>*) &sm );
}

```

It is worth picking apart these changes. First though, before looking at changes, notice that the template for our function takes a pointer of type `const cv::SparseMat_<t>*`, a *pointer to* a sparse matrix template object. There is a good reason to use a pointer and not a reference here, because the caller may have a `cv::Mat` object (as is done in `calling_function2()`) and not a `cv::Mat_<>` template object (as used in `calling_function1()`). The `cv::Mat` can be dereferenced and then explicitly cast to a pointer to the sparse matrix template object type.

In the templated prototype, we have promoted the function to a template of `class T`, and now expect a `cv::SparseMat_<T>*` pointer as argument. In the next two lines, we declare our iterators using the template type, but `begin()` and `end()` no longer have templated instantiations. The reason for this is that `sm` is now an instantiated template, and because of that explicit instantiation, `sm` “knows” what sort of matrix it is, and thus specialization of `begin()` and `end()` is unnecessary. The declaration of the `Node` is similarly changed so that the `Node` we are using is explicitly taken from the `cv::SparseMat_<T>` instantiated template class.<sup>26</sup> Finally, we change the `printf()` statement to use stream output to `cout`. This has the advantage that the printing is now agnostic to the type of `*it`.

## Array Operators

As we have seen so far in this chapter, there are many basic operations on arrays that are now handled by member functions of the array classes. In addition to those, however, there are many more operations that are most naturally represented as “friend” functions that either take array types as arguments, have array types as return values, or both. The functions, together with their arguments, will be covered in more detail after the table. For a shortcut, it is best to download the cheat sheet at [http://docs.opencv.org/trunk/opencv\\_cheatsheet.pdf](http://docs.opencv.org/trunk/opencv_cheatsheet.pdf).

*Table 3-20: Basic matrix and image operators*

Function	Description
----------	-------------

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<sup>26</sup> The appearance of the `typename` keyword here is probably somewhat mysterious to most readers. It is a result of the dependent scoping rules in C++. If you should forget it, however, most modern compilers (e.g., g++) will throw you a friendly message reminding you to add it.

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<code>cv::abs()</code>	Absolute value of all elements in an array
<code>cv::absdiff()</code>	Absolute value of differences between two arrays
<code>cv::add()</code>	Element-wise addition of two arrays
<code>cv::addWeighted()</code>	Element-wise weighted addition of two arrays (alpha blending)
<code>cv::bitwise_and()</code>	Element-wise bit-level AND of two arrays
<code>cv::bitwise_not()</code>	Element-wise bit-level NOT of two arrays
<code>cv::bitwise_or()</code>	Element-wise bit-level OR of two arrays
<code>cv::bitwise_xor()</code>	Element-wise bit-level XOR of two arrays
<code>cv::calcCovarMatrix()</code>	Compute covariance of a set of $n$ -dimensional vectors
<code>cv::cartToPolar()</code>	Compute angle and magnitude from a two-dimensional vector field
<code>cv::checkRange()</code>	Check array for invalid values
<code>cv::compare()</code>	Apply selected comparison operator to all elements in two arrays
<code>cv::completeSymm()</code>	Symmetrize matrix by copying elements from one half to the other
<code>cv::convertScaleAbs()</code>	Scale array, take absolute value, then convert to 8-bit unsigned
<code>cv::countNonZero()</code>	Count nonzero elements in an array
<code>cv::arrToMat()</code>	Converts pre-version 2.1 array types to <code>cv::Mat</code>
<code>cv::dct()</code>	Compute discrete cosine transform of array
<code>cv::determinant()</code>	Compute determinant of a square matrix
<code>cv::dft()</code>	Compute discrete Fourier transform of array
<code>cv::divide()</code>	Element-wise division of one array by another
<code>cv::eigen()</code>	Compute eigenvalues and eigenvectors of a square matrix
<code>cv::exp()</code>	Element-wise exponentiation of array
<code>cv::extractImageCOI()</code>	Extract single channel from pre-version 2.1 array type
<code>cv::flip()</code>	Flip an array about a selected axis
<code>cv::gemm()</code>	Generalized matrix multiplication
<code>cv::getConvertElem()</code>	Get a single pixel type conversion function
<code>cv::getConvertScaleElem()</code>	Get a single pixel type conversion and scale function

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<code>cv::idct()</code>	Compute inverse discrete cosine transform of array
<code>cv::idft()</code>	Compute inverse discrete Fourier transform of array
<code>cv::inRange()</code>	Test if elements of an array are within values of two other arrays
<code>cv::invert()</code>	Invert a square matrix
<code>cv::log()</code>	Element-wise natural log of array
<code>cv::magnitude()</code>	Compute magnitudes from a two-dimensional vector field
<code>cv::LUT()</code>	Converts array to indices of a look-up table
<code>cv::Mahalanobis()</code>	Compute Mahalanobis distance between two vectors
<code>cv::max()</code>	Compute element-wise maxima between two arrays
<code>cv::mean()</code>	Compute the average of the array elements
<code>cv::meanStdDev()</code>	Compute the average and standard deviation of the array elements
<code>cv::merge()</code>	Merge several single-channel arrays into one multichannel arrays
<code>cv::min()</code>	Compute element-wise minima between two arrays
<code>cv::minMaxLoc()</code>	Find minimum and maximum values in an array
<code>cv::mixChannels()</code>	Shuffle channels from input arrays to output arrays
<code>cv::mulSpectrums()</code>	Compute element-wise multiplication of two Fourier spectra
<code>cv::multiply()</code>	Element-wise multiplication of two arrays
<code>cv::mulTransposed()</code>	Calculate matrix product of one array
<code>cv::norm()</code>	Compute normalized correlations between two arrays
<code>cv::normalize()</code>	Normalize elements in an array to some value
<code>cv::perspectiveTransform()</code>	Perform perspective matrix transform of a list of vectors
<code>cv::phase()</code>	Compute orientations from a two-dimensional vector field
<code>cv::polarToCart()</code>	Compute two-dimensional vector field from angles and magnitudes
<code>cv::pow()</code>	Raise every element of an array to a given power
<code>cv::randu()</code>	Fill a given array with uniformly distributed random numbers
<code>cv::randn()</code>	Fill a given array with normally distributed random numbers
<code>cv::randShuffle()</code>	Randomly shuffle array elements

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<code>cv::reduce()</code>	Reduce a two-dimensional array to a vector by a given operation
<code>cv::repeat()</code>	Tile the contents of one array into another
<code>cv::saturate_cast&lt;&gt;()</code>	Template function for guarding against overflow
<code>cv::scaleAdd()</code>	Element-wise sum of two arrays with optional scaling of the first
<code>cv::setIdentity()</code>	Set all elements of an array to 1 for the diagonal and 0 otherwise
<code>cv::solve()</code>	Solve a system of linear equations
<code>cv::solveCubic()</code>	Find the (only) real roots of a cubic equation
<code>cv::solvePoly()</code>	Find the complex roots of a polynomial equation
<code>cv::sort()</code>	Sort elements in either the rows or columns in an array
<code>cv::sortIdx()</code>	Same as <code>cv::sort()</code> except array is unmodified and indices are returned
<code>cv::split()</code>	Split a multichannel array into multiple single-channel arrays
<code>cv::sqrt()</code>	Compute element-wise square root of an array
<code>cv::subtract()</code>	Element-wise subtraction of one array from another
<code>cv::sum()</code>	Sum all elements of an array
<code>cv::theRNG()</code>	Return a random number generator
<code>cv::trace()</code>	Compute the trace of an array
<code>cv::transform()</code>	Apply matrix transformation on every element of an array
<code>cv::transpose()</code>	Transpose all elements of an array across the diagonal

In these functions, some general rules are followed. To the extent that any exceptions exist, they are noted in the function descriptions. Because one or more of these rules applies to just about every function described in this section, they are listed here for convenience:

#### Saturation

Outputs of calculations are saturation casted to the type of the output array.

#### Output

The output array will be created with `cv::Mat::create()` if its type and size do not match the inputs.

#### Scalars

Many functions such as `cv::add()` allow for addition of two arrays or an array and a scalar. Where the prototypes make the option clear, the result of providing a scalar argument is the same as if a second array had been provided with the same scalar value in every element.

---

---

## Masks

Whenever a mask argument is present for a function, the output will only be computed for those elements where the mask value corresponding to that element in the output array is nonzero.

## dtype

Many arithmetic and similar functions do not require the types of the input arrays to be the same, and even if they are the same, the output array may be of a different type than the inputs. In these cases, the output array must have its depth explicitly specified. This is done with the `dtype` argument. When present, `dtype` can be set to any of the basic types (`cv::F32` etc.) and the result array will be of that type. If the input arrays have the same type, then `dtype` can be set to its default value of `-1`, and the resulting type will be the same as the types of the input arrays.

## In Place Operation

Unless otherwise specified, any operation with both an array input and an array output that are of the same size and type can use the same array for both (i.e., it is allowable to write the output on top of an input).

## Multichannel

For those operations that do not naturally make use of multiple channels, if given multichannel arguments, each channel is processed separately.

## cv::abs()

```
cv::MatExpr cv::abs( cv::InputArray src );  
cv::MatExpr cv::abs( const cv::MatExpr& src           // Matrix expression  
);
```

These functions compute the absolute value of an array or of some expression of arrays. The most common usage computes the absolute value of every element in an array. Because `cv::abs()` can take a matrix expression, it is able to recognize certain special cases and handle them appropriately. In fact, calls to `cv::abs()` are actually converted to calls to `cv::absDiff()` or other functions, and handled by those functions. In particular, the following special cases are implemented:

- `m2 = cv::abs( m0 - m1 )` is converted to `cv::absDiff( m0, m1, m2 )`
- `m2 = cv::abs( m0 )` is converted to `m2 = cv::absDiff( m0, cv::Scalar::all(0), m2 )`
- `m2 = cv::Mat_<Vec<uchar,n>>( cv::abs( alpha*m0 + beta ) )` (for alpha, beta real numbers) is converted to `cv::convertScaleAbs( m0, m2, alpha, beta )`

The third case might seem obscure, but this is just the case of computing a scale and offset (either of which could be trivial) to an n-channel array. This is typical of what one might do when computing a contrast correction for an image, for example.

In the cases that are implemented by `cv::absDiff()`, the result array will have the same size and type as the input array. In the case implemented by `cv::convertScaleAbs()`, however, the result type of the return array will always be `cv::U8`.

## cv::absdiff()

```
void cv::absdiff(  
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array  
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array  
    cv::OutputArray dst            // Result array  
)
```

$$dst_i = \text{saturnate}(|src1_i - src2_i|)$$

---

---

Given two arrays, `cv::absdiff()` computes the difference between each pair of corresponding elements in those arrays, and places the absolute value of that difference into the corresponding element of the destination array.

#### `cv::add()`

```
void cv::add(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero
    int dtype = -1                 // Output type for result array
)
```

$$dst_i = \text{satuate}(src1_i + src2_i)$$

`cv::add()` is a simple addition function: it adds all of the elements in `src1` to the corresponding elements in `src2` and puts the results in `dst`.

---

For simple cases, the same result can be achieved with the matrix operation:

```
dst = src1 + src2;
```

Accumulation is also supported:

```
dst += src1;
```

---

#### `cv::addWeighted()`

```
void cv::addWeighted(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
    double alpha,                  // Weight for first input array
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array
    double beta,                   // Weight for second input array
    double gamma,                  // Offset added to weighted sum
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array
    int dtype = -1                 // Output type for result array
)
```

The function `cv::addWeighted()` is similar to `cvAdd()` except that the result written to `dst` is computed according to the following formula:

$$dst_i = \text{satuate}(src1_i * \alpha + src2_i * \beta + \gamma)(src1_i * \alpha + src2_i * \beta + \gamma).$$

The two source images, `src1` and `src2` may be of any pixel type as long as both are of the same type. They may also have any number of channels (grayscale, color, etc.), as long as they agree.

This function can be used to implement *alpha blending* [Smith79; Porter84]; that is, it can be used to blend one image with another. In this case, the parameter `alpha` is the blending strength of `src1`, and `beta` is the blending strength of `src2`. You can convert to the standard alpha blend equation by choosing `alpha` between 0 and 1, setting `beta = 1 - alpha`, and setting `gamma` to 0; this yields:

$$dst_i = \text{satuate}(src1_i * \alpha + src2_i * (1 - \alpha)(1 - \alpha))(src1_i * \alpha + src2_i * (1 - \alpha)).$$

However, `cv::addWeighted()` gives us a little more flexibility—both in how we weight the blended images and in the additional parameter `gamma`, which allows for an additive offset to the resulting destination image. For the general form, you will probably want to keep `alpha` and `beta` at 0 or above, and their sum at no more than 1; `gamma` may be set depending on average or max image value to scale the pixels up. A program showing the use of alpha blending is shown in [Example 3-1](#).

---

*Example 3-1. Complete program to alpha blend the ROI starting at (0,0) in `src2` with the ROI starting at (x,y) in `src1`*

```
// alphablend <imageA> <image B> <x> <y> <width> <height> alpha <beta>
//
#include <cv.h>
```

---

---

```

#include <highgui.h>

int main(int argc, char** argv) {

    cv::Mat src1 = cv::imread(argv[1],1);
    cv::Mat src2 = cv::imread(argv[2],1);

    if( argc==9 && !src1.empty() && !src2.empty() ) {

        int    x    = atoi(argv[3]);
        int    y    = atoi(argv[4]);
        int    w    = atoi(argv[5]);
        int    h    = atoi(argv[6]);
        double alpha = (double)atof(argv[7]);
        double beta  = (double)atof(argv[8]);

        cv::Mat roi1( src1, cv::Rect(x,y,w,h) );
        cv::Mat roi2( src2, cv::Rect(0,0,w,h) );

        cv::addWeighted( roi1, alpha, roi2, beta, 0.0, roi1 );

        cv::namedWindow( "Alpha Blend", 1 );
        cv::imshow( "Alpha Blend", src2 );
        cv::waitKey( 0 );
    }

    return 0;
}

```

The code in Example 3-1 takes two source images: the primary one (**src1**) and the one to blend (**src2**). It reads in a rectangle ROI for **src1** and applies an ROI of the same size to **src2**, but located at the origin. It reads in **alpha** and **beta** levels but sets **gamma** to 0. Alpha blending is applied using **cv::addWeighted()**, and the results are put into **src1** and displayed. Example output is shown in Figure 3-1, where the face of a child is blended onto a cat. Note that the code took the same ROI as in the ROI addition example in Figure 3-1. This time we used the ROI as the target blending region.



*Figure 3-1: The face of a child is alpha blended onto the face of a cat*

---

---

### **cv::bitwise\_and()**

```
void cv::bitwise_and(  
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array  
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array  
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array  
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero  
)
```

$$dst_i = src1_i \wedge src2_i$$

**cv::bitwise\_and()** is a per-element bitwise conjunction operation. For every element in **src1**, the bitwise AND is computed with the corresponding element in **src2** and put into the corresponding element of **dst**.

---

If you are not using a mask, the same result can be achieved with the matrix operation:

```
dst = src1 & src2;
```

---

### **cv::bitwise\_not()**

```
void cv::bitwise_not(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array  
    cv::OutputArray dst,          // Result array  
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero  
)
```

$$dst_i = \sim src1_i$$

**cv::bitwise\_not()** is a per-element bitwise inversion operation. For every element in **src1** the logical inversion is computed and placed into the corresponding element of **dst**.

---

If you are not using a mask, the same result can be achieved with the matrix operation:

```
dst = !src1;
```

---

### **cv::bitwise\_or()**

```
void cv::bitwise_and(  
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array  
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array  
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array  
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero  
)
```

$$dst_i = src1_i \vee src2_i$$

$$dst_i = src1_i \vee sc$$

**cv::bitwise\_or()** is a per-element bitwise disjunction operation. For every element in **src1**, the bitwise OR is computed with the corresponding element in **src2** and put into the corresponding element of **dst**.

---

If you are not using a mask, the same result can be achieved with the matrix operation:

```
dst = src1 | src2;
```

---

### **cv::bitwise\_xor()**

```
void cv::bitwise_and(  
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array  
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array  
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array  
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero  
)
```

---

$$dst_i = src1_i \oplus src2_i$$

$$dst_i = src1_i \oplus sc$$

`cv::bitwise_and()` is a per-element bitwise “exclusive or” operation. For every element in `src1`, the bitwise XOR is computed with the corresponding element in `src2` and put into the corresponding element of `dst`.

---

If you are not using a mask, the same result can be achieved with the matrix operation:

---

```
dst = src1 ^ src2;
```

---

### `cv::calcCovarMatrix()`

```
void cv::calcCovarMatrix(
    const cv::Mat* samples,           // C-array of n-by-1 or 1-by-n matrices
    int nsamples,                     // number of matrices pointed to by 'samples'
    cv::Mat& covar,                   // reference to return array for covariance
    cv::Mat& mean,                    // reference to return array for mean
    int flags,                        // special variations, see Table 3-21
    int ctype = cv::F64               // output matrix type for covar
);

void cv::calcCovarMatrix(
    cv::InputArray samples,           // n-by-m matrix, use 'flags' for which is which
    cv::Mat& covar,                   // reference to return array for covariance
    cv::Mat& mean,                    // reference to return array for mean
    int flags,                        // special variations, see Table 3-21
    int ctype = cv::F64               // output matrix type for covar
);
```

Given any number of vectors, `cv::calcCovarMatrix()` will compute the mean and *covariance matrix* for the Gaussian approximation to the distribution of those points. This can be used in many ways, of course, and OpenCV has some additional flags that will help in particular contexts (see Table 3-21). These flags may be combined by the standard use of the Boolean OR operator.

*Table 3-21: Possible components of flags argument to `cv::calcCovarMatrix()`*

Flag in flags argument	Meaning
<code>cv::COVAR_NORMAL</code>	Compute mean and covariance
<code>cv::COVAR_SCRAMBLED</code>	Fast PCA “scrambled” covariance
<code>cv::COVAR_USE_AVERAGE</code>	Use mean as input instead of computing it
<code>cv::COVAR_SCALE</code>	Rescale output covariance matrix
<code>cv::COVAR_ROWS</code>	Use rows of <code>samples</code> for input vectors
<code>cv::COVAR_COLS</code>	Use columns of <code>samples</code> for input vectors

There are two basic calling conventions for `cv::calcCovarMatrix()`. In the first, a pointer to an array of `cv::Mat` objects is passed along with `nsamples`, the number of matrices in that array. In this case, the arrays may be *n*-by-1 or 1-by-*n*. The second calling convention is to pass a single array that is *n*-by-*m*. In this case, either the flag `cv::COVAR_ROWS` should be supplied, to indicate that there are *n* (row) vectors of length *m*, or `cv::COVAR_COLS` should be supplied, to indicate that there are *m* (column) vectors of length *n*.

The results will be placed in `covar` in all cases, but the exact meaning of `avg` depends on the flag values (see Table 3-21).

The flags `cv::COVAR_NORMAL` and `cv::COVAR_SCRAMBLED` are mutually exclusive; you should use one or the other but not both. In the case of `cv::COVAR_NORMAL`, the function will simply compute the mean and covariance of the points provided:

---

$$\Sigma_{normal}^2 \Sigma_{normal}^2 = z \begin{bmatrix} v_{0,0} - \bar{v}_o & \cdots & v_{m,0} - \bar{v}_o \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ v_{0,n} - \bar{v}_n & \cdots & v_{m,n} - \bar{v}_n \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} v_{0,0} - \bar{v}_o & \cdots & v_{m,0} - \bar{v}_o \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ v_{0,n} - \bar{v}_n & \cdots & v_{m,n} - \bar{v}_n \end{bmatrix}^T.$$

Thus the normal covariance  $\Sigma_{normal}^2$  is computed from the  $m$  vectors of length  $n$ , where  $\bar{v}_n$  is defined as the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element of the average vector:  $\bar{v}$ . The resulting covariance matrix is an  $n$ -by- $n$  matrix. The factor  $z$  is an optional scale factor; it will be set to 1 unless the `cv::COVAR_SCALE` flag is used.

In the case of `cv::COVAR_SCRAMBLED`, `cv::calcCovarMatrix()` will compute the following:

$$\Sigma_{scrambled}^2 \Sigma_{scrambled}^2 = z \begin{bmatrix} v_{0,0} - \bar{v}_o & \cdots & v_{m,0} - \bar{v}_o \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ v_{0,n} - \bar{v}_n & \cdots & v_{m,n} - \bar{v}_n \end{bmatrix}^T \begin{bmatrix} v_{0,0} - \bar{v}_o & \cdots & v_{m,0} - \bar{v}_o \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ v_{0,n} - \bar{v}_n & \cdots & v_{m,n} - \bar{v}_n \end{bmatrix}.$$

This matrix is not the usual covariance matrix (note the location of the transpose operator). This matrix is computed from the same  $m$  vectors of length  $n$ , but the resulting *scrambled covariance* matrix is an  $m$ -by- $m$  matrix. This matrix is used in some specific algorithms such as fast PCA for very large vectors (as in the *eigenfaces* technique for face recognition).

The flag `cv::COVAR_USE_AVG` is used when the mean of the input vectors is already known. In this case, the argument `avg` is used as an input rather than an output, which reduces computation time.

Finally, the flag `cv::COVAR_SCALE` is used to apply a uniform scale to the covariance matrix calculated. This is the factor  $z$  in the preceding equations. When used in conjunction with the `cv::COVAR_NORMAL` flag, the applied scale factor will be  $1/m$  (or, equivalently,  $1.0/nsamples$ ). If instead `cv::COVAR_SCRAMBLED` is used, then the value of  $z$  will be  $1/n$  (the inverse of the length of the vectors).

The input and output arrays to `cv::calcCovarMatrix()` should all be of the same floating-point type. The size of the resulting matrix `covar` will be either  $n$ -by- $n$  or  $m$ -by- $m$  depending on whether the standard or scrambled covariance is being computed. It should be noted that when using the `cv::Mat*` form, the “vectors” input in `samples` do not actually have to be one-dimensional; they can be two-dimensional objects (e.g., images) as well.

#### `cv::cartToPolar()`

```
void cv::cartToPolar(
    cv::InputArray x,
    cv::InputArray y,
    cv::OutputArray magnitude,
    cv::OutputArray angle,
    bool          angleInDegrees = false
);
```

$$magnitude_i = \sqrt{x_i^2 + y_i^2}$$

$$angle_i = \text{atan2}(y_i, x_i)$$

This function `cv::cartToPolar()` takes two input arrays `x` and `y`, which are taken to be the  $x$  and  $y$  components of a vector field (note that this is not a single two-channel array, but two separate arrays). The arrays `x` and `y` must be of the same size. `cv::cartToPolar()` then computes the polar representation of each of those vectors. The magnitude of each vector is placed into the corresponding location in `magnitude`, and the orientation of each vector is placed into the corresponding location in `angle`. The returned angles are in radians unless the Boolean variable `angleInDegrees` is set to `true`.

#### `cv::checkRange()`

```
bool cv::checkRange(
    cv::InputArray src,
    bool          quiet = true,
    Point*        pos    = 0,          // if non-Null, location of first outlier
    double        minVal = -DBL_MAX,   // Lower check bound (inclusive)
```

---

```
double      maxVal = DBL_MAX      // Upper check bound (exclusive)
);
```

This function `cv::checkRange()` tests every element of the input array `src` and determines if that element is in a given range. The range is set by `minVal` and `maxVal`, but any `NaN` or `inf` value is also considered out of range. If an out-of-range value is found, an exception will be thrown unless `quiet` is set to `true`, in which case the return value of `cv::checkRange()` will be `true` if all values are in range and `false` if any value is out of range. If the pointer `pos` is not `NULL`, then the location of the first outlier will be stored in `pos`.

#### `cv::compare()`

```
bool cv::compare(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array
    int            cmpop           // Comparison operator, see Table 3-22
)
```

This function makes element-wise comparisons between corresponding pixels in two arrays, `src1` and `src2`, and places the results in the image `dst`. `cv::compare()` takes as its last argument a comparison operator, which may be any of the types listed in Table 3-22. In each case, the result `dst` will be an 8-bit array where pixels that match are marked with 255 and mismatches are set to 0.

*Table 3-22 Values of `cmpop` used by `cv::compare()` and the resulting comparison operation performed*

Value of <code>cmp_op</code>	Comparison
<code>cv::CMP_EQ</code>	<code>(src1i == src2i)</code>
<code>cv::CMP_GT</code>	<code>(src1i &gt; src2i)</code>
<code>cv::CMP_GE</code>	<code>(src1i &gt;= src2i)</code>
<code>cv::CMP_LT</code>	<code>(src1i &lt; src2i)</code>
<code>cv::CMP_LE</code>	<code>(src1i &lt;= src2i)</code>
<code>cv::CMP_NE</code>	<code>(src1i != src2i)</code>

All the listed comparisons are done with the same functions; you just pass in the appropriate argument to indicate what you would like done.

These comparison functions are useful, for example, in background subtraction to create a mask of the changed pixels (e.g., from a security camera) such that only novel information is pulled out of the image.

---

These same results can be achieved with the matrix operations:

```
dst = src1 == src2;
dst = src1 > src2;
dst = src1 >= src2;
dst = src1 < src2;
dst = src1 <= src2;
dst = src1 != src2;
```

---

#### `cv::completeSymm()`

```
bool cv::completeSymm(
    cv::InputArray mtx,
    bool          lowerToUpper = false
)
```

$mtx_{ij} = mtx_{ji} \forall i > j$  (`lowerToUpper = false`)

---

---


$$mtx_{ij} = mtx_{ji} \forall j > i \quad (\text{lowerToUpper} = \text{false})$$

Given a matrix (an array of dimension two) `mtx`, `cv::completeSymm()` symmetrizes the matrix by copying.<sup>27</sup> Specifically, all of the elements from the lower triangle are copied to their transpose position on the upper triangle of the matrix. The diagonal elements of the `mtx` are left unchanged. If the flag `lowerToUpper` is set to `true`, then the elements from the upper triangle are copied into the lower triangle instead.

#### `cv::convertScaleAbs()`

```
void cv::convertScaleAbs(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array
    double alpha = 1.0,         // Multiplicative scale factor
    double beta = 0.0           // Additive offset factor
);
```

$$dst_i = \text{saturate}_{uchar}(|\alpha * src_i + \beta|)$$

The `cv::convertScaleAbs()` function is actually several functions rolled into one; it will perform four operations in sequence. The first operation is to rescale the source image by the factor `alpha`, the second is to offset by (add) the factor `beta`, the third is to compute the absolute value of that sum, and the fourth operation is to cast that result (with saturation) to unsigned char (8-bit).

When you simply pass the default values (`alpha = 1.0` or `beta = 0.0`), you need not have performance fears; OpenCV is smart enough to recognize these cases and not waste processor time on useless operations.

---

A similar result can be achieved, with somewhat greater generality using matrix algebra:

```
Mat_<uchar> B = saturate_cast<uchar>(
    cv::abs( src * alpha + beta )
);
```

This method will also generalize to types other than `uchar`:

```
Mat_<unsigned short> B = saturate_cast<unsigned short>(
    cv::abs( src * alpha + beta )
);
```

---

#### `cv::countNonZero()`

```
int cv::countNonZero(           // Return number of non-zero elements in mtx
    cv::InputArray mtx,         // Input array
);
```

$$count = \sum_{mtx_i \neq 0} 1$$

`cv::countNonZero()` returns the number of nonzero pixels in the array `mtx`.

#### `cv::cvarrToMat()`

```
cv::Mat cv::cvarrToMat(
    const CvArr* src,           // Input array: CvMat, IplImage, or CvMatND
    bool copyData = false,      // if false just make new header, else copy data
    bool allowND = true,        // if true, and possible, convert CvMatND to Mat
    int coiMode = 0             // if 0: error if COI set, if 1: ignore COI
);
```

---

<sup>27</sup> Mathematically inclined readers will realize that there are other symmetrizing processes for matrices that are more “natural” than this operation, but this particular operation is useful in its own right, for example to complete a matrix when only half of it was computed, and so is exposed in the library.

---

---

`cv::cvarrToMat()` is used when you have an “old-style” (pre-version 2.1) image or matrix type and you want to convert it to a “new-style” (version 2.1 or later, which uses C++) `cv::Mat` object. By default, only the header for the new array is constructed without copying the data. Instead, the data pointers in the new header point to the existing data array (so do not deallocate it while the `cv::Mat` header is in use). If you want the data copied, just set `copyData` to `true`, and then you can freely do away with the original data object.

`cv::cvarrToMat()` can also take `CvMatND` structures, but it cannot handle all cases. The key requirement for the conversion is that the matrix should be continuous, or at least it should be representable as a sequence of continuous matrices. Specifically, `A.dim[i].size*A.dim.step[i]` should be equal to `A.dim.step[i-1]` for all `i`, or at worst all but one. If `allowND` is set to `true` (default), `cv::cvarrToMat()` will attempt the conversion when it encounters a `CvMatND` structure, and throw an exception if that conversion is not possible (the condition above). If `allowND` is set to `false`, then an exception will be thrown whenever a `CvMatND` structure is encountered.

Because the concept of COI<sup>28</sup> is handled differently in the post-version 2.1 library (which is to say, it no longer exists), COI has to be handled during the conversion. If the argument `coiMode` is `0`, then an exception will be thrown when `src` contains an active COI. If `coiMode` is nonzero, then no error will be reported, and instead a `cv::Mat` header, which corresponds to the entire image, will be returned, ignoring the COI. (If you want to handle COI properly, you will have to check yourself if the image has the COI set, and if so, use `cv::extractImageCOI()` to create a header for just that channel.)

---

Most of the time, this function is used to help migrate old-style code to the new. In such case, you will probably need to both convert old `CvArr*` style structures to `cv::Mat`, as well as the reverse operation. The reverse operation is done using cast operators. If, for example, you have a matrix you defined as `cv::Mat A`, you can convert that to an `IplImage*` pointer simply with:

```
Mat A( 640, 480, cv::U8C3 );
IplImage img = A; // casting is implicit in assignment
```

---

## `cv::dct()`

```
void cv::dct(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array
    int flags,                   // for inverse transform or row-by-row
);
```

This function performs both the discrete cosine transform and the inverse transform depending on the `flags` argument. The source array `src` must be either one- or two-dimensional, and the size should be an even number (you can pad the array if necessary). The result array `dst` will have the same type and size as `src`. The argument `flags` is a bit-field and can be set to one or both of `DCT_INVERSE` or `DCT_ROWS`. If `DCT_INVERSE` is set, then the inverse transform is done instead of the forward transform. If the flag `DCT_ROWS` is set, then a two-dimensional  $n$ -by- $m$  input is treated as  $n$  distinct one-dimensional vectors of length  $m$ . In this case, each such vector will be transformed independently.

---

The performance of `cv::dct()` depends strongly on the exact size of the arrays passed to it, and this relationship is not monotonic. There are just some sizes that work better than others. It is recommended that when passing an array to `cv::dct()`, you should first determine the most optimal size that is larger than your array, and extend your array

---

<sup>28</sup> “COI” is an old concept from the pre-v2 library which meant “Channel of interest”. In the old `IplImage` class, this COI was analogous to ROI (Region of interest), and could be set to cause certain functions to act only on the indicated channel.

---

---

to that size. OpenCV provides a convenient routine to compute such values for you, called `cv::getOptimalDFTSize()`.

As implemented, the discrete cosine transform of a vector of length  $n$  is computed using the discrete Fourier transform (`cv::dft()`) on a vector of length  $n/2$ . This means that to get the optimal size for a call to `cv::dct()`, you should compute it like this:

```
size_t optimal_dct_size = 2 * getOptimalDFTSize( (N+1) / 2 );
```

---

This function (and discrete transforms in general) is covered in much greater detail in Chapter 6, General Image Transforms. In that section, we will discuss the details of how to pack and unpack the input and output, as well as information on when and why you might want to use the discrete cosine transform.

#### `cv::dft()`

```
void cv::dft(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array
    int flags = 0,               // for inverse transform or row-by-row, etc.
    int nonzeroRows = 0          // assume only this many entries are nonzero
);
```

This function performs both the discrete Fourier transform as well as the inverse transform (depending on the `flags` argument). The source array `src` must be either one- or two-dimensional. The result array `dst` will have the same type and size as `src`. The argument `flags` is a bit-field and can be set to one or more of `DFT_INVERSE`, `DFT_ROWS`, `DFT_SCALE`, `DFT_COMPLEX_OUTPUT`, or `DFT_REAL_OUTPUT`. If `DFT_INVERSE` is set, then the inverse transform is done. If the flag `DFT_ROWS` is set, then a two-dimensional  $n$ -by- $m$  input is treated as  $n$  distinct one-dimensional vectors of length  $m$  and each such vector will be transformed independently. The flag `DFT_SCALE` normalizes the results by the number of elements in the array. This is normally done for `DFT_INVERSE`, as it guarantees that the inverse of the inverse will have the correct normalization.

The flags `DFT_COMPLEX_OUTPUT` and `DFT_REAL_OUTPUT` are useful because when the Fourier transform of a real array is computed, the result will have a complex-conjugate symmetry. So, even though the result is complex, the number of array elements that result will be equal to the number of elements in the real input array rather than double that number. Such a packing is the default behavior of `cv::dft()`. To force the output to be in complex form, set the flag `DFT_COMPLEX_OUTPUT`. In the case of the inverse transform, the input is (in general) complex, and the output will be as well. However, if the input array (to the inverse transform) has complex-conjugate symmetry (for example, if it was itself the result of a Fourier transform of a real array), then the inverse transform will be a real array. If you know this to be the case, and you would like the result array represented as a real array (and so use half the amount of memory), you can set the `DFT_REAL_OUTPUT` flag. (Note that if you do set this flag, `cv::dft()` does not check that the input array has the necessary symmetry, it simply assumes that it does.)

The last parameter to `cv::dft()` is `nonzeroRows`. This defaults to 0, but if set to any nonzero value, will cause `cv::dft()` to assume that only the first `nonzeroRows` of the input array are actually meaningful. (If `DFT_INVERSE` is set, then it is only the first `nonzeroRows` of the output array that are assumed to be nonzero.) This flag is particularly handy when computing cross-correlations of convolutions using `cv::dft()`.

---

Like the performance of `cv::dct()`, `cv::dft()` depends strongly on the exact size of the arrays passed to it, and this relationship is not monotonic. There are just some sizes that work better than others. It is recommended that when passing an array to `cv::dft()`, you should first determine the most optimal size larger than your array, and extend your array to that size. OpenCV provides a convenient routine to compute such values for you, called `cv::getOptimalDFTSize()`.

---

Again, this function (and discrete transforms in general) is covered in much greater detail in Chapter 6, General Image Transforms. In that section, we will discuss the details of how to pack and unpack the input and output, as well as information on when and why you might want to use the discrete Fourier transform.

---

---

## **cv::cvtColor()**

```
void cv::cvtColor(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array  
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array  
    int code,                    // color mapping code, see Table 3-23  
    int dstCn = 0                // channels in output (0 for 'automatic')  
);
```

**cv::cvtColor()** is used to convert from one color space (number of channels) to another [Wharton71] while retaining the same data type. The input array **src** can be an 8-bit array, a 16-bit unsigned array, or a 32-bit floating-point array. The output array **dst** will have the same size and depth as the input array. The conversion operation to be done is specified by the **code** argument, with possible values shown in [Table 3-23](#).<sup>29</sup> The final parameter **dstCn** is the desired number of channels in the destination image. If the default value (of 0) is given, then the number of channels is determined by the number of channels in **src** and the conversion code.

*Table 3-23: Conversions available by means of cv::cvtColor()*

Conversion code	Meaning
cv::BGR2RGB cv::RGB2BGR cv::RGBA2BGRA cv::BGRA2RGBA	Convert between RGB and BGR color spaces (with or without alpha channel)
cv::RGB2RGBA cv::BGR2BGRA	Add alpha channel to RGB or BGR image
cv::RGBA2RGB cv::BGRA2BGR	Remove alpha channel from RGB or BGR image
cv::RGB2BGRA cv::RGBA2BGR cv::BGRA2RGB cv::BGR2RGBA	Convert RGB to BGR color spaces while adding or removing alpha channel
cv::RGB2GRAY cv::BGR2GRAY	Convert RGB or BGR color spaces to grayscale
cv::GRAY2RGB cv::GRAY2BGR cv::RGBA2GRAY cv::BGRA2GRAY	Convert grayscale to RGB or BGR color spaces (optionally removing alpha channel in the process)
cv::GRAY2RGBA cv::GRAY2BGRA	Convert grayscale to RGB or BGR color spaces and add alpha channel
cv::RGB2BGR565 cv::BGR2BGR565 cv::BGR5652RGB cv::BGR5652BGR cv::RGBA2BGR565 cv::BGRA2BGR565 cv::BGR5652RGBA cv::BGR5652BGRA	Convert from RGB or BGR color space to BGR565 color representation with optional addition or removal of alpha channel (16-bit images)
cv::GRAY2BGR565 cv::BGR5652GRAY	Convert grayscale to BGR565 color representation or vice versa (16-bit images)

---

<sup>29</sup> Long-time users of IPL should note that the function **cvCvtColor()** ignores the **colorModel** and **channelSeq** fields of the **IplImage** header. The conversions are done exactly as implied by the **code** argument.

---

---

<code>cv::RGB2BGR555</code> <code>cv::BGR2BGR555</code> <code>cv::BGR5552RGB</code> <code>cv::BGR5552BGR</code> <code>cv::RGBA2BGR555</code> <code>cv::BGRA2BGR555</code> <code>cv::BGR5552RGBA</code> <code>cv::BGR5552BGRA</code> <code>cv::GRAY2BGR555</code> <code>cv::BGR5552GRAY</code>  <code>cv::RGB2XYZ</code> <code>cv::BGR2XYZ</code> <code>cv::XYZ2RGB</code> <code>cv::XYZ2BGR</code>  <code>cv::RGB2YCrCb</code> <code>cv::BGR2YCrCb</code> <code>cv::YCrCb2RGB</code> <code>cv::YCrCb2BGR</code>  <code>cv::RGB2HSV</code> <code>cv::BGR2HSV</code> <code>cv::HSV2RGB</code> <code>cv::HSV2BGR</code>  <code>cv::RGB2HLS</code> <code>cv::BGR2HLS</code> <code>cv::HLS2RGB</code> <code>cv::HLS2BGR</code>  <code>cv::RGB2Lab</code> <code>cv::BGR2Lab</code> <code>cv::Lab2RGB</code> <code>cv::Lab2BGR</code>  <code>cv::RGB2Luv</code> <code>cv::BGR2Luv</code> <code>cv::Luv2RGB</code> <code>cv::Luv2BGR</code>  <code>cv::BayerBG2RGB</code> <code>cv::BayerGB2RGB</code> <code>cv::BayerRG2RGB</code> <code>cv::BayerGR2RGB</code> <code>cv::BayerBG2BGR</code> <code>cv::BayerGB2BGR</code> <code>cv::BayerRG2BGR</code> <code>cv::BayerGR2BGR</code>	<p>Convert from RGB or BGR color space to BGR555 color representation with optional addition or removal of alpha channel (16-bit images)</p> <p>Convert grayscale to BGR555 color representation or vice versa (16-bit images)</p> <p>Convert RGB or BGR image to CIE XYZ representation or vice versa (Rec 709 with D65 white point)</p> <p>Convert RGB or BGR image to luma-chroma (aka YCC) color representation or vice versa</p> <p>Convert RGB or BGR image to HSV (hue saturation value) color representation or vice versa</p> <p>Convert RGB or BGR image to HLS (hue lightness saturation) color representation or vice versa</p> <p>Convert RGB or BGR image to CIE Lab color representation or vice versa</p> <p>Convert RGB or BGR image to CIE Luv color representation or vice versa</p> <p>Convert from Bayer pattern (single-channel) to RGB or BGR image</p>
--	--

We will not go into the details of these conversions nor the subtleties of some of the representations (particularly the Bayer and the CIE color spaces) here. Instead, we will just note that OpenCV contains tools to convert to and from these various color spaces, which are of importance to various classes of users.

The color-space conversions all use the conventions: 8-bit images are in the range 0 to 255, 16-bit images are in the range 0 to 65536, and floating-point numbers are in the range 0.0 to 1.0. When grayscale images are converted to color images, all components of the resulting image are taken to be equal; but for the reverse transformation (e.g., RGB or BGR to grayscale), the gray value is computed using the perceptually weighted formula:

$$Y = (0.299)R + (0.587)G + (0.114)B$$


---

---

In the case of HSV or HLS representations, hue is normally represented as a value from 0 to 360.<sup>30</sup> This can cause trouble in 8-bit representations and so, when converting to HSV, the hue is divided by 2 when the output image is an 8-bit image.

#### **cv::determinant()**

```
double cv::determinant(  
    cv::InputArray mat  
);
```

$$d = \det(mat)$$

**cv::determinant()** computes the determinant of a square array. The array must be of one of the floating-point data types and must be single-channel. If the matrix is small, then the determinant is directly computed by the standard formula. For large matrices, this is not efficient and so the determinant is computed by *Gaussian elimination*.

---

It is worth noting that if you know that a matrix has a symmetric and positive determinant, you can use the trick of solving via *singular value decomposition* (SVD). For more information, see the upcoming section on **cv::SVD()**, but the trick is to set both **U** and **V** to **NULL** and then just take the products of the matrix **W** to obtain the determinant.

---

#### **cv::divide()**

```
void cv::divide(  
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array (numerators)  
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array (denominators)  
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Results array (scale*src1/src2)  
    double scale = 1.0,           // Multiplicative scale factor  
    int dtype = -1                // Data type for dst, -1 to get from src2  
)  
  
void cv::divide(  
    double scale,                 // Numerator for all divisions  
    cv::InputArray src2,          // Input array (denominators)  
    cv::OutputArray dst,          // Results array (scale/src2)  
    int dtype = -1               // Data type for dst, -1 to get from src2  
)
```

$$dst_i = \text{satuate}(scale * src1_i / src2_i)$$

$$dst_i = \text{satuate}(scale / src2_i)$$

**cv::divide()** is a simple division function; it divides all of the elements in **src1** by the corresponding elements in **src2** and puts the results in **dst**.

#### **cv::eigen()**

```
bool cv::eigen(  
    cv::InputArray src,  
    cv::OutputArray eigenvalues,  
    int lowindex = -1,  
    int highindex = -1  
);  
  
bool cv::eigen(  
    cv::InputArray src,  
    cv::OutputArray eigenvalues,  
    cv::OutputArray eigenvectors,  
    int lowindex = -1,
```

---

<sup>30</sup> Excluding 360, of course.

---

---

```
int highindex = -1
);
```

Given a symmetric matrix `mat`, `cv::eigen()` will compute the *eigenvectors* and *eigenvalues* of that matrix. The matrix must be of one of the floating-point types. The results array `eigenvalues` will contain the eigenvalues of `mat` in descending order. If the array `eigenvectors` was provided, the eigenvectors will be stored as the rows of that array in the same order as the corresponding eigenvalues in `eigenvalues`. The additional parameters `lowindex` and `highindex` allow you to request only some of the eigenvalues to be computed (both must be used together). For example, if `lowindex=0` and `highindex=1`, then only the largest two eigenvectors will be computed. Regardless of the number of eigenvalues (and eigenvectors) requested, the result arrays will be of the same size (the requested values will always appear in the initial rows).

---

Similar to `cv::det()` (described previously), if the matrix in question is symmetric and positive definite,<sup>31</sup> then it is better to use SVD to find the eigenvalues and eigenvectors of `mat`.

---

### `cv::exp()`

```
void cv::exp(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::OutputArray dst
);
```

$$dst_i = e^{src_i}$$

`cv::exp()` exponentiates all of the elements in `src` and puts the results in `dst`.

### `cv::extractImageCOI()`

```
bool cv::extractImageCOI(
    cv::InputArray mat,
    cv::OutputArray dst,
    int coi = -1
);
```

The function `cv::extractImageCOI()` extracts the indicated COI from a legacy-style (pre-version 2.1) array, such as an `IplImage` or `CvMat` given by `src` and puts the result in `dst`. If the argument `coi` is provided, then that particular COI will be extracted. If not, then the COI field in `src` will be checked to determine which channel to extract.

---

This method here specifically works with legacy arrays. If you need to extract a single channel from a modern `cv::Mat` object, use `cv::mixChannels()` or `cv::split()`.

---

### `cv::flip()`

```
void cv::flip(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Results array, size and type of 'src'
    int flipCode = 0             // >0: y-flip, 0: x-flip, <0: both
);
```

This function flips an image around the *x*-axis, the *y*-axis, or both. By default, `flipCode` is set to 0, which flips around the *x*-axis.

If `flipCode` is set greater than zero (e.g., +1), the image will be flipped around the *y*-axis, and if set to a negative value (e.g., -1), the image will be flipped about both axes.

---

<sup>31</sup> This is, for example, always the case for covariance matrices. See `cvCalcCovarMatrix` See `cv::calcCovarMatrix` `cvCalcCovarMatrix()`.

---

---

When doing video processing on Win32 systems, you will find yourself using this function often to switch between image formats with their origins at the upper-left and lower-left of the image.

#### **cv::gemm()**

```
void cv::gemm(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array
    double alpha,                 // Weight for 'src1' * 'src2' product
    cv::InputArray src3,           // Third (offset) input array
    double beta,                  // Weight for 'src3' array
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Results array
    int flags = 0                 // Use to transpose source arrays
);
```

Generalized matrix multiplication (GEMM) in OpenCV is performed by `cv::gemm()`, which performs matrix multiplication, multiplication by a transpose, scaled multiplication, and so on. In its most general form, `cv::gemm()` computes the following:

$$D = \alpha \cdot op(src_1) * op(src_2) + \beta \cdot op(src_3)$$

where `src1`, `src2`, and `src3` are matrices,  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are numerical coefficients, and `op()` is an optional transposition of the matrix enclosed. The transpositions are controlled by the optional argument `flags`, which may be 0 or any combination (by means of Boolean OR) of `cv::GEMM_1_T`, `cv::GEMM_2_T`, and `cv::GEMM_3_T` (with each flag indicating a transposition of the corresponding matrix).

All matrices must be of the appropriate size for the (matrix) multiplication, and all should be of floating-point types. The `cv::gemm()` function also supports two-channel matrices that will be treated as two components of a single complex number.

---

A similar result can be achieved using the matrix algebra operators. For example:

```
cv::gemm(src1,src2,alpha,src3,bets,dst,cv::GEMM_1_T|cv::GEMM_3_T)
```

would be equivalent to:

```
dst = alpha * src1.T() * src2 + beta * src3.T()
```

---

#### **cv::getConvertElem() and cv::getConvertScaleElem()**

```
cv::convertData cv::getConvertElem( // Returns a conversion function (below)
    int fromType,                    // Input pixel type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int toType                        // Output pixel type (e.g., cv::F32)
);

cv::convertScaleData cv::getConvertScaleElem( // Returns a conversion function
    int fromType,                    // Input pixel type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int toType                        // Output pixel type (e.g., cv::F32)
);

// Conversion functions are of these forms:
//
typedef void (*ConvertData)(
    const void* from,                // Pointer to the input pixel location
    void* to,                        // Pointer to the result pixel location
    int cn                           // number of channels
);

typedef void (*ConvertScaleData)(
    const void* from,                // Pointer to the input pixel location
    void* to,                        // Pointer to the result pixel location
    int cn,                          // number of channels
    double alpha,                    // scale factor
    double beta                       // offset factor
);
```

---

---

The functions `cv::getConvertElem()` and `cv::getConvertScaleElem()` return function pointers to the functions that are used for specific type conversions in OpenCV. The function returned by `cv::getConvertElem()` is defined (via `typedef`) to the type `cv::ConvertData`, which can be passed a pointer to two data areas and a number of “channels.” The number of channels is given by the argument `cn` of the conversion function, which is really the number of contiguous-in-memory objects of `fromType` to convert. This means that if you wanted, you could convert an entire (contiguous in memory) array by simply setting the number of channels equal to the total number of elements in the array.

Both `cv::getConvertElem()` and `cv::getConvertScaleElem()` take as arguments two types: `fromType` and `toType`. These types are specified using the integer constants (`cv::F32`, etc.).

In the case of `cv::getConvertScaleElem()`, the returned function takes two additional arguments, `alpha` and `beta`. These values are used by the converter function to rescale (`alpha`) and offset (`beta`) the input value before conversion to the desired type.

#### `cv::idct()`

```
void cv::idct(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array
    int flags,                   // for row-by-row
);
```

`cv::idct()` is just a convenient shorthand for the inverse discrete cosine transform. A call to `cv::idct()` is exactly equivalent to a call to `cv::dct()` with the arguments:

```
| cv::dct( src, dst, flags | cv::DCT_INVERSE );
```

#### `cv::idft()`

```
void cv::idft(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array
    int flags = 0,               // for row-by-row, etc.
    int nonzeroRows = 0          // assume only this many entries are nonzero
);
```

`cv::idft()` is just a convenient shorthand for the inverse discrete Fourier transform. A call to `cv::idft()` is exactly equivalent to a call to `cv::dft()` with the arguments:

```
| cv::dft( src, dst, flags | cv::DCT_INVERSE, outputRows );
```

---

It is noteworthy that neither `cv::dft()` nor `cv::idft()` scales the output by default. So you will probably want to call `cv::idft()` with the `cv::DFT_SCALE` argument, that way, the transform and its “inverse” will be true inverse operations.

---

#### `cv::inRange()`

```
void cv::inRange(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Array
    cv::InputArray upperb,       // Array of upper bounds (inclusive)
    cv::InputArray lowerb,       // Array of lower bounds (inclusive)
    cv::OutputArray dst          // Result array, cv::U8C1 type
);
```

$$dst_i = lowerb_i \leq src_i \leq upperb_i$$

When applied to a one-dimensional array, each element of `src` is checked against the corresponding elements of `upperb` and `lowerb`. The corresponding element of `dst` is set to 255 if the element in `src` is between the values given by `upperb` and `lowerb`; otherwise, it is set to 0.

However, in the case of multichannel arrays for `src`, `upperb`, and `lowerb`, however, the output is still a single channel. The output value for element *i* will be set to 255 if and only if the values for the corresponding entry in `src` all lay inside of the intervals implied for the corresponding channel in `upperb`

---

---

and `lowerb`. In this sense, `upperb` and `lowerb` define an  $n$ -dimensional hypercube for each pixel and the corresponding value in `dst` is only set to true (255) if the pixel in `src` lies inside that hypercube.

#### `cv::invert()`

```
double cv::invert(           // Return 0 if 'src' is singular
    cv::InputArray  src,     // Input Array, m-by-n
    cv::OutputArray dst,     // Result array, n-by-m
    int             method = cv::DECOMP_LU // Method for computing (pseudo) inverse
);
```

`cv::invert()` inverts the matrix in `src` and places the result in `dst`. The input array must be a floating-point type, and the result array will be of the same type. Because `cv::invert()` includes the possibility of computing pseudo-inverses, the input array need not be square. If the input array is  $n$ -by- $m$ , then the result array will be  $m$ -by- $n$ . This function supports several methods of computing the inverse matrix (see Table 3-24), but the default is Gaussian elimination. The return value depends on the method used.

Table 3-24: Possible values of method argument to `cv::invert()`

Value of method argument	Meaning
<code>cv::DECOMP_LU</code>	Gaussian elimination (LU decomposition)
<code>cv::DECOMP_SVD</code>	Singular value decomposition (SVD)
<code>cv::DECOMP_CHOLESKY</code>	Only for symmetric positive matrices

In the case of Gaussian elimination (`cv::DECOMP_LU`), the determinant of `src` is returned when the function is complete. If the determinant is 0, inversion failed and the array `dst` is set to 0s.

In the case of `cv::DECOMP_SVD`, the return value is the inverse condition number for the matrix (the ratio of the smallest to the largest eigenvalues). If the matrix `src` is singular, then `cv::invert()` in SVD mode will compute the pseudo-inverse. The other two methods (LU and Cholesky decomposition) require the source matrix to be square, nonsingular and positive.

#### `cv::log()`

```
void cv::log(
    cv::InputArray  src,
    cv::OutputArray dst
);
```

$$dst_i = \begin{cases} \log src_i & src_i \neq 0 \\ -C & \text{else} \end{cases}$$

`cv::log()` computes the natural log of the elements in `src` and puts the results in `dst`. Source pixels that are less than or equal to zero are marked with destination pixels set to a large negative value.

#### `cv::LUT()`

```
void cv::LUT(
    cv::InputArray  src,
    cv::InputArray  lut,
    cv::OutputArray dst
);
```

$$dst_i = lut(src_i)$$

The function `cv::LUT()` performs a “lookup table transform” on the input in `src`. `cv::LUT()` requires the source array `src` to be 8-bit index values. The `lut` array holds the lookup table. This lookup table array should have exactly 256 elements, and may have either a single channel or, in the case of a multichannel `src` array, the same number of channels as the source array. The function `cv::LUT()` then fills the destination array `dst` with values taken from the lookup table `lut` using the corresponding value from `src` as an index into that table.

---

---

In the case where the values in `src` are signed 8-bit numbers, they are automatically offset by +128 so that their range will index the lookup table in a meaningful way. If the lookup table is multichannel (and the indices are as well), then the value in `src` is used as a multidimensional index into `lut`, and the result array `dst` will be single channel. If `lut` is one-dimensional, then the result array will be multichannel, with each channel being separately computed from the corresponding index from `src` and the one-dimensional lookup table.

#### `cv::magnitude()`

```
void cv::magnitude(  
    cv::InputArray x,  
    cv::InputArray y,  
    cv::OutputArray dst  
);
```

$$dst_i = \sqrt{x_i^2 + y_i^2}$$

`cv::magnitude()` essentially computes the radial part of a Cartesian-to-polar conversion on a two-dimensional vector field. In the case of `cv::magnitude()`, this vector field is expected to be in the form of two separate single channel arrays. These two input array should have the same size. (If you have a single two-channel array, `cv::split()` will give you separate channels.) Each element in `dst` is computed from the corresponding elements of `x` and `y` as the Euclidian norm of the two (i.e., the square root of the sum of the squares of the corresponding values).

#### `cv::Mahalanobis()`

```
cv::Size cv::mahalanobis(  
    cv::InputArray vec1,  
    cv::InputArray vec2,  
    cv::OutputArray icovar  
);
```

`cvMahalanobis()` computes the value:

$$r_{mahalanobis} = \sqrt{(\vec{x} - \vec{\mu})^T \Sigma^{-1} (\vec{x} - \vec{\mu})}$$

The *Mahalanobis distance* is defined as the vector distance measured between a point and the center of a Gaussian distribution; it is computed using the inverse covariance of that distribution as a metric. See [Figure 3-2](#). Intuitively, this is analogous to the z-score in basic statistics, where the distance from the center of a distribution is measured in units of the variance of that distribution. The Mahalanobis distance is just a multivariable generalization of the same idea.

---

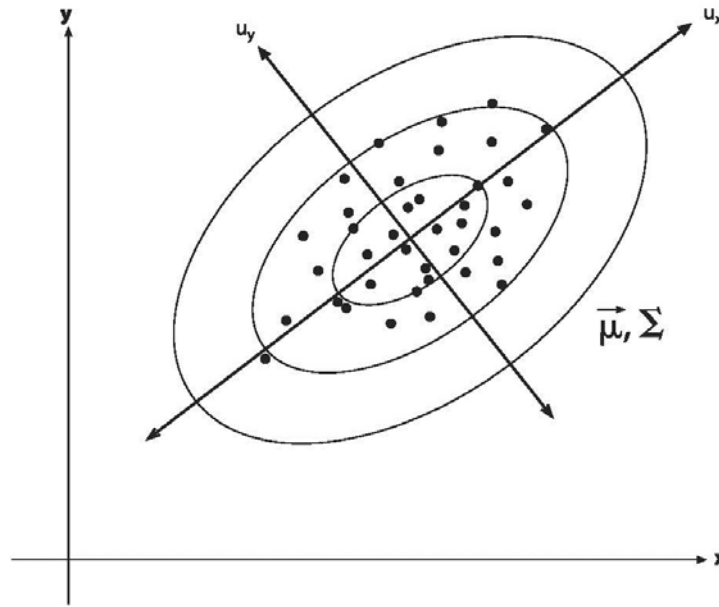


Figure 3-2: A distribution of points in two dimensions with superimposed ellipsoids representing Mahalanobis distances of 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 from the distribution's mean

The vector `vec1` is presumed to be the point `x`, and the vector `vec2` is taken to be the distribution's mean.<sup>32</sup> That matrix `icovar` is the inverse covariance.

This covariance matrix will usually have been computed with `cv::calcCovarMatrix()` (described previously) and then inverted with `cv::invert()`. It is good programming practice to use the `cv::DECOMP_SVD` method for this inversion because someday you will encounter a distribution for which one of the eigenvalues is 0!

**cv::max()**

```
cv::MatExpr cv::max(
    const cv::Mat& src1,           // First input Array
    const cv::Mat& src2           // Second input array
);
MatExpr cv::max(
    const cv::Mat& src1,           // Return a matrix expression, not a matrix
    double value,                 // First input array (first position)
                                // Scalar in second position
);
MatExpr cv::max(
    double value,                 // Return a matrix expression, not a matrix
    const cv::Mat& src1           // Scalar in first position
                                // Input Array (second position)
);

void cv::max(
    cv::InputArray src1,          // First input Array
    cv::InputArray src2,          // Second input Array
    cv::OutputArray dst           // Result array
);
```

<sup>32</sup> Actually, the Mahalanobis distance is more generally defined as the distance between any two vectors; in any case, the vector `vec2` is subtracted from the vector `vec1`. Neither is there any fundamental connection between `mat` in `cvMahalanobiscv::Mahalanobis()` and the inverse covariance; any metric can be imposed here as appropriate.

---

```

void cv::max(
    const Mat&      src1,          // First input Array
    const Mat&      src2,          // Second input Array
    Mat&           dst             // Result array
);
void cv::max(
    const Mat&      src1,          // Input Array
    double          value,         // Scalar input
    Mat&           dst             // Result array
);

```

$$dst_i = \max ( src_{1,i}, src_{2,i} )$$

`cv::max()` computes the maximum value of each corresponding pair of pixels in the arrays `src1` and `src2`. It has two basic forms: those that return a matrix expression and those that compute a result and put it someplace you have indicated. In the three-argument form, in the case where one of the operands is a `cv::Scalar`, comparison with a multichannel array is done on a per-channel basis with the appropriate component of the `cv::Scalar`.

#### `cv::mean()`

```

cv::Scalar cv::mean(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero
);

```

$$N = \sum_{i, mask_i \neq 0} 1$$

$$mean_c = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i, mask_i \neq 0} src_i$$

The function `cv::mean()` computes average value of all of the pixels in the input array `src` that are not masked out. The result is computed on a per-channel basis if `src` is multichannel.

#### `cv::meanStdDev()`

```

void cv::meanStdDev(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::OutputArray mean,
    cv::OutputArray stddev,
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero
);

```

$$N = \sum_{i, mask_i \neq 0} 1$$

$$mean_c = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i, mask_i \neq 0} src_i$$

$$stddev_c = \sqrt{\sum_{i, mask_i \neq 0} (src_{c,i} - mean_c)^2}$$

The function `cv::meanStdDev()` computes the average value of the pixels in the input array `src` not masked out, as well as their standard deviation. The mean and standard deviation are computed on a per-channel basis if `src` is multichannel.

---

It is important to know that the standard deviation computed here is not the same as the covariance matrix. In fact, the standard deviation computed here is only the diagonal

---

---

elements of the full covariance matrix. If you want to compute the full covariance matrix, you will have to use `cv::calcCovarMatrix()`.

---

#### `cv::merge()`

```
void cv::merge(
    const cv::Mat* mv,           // C-style array of arrays
    size_t count,               // Number of arrays pointed to by 'mv'
    cv::OutputArray dst         // Result array, contains all channels in 'mv'
);
void merge(
    const vector<cv::Mat>& mv,    // STL-style array of arrays
    cv::OutputArray dst         // Result array, contains all channels in 'mv'
);
```

`cv::merge()` is the inverse operation of `cv::split()`. The arrays contained in `mv` are combined into the output array `dst`. In the case in which `mv` is a pointer to a C-style array of `cv::Mat` objects, the additional size parameter `count` must also be supplied.

#### `cv::min()`

```
cv::MatExpr cv::min(           // Return a matrix expression, not a matrix
    const cv::Mat& src1,       // First input array
    const cv::Mat& src2       // Second input array
);
MatExpr cv::min(              // Return a matrix expression, not a matrix
    const cv::Mat& src1,       // First input array (first position)
    double value              // Scalar in second position
);
MatExpr cv::min(              // Return a matrix expression, not a matrix
    double value,             // Scalar in first position
    const cv::Mat& src1       // Input Array (second position)
);

void cv::min(
    cv::InputArray src1,      // First input Array
    cv::InputArray src2,      // Second input Array
    cv::OutputArray dst       // Result array
);
void cv::min(
    const Mat& src1,          // First input Array
    const Mat& src2,          // Second input Array
    Mat& dst                  // Result array
);
void cv::min(
    const Mat& src1,          // Input Array
    double value,             // Scalar input
    Mat& dst                  // Result array
);
```

$$dst_i = \min(src_{1,i}, src_{2,i})$$

`cv::min()` computes the minimum value of each corresponding pair of pixels in the arrays `src1` and `src2` (or one source matrix and a single value). Note that the variants of `cv::min()` that return a value or return a matrix expression that can then be manipulated by OpenCV's matrix expression machinery.

In the three-argument form, in the case where one of the operands is a `cv::Scalar`, comparison with a multichannel array is done on a per-channel basis with the appropriate component of the `cv::Scalar`.

#### `cv::minMaxIdx()`

```
void cv::minMaxLoc(
    cv::InputArray src,        // Input array, 1-dimensional only
    double* minVal,            // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    double* maxVal,            // min value goes here (in not NULL)
```

---

---

```

    cv::Point*    minLoc,           // location of min goes here (if not NULL)
    cv::Point*    maxLoc,           // location of max goes here (if not NULL)
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray() // search only non-zero values (if not NULL)

void cv::minMaxLoc(
    const SparseMat& src,           // Input sparse array
    double*         minVal,         // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    double*         maxVal,         // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    cv::Point*      minIdx,         // C-style array, indices of min location
    cv::Point*      maxIdx,         // C-style array, indices of min location
);

```

This routine finds the minimal and maximal values in the array `src` and (optionally) returns their locations. The computed minimum and maximum values are placed in `minVal` and `maxVal`. Optionally, the locations of those extrema can also be returned, but only if the `src` array is two-dimensional. These locations will be written to the addresses given by `minLoc` and `maxLoc` (provided that these arguments are non-`NULL`). Because these locations are of type `cv::Point`, this form of the function should only be used on two-dimensional arrays (i.e., matrices or images).

#### `cv::minMaxLoc()`

```

void cv::minMaxLoc(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array
    double*         minVal,         // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    double*         maxVal,         // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    cv::Point*      minLoc,         // location of min goes here (if not NULL)
    cv::Point*      maxLoc,         // location of max goes here (if not NULL)
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray() // search only non-zero values (if present)

void cv::minMaxLoc(
    const SparseMat& src,           // Input sparse array
    double*         minVal,         // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    double*         maxVal,         // min value goes here (in not NULL)
    cv::Point*      minIdx,         // C-style array, indices of min location
    cv::Point*      maxIdx,         // C-style array, indices of min location
);

```

This routine finds the minimal and maximal values in the array `src` and (optionally) returns their locations. The computed minimum and maximum values are placed in `minVal` and `maxVal`. Optionally, the locations of those extrema can also be returned, but only if the `src` array is two-dimensional. These locations will be written to the addresses given by `minLoc` and `maxLoc` (provided that these arguments are non-`NULL`). Because these locations are of type `cv::Point`, this form of the function should only be used on two-dimensional arrays (i.e., matrices or images).

`cv::minMaxLoc()` can also be called with a `cv::SparseMat` for the `src` array. In this case, the array can be of any number of dimensions and the minimum and maximum will be computed and their location returned. In this case, the locations of the extrema will be returned and placed in the C-style arrays `minIdx` and `maxIdx`. Both of those arrays, if provided, should have the same number of elements as the number of dimensions in the `src` array. In the case of `cv::SparseMat`, the minimum and maximum are only computed for what are generally referred to as nonzero elements in the source code. However, it is important to note that this terminology is slightly misleading, as what is really meant is: *elements that exist* in the sparse matrix representation in memory. In fact, there may, as a result of how the sparse matrix came into being and what has been done with it in the past, be elements that *exist* and are also zero. Such elements will be included in the computation of the minimum and maximum.

When working with multichannel arrays, there are several options. Natively, `cv::minMaxLoc()` does not support multichannel input. Primarily this is because this operation is ambiguous.

---

---

If you want the minimum and maximum across all channels, you can use `cv::reshape()` to reshape the multichannel array into one giant single-channel array. If you would like the minimum and maximum for each channel separately, you can use `cv::split()` or `cv::mixChannels()` to separate the channels out and analyze them separately.

---

In both forms of `cv::minMaxLoc`, the arguments for the minimum or maximum value or location may be set to `NULL`, which turns off the computation for that argument.

#### `cv::mixChannels()`

```
void cv::mixChannels(
    const cv::Mat*      srcv,          // C-style array of matrices
    int                 nsrc,          // Number of elements in 'srcv'
    cv::Mat*            dstv,          // C-style array of target matrices
    int                 ndst,          // Number of elements in 'dstv'
    const int*           fromTo,       // C-style array of pairs, ...from,to...
    size_t              n_pairs       // Number of pairs in 'fromTo'
);

void cv::mixChannels(
    const vector<cv::Mat>& srcv,        // STL-style vector of matrices
    vector<cv::Mat>&       dstv,        // STL-style vector of target matrices
    const int*           fromTo,       // C-style array of pairs, ...from,to...
    size_t              n_pairs       // Number of pairs in 'fromTo'
);
```

There are many operations in OpenCV that are special cases of the general problem of rearranging channels from one or more images in the input, and sorting them into particular channels in one or more images in the output. Functions like `cv::split()`, `cv::merge()`, and (at least some cases of) `cv::cvtColor()` all make use of such functionality. Those methods do what they need to do by calling the much more general `cv::mixChannels()`. This function allows you to supply multiple arrays, each with potentially multiple channels, for the input, and the same for the output, and to map the channels from the input arrays into the channels in the output arrays in any manner you choose.

The input and output arrays can either be specified as C-style arrays of `cv::Mat` objects with an accompanying integer indicating the number of `cv::Mats`, or as an STL `vector<>` of `cv::Mat` objects. Output arrays must be pre-allocated with their size and number of dimensions matching those of the input arrays.

---

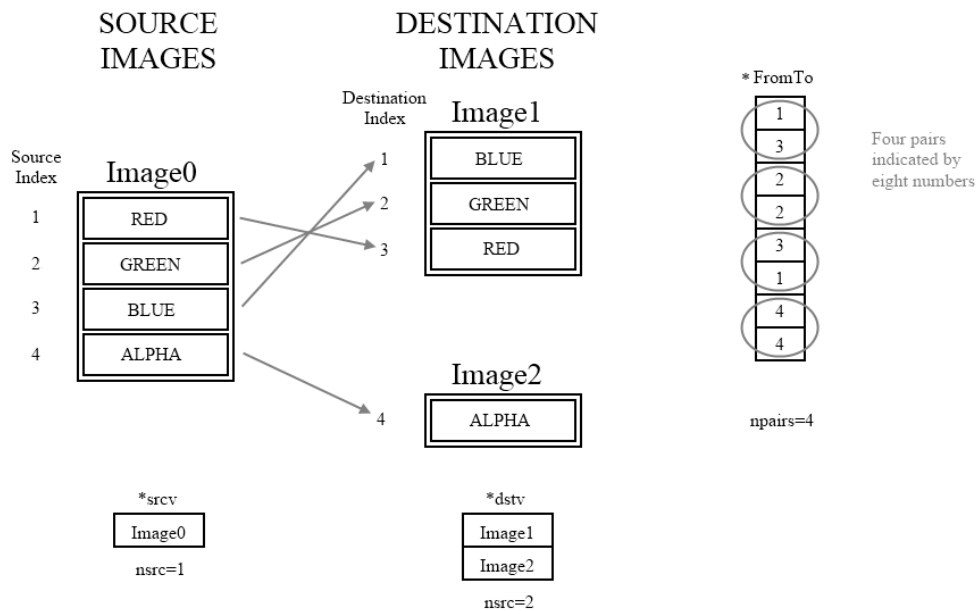


Figure 3-3: A single four-channel RGB image is converted to one BGR and one Alpha-only image.

The mapping is controlled by the C-style integer array `fromTo`. This array can contain any number of integer pairs in sequence, with each pair indicating with its first value the source channel and with its second value the destination channel to which that should be copied. The channels are sequentially numbered starting at zero for the first image, then through the second image, and so on. (Figure 3-3). The total number of pairs is supplied by the argument `n_pairs`.

Unlike most other functions in the post-version 2.1 library, `cv::mixChannels()` *does not* allocate the output arrays. They must be pre-allocated and have the same size and dimensionality as the input arrays.

#### `cv::mulSpectrums()`

```
doublevoid cv::mulSpectrums(
    cv::InputArray arr1,           // First input array
    cv::InputArray arr2,           // Second input array, same size as 'arr1'
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array, same size as 'arr1'
    int flags,                     // used to indicate that rows are independent
    bool conj = false             // If true, conjugate arr2 first
);
```

In many operations involving spectra (i.e., the results from `cv::dft()` or `cv::idft()`), one wishes to do a per-element multiplication that respects the packing of the spectra (real arrays), or their nature as complex variables. (See the description of `cv::dft()` for more details.) The input arrays may be one- or two-dimensional, with the second the same size and type as the first. If the input array is two-dimensional, it may either be taken to be a true two-dimensional spectrum, or an array of one-dimensional spectra (one per row). In the latter case, flags should be set to `cv::DFT_ROWS`; otherwise it can be set to 0.

When the two arrays are complex, they are simply multiplied on an element-wise basis, but `cv::mulSpectrums()` provides an option to conjugate the second array elements before multiplication. For example, you would use this option to perform correlation (using the Fourier transform), but for convolution, you would use `conj=false`.

#### `cv::multiply()`

```
void cv::multiply(
```

---

```

cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
cv::InputArray src2,          // Second input array
cv::OutputArray dst,          // Result array
double         scale = 1.0,    // overall scale factor
int            dtype = -1      // Output type for result array
);

```

$$dst_i = \text{saturnate}(\text{scale} * src1_i * src2_i)$$

`cv::multiply()` is a simple multiplication function; it multiplies the elements in `src1` by the corresponding elements in `src2` and puts the results in `dst`.

#### `cv::mulTransposed()`

```

void cv::mulTransposed(
    cv::InputArray src1,          // Input matrix
    cv::OutputArray dst,          // Result array
    bool           aTa,           // If true, transpose then multiply
    cv::InputArray delta = cv::noArray(), // subtract from 'src1' before multiplication
    double         scale = 1.0,    // overall scale factor
    int            dtype = -1      // Output type for result array
)

```

$$dst = \begin{cases} \text{scale} * (src - delta)^T (src - delta) & aTa = \text{true} \\ \text{scale} * (src - delta) (src - delta)^T & aTa = \text{false} \end{cases}$$

`cv::mulTransposed()` is used to compute the product of a matrix and its own transpose—useful, for example, in computing covariance. The matrix `src` should be two-dimensional and single-channel, but unlike `cv::GEMM()`, it is not restricted to the floating-point types. The result matrix will be the same type as the source matrix unless specified otherwise by `dtype`. If `dtype` is not negative (default), it should be either `cv::F32` or `cv::F64`; the output array `dst` will then be of the indicated type.

If a second input matrix `delta` is provided, that matrix will be subtracted from `src` before the multiplication. If no matrix is provided (i.e., `delta=cv::noArray()`), then no subtraction is done. The array `delta` need not be the same size as `src`; if `delta` is smaller than `src`, `delta` is repeated (also called tiling, see `cv::repeat()`) in order to produce an array whose size matches the size of `src`. The argument `scale` is applied to the matrix after the multiplication is done. Finally, the argument `aTa` is used to select either the multiplication in which the transposed version of `src` is multiplied from the left (`aTa=true`) or from the right (`aTa=false`).

#### `cv::norm()`

```

double cv::norm(                // Return computed norm in double precision
    cv::InputArray src1,         // Input matrix
    int            normType = cv::NORM_L2, // Type of norm to compute
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray() // include only non-zero values (if present)
);
double cv::norm(                // Return computed norm of difference
    cv::InputArray src1,         // Input matrix
    cv::InputArray src2,         // Second input matrix
    int            normType = cv::NORM_L2, // Type of norm to compute
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray() // include only non-zero values (if present)
);
double cv::norm(                // Input sparse matrix
    const cv::SparseMat& src,     // Input sparse matrix
    int                 normType = cv::NORM_L2, // Type of norm to compute
);

```

$$\|src1\|_{\infty, L1, L2}$$

$$\|src1 - src2\|_{\infty, L1, L2}$$


---

This function is used to compute the norm of an array (see Table 3-25) or a variety of distance norms (Table 3-26) between two arrays if two arrays are provided (see Table 3-26). The norm of a `cv::SparseMat` can also be computed, in which case zero-entries are ignored in the computation of the norm.

Table 3-25: Norm computed by `cv::norm()` for different values of `normType` when `arr2=NULL`

<b>normType</b>	<b>Result</b>
<code>cv::NORM_INF</code>	$\ src1\ _{\infty} = \max_i abs(src1_i)$
<code>cv::NORM_L1</code>	$\ src1\ _{L1} = \sum_i abs(src1_i)$
<code>cv::NORM_L2</code>	$\ src1\ _{L2} = \sum_i src1_i^2 \sqrt{\sum_i src1_i^2}$

If the second array argument `src2` is non-`NULL`, then the norm computed is a difference norm—that is, something like the distance between the two arrays.<sup>33</sup> In the first three cases (shown in Table 3-26) the norm is absolute; in the latter three cases it is rescaled by the magnitude of the second array `src2`.

Table 3-26: Norm computed by `cv::norm()` for different values of `normType` when `arr2` is non-`NULL`

<b>normType</b>	<b>Result</b>
<code>cv::NORM_INF</code>	$\ src1 - src2\ _{\infty} = \max_i abs(src1_i - src2_i)$
<code>cv::NORM_L1</code>	$\ src1 - src2\ _{L1} = \sum_i abs(src1_i - src2_i)$
<code>cv::NORM_L2</code>	$\ src1 - src2\ _{L2} = \sum_i (src1_i - src2_i)^2$
<code>cv::NORM_RELATIVE_INF</code>	$\frac{\ src1 - src2\ _{\infty}}{\ src2\ _{\infty}}$
<code>cv::NORM_RELATIVE_L1</code>	$\frac{\ src1 - src2\ _{L1}}{\ src2\ _{L1}}$
<code>cv::NORM_RELATIVE_L2</code>	$\frac{\ src1 - src2\ _{L2}}{src2_{L2}}$

In all cases, `src1` and `src2` must have the same size and number of channels. When there is more than one channel, the norm is computed over all of the channels together (i.e., the sums in Table and Table 3-26 are not only over `x` and `y` but also over the channels).

#### `cv::normalize()`

```
void cv::normalize(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // Input matrix
    cv::OutputArray dst,          // Result matrix
    double alpha = 1,             // first parameter (see Table 3-27)
    double beta = 0,              // second parameter (see Table 3-27)
    int normType = cv::NORM_L2,   // Type of norm to compute
    int dtype = -1,               // Output type for result array
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray() // include only non-zero values (if present)
);
void cv::normalize(
```

<sup>33</sup> At least in the case of the L2 norm, there is an intuitive interpretation of the difference norm as a Euclidean distance in a space of dimension equal to the number of pixels in the images.

---

```

const cv::SparseMat& src,           // Input sparse matrix
cv::SparseMat& dst,               // Result sparse matrix
double alpha = 1,                // first parameter (see Table 3-27)
int normType = cv::NORM_L2,      // Type of norm to compute
);

```

$$\|dst\|_{\infty, L1, L2} = \alpha$$

$$\min(dst) = \alpha, \quad \max(dst) = \beta$$

As with so many OpenCV functions, `cv::normalize()` does more than it might at first appear. Depending on the value of `normType`, image `src` is normalized or otherwise mapped into a particular range in `dst`. The array `dst` will be the same size as `src`, and will have the same data type, unless the `rtype` argument is used. Optionally, `rtype` can be set to one of the OpenCV fundamental types (`cv::F32`, etc.) and the output array will be of that type. The exact meaning of this operation is dependent on the `normType` argument. The possible values of `normType` are shown in Table 3-27.

Table 3-27: Possible values of `normType` argument to `cv::normalize()`

<b>norm_type</b>	<b>Result</b>
<code>cv::NORM_INF</code>	$\ dst\ _{\infty} = \max_i \text{abs}(dst_i) = \alpha$
<code>cv::NORM_L1</code>	$\ dst\ _{L1} = \sum_i \text{abs}(dst_i) = \alpha$
<code>cv::NORM_L2</code>	$\ dst\ _{L2} = \sum_i dst_i^2 = \sqrt{\sum_i dst_i^2} = \alpha$
<code>cv::NORM_MINMAX</code>	Map into range $[\alpha, \beta]$

In the case of the infinity norm, the array `src` is rescaled such that the magnitude of the absolute value of the largest entry is equal to `alpha`. In the case of the L1 or L2 norm, the array is rescaled so that the norm equals the value of `alpha`. If `normType` is set to `cv::MINMAX`, then the values of the array are rescaled and translated so that they are linearly mapped into the interval between `alpha` and `beta` (inclusive).

As before, if `mask` is non-NULL then only those pixels corresponding to nonzero values of the mask image will contribute to the computation of the norm—and only those pixels will be altered by `cv::normalize()`. Note that if the operation `dtype=cv::MINMAX` is used, the source array may not be `cv::SparseMat`. The reason for this is that the `cv::MIN_MAX` operation can apply an overall offset, and this would affect the sparsity of the array (specifically, a sparse array would become non-sparse as all of the zero elements became non-zero as a result of this operation).

#### **cv::perspectiveTransform()**

```

void cv::perspectiveTransform(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array, 2 or 3 channels
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array, size, type, as src1
    cv::InputArray mtx           // 3-by-3 or 4-by-4 transform matrix
);

```

$$\begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} x'/w' \\ y'/w' \\ z'/w' \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} x' \\ y' \\ z' \\ w' \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [mtx] \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

The `cv::perspectiveTransform()` function performs a plane-plane projective transform of a list of points (not pixels). The input array should be a two- or three-channel array, and the matrix `mtx` should be

---

---

3-by-3 or 4-by-4, respectively, in the two cases. `cv::perspectiveTransform()` thus transforms each element of `src` by first regarding it as a vector of length `src.channels() + 1`, with the additional dimension (the projective dimension) set initially to 1.0. This is also known as homogeneous coordinates. Each extended vector is then multiplied by `mtx` and the result is rescaled by the value of the (new) projective coordinate<sup>34</sup> (which is then thrown away as it is always 1.0 after this operation).

---

Note again that this routine is for transforming a list of points, not an image as such. If you want to apply a perspective transform to an image, you are actually asking not to transform the individual pixels, but rather to move them from one place in the image to another. This is the job of `cv::warpPerspective()`.

If you want to solve the inverse problem to find the most probable perspective transformation given many pairs of corresponding points, use `cv::getPerspectiveTransform()` or `cv::findHomography()`.

---

#### `cv::phase()`

```
void cv::phase(
    cv::InputArray x,           // Input array of x-components
    cv::InputArray y,           // Input array of y-components
    cv::OutputArray dst,        // Output array of angles (radians)
);
```

$$dst_i = \text{atan2}(y_i, x_i)$$

`cv::phase()` computes the azimuthal (angle) part of a Cartesian-to-polar conversion on a two-dimensional vector field. This vector field is expected to be in the form of two separate single-channel arrays. These two input arrays should, of course, be of the same size. (If you happen to have a single two-channel array, a quick call to `cv::split()` will do just what you need.) Each element in `dst` is then computed from the corresponding elements of `x` and `y` as the arctangent of the ratio of the two.

#### `cv::polarToCart()`

```
void cv::polarToCart(
    cv::InputArray magnitude,   // Input array of magnitudes
    cv::InputArray angle,       // Input array of angles
    cv::OutputArray x,          // Output array of x-components
    cv::OutputArray y,          // Output array of y-components
    bool angleInDegrees = false // degrees (if true) radians (if false)
);
```

$$x_i = \text{magnitude}_i * \cos(\text{angle}_i)$$

$$y_i = \text{magnitude}_i * \sin(\text{angle}_i)$$

`cv::polarToCart()` computes a vector field in Cartesian ( $x, y$ ) coordinates from polar coordinates. The input is in two arrays, `magnitude` and `angle`, of the same size and type, specifying the magnitude and angle of the field at every point. The output is similarly two arrays that will be of the same size and type as the inputs, and which will contain the `x` and `y` projections of the vector at each point. The additional flag `angleInDegrees` will cause the angle array to be interpreted as angles in degrees, rather than in radians.

#### `cv::pow()`

```
void cv::pow(
    cv::InputArray src,          // Input array
    double p,                   // power for exponentiation
    cv::OutputArray dst          // Result array
);
```

---

<sup>34</sup> Technically, it is possible that after multiplying by `mtx`, the value of `w'` will be zero, corresponding to points projected to infinity. In this case, rather than dividing by zero, a value of 0 is assigned to the ratio.

---

---

```
| );
```

$$dst_i = \begin{cases} src_i^p & p \in \mathbb{Z} \\ |src_i|^p & \text{else} \end{cases}$$

The function `cv::pow()` computes the element-wise exponentiation of an array by a given power `p`. In the case in which `p` is an integer, the power is computed directly. For non-integer `p`, the absolute value of the source value is computed first, and then raised to the power `p` (so only real values are returned). For some special values of `p`, such as integer values, or  $\pm 1/2$ , special algorithms are used resulting in faster computation.

#### `cv::randu()`

```
template<typename _Tp> _Tp randu();           // Return random number of specific type

void cv::randu(
    cv::InputOutputArray mtx,                // All values will be randomized
    cv::InputArray low,                     // minimum, 1-by-1 (Nc=1,4), or 1-by-4 (Nc=1)
    cv::InputArray high                     // maximum, 1-by-1 (Nc=1,4), or 1-by-4 (Nc=1)
);
```

$$mtx_i \in [low_i, high_i]$$

There are two ways to call `cv::randu()`. The first method is to call the template form of `randu<>()`, which will return a random value of the appropriate type. Random numbers generated in this way are uniformly distributed<sup>35</sup> in the range from zero to the maximum value available for that type (for integers), and in the interval from 0.0 to 1.0 (not inclusive of 1.0) for floating-point types. This template form generates only single numbers<sup>36</sup>.

The second way to call `cv::randu()` is to provide a matrix `mtx` that you wish to have filled with values, and two additional arrays that specify the minimum and maximum values for the range from which you would like a random number drawn for each particular array element. These two additional values, `low` and `high`, should be 1-by-1 with 1 or 4 channels, or 1-by-4 with a single channel; they may also be of type `cv::Scalar`. In any case, they are not the size of `mtx`, but rather the size of individual entries in `mtx`.

The array `mtx` is both an input and an output, in the sense that you must allocate the matrix so that `cv::randu()` will know the number of random values you need, and how they are to be arranged in terms of rows, columns, and channels.

#### `cv::randn()`

```
void cv::randn(
    cv::InputOutputArray mtx,                // All values will be randomized
    cv::InputArray mean,                    // means, array is in channel-space
    cv::InputArray stddev                   // standard deviations, channel-space
);
```

$$mtx_i \sim N(mean_i, stddev_i)$$

The function `cv::randn()` fills a matrix `mtx` with random normally distributed values<sup>37</sup>. The parameters from which these values are drawn are taken from two additional arrays (`mean` and `stddev`)

---

<sup>35</sup> Uniform distribution random numbers are generated using the Multiply-With-Carry algorithm [G. Marsaglia].

<sup>36</sup> In particular, this means that if you call the template form with a vector argument, such as: `cv::randu<Vec4f>`, the return value, though it will be of vector type, will be all zeros except for the first element.

<sup>37</sup> Gaussian-distribution random numbers are generated using the Ziggurat algorithm [G. Marsaglia, W. W. Tsang].

---

---

that specify the mean and standard deviation for the distribution from which you would like a random number drawn for each particular array element.

As with the array form of `cv::randu()`, every element of `mtx` is computed separately, and the arrays `mean` and `stddev` are in the channel-space for individual entries of `mtx`. Thus, if `mtx` were four channels, then `mean` and `stddev` would be 1-by-4 or 1-by-1 with 4 channels (or equivalently of type `cv::Scalar`).<sup>38</sup>

#### `cv::randShuffle()`

```
void cv::randShuffle(
    cv::InputOutputArray mtx,           // All values will be shuffled
    double iterFactor = 1,             // Number of times to repeat shuffle
    cv::RNG* rng = NULL                // your own generator, if you like
);
```

`cv::randShuffle()` attempts to randomize the entries in a one-dimensional array by selecting random pairs of elements and interchanging their position. The number of such *swaps* is equal to the size of the array `mtx` multiplied by the optional factor `iterFactor`. Optionally, a random number generator can be supplied (for more on this, see “Random Number Generator (`cv::RNG`)”). If none is supplied, the default random number generator `theRNG()` will be used automatically.

#### `cv::reduce()`

```
void cv::reduce(
    cv::InputArray src,                // Input array, n-by-m must be 2-dimensional
    cv::OutputArray vec,              // Output array, 1-by-m or n-by-1
    int dim,                          // Reduction direction (1) to row, (0) to col
    int reduceOp = cv::REDUCE_SUM,    // Reduce operation (see Table 3-)
    int dtype = -1                    // Output type for result array
);
```

Reduction is the systematic transformation of the input matrix `src` into a vector `vec` by applying some combination rule `reduceOp` on each row (or column) and its neighbor until only one row (or column) remains (see Table 3-28).<sup>39</sup> The argument `dim` controls how the reduction is done, as summarized in Table 3-29.

Table 3-28: Argument `reduceOp` in `cv::reduce()` selects the reduction operator

Value of op	Result
<code>cv::REDUCE_SUM</code>	Compute sum across vectors
<code>cv::REDUCE_AVG</code>	Compute average across vectors
<code>cv::REDUCE_MAX</code>	Compute maximum across vectors
<code>cv::REDUCE_MIN</code>	Compute minimum across vectors

Table 3-29: Argument `dim` in `cv::reduce()` controls the direction of the reduction

Value of dim	Result
1	Collapse to a single row
0	Collapse to a single column

`cv::reduce()` supports multichannel arrays of any type. Using `dtype`, you can specify an alternative type for `dst`.

---

<sup>38</sup> Note that `stddev` is not a square matrix; correlated number generation is not supported by `cv::randn()`.

<sup>39</sup> Purists will note that averaging is not technically a proper *fold* in the sense implied here. OpenCV has a more practical view of reductions and so includes this useful operation in `cvReduce`.

---

---

Using the `dtype` argument to specify a higher-precision format for `dst` is particularly important for `cv::REDUCE_SUM` and `cv::REDUCE_AVG`, where overflows and summation problems are possible.

---

### `cv::repeat()`

```
void cv::repeat(
    cv::InputArray  src,           // Input 2-dimensional array
    int            nx,           // Copies in x-direction
    int            ny,           // Copies in y-direction
    cv::OutputArray dst          // Result array
);
cv::Mat cv::repeat(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input 2-dimensional array
    int            nx,           // Copies in x-direction
    int            ny            // Copies in y-direction
);
```

$$dst_{i,j} = src_{i \% src.rows, j \% src.cols}$$

This function copies the contents of `src` into `dst`, repeating as many times as necessary to fill `dst`. In particular, `dst` can be of any size relative to `src`. It may be larger or smaller, and it need not have an integer relationship between any of its dimensions and the corresponding dimensions of `src`.

`cv::repeat()` has two calling conventions. The first is the old-style convention, in which the output array is passed as a reference to `cv::repeat()`. The second actually creates and returns a `cv::Mat`, and is much more convenient when working with matrix expressions.

### `cv::scaleAdd()`

```
void cv::scaleAdd(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
    double         scale,          // Scale factor applied to first array
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,          // Result array
);
```

$$dst_i = scale * src1_i + src2_i$$

`cv::scaleAdd()` is used to compute the sum of two arrays `src1` and `src2` with a scale factor `scale` applied to the first before the sum is done. The results are placed in the array `dst`.

---

The same result can be achieved with the matrix algebra operation:

$$dst = scale * src1 + src2;$$

---

### `cv::setIdentity()`

```
void cv::setIdentity(
    cv::InputOutputArray dst,      // Array to reset values
    const cv::Scalar&    value = cv::Scalar(1.0) // Value to apply to diagonal elems
);
```

$$dst_{i,j} = \begin{cases} value & i = j \\ 0 & else \end{cases}$$

`cv::setIdentity()` sets all elements of the array to 0 except for elements whose row and column are equal; those elements are set to 1 (or to `value` if provided). `cv::setIdentity()` supports all data types and does not require the array to be square.

---

This can also be done using the `eye()` member function of the `cv::Mat` class. The use of `eye()` is often more convenient when one is working with matrix expressions.

```
Mat A( 3, 3, cv::F32 );
cv::setIdentity( A, s );
```

---

---

```
C = A + B;
```

For some other arrays **B** and **C**, and some scalar **s**, this is equivalent to:

```
C = s * cv::Mat::eye( 3, 3, cv::F32 ) + B;
```

---

### **cv::solve()**

```
int cv::solve(
    cv::InputArray lhs,           // Left-hand side of system, n-by-n
    cv::InputArray rhs,          // Right-hand side of system, n-by-1
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Results array, will be n-by-1
    int method = cv::DECOMP_LU  // Method for solver
);
```

The function `cv::solve()` provides a fast way to solve linear systems based on `cv::invert()`. It computes the solution to

$$C = \operatorname{argmin}_X \|A \cdot X - B\|$$

where **A** is a square matrix given by **lhs**, **B** is the vector **rhs**, and **C** is the solution computed by `cv::solve()` for the best vector **X** it could find. That best vector **X** is returned in **dst**. The actual method used to solve this system is determined by the value of the **method** argument (Table 3-30). Only floating-point data types are supported. The function returns an integer value where a nonzero return indicates that it could find a solution.

*Table 3-30: Possible values of **method** argument to `cv::solve()`*

Value of method argument	Meaning
<code>cv::DECOMP_LU</code>	Gaussian elimination (LU decomposition)
<code>cv::DECOMP_SVD</code>	Singular value decomposition (SVD)
<code>cv::DECOMP_CHOLESKY</code>	For symmetric positive matrices
<code>cv::DECOMP_EIG</code>	Eigenvalue decomposition, symmetric matrices only
<code>cv::DECOMP_QR</code>	QR Factorization
<code>cv::DECOMP_NORMAL</code>	Optional additional flag, indicates that the normal equations are to be solved instead)

The methods `cv::DECOMP_LU` and `cv::DECOMP_CHOLESKY` cannot be used on singular matrices. If a singular **src1** is provided, both methods will exit and return 0 (a 1 will be returned if **src1** is nonsingular). `cv::solve()` can be used to solve over-determined linear systems using either QR decomposition (`cv::DECOMP_QR`) or singular value decomposition (`cv::DECOMP_SVD`) methods to find the least-squares solution for the given system of equations. Both of these methods can be used in case the matrix **src1** is singular.

Though the first five arguments in Table 3-30 are mutually exclusive, the last option `cv::DECOMP_NORMAL` may be combined with any of the first five (e.g., by logical-or: `cv::DECOMP_LU | cv::DECOMP_NORMAL`). If provided, then `cv::solve()` will attempt to solve the *normal equations*:  $\text{src1}^T \cdot \text{src1} \cdot \text{dst} = \text{src1}^T \cdot \text{src2}$  instead of the usual system  $\text{src1} \cdot \text{dst} = \text{src2}$ .

### **cv::solveCubic()**

```
int cv::solveCubic(
    cv::InputArray coeffs,
    cv::InputArray roots
);
```

Given a cubic polynomial in the form of a three- or four-element vector **coeffs**, `cv::solveCubic()` will compute the real roots of that polynomial. If **coeffs** has four elements, the roots of the following polynomial are computed:

---

---


$$\text{coeffs}_0x^3 + \text{coeffs}_1x^2 + \text{coeffs}_2x + \text{coeffs}_3 = 0$$

If `coeffs` has only three elements, the roots of the following polynomial are computed:

$$x^3 + \text{coeffs}_0x^2 + \text{coeffs}_1x + \text{coeffs}_2 = 0$$

The results are stored in the array `roots`, which will have either one or three elements, depending on how many real roots the polynomial has.

---

A word of warning about `cv::solveCubic()` and `cv::solvePoly()`: the order of the coefficients in the seemingly analogous input arrays `coeffs` is opposite in the two routines. In `cv::solveCubic()`, the highest order coefficients come first, while in `cv::solvePoly()` the highest order coefficients come last.

---

#### `cv::solvePoly()`

```
int cv::solvePoly (
    cv::InputArray coeffs,
    cv::OutputArray roots           // n complex roots (2-channels)
    int             maxIters = 300 // maximum iterations for solver
);
```

Given a polynomial of any order in the form of a vector of coefficients `coeffs`, `cv::solvePoly()` will attempt to compute the roots of that polynomial. Given the array of coefficients `coeffs`, the roots of the following polynomial are computed:

$$\text{coeffs}_nx^n + \text{coeffs}_{n-1}x^{n-1} + \dots + \text{coeffs}_1x + \text{coeffs}_0 = 0.$$

These roots are not guaranteed to be real. For an order- $n$  polynomial (i.e., `coeffs` having  $n + 1$  elements), there will be  $n$  roots. As a result, the array `roots` will be returned in a two-channel (real, imaginary) matrix of doubles.

#### `cv::sort()`

```
void cv::sort(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::InputArray dst,
    int             flags
);
```

The OpenCV sort function is used for two-dimensional arrays. Only single-channel source arrays are supported. You should not think of this like sorting rows or columns in a spreadsheet; `cv::sort()` sorts every row or column *separately*. The result of the sort operation will be a new array `dst`, which is of the same size and type as the source array.

Sorting can be done on every row or on every column by supplying either the `cv::SORT_EVERY_ROW` or `cv::SORT_EVERY_COLUMN` flag. Sort can be in ascending or descending order, which is indicated by the `cv::SORT_ASCENDING` or `cv::SORT_DESCENDING` flags respectively. One flag from each of the two groups is required.

#### `cv::sortIdx()`

```
void cv::sortIdx(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::InputArray dst,
    int             flags
);
```

Similar to `cv::sort()`, `cv::sortIdx()` is used only for single-channel two-dimensional arrays. `cv::sortIdx()` sorts every row or column *separately*. The result of the sort operation is a new array `dst` of the same size as the source array, but which contains the integer indices of the sorted elements. For example, given an array `A`, a call to `cv::sortIdx( A, B, cv::SORT_EVERY_ROW | cv::SORT_DESCENDING )` would produce:

---

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0.0 & 0.1 & 0.2 \\ 1.0 & 1.1 & 1.2 \\ 2.0 & 2.1 & 2.2 \end{bmatrix} \quad B = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 & 0 \\ 2 & 1 & 0 \\ 2 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

In this toy case, every row was previously ordered from lowest to highest and sorting has indicated that this should be reversed.

### `cv::split()`

```
void cv::split(
    const cv::Mat&   mtx,
    cv::Mat*         mv
);
void cv::split(
    const cv::Mat&   mtx,
    vector<Mat>&      mv                // STL-style vector of n 1-channel cv::Mat's
);
```

The function `cv::split()` is a special, simpler case of `cv::mixChannels()`. `cv::split()` separates the channels in a multichannel array into multiple single-channel arrays. There are two ways for doing this: in the first, you supply a pointer to a C-style array of pointers to `cv::Mat` objects that `cv::split()` will use for the results of the split operation. In the second option, you supply an STL vector full of `cv::Mat` objects. If you use the C-style array, you need to make sure that the number of `cv::Mat` objects available is (at least) equal to the number of channels in `mtx`. If you use the STL vector form, `cv::split()` will handle the allocation of the result arrays for you.

### `cv::sqrt()`

```
void cv::sqrt(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::InputArray dst
);
```

As a special case of `cv::pow()`, `cv::sqrt()` will compute the element-wise square root of an array. Multiple channels are processed separately.

---

There is such thing as a square root of a matrix, i.e., a matrix  $B$  whose relationship with some matrix  $A$  is that  $BB = A$ . If  $A$  is square and positive definite, then if  $B$  exists, it is unique.

If  $A$  can be diagonalized, then there is a matrix  $V$  (made from the eigenvectors of  $A$  as columns) such that  $A = VDV^{-1}$ , where  $D$  is a diagonal matrix. The square root of a diagonal matrix  $D$  is just the square roots of the elements of  $D$ . So to compute  $A^{1/2}$ , we simply use the matrix  $V$  and get:

$$A^{1/2} = VD^{1/2}V^{-1}$$

Math fans can easily verify that this expression is correct by explicitly squaring it:

$$\left(A^{1/2}\right)^2 = \left(VD^{1/2}V^{-1}\right)\left(VD^{1/2}V^{-1}\right) = VD^{1/2}V^{-1}VD^{1/2}V^{-1} = VDV^{-1} = A$$

In code, this would look something like<sup>40</sup>:

---

```
void matrix_square_root( const cv::Mat& A, cv::Mat& sqrtA ) {
```

---

<sup>40</sup> Here “something like” means that if you were really writing a responsible piece of code, you would do a lot of checking to make sure that the matrix you were handed was in fact what you thought it was (i.e., square). You would also probably want to check the return values of `cv::eigen()` and `cv::invert()` and think more carefully about the actual methods used for the decomposition and inversion, make sure the eigenvalues are positive before blindly calling `sqrt()` on them.

---

---

```

cv::Mat U, V, Vi, E;
cv::eigen( A, E, U );
V = U.T();
cv::transpose( V, Vi ); // inverse of the orthogonal V
cv::sqrt(E, E); // assume that A is positively-defined,
otherwise its square root is complex-valued
sqrtA = V * Mat::diag(E) * Vi;
}

```

---

### cv::subtract()

```

void cv::subtract(
    cv::InputArray src1,           // First input array
    cv::InputArray src2,           // Second input array
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result array
    cv::InputArray mask = cv::noArray(), // Optional mask, compute only where nonzero
    int dtype = -1                // Output type for result array
)

```

$$dst_i = \text{saturnate}(src1_i - src2_i)$$

`cv::subtract()` is a simple subtraction function: it subtracts all of the elements in `src2` from the corresponding elements in `src1` and puts the results in `dst`.

---

For simple cases the same result can be achieved with the matrix operation:

$$dst = src1 - src2;$$

Accumulation is also supported:

$$dst \mathrel{+=} src1;$$


---

### cv::sum()

```

cv::Scalar cv::sum(
    cv::InputArray arr
);

```

$$sum_c = \sum_{i,j} arr_{c,i,j}$$

`cv::sum()` sums all of the pixels in each of the channels of the array `arr`. The return value is of type `cv::Scalar`, so `cv::sum()` can accommodate multichannel arrays, but only up to four channels. The sum for each channel is placed in the corresponding component of the `cv::scalar` return value.

### cv::trace()

```

cv::Scalar cv::trace(
    cv::InputArray mat
);

```

$$Tr(mat)_c = \sum_i mat_{c,i,i}$$

The trace of a matrix is the sum of all of the diagonal elements. The trace in OpenCV is implemented on top of `cv::diag()`, so it does not require the array passed in to be square. Multichannel arrays are supported, but the trace is computed as a scalar so each component of the scalar will be the sum over each corresponding channel for up to four channels.

### cv::transform()

```

void cv::transform(
    cv::InputArray src,
    cv::OutputArray dst,
    cv::InputArray mtx
)

```

---

---

```
| );
```

$$dst_{c,i,j} = \sum_{c'} mtx_{c,c'} src_{c',i,j}$$

The function `cv::transform()` can be used to compute arbitrary linear image transforms. It treats a multichannel input array `src` as a collection of vectors in what you could think of as “channel space.” Those vectors are then each multiplied by the “small” matrix `mtx`, to affect a transformation in this channel space.

The matrix `mtx` must have as many rows as there are channels in `src`, or that number plus one. In the second case, the channel space vectors in `src` are automatically extended by one and the value `1.0` is assigned to the extended element.

---

The exact meaning of this transformation depends on what you are using the different channels for. If you are using the channels as color channels, then this transformation can be thought of as a linear color space transformation. (Transformation between RGB and YUV color spaces is an example of such a transformation. If you are using the channels to represent the  $(x, y)$  or  $(x, y, z)$  coordinates of points, then these transformations can be thought of as rotations (or other geometrical transformations) of those points.

---

### `cv::transpose()`

```
void cv::transpose(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input array, 2-dimensional, n-by-m  
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result array, 2-dimensional, m-by-n  
);
```

`cv::transpose()` copies every element of `src` into the location in `dst` indicated by reversing the row and column indices. This function does support multichannel arrays; however, if you are using multiple channels to represent complex numbers, remember that `cv::transpose()` does not perform complex conjugation.

---

This same result can be achieved with the matrix member function `cv::Mat::t()`. The member function has the advantage that it can be used in matrix expressions like:

---

```
A = B + B.t();
```

---

## Utility Functions

There are several operations provided by OpenCV that operate on single values (integers or floating-point numbers). These functions either serve some special function, or are fast implementations of particular things that come up often enough in vision processing to justify implementing in a custom way for OpenCV.

*Table 3-31 Utility and System Functions*

Function	Description
<code>cv::alignPtr()</code>	Align pointer to given number of bytes
<code>cv::alignSize()</code>	Align buffer size to given number of bytes
<code>cv::allocate()</code>	Allocate a C-style array of objects

---

<code>cvCeil()</code> <sup>41</sup>	Round float number <i>x</i> to nearest integer not smaller than <i>x</i>
<code>cv::cubeRoot()</code>	Compute the cube root of a number
<code>cv::CV_Assert()</code>	Throw an exception if a given condition is not true
<code>CV_Error()</code>	Macro to build a <code>cv::Exception</code> (from a fixed string) and throw it
<code>CV_Error_()</code>	Macro to build a <code>cv::Exception</code> (from a formatted string) and throw it
<code>cv::deallocate()</code>	Deallocate a C-style array of objects
<code>cv::error()</code>	Indicate an error and throw an exception
<code>cv::fastAtan2()</code>	Calculate two-dimensional angle of a vector in degrees
<code>cv::fastFree()</code>	Deallocate a memory buffer
<code>cv::fastMalloc()</code>	Allocate an aligned memory buffer
<code>cvFloor()</code> <sup>41</sup>	Round float number <i>x</i> to nearest integer not larger than <i>x</i>
<code>cv::format()</code>	Create an STL string using <code>sprintf</code> -like formatting
<code>cv::getCPUTickCount()</code>	Get tick count from internal CPU timer
<code>cv::getNumThreads()</code>	Count number of threads currently used by OpenCV
<code>cv::getOptimalDFTSize()</code>	Compute the best size for an array that you plan to pass to <code>cv::DFT()</code>
<code>cv::getThreadNum()</code>	Get index of the current thread
<code>cv::getTickCount()</code>	Get tick count from generic source
<code>cv::getTickFrequency()</code>	Get number of ticks per second (see <code>cv::getTickCount()</code> )
<code>cvIsInf()</code> <sup>41</sup>	Check if a floating-point number <i>x</i> is infinity
<code>cvIsNaN()</code> <sup>41</sup>	Check if a floating-point number <i>x</i> is “Not a Number”
<code>cvRound()</code>	Round float number <i>x</i> to the nearest integer
<code>cv::setNumThreads()</code>	Set number of threads used by OpenCV
<code>cv::setUseOptimized()</code>	Enables or disables the use of optimized code (SSE2, etc.)
<code>cv::useOptimized()</code>	Indicates status of optimized code enabling (see <code>cv::setUseOptimized()</code> )

---

<sup>41</sup> This function has something of a legacy interface. It is a C definition, not C++ (see `core/../types_c.h`) where it is defined as an inline function. There are several others with a similar interface.

---

---

### **cv::alignPtr()**

```
template<T> T* cv::alignPtr(           // Return aligned pointer of type T*
    T* ptr,                          // pointer, unaligned
    int n    = sizeof(T)             // align to block size, a power of 2
);
```

Given a pointer of any type, this function computes an aligned pointer of the same type according to the following computation:

$$(T^*)(((\text{size\_t})\text{ptr} + n + 1) \ \& \ -n)$$

---

On some architectures, it is not even possible to read a multi-byte object from an address that is not evenly divisible by the size of the object (i.e., by 4 for a 32-bit integer). On architectures such as x86, this is handled for you automatically by the CPU by using multiple reads and assembling your value from those reads at the cost of a substantial penalty in performance.

---

### **cv::alignSize()**

```
size_t cv::alignSize(                // minimum size >='sz' divisible by 'n'
    size_t sz,                      // size of buffer
    int n    = sizeof(T)            // align to block size, a power of 2
);
```

Given a number `n` (typically a return value from `sizeof()`), and a size for a buffer `sz`, `cv::alignSize()` computes the size that this buffer should be in order to contain an integer number of objects of size `n`, i.e., the minimum number that is greater or equal to `sz` yet divisible by `n`. The following formula is used:

$$(sz + n - 1) \ \& \ -n$$

### **cv::allocate()**

```
template<T> T* cv::allocate(          // Return pointer to allocated buffer
    size_t sz                        // size of buffer, multiples of sizeof(T)
);
```

The function `cv::allocate()` functions similarly to the array form of `new`, in that it allocates a C-style array of `n` objects of type `T`, calls the default constructor for each object, and returns a pointer to the first object in the array.

### **cv::deallocate()**

```
template<T> void cv::deallocate(
    T* ptr,                          // Pointer to buffer to free
    size_t sz                        // size of buffer, multiples of sizeof(T)
);
```

The function `cv::deallocate()` functions similarly to the array form of `delete`, in that it deallocates a C-style array of `n` objects of type `T`, and calls the destructor for each object. `cv::deallocate()` is used to deallocate objects allocated with `cv::allocate()`. The number of elements `n` passed to `cv::deallocate()` must be the same as the number of objects originally allocated with `cv::allocate()`.

### **cv::fastAtan2()**

```
float cv::fastAtan2(                // Return value is 32-bit float
    float y,                        // y input value (32-bit float)
    float x                          // x input value (32-bit float)
);
```

This function computes the arctangent of an `x, y` pair and returns the angle from the origin to the indicated point. The result is reported in degrees ranging from `0.0` to `360.0`, inclusive of `0.0` but not inclusive of `360.0`.

---

## cvCeil()

```
int cvCeil(           // Return the smallest int >= x
    float x          // input value (32-bit float)
);
```

Given a floating-point number `x`, `cvCeil()` computes the smallest integer not smaller than `x`. If the input value is outside of the range representable by a 32-bit integer, the result is undefined.

```
cv::cubeRoot()
```

```
float cv::cubeRoot(           // Return value is 32-bit float
    float x                  // input value (32-bit float)
);
```

This function computes the cubed root of the argument `x`. Negative values of `x` are handled correctly (i.e., the return value is negative).

**cv::CV\_Assert()**      and   **CV\_DbgAssert()**

```
// example
CV Assert( x!=0 )
```

`CV_Assert()` is a macro that will test the expression passed to it and, if that expression evaluates to `False` (or 0), it will throw an exception. The `CV_Assert()` macro is always tested. Alternatively, you can use `CV_DbgAssert()`, which will only be tested in debug compilations.

## cv::CV\_Error() and CV\_Error()

```
// example
CV_Error( ecode, estring )
CV_Error ( ecode, fmt, ... )
```

The macro `CV_Error()` allows you to pass in an error code `ecode` and a fixed C-style character string `estring`, which it then packages up into a `cv::Exception` and passes that to `cv::error()` to be handled. The variant macro `CV_Error_()` is used if you need to construct the message string on the fly. `CV_Error_()` accepts the same `ecode` as `CV_Error()`, but then expects a `sprintf()` style format string followed by a variable number of arguments as would be expected by `sprintf()`.

```
cv::error()
```

```
void cv::error(
    const cv::Exception& ex           // Exception to be thrown
);
```

This function is mostly called from `CV_Error()` and `CV_Error_()`. If your code is compiled in a non-debug build, it will throw the exception `ex`. If your code is compiled in a debug build, it will deliberately provoke a memory access violation so that the execution stack and all of the parameters will be available for whatever debugger you are running.

You will probably not call `cv::error()` directly, but rather rely on the macros `CV_Error()` and `CV_Error_()` to throw the error for you. These macros take the information you want displayed in the exception and package it up for you and pass the resulting exception to `cv::error()`.

```
cv::fastFree()
```

```
void cv::fastFree(
    void* ptr                // Pointer to buffer to be freed
);
```

This routine deallocates buffers that were allocated with `cv::fastMalloc()` (covered next).

**cv::fastMalloc()**

```
void* cv::fastMalloc(           // Pointer to allocated buffer
    size_t size                // Size of buffer to allocate
);
```

---

`cv::FastMalloc()` works just like the `malloc()` you are familiar with, except that it is often faster, and it does buffer size alignment for you. This means that if the buffer size passed is more than 16 bytes, the returned buffer will be aligned to a 16 byte boundary.

#### `cvFloor()`

```
| int cvFloor(                                     // Return the largest int <= x  
|   float x                                       // input value (32-bit float)  
| );
```

Given a floating-point number `x`, `cv::Floor()` computes the largest integer not larger than `x`. If the input value is outside of the range representable by a 32-bit integer, the result is undefined.

#### `cv::format()`

```
| string cv::format(                               // Return STL-string  
|   const char* fmt,                             // formatting string, as sprintf()  
|   ...                                           // vargs, as sprintf()  
| );
```

This function is essentially the same as `sprintf()` from the standard library, but rather than requiring a character buffer from the caller, it constructs an STL string object and returns that. It is particularly handy for formatting error messages for the `Exception()` constructor (which expects STL strings as argument).

#### `cv::getCPUTickCount()`

```
| int64 cv::getCPUTickCount( void );              // long int CPU for tick count
```

This function reports the number of CPU ticks on those architectures that have such a construct (including, but not limited to, x86 architectures). It is important to know, however, that the return value of this function can be very difficult to interpret on many architectures. In particular, because on a multi-core system a thread can be put to sleep on one core and wake up on another, the difference between the results to two subsequent calls to `cv::getCPUTickCount()` can be misleading, even completely meaningless. Therefore, unless you are certain you know what you are doing, it is best to use `cv::getTickCount()` for timing measurements.<sup>42</sup> This function is best for tasks like initializing random number generators.

#### `cv::getNumThreads()`

```
| int cv::getNumThreads( void );                  // number of threads allocated to OpenCV
```

Return the current number of threads being used by OpenCV.

#### `cv::getOptimalDFTSize()`

```
| int cv::getOptimalDFTSize( int n );             // best size array to use for dft, >= n
```

When making calls to `cv::dft()`, the algorithm used by OpenCV to compute the transform is extremely sensitive to the size of the array passed to `cv::dft()`. The preferred sizes do obey a rule for their generation, but that rule is sufficiently complicated that it is (at best) an annoyance to compute the correct size to which to pad your array every time. The function `cv::getOptimalDFTSize()` takes as argument the size of the array you would have passed to `cv::dft()`, and returns the size of the array you should pass to `cv::dft()`. The usage of this information is to just create a larger array into which you can copy your data and pad out the rest with zeros.

#### `cv::getThreadNum()`

```
| int cv::getThreadNum( void );                   // int, id of this particular thread
```

If your OpenCV library was compiled with OpenMP support, it will return the index (starting from zero) of the currently executing thread.

---

<sup>42</sup> Of course, if you *really do know* what you are doing, then there is no more accurate way to get detailed timing information than from the CPU timers themselves.

---

---

### **cv::getTickCount()**

```
| int64 cv::getTickCount( void );           // long int CPU for tick count
```

This function returns a tick count relative to some architecture-dependent time. The rate of ticks is also architecture and operating system dependent, however; the time per tick can be computed by `cv::getTickFrequency()` (reviewed next).below). This function is preferable to `cv::getCPUTickCount()` for most timing applications, as it is not affected by low-level issues such as which core your thread is running on and automatic throttling of CPU frequency (which most modern processors do for power management reasons).

### **cv::getTickFrequency()**

```
| double cv::getTickFrequency( void );      // Tick frequency in seconds as 64-bit
```

When using `cv::getTickCount()` for timing analysis, the exact meaning of a tick is, in general, architecture dependent. The function `cv::getTickFrequency()` computes the conversion between clock time (i.e., seconds) and abstract “ticks.”

---

Thus to compute the time required for some specific thing to happen (such as a function to execute), one need only call `cv::getTickCount()` before and after the function call, subtract the results, and divide by the value of `cv::getTickFrequency()`.

---

### **cvIsInf()**

```
| int cvIsInf( double x );                  // return 1 if x is IEEE754 “infinity”
```

The return value of `cvIsInf()` is one if `x` is plus or minus infinity and zero otherwise. The infinity test is the test implied by the IEEE754 standard.

### **cvIsNaN()**

```
| int cvIsNaN( double x );                  // return 1 if x is IEEE754 “Not a number”
```

The return value of `cvIsNaN()` is one if `x` is “not a number” and zero otherwise. The NaN test is the test implied by the IEEE754 standard.

### **cvRound()**

```
| int cvRound( double x );                  // Return integer nearest to 'x'
```

Given a floating-point number `x`, `cvRound()` computes the integer closest to `x`. If the input value is outside of the range representable by a 32-bit integer, the result is undefined.

### **cv::setNumThreads()**

```
| void cv::setNumThreads( int nthreads );   // Set number of threads OpenCV can use
```

When OpenCV is compiled with OpenMP support, this function sets the number of threads that OpenCV will use in parallel OpenMP regions. The default value for the number of threads is the number of logical cores on the CPU (i.e., if we have four cores each with two hyper-threads, there will be eight threads by default). If `nthreads` is set to 0, the number of threads will be returned to this default value.

### **cv::setUseOptimized()**

```
| void cv::setUseOptimized( bool on_off );  // If false, turn off optimized routines
```

Though early versions of OpenCV relied on outside libraries (such as IPP, the Intel Performance Primitives library) for access to high performance optimizations such as SSE2 instructions, later versions have increasingly moved to containing that code in the OpenCV itself. By default the use of these optimized routines is enabled, unless you specifically disabled it when you built your installation of the library. However, you can turn the use of these optimizations on and off at any time with `cv::setUseOptimized()`.

---

The test of the global flag for optimizations usage is done at a relatively high level inside of the OpenCV library functions. The implication of this is that you should not call

---

---

`cv::setUseOptimized()` while any other routines might be running (on any threads). You should make sure to call this routine when you can be certain you know what is and what is not running, preferably from the very top level of your application.

---

### `cv::useOptimized()`

```
| bool cv::useOptimized( void );           // return true if optimizations are enabled
```

At any time, you can check the state of the global flag, which enables the use of high performance optimizations (see `cv::setUseOptimized()`) by calling `cv::useOptimized()`. `True` will be returned only if these optimizations are currently enabled; otherwise, this function will return `False`.

## Objects That Do Stuff

As the OpenCV library has evolved, it has become increasingly common to introduce new objects which encapsulate functionality that is too complicated to be associated with a single function and which, if implemented as a set of functions, would cause the overall function space of the library to become too cluttered.

As a result, new functionality is often represented by an associated new object type, which can be thought of as a “machine” that does whatever this function is. Most of these machines have an overloaded `operator()`, which officially makes them *function objects* or *functors*. If you are not familiar with this programming idiom, the important idea is that unlike “normal” functions, function objects are created, and can maintain state information inside them. As a result, they can be set up with whatever data or configuration they need, and they are “asked” to perform services through either common member functions, or by calling them as functions (usually via the overloaded `operator()`<sup>43</sup>).

## Principal Component Analysis (cv::PCA)

Principal component analysis is the process of analyzing a distribution in many dimensions and extracting from that distribution the particular subset of dimensions that carry the most information. The dimensions computed by PCA are not necessarily the basis dimensions in which the distribution was originally specified. Indeed, one of the most important aspects of PCA is the ability to generate a new basis in which the axes of the new basis can be ordered by their importance<sup>44</sup>. These basis vectors will turn out to be the eigenvectors of the covariance matrix for the distribution as a whole, and the corresponding eigenvalues will tell us about the extent of the distribution in that dimension.

We are now in a position to explain why PCA is handled by one of these function objects. Given a distribution once, the PCA object can compute and retain this new basis. The big advantage of the new basis is that the basis vectors that correspond to the large eigenvalues carry most of the information about the objects in the distribution. Thus, without losing much accuracy, we can throw away the less informative dimensions. This dimension reduction is called a KLT Transform.<sup>45</sup> Once you have loaded a sample distribution and the principal components are computed, you might want to use that information to do

---

<sup>43</sup> Here the word “usually” means “usually when people program function objects,” but does not turn out to mean “usually” for the OpenCV library. There is a competing convention in the OpenCV library which uses the overloaded `operator()` to load the configuration, and a named member to provide the fundamental service of the object. This convention is substantially less canonical in general, but quite common in the OpenCV library.

<sup>44</sup> You might be thinking to yourself “hey, this sounds like machine learning, what is it doing in this chapter?” This is not a bad question. In modern computer vision, machine learning is becoming increasingly intrinsic to an ever-growing list of algorithms. For this reason, component capabilities, such as PCA and SVD, are increasingly considered “building blocks.”

<sup>45</sup> KLT stands for “Karhunen-Loeve Transform,”, so that phrase “KLT Transformation” is a bit of a malapropism. It is however at least as often said one way as the other.

---

various things, such as applying the KLT transform to new vectors. By making the PCA functionality a function object, it can “remember” what it needs to know about the distribution you gave it, and thereafter use that information to provide the “service” of transforming new vectors on demand.

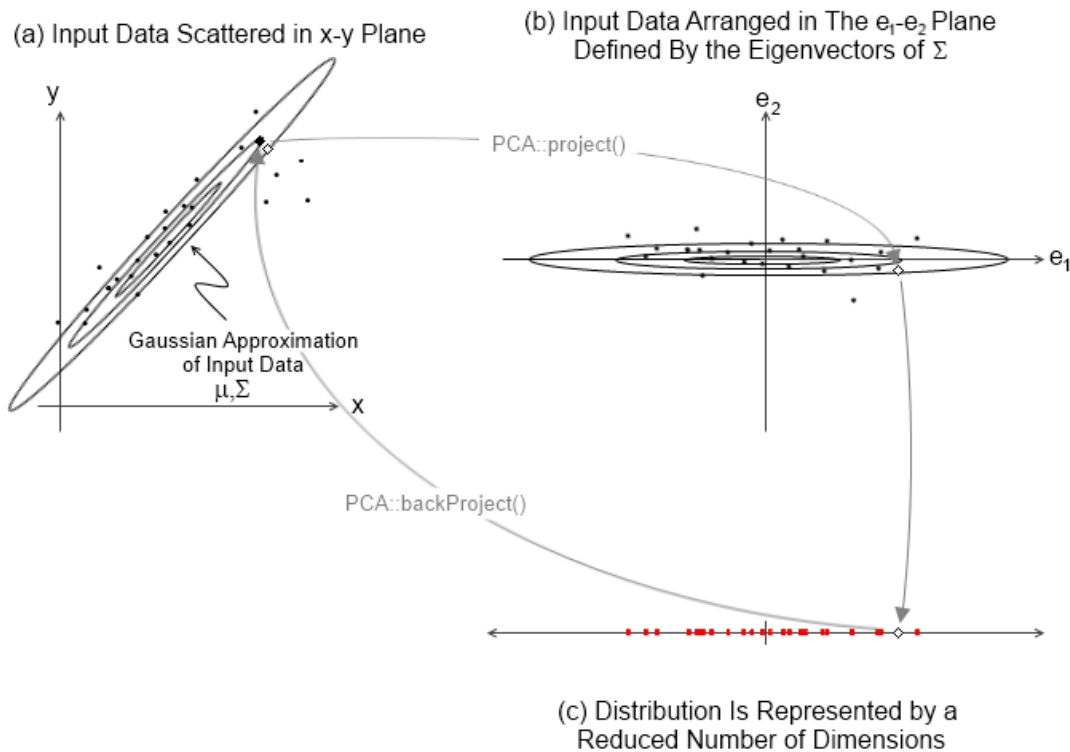


Figure 3-4. (a) Input data is characterized by a Gaussian approximation; (b) the data is projected into the space implied by the eigenvectors of the covariance of that approximation; (c) the data is projected by the KLT projection to a space defined only by the most “useful” of the eigenvectors; superimposed: a new data point (white diamond) is projected to the reduced dimension space by `cv::PCA::project()`; that same point is brought back to the original space (black diamond) by `cv::PCA::backProject()`

**cv::PCA::PCA()**

```
PCA::PCA();
PCA::PCA(
    cv::InputArray data,           // Data, as rows or cols in 2d array
    cv::InputArray mean,          // average, if known, 1-by-n or n-by-1
    int flags,                    // Are vectors rows or cols of 'data'
    int maxComponents = 0         // Max dimensions to retain
);
```

The PCA object has a default constructor, `cv::PCA()`, which simply builds the PCA object and initializes the empty structure. The second form executes the default construction, then immediately proceeds to pass its arguments to `PCA::operator()()` (discussed next).

**cv::PCA::operator()()**

```
PCA::operator() (
    cv::InputArray data,           // Data, as rows or cols in 2d array
    cv::InputArray mean,          // average, if known, 1-by-n or n-by-1
    int flags,                    // Are vectors rows or cols of 'data'
    int maxComponents = 0         // Max dimensions to retain
);
```

---

The overloaded `operator()()` for `PCA` builds the model of the distribution inside of the `PCA` object. The argument `data` is an array containing all of the samples that constitute the distribution. Optionally, `mean`, a second array that contains the mean value in each dimension, can be supplied. (`mean` can either be `n`-by-1 or 1-by-`n`.) The data can be arranged as an `n`-by-`D` (`n` rows of samples each of `D` dimensions) or `D`-by-`n` array (`n` columns of samples each of `D` dimensions). The argument `flags` is currently used only to specify the arrangement of the data in `data` and `mean`. In particular, `flags` can be set either to `cv::PCA_DATA_AS_ROW` or `cv::PCA_DATA_AS_COL`, to indicate that either data is `n`-by-`D` and mean is `n`-by-1 or data is `D`-by-`n` and mean is 1-by-`n` respectively. The final argument `maxComponents` specifies the maximum number of components (dimensions) that `PCA` should retain. By default, all of the components are retained.

---

Any subsequent call to `cv::PCA::operator()()` will overwrite the internal representations of the eigenvectors and eigenvalues, so you can recycle a `PCA` object whenever you need to (i.e., you don't have to reallocate a new one for each new distribution you want to handle if you no longer need the information about the previous distribution).

---

### `cv::PCA::project()`

```
cv::Mat PCA::project(           // Return results, as a 2d matrix
    cv::InputArray vec         // points to project, rows or cols, 2d
) const;

void PCA::project(
    cv::InputArray vec         // points to project, rows or cols, 2d
    cv::OutputArray result    // Result of projection, reduced space
) const;
```

Once you have loaded your reference distribution with `cv::PCA::operator()()`, you can start asking the `PCA` object to do useful things for you like compute the KLT projection of some set of vectors onto the basis vectors computed by the principal component analysis. The function `cv::PCA::project()` has two forms, the first returns a matrix containing the results of the projections, while the second writes the results to a matrix you provide. The advantage of the first form is that you can use it in matrix expressions.

The argument `vec` contains the input vectors. `vecvec` is required to have the same number of dimensions and the same “orientation” as the `data` array that was passed to `PCA` when the distribution was first analyzed (i.e., if your data was columns when you called `cv::PCA::operator()()`, `vec` should also have the data arranged into columns).

The returned array will have the same number of objects as `vec` with the same orientation, but the dimensionality of each object will be whatever was passed to `maxComponents` when the `PCA` object was first configured with `cv::PCA::operator()()`.

### `cv::PCA::backProject()`

```
cv::Mat PCA::backProject(       // Return results, as a 2d matrix
    cv::InputArray vec         // Result of projection, reduced space
) const;

void PCA::backProject(
    cv::InputArray vec         // Result of projection, reduced space
    cv::OutputArray result    // “reconstructed” vectors, full dimension
) const;
```

The `cv::PCA::backProject()` function performs the reverse operation of `cv::PCA::project()`, with the analogous restrictions on the input and output arrays. The argument `vec` contains the input vectors, which this time are from the projected space. They will have the same number of dimensions as you specified with `maxComponents` when you configured the `PCA` object and the same “orientation” as the `data` array that was passed to `PCA` when the distribution was first analyzed

---

---

(i.e., if your data was columns when you called `cv::PCA::operator()`, `vec` should also have the data arranged into columns).

The returned array will have the same number of objects as `vec` with the same orientation, but the dimensionality of each object will be the dimensionality of the original data you gave to the PCA object when the PCA object was first configured with `cv::PCA::operator()()`.

---

If you did not retain all of the dimensions when you configured the PCA object in the beginning, the result of back projecting vectors, which are themselves projections of some vector  $\vec{x}$  from the original data space, will not be equal to  $\vec{x}$ . Of course, the difference should be small, even if the number of components retained was much smaller than the original dimension of  $\vec{x}$ , as this is the very point of using PCA in the first place.

---

## Singular Value Decomposition (cv::SVD)

The class `cv::SVD` is similar to `cv::PCA` above in that it is the same kind of function object. Its purpose, however, is quite different. The singular value decomposition is essentially a tool for working with non-square, ill-conditioned, or otherwise poorly-behaved matrices such those encountered when solving under-determined linear systems.

Mathematically, the singular value decomposition (SVD) is the decomposition of an  $m$ -by- $n$  matrix  $\mathbf{A}$  into the form:

$$\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{U} \cdot \mathbf{W} \cdot \mathbf{V}^T$$

where  $\mathbf{W}$  is a diagonal matrix and  $\mathbf{U}$  and  $\mathbf{V}$  are  $m$ -by- $n$  and  $n$ -by- $n$  (unitary) matrices. Of course, the matrix  $\mathbf{W}$  is also an  $m$ -by- $n$  matrix, so here “diagonal” means that any element whose row and column numbers are not equal is necessarily 0.

### cv::SVD()

```
SVD::SVD();  
SVD::SVD(  
    cv::InputArray A,                // Linear system, array to be decomposed  
    int flags = 0                    // what to construct, can A can scratch  
);
```

The SVD object has a default constructor, `cv::SVD()`, which simply builds the SVD object and initializes the empty structure. The second form basically executes the default construction, then immediately proceeds to pass its arguments to `cv::SVD::operator()()` (discussed next).

### cv::SVD::operator()()

```
SVD::& SVD::operator() (  
    cv::InputArray A,                // Linear system, array to be decomposed  
    int flags = 0                    // what to construct, can A be scratch  
);
```

The operator `cv::SVD::operator()()` passes to the `cv::SVD` object the matrix to be decomposed. The matrix  $\mathbf{A}$ , as described earlier, is decomposed into a matrix  $\mathbf{U}$ , a matrix  $\mathbf{V}$  (actually the transpose of  $\mathbf{V}$ , which we will call  $\mathbf{Vt}$ ), and a set of singular values (which are the diagonal elements of the matrix  $\mathbf{W}$ ).

The flags can be any one of `cv::SVD::MODIFY_A`, `cv::SVD::NO_UV`, or `cv::SVD::FULL_UV`. The latter two are mutually exclusive, but either can be combined with the first. The flag `cv::SVD::MODIFY_A` indicates that it is OK to modify the matrix  $\mathbf{A}$  when computing. This speeds up computation a bit and saves some memory. It is more important when the input matrix is already very large. The flag `cv::SVD::NO_UV` tells `cv::SVD` to not explicitly compute the matrices  $\mathbf{U}$  and  $\mathbf{Vt}$ , while the flag `cv::SVD::FULL_UV` indicates that not only would you like  $\mathbf{U}$  and  $\mathbf{Vt}$  computed, but that you would like them to be represented as full size square orthogonal matrices.

---

---

### **cv::SVD::compute()**

```
void SVD::compute(
    cv::InputArray A,           // Linear system, array to be decomposed
    cv::OutputArray W,         // Output array 'W', singular values
    cv::OutputArray U,         // Output array 'U', left singular vectors
    cv::OutputArray Vt,        // Output array 'Vt', right singular vectors
    int flags = 0              // what to construct, and if A can be scratch
);
```

This function is an alternative to using `cv::SVD::operator()()` to decompose the matrix **A**. The primary difference is that the matrices **W**, **U**, and **Vt** are stored in the user-supplied arrays, rather than being kept internally. The flags supported are exactly those supported by `cv::SVD::operator()()`.

### **cv::SVD::solveZ()**

```
void SVD::solveZ(
    cv::InputArray A,           // Linear system, array to be decomposed
    cv::OutputArray z           // One possible solution (unit length)
);
```

$$\vec{z} = \operatorname{argmin}_{\vec{x}: \|\vec{x}\|=1} \|\mathbf{A} \cdot \vec{x}\|$$

Given an under-determined (singular) linear system, `cv::SVD::solveZ()` will (attempt to) find a unit length solution of  $\mathbf{A} \cdot \vec{x} = \mathbf{0}$  and place the solution in the array **y**. Because the linear system is singular, however, it may have no solution, or it may have an infinite family of solutions. `cv::SVD::solveZ()` will find a solution, if one exists. If no solution exists, then the return value **y** will be a vector that minimizes  $\mathbf{A} \cdot \vec{x}$ , even if this is not, in fact, zero.

### **cv::SVD::backSubst()**

```
void SVD::backSubst(
    cv::InputArray b,           // Right-hand side of linear system
    cv::OutputArray x           // Found solution to linear system
);

void SVD::backSubst(
    cv::InputArray W,           // Output array 'W', singular values
    cv::InputArray U,           // Output array 'U', left singular vectors
    cv::InputArray Vt,          // Output array 'Vt', right singular vectors
    cv::InputArray b,           // Right hand side of linear system
    cv::OutputArray x           // Found solution to linear system
);
```

Assuming that the matrix **A** has been previously passed to the `cv::SVD` object (and thus decomposed into **U**, **W**, and **Vt**), the first form of `cv::SVD::backSubst()` attempts to solve the system:

$$(\mathbf{U}\mathbf{W}\mathbf{V}^T) \cdot \vec{x} = \vec{b}.$$

The second form does the same thing, but expects the matrices **W**, **U**, and **Vt** to be passed to it as arguments. The actual method of computing `dst` is to evaluate the following expression:

$$\vec{x} = \mathbf{V}_t^T \cdot \operatorname{diag}(\mathbf{W})^{-1} \cdot \mathbf{U}^T \cdot \vec{b} \sim \mathbf{A}^{-1} \cdot \vec{b}.$$

This method produces a *pseudo-solution* for an over-determined system, which is the best solution in the sense of minimizing the least-squares error.<sup>46</sup> Of course, it will also exactly solve a correctly determined linear system.

---

<sup>46</sup> The object  $\operatorname{diag}(\mathbf{W})^{-1}$  is a matrix whose diagonal elements  $\lambda_i^*$  are defined in terms of the diagonal elements  $\lambda_i$  of **W** by  $\lambda_i^* = \lambda_i^{-1}$  for  $\lambda_i \geq \varepsilon$ . This value  $\varepsilon$  is the *singularity threshold*, a very small number that is typically proportional to the sum of the diagonal elements of **W** (i.e.,  $\varepsilon_0 \sum_i \lambda_i$ ).

---

---

In practice, it is relatively rare that you would want to use `cv::SVD::backSubst()` directly. This is because you can do precisely the same thing by calling `cv::solve()` and passing the `cv::DECOMP_SVD` method flag—which is a lot easier. It is only in the less common case in which you need to solve many different systems with the same *left-hand* side (**x**) that you would be better off calling `cv::SVD::backSubst()` directly. (As opposed to solving the *same* system many times with different *right-hand* sides (**b**), which you might just as well do with `cv::solve()`).

---

## Random Number Generator (`cv::RNG`)

The random number generator object `RNG` holds the state of a pseudorandom sequence that generates random numbers. The benefit of doing things this way is that you can conveniently maintain multiple streams of pseudorandom numbers.

---

When programming large systems, it is a good programming practice to use separate random number streams in different modules of the code. In this way, the removal of one module does not change the behavior of the streams in the other modules.

---

Once created, the random number generator provides the “service” of generating random numbers on demand, drawn from either a uniform or a Gaussian distribution. The generator uses the *Multiply with Carry* algorithm (G. Marsaglia) for uniform distributions and the *Ziggurat* algorithm (G. Marsaglia and W. Tsang) for the generation of numbers from a Gaussian distribution.

### `cv::theRNG()`

```
| cv::RNG& theRNG( void );           // Return a random number generator
```

The function `cv::theRNG()` returns the default random number generator for the thread from which it was called. OpenCV automatically creates one instance of `cv::RNG` for each thread in execution. This is the same random number generator that is implicitly accessed by functions like `cv::randu()` or `cv::randn()`. Those functions are convenient and just as quick if you want a single number, or to initialize an array, but if you have a loop of your own that needs to generate a lot of random numbers, you are better off grabbing a reference to a random number generator (in this case, the default generator, but you could use your own instead) and using `RNG::operator T()` to get your random numbers (more on that operator follows).

### `cv::RNG()`

```
| cv::RNG::RNG( void );
| cv::RNG::RNG( uint64 state );       // create using the seed 'state'
```

You can create an `RNG` object with either the default constructor, or you can pass it a 64-bit unsigned integer that it will use as the seed of the random number sequence. If you call the default constructor (or pass 0 to the second variation) the generator will initialize with a standardized value.<sup>47</sup>

### `cv::RNG::operator T()`

```
| cv::RNG::operator uchar();
| cv::RNG::operator schar();
| cv::RNG::operator ushort();
| cv::RNG::operator short int();
| cv::RNG::operator int();
| cv::RNG::operator unsigned();
| cv::RNG::operator float();
| cv::RNG::operator double();
```

---

<sup>47</sup> This “standard value” is not zero because, for that value, many random number generators, including the ones used by `RNG`, will return nothing but zeros thereafter. Currently, this standard value is  $2^{32} - 1$ .

---

---

This is really a set of different methods that return a new random number from `cv::RNG` of some specific type. Each of these is an overloaded cast operator, so in effect you cast the RNG object to whatever type you want:

*Example 3-2: Using the default random number generator we generate a pair of integers and a pair of floating-point numbers; the style of the cast operation is up to you, this example shows both the `int(x)` and the `(int)x` forms*

```
cv::RNG rng = cv::theRNG();
cout << "An integer:      " << (int)rng << endl;
cout << "Another integer: " << int(rng) << endl;
cout << "A float:         " << (float)rng << endl;
cout << "Another float:   " << float(rng) << endl;
```

When integer types are generated, they will be generated across the entire range of available values (using the MWC algorithm described earlier and thus uniformly). When floating-point types are generated, they will always be in the range from the interval [0.0, 1.0).<sup>48</sup>

#### `cv::RNG::operator()`

```
unsigned int cv::RNG::operator()();           // Return random value from 0-UINT_MAX
unsigned int cv::RNG::operator()( unsigned int N ); // Return value from 0-(N-1)
```

When generating integer random numbers, the overloaded `operator()()` allows a convenient way to just grab another one. In essence, calling `my_rng()` is equivalent to calling `(unsigned int)my_rng`. The somewhat more interesting form of `cv::RNG::operator()()` takes an integer argument `N`. This form returns a random unsigned integer *modulo* `N` (using the MWC algorithm described earlier and thus uniformly). Thus, the range of integers returned by `my_rng( N )` is then the range of integers from 0 to `N-1`.

#### `cv::RNG::uniform()`

```
int      cv::RNG::uniform( int a,   int b ); // Return value from a-(b-1)
float    cv::RNG::uniform( float a, float b ); // Return value in range [a,b)
double   cv::RNG::uniform( double a, double b ); // Return value in range [a,b)
```

This function allows you to generate a random number uniformly (using the MWC algorithm) in the interval [a, b).

---

It is important to note that the C++ compiler does not consider the return value of a function when determining which of multiple similar forms to use, only the arguments. As a result, if you call: `float x = my_rng.uniform(0,1)` you are going to get `0.f`, because 0 and 1 are integers and the only integer in the interval [0, 1) is 0. If you want a floating-point number, you should use something like `my_rng.uniform(0.f,1.f)`, and for a double, use `my_rng.uniform(0.,1.)`. Of course, explicit casting of the arguments also works.

---

#### `cv::RNG::gaussian()`

```
double cv::RNG::gaussian( double sigma ); // Gaussian number, zero mean, std-dev='sigma'
```

This function allows you to generate a random number from a zero-mean Gaussian distribution (using the Ziggurat algorithm) with standard deviation `sigma`.

#### `cv::RNG::fill()`

```
void cv::RNG::fill(
    InputOutputArray mat,           // Input array, values will be overwritten
```

---

<sup>48</sup> In case this notation is not familiar, the designation of an interval using square brackets, [], '[' indicates that this limit is inclusive, and the designation using parentheses, (), '(' indicates that this limit is noninclusive. Thus the notation [0.0,1.0) means an interval from 0.0 to 1.0 inclusive of 0.0 but not inclusive of 1.0.

---

---

```

int          distType,           // Type of distribution (Gaussian or uniform)
InputArray   a,                  // min (uniform) or mean (Gaussian)
InputArray   b                    // max (uniform) or std-deviation (Gaussian)
);

```

The `cv::RNG::fill()` algorithm fills a matrix `mat` of up to four channels with random numbers drawn from a specific distribution. That distribution is selected by the `distType` argument, which can be either `cv::RNG::UNIFORM` or `cv::RNG::NORMAL`. In the case of the uniform distribution, each element of `mat` will be filled with a random value generated from the interval  $mat_{c,i} \in [a_c, b_c]$ . In the case of the Gaussian (`cv::RNG::NORMAL`) distribution, each element is generated from a distribution with mean taken from `a` and standard deviation taken from `b`:  $mat_{c,i} \in N(a_c, b_c)$ . It is important to note that the arrays `a` and `b` are not of the dimension of `mat`, they are  $n_c$ -by-1 or 1-by- $n_c$  where  $n_c$  is the number of channels in `mat` (i.e., there is not a separate distribution for each element of `mat`, `a` and `b` specify one distribution, not one distribution for every element of `mat`.)

---

If you have a multichannel array, then you can generate individual entries in “channel-space” from a multivariate distribution simply by giving the appropriate mean and standard deviation for each channel in the input arrays `a` and `b`. This distribution, however, will be drawn from a distribution with only zero entries in the off-diagonal elements of its covariance matrix. (This is because each element is generated completely independently of the others.) If you need to draw from a more general distribution, the easiest method is to generate zero-mean values using an identity covariance matrix with `cv::RNG::fill()`, and then transform (translate and rotate) back to your original basis using `cv::transform()`.

---

## Summary

In this chapter, we introduced some frequently encountered basic data structures. In particular, we looked at the all-important OpenCV array structure `cv::Mat`, which can contain matrices, images, and multidimensional arrays.

## Exercises

In the following exercises, you may need to refer to the manual at <http://docs.opencv.org/>.

- Find and open `.../opencv/modules/core/include/opencv2/core/core.hpp`. Read through and find the many conversion helper functions.
  - Choose a negative floating-point number. Take its absolute value, round it, and then take its ceiling and floor.<sup>49</sup>
  - Generate some random numbers.
  - Create a floating-point `cv::Point2f` and convert it to an integer `cv::Point2i`.
  - Convert a `cv::Point2i` to a `CvPoint2f`.
- This exercise will accustom you to the idea of many functions taking matrix types. Create a two-dimensional matrix with three channels of type byte with data size 100-by-100. Set all the values to 0.
  - Draw a circle in the matrix using the `cv::circle()` function:

```

void circle(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Point      center,       // Location of circle center

```

---

<sup>49</sup> Remember that `cvFloor()` and `cvCeil()` are legacy functions and are found in `.../opencv/modules/core/include/opencv2/core/types_c.h`.

---

---

```

    int          radius,           // Radius of circle
    const cv::Scalar& color,       // Color, RGB form
    int          thickness = 1,     // Thickness of line
    int          lineType = 8,     // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int          shift = 0         // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);

```

b) Display this image using methods described in Chapter 2.

1. Create a two-dimensional matrix with three channels of type byte with data size 100-by-100, and set all the values to 0. Use the element access member: `m.at<cv::Vec3f>` to point to the middle (“green”) channel. Draw a green rectangle between (20, 5) and (40, 20).
  2. Create a three-channel RGB image of size 100-by-100. Clear it. Use pointer arithmetic to draw a green square between (20, 5) and (40, 20).
  3. Practice using the block access methods (Table 3-16). Create a 210-by-210 single-channel byte image and zero it. Within the image, build a pyramid of increasing values using the submatrix constructor and the `cv::Range` object. That is: the outer border should be 0, the next inner border should be 20, the next inner border should be 40, and so on until the final innermost square is set to value 200; all borders should be 10 pixels wide. Display the image.
  4. Use multiple image objects for one image. Load an image that is at least 100-by-100. Create two additional image objects using the first object and the submatrix constructor. Create the new images with width at 20 and the height at 30, but with their origins located at pixel at (5, 10) and (50, 60), respectively. Logically invert the two images using the ‘not’ logical inversion operator. Display the loaded image, which should have two inverted rectangles within the larger image.
  5. Add an `CV_Assert( condition )` to the code of question 4 that will be triggered by a condition in the program. Build the code in debug, run it and see the assert being triggered. Now build it in release mode and see that the condition is not triggered.
  6. Create a mask using `cv::compare()`. Load a real image. Use `cv::split()` to split the image into red, green, and blue images.
    - a) Find and display the green image.
    - b) Clone this green plane image twice (call these clone1 and clone2).
    - c) Find the green plane’s minimum and maximum value.
    - d) Set clone1’s values to *thresh = (unsigned char)((maximum - minimum)/2.0)*.
    - e) Set clone2 to 0 and use `cv::compare(green_image, clone1, clone2, cv::CMP_GE)`. Now clone2 will have a mask of where the value exceeds thresh in the green image.
    - f) Finally, compute the value: `green_image = green_image - thresh/2` and display the results. (Bonus: assign this value to `green_image` only where clone2 is non-zero.)
-

---

# Graphical User Interface

## HighGUI: Portable Graphics Toolkit

The OpenCV functions that allow us to interact with the operating system, the filesystem<sup>1</sup>, and hardware such as cameras are collected into a sub-library called HighGUI (which stands for “high-level graphical user interface”). HighGUI allows us to open windows, to display images, to read and write graphics-related files (both images and video), and to handle simple mouse, pointer, and keyboard events. We can also use it to create other useful doodads—like sliders, for example—and then add them to our windows. If you are a GUI guru in your window environment of choice, then you might find that much of what HighGUI offers is redundant. Yet, even so, you might find that the benefit of cross-platform portability is itself a tempting morsel.

From our initial perspective, the HighGUI library in OpenCV can be divided into three parts: the hardware part, the filesystem part, and the GUI part. We will take a moment to overview what is in each part before we really dive in.

The hardware part is primarily concerned with the operation of cameras. In most operating systems, interaction with a camera is a tedious and painful task. HighGUI allows an easy way to query a camera and retrieve its latest image. It hides all of the nasty stuff, and that keeps us happy.

The filesystem part is concerned primarily with loading and saving images. One nice feature of the library is that it allows us to read video using the same methods we would use to read a camera. We can therefore abstract ourselves away from the particular device we’re using and get on with writing interesting code. In a similar spirit, HighGUI provides us with a (relatively) universal pair of functions to load and save still images. These functions simply rely on the filename extension and automatically handle all of the decoding or encoding that is necessary.

The third part of HighGUI is the window system (or GUI). The library provides some simple functions that allow us to open a window and throw an image into that window. It also allows us to register and respond to mouse and keyboard events on that window. These features are most useful when trying to get off of the ground with a simple application. Tossing in some slider bars, we find ourselves able to prototype a surprising variety of applications using only the HighGUI library. If we want to link to Qt, we can even get a little more functionality.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some lower level file system operations are located in the core module as well.

<sup>2</sup> This is Qt the cross-platform widget toolkit. We will talk more about how this works later in this chapter.

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As we proceed in this chapter, we will not treat these three segments separately; rather, we will start with some functions of highest immediate utility and work our way to the subtler points thereafter. In this way, you will learn what you need to get going as soon as possible.

At the end of the chapter, we will consider additional functions that will allow us to mark up images by drawing lines or other shapes on them. These functions are primarily provided for debugging and validating code, but will turn out to be broadly useful. Finally, we will look at more advanced data persistence for OpenCV data types that will allow us to store and reload additional data types other than just images.

## Working with Image Files

OpenCV provides special functions for the loading and saving of images that deal, either directly or implicitly, with the complexities associated with compression and decompression of that image data. These functions are different from the more universal XML/YML-based functions discussed in the previous chapter in several respects. The primary distinction is that because these functions are designed for actual images, as opposed to general arrays of data, they rely heavily on existing backends for compression and decompression, handling all of the common file formats, each in the manner required by that file type. Most of these compression and decompression schemes have been developed with the idea that it is possible to lose some information without degrading the visual experience of the image. Clearly such lossy compression schemes are not a good idea for arrays of nonimage data. Less obviously, artifacts introduced by lossy compressions schemes can also cause headaches for computer vision algorithms as well. In many cases, algorithms will find and respond to compression artifacts that are completely invisible to us humans.

The key difference to remember is that the loading and saving functions we will discuss here are really an interface to the resources for handling image files that are already present in your operating system or its available libraries. The XML/YML data persistence mentioned here is entirely intrinsic to OpenCV.

## Loading and Saving Images

The most common tasks we will need to accomplish are the loading and the saving of files from disk. The easiest way to do this is with the high-level functions `cv::imread()` and `cv::imwrite()`. These functions handle the complete task of decompression and compression as well as the actual interaction with the filesystem.

### Reading Files with `cv::imread()`

Obviously the first thing to do is to learn how to get an image out of the filesystem and into our program. The function that does this is `cv::imread()`:

```
cv::Mat cv::imread(  
    const string& filename,           // Input filename  
    int          flags = cv::LOAD_IMAGE_COLOR // Flags set how to interpret file  
);
```

When opening an image, `cv::imread()` does not look at the file extension. Instead, `cv::imread()` analyzes the first few bytes of the file (aka its *signature* or “magic sequence”) and determines the appropriate codec using that. The second argument `flags` can be set to one of several values. By default, `flags` is set to `cv::IMREAD_COLOR`. This value indicates that images are to be loaded as three-channel images with 8 bits per channel. In this case, even if the image is actually grayscale in the file, the resulting image in memory will still have three channels, with all of the channels containing identical information. Alternatively, if `flags` is set to `cv::IMREAD_GRAYSCALE`, the image will be loaded as grayscale, regardless of the number of channels in the file. The final option is to set `flags` to

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`cv::IMREAD_ANYCOLOR`. In this case, the image will be loaded “as is,” with the result being three-channel if the file is color, and one-channel if the file is grayscale.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the color-related flags, `cv::imread()` supports the flag `cv::IMREAD_ANYDEPTH`, which indicates that if an input image channels have more than 8 bits, that it should be loaded without conversion (i.e., the allocated array will be of the type indicated in the file.)

*Table 4-1: Parameters accepted by `cv::imread()`*

Parameter ID	Meaning	Default
<code>cv::IMREAD_COLOR</code>	Always load to three-channel array.	yes
<code>cv::IMREAD_GRAYSCALE</code>	Always load to single-channel array.	no
<code>cv::IMREAD_ANYCOLOR</code>	Channels as indicated by file (up to three).	no
<code>cv::IMREAD_ANYDEPTH</code>	Allow loading of more than 8-bit depth.	no
<code>cv::IMREAD_UNCHANGED</code>	Equivalent to combining: <code>cv::LOAD_IMAGE_ANYCOLOR  </code> <code>cv::LOAD_IMAGE_UNCHANGED</code>	no

`cv::imread()` does not give a runtime error when it fails to load an image; it simply returns an empty `cv::Mat` (i.e., `empty() == true`).

### Writing Files with `cv::imwrite()`

The obvious complementary function to `cv::imread()` is `cv::imwrite()`, which takes three arguments:

```
int cv::imwrite(  
    const string&      filename,           // Input filename  
    cv::InputArray      image,             // Image to write to file  
    const vector<int>& params = vector<int>() // (Optional) for parameterized formats  
);
```

The first argument gives the filename, whose extension is used to determine the format in which the file will be stored. The second argument is the image to be stored. The third argument is used for parameters that are accepted by the particular file type being used for the write operation. The `params` argument expects an STL vector of integers, with those integers being a sequence of parameter IDs followed by the value to be assigned to that parameter (i.e., alternating between the parameter ID and the parameter value). For the parameter IDs, there are aliases provided by OpenCV, as listed in *Table 4-2*.

*Table 4-2: Parameters accepted by `cv::imwrite()`*

Parameter ID	Meaning	Range	Default
<code>cv::IMWRITE_JPG_QUALITY</code>	JPEG quality	0-100	95

---

<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing, “as is” does not support the loading of a fourth channel for those file types that support alpha channels. In this case, the fourth channel will currently just be ignored and the file will be treated as if it had only three channels.

---

---

<code>cv::IMWRITE_PNG_COMPRESSION</code>	PNG compression (higher values mean more compression)	0-9	3
<code>cv::IMWRITE_PXM_BINARY</code>	Use binary format for PPM, PGM, or PBM files	0 or 1	1

The `cv::imwrite()` function will store only 8-bit single- or three-channel images for most file formats. Backends for flexible image formats like PNG, TIFF, or JPEG 2000 allow storing 16-bit or even float formats and some allow four-channel images (BGR plus alpha) as well. The return value will be `1` if the save was successful and should be `0` if the save was not.<sup>4</sup>

## A Note about Codecs

Remember, however, that `cv::imwrite()` is intended for images, and relies heavily on software libraries intended for handling image file types. These libraries are generically referred to as *codecs* (“*co*-mpression and *dec*-ompression librari*e-s*”). Your operating system will likely have many codecs available, with (at least) one being available for each of the different common file types.

OpenCV comes with the codecs you will need for some file formats (JPEG, PNG, and TIFF), and on Microsoft Windows as well as on Apple Mac OS X, these should be available on installation. On Linux and other Unix-like operating systems, OpenCV will try to use codecs supplied with the OS image. In this case, you will need to ensure you have installed the relevant packages with their development files (i.e., install *libjpeg-dev* in addition to *libjpeg* on Linux).

---

In Apple’s Mac OS X, it is also possible to use the native image readers from Mac OS X. If you do this, however, you should be aware that Mac OS X has an embedded native color management, and so the colors that appear in the loaded file may be different than if you had used the codecs included with the OpenCV package. This is a good example of how the reliance on external elements by `cv::imread()` and `cv::imwrite()` can have important and sometimes unexpected consequences.

---

## Compression and Decompression

As already mentioned, the `cv::imread()` and `cv::imwrite` functions are high-level tools that handle a number of separate things necessary to ultimately get your image written to or read from the disk. In practice, it is often useful to be able to handle some of those subcomponents individually and, in particular, to be able to compress or decompress an image in memory (using the codecs we just reviewed).

### Compressing Files with `cv::imencode()`

Images can be compressed directly from OpenCV’s array types. In this case, the result will not be an array type, but rather a simple character buffer. This should not be surprising, as the resulting object is now in some format that is meaningful only to the codec that compressed it, and will (by construction) not be the same size as the original image.

```
void cv::imencode(
    const string&      ext,                // Extension specifies codec
    cv::InputArray      img,               // Image to be encoded
    vector<uchar>&      buf,               // Encoded file bytes go here
    const vector<int>& params = vector<int>() // (Optional) for parameterized formats
```

---

<sup>4</sup> The reason we say “should” is that, in some OS environments, it is possible to issue save commands that will actually cause the operating system to throw an exception. Normally, however, a zero value will be returned to indicate failure.

---

---

```
| );
```

The first argument to `cv::imencode()` is the file extension `ext`, represented as a string, which is associated with the desired compression. Of course, no file is actually written, but the extension is not only an intuitive way to refer to the desired format, it is the actual key used by most operating systems to index the available codecs. The next argument `img` is the image to be compressed, and the argument following that `buf` is the character array into which the compressed image will be placed. The final argument `params` is used to specify any parameters which may be required (or desired) for the specific compression codec to be used. The possible values for `params` are those listed earlier in Table 4-2 in the `cv::imwrite()`.

### Uncompressing Files with `cv::imdecode()`

```
cv::Mat cv::imdecode(  
    cv::InputArray buf,                // Encoded file bytes are here  
    int flags = cv::LOAD_IMAGE_COLOR // Flags set how to interpret file  
);
```

Just as `cv::imencode()` allows us to compress an image into a character buffer, `cv::imdecode()` allows us to decompress from a character buffer into an image array. `cv::imdecode()` takes just two arguments, the first being the buffer<sup>5</sup> `buf` and the second being the `flags` arguments, which takes the same options as the flags used by `cv::imread()` (see Table 4-1). As was the case with `cv::imread()`, `cv::imdecode()` does not need a file extension (as `cv::imencode()` did) because it can deduce the correct codec to use from the first bytes of the compressed image in the buffer.

Just as `cv::imread()` returns an empty (`cv::Mat::empty()==true`) array if it cannot read the file it is given, `cv::imdecode()` returns an empty array if the buffer it is given is empty, contains invalid or unusable data, and so on.

## Working with Video

When working with video, we must consider several functions, including (of course) how to read and write video files. You will also probably find yourself thinking shortly thereafter about how to actually play back such files on the screen—either for debugging, or as the final output of our program; we’ll get to that next,

### Reading Video with the `cv::VideoCapture` Object

The first thing we need is the `cv::VideoCapture` object. This is another one of those “objects that do stuff” we encountered in the previous chapter. This object contains the information needed for reading frames from a camera or video file. Depending on the source, we use one of three different calls to create a `cv::VideoCapture` object:

```
cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture(  
    const string& filename,                // Input filename  
);  
cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture(  
    int device                             // Video Capture device id  
);  
cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture();
```

In the case of the first constructor, we can simply give a filename for a video file (.MPG, .AVI, etc.) and OpenCV will open the file and prepare to read it. If the open is successful and we are able to start reading frames, the member function `cv::VideoCapture::isOpen()` will return `true`.

---

<sup>5</sup> You should not be surprised that the input `buf` is not type `vector<int>&`, as it was with `cv::imencode()`. Recall that the type `cv::InputArray` covers many possibilities and `vector<>` is one of them.

---

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A lot of people don't always check these sorts of things, thinking that nothing will go wrong. Don't do that here. The returned value of `cv::VideoCapture::isOpen()` will be `false` if for some reason the file could not be opened (e.g., if the file does not exist), but that is not the only possible cause. The constructed object will also not be ready to be used if the codec with which the video is compressed is not known. As with the image codecs, you will need to have the appropriate library already residing on your computer in order to successfully read the video file. This is why it is always important for your code to check the return value of `cv::VideoCapture::isOpen()`, because even if it works on one machine (where the needed codec DLL or shared library is available), it might not work on another machine (where that codec is missing). Once we have an open `cv::VideoCapture` object, we can begin reading frames and do a number of other things. But before we get into that, let's take a look at how to capture images from a camera.

The variant of `cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture()` that takes an integer `device` argument works very much like the `string` version we just discussed, except without the headache from the codecs.<sup>6</sup> In this case, we give an *identifier* that indicates a camera we would like to access and how we expect the operating system to talk to that camera. For the camera, this is just an identification number that is zero (0) when we only have one camera and increments upward when there are multiple cameras on the same system. The other part of the identifier is called the *domain* of the camera and indicates (in essence) what type of camera we have. The domain can be any of the predefined constants shown in Table 4-3.

*Table 4-3: Camera “domain” indicates where HighGUI should look for your camera*

Camera capture constant	Numerical value
<code>cv::CAP_ANY</code>	0
<code>cv::CAP_MIL</code>	100
<code>cv::CAP_VFW</code>	200
<code>cv::CAP_V4L</code>	200
<code>cv::CAP_V4L2</code>	200
<code>cv::CAP_FIREWIRE</code>	300
<code>cv::CAP_IEEE1394</code>	300
<code>cv::CAP_DC1394</code>	300
<code>cv::CAP_CMU1394</code>	300
<code>cv::CAP_QT</code>	500
<code>cv::CAP_DSHOW</code>	700
<code>cv::CAP_PVAPI</code>	800
<code>cv::CAP_OPENNI</code>	900
<code>cv::CAP_ANDROID</code>	1000
...	

When we construct the `device` argument for `cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture()`, we pass in an identifier that is just the sum of the domain index and the camera index. For example:

```
| cv::VideoCapture capture( cv::CAP_FIREWIRE );
```

In this example, `cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture()` will attempt to open the first (i.e., number-zero) FireWire camera. In most cases, the domain is unnecessary when we have only one camera; it is sufficient to use `cv::CAP_ANY` (which is conveniently equal to 0, so we don't even have to type that in). One last useful hint before we move on: on some platforms, you can pass `-1` to

---

<sup>6</sup> Of course, to be completely fair, we should probably confess that the headache caused by different codecs has been replaced by the analogous headache of determining which cameras are (or are not) supported on our system.

---

---

`cv::VideoCapture::VideoCapture()`, which will cause OpenCV to open a window that allows you to select the desired camera.

Your last option is to create the capture object without providing any information about what is to be opened.

```
cv::VideoCapture cap();  
cap.open( "my_video.avi" );
```

In this case, the capture object will be there, but not ready for use until you explicitly open the source you want to read from. This is done with the `cv::VideoCapture::open()` method which, like the `cv::VideoCapture` constructor, can take either an STL string or a device ID as arguments. In either case, `cv::VideoCapture::open()` will have exactly the same effect as calling the `cv::VideoCapture` constructor with the same argument.

### Reading Frames with `cv::VideoCapture::read()`

```
bool cv::VideoCapture::read(  
    cv::Mat& image                // Image into which to read data  
);
```

Once you have a `cv::VideoCapture` object, you can start reading frames. The easiest way to do this is to call `cv::VideoCapture::read()`, which will simply go to the open file represented by `cv::VideoCapture` and get the next frame, inserting that frame into the provided array `image`. This action will automatically “advance” the video capture object such that a subsequent call to `cv::VideoCapture::read()` will return the next frame, and so on.

If the read was not successful (e.g., if you have reached the end of your file), then this function call will return `false` (otherwise it will return `true`). Similarly, the array object you supplied to the function will also be empty.

### Reading Frames with `cv::VideoCapture::operator>>()`

```
cv::VideoCapture& cv::VideoCapture::operator>>(  
    cv::Mat& image                // Image into which to read data  
);
```

In addition to using the read method of `cv::VideoCapture`, you can use the overloaded function `cv::VideoCapture::operator>>()` (i.e., the “stream read” operator) to read the next frame from your video capture object. In this case, `cv::VideoCapture::operator>>()` behaves exactly the same as `cv::VideoCapture::read()`, except that because it is a stream operator, it returns a reference to the original `cv::VideoCapture::read()` object, whether or not it succeeded. In this case, you must check that the return array is not empty.

### Reading Frames with `cv::VideoCapture::grab()` and `cv::VideoCapture::retrieve()`

Instead of taking images one at a time from your camera or video source and decoding them as you read them, it is possible to break this process down into a *grab* phase, which is a little more than a memory copy, and a *retrieve* phase, which handles the actual decoding of the grabbed data.

```
bool cv::VideoCapture::grab( void );  
bool cv::VideoCapture::retrieve(  
    cv::Mat& image,                // Image into which to read data  
    int      channel = 0           // Used for multihead devices  
);
```

The `cv::VideoCapture::grab()` function copies the currently available image to an internal buffer that is invisible to the user. Why would you want OpenCV to put the frame somewhere you can’t access it? The answer is that this grabbed frame is unprocessed, and `grab()` is designed simply to get it onto the computer (typically from a camera) as quickly as possible.

---

There are many reasons to grab and retrieve separately rather than together as would be the case in calling `cv::VideoCapture::read()`. The most common situation

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arises when there are multiple cameras (e.g., with stereo imaging). In this case, it is important to have frames that are separated in time by the minimum amount possible (ideally they would be simultaneous for stereo imaging). Therefore, it makes the most sense to first grab all the frames and then come back and decode them after you have them all safely in your buffers.

---

As was the case with `cv::VideoCapture::read()`, `cv::VideoCapture::grab()` returns `true` only if the grab was successful.

Once you have grabbed your frame, you can call `cv::VideoCapture::retrieve()`, which handles the decoding and the allocation and copying necessary to return the frame to you as a `cv::Mat` array. The function `cv::VideoCapture::retrieve()` functions analogously to `cv::VideoCapture::read()`, except that it operates from the internal buffer to which `cv::VideoCapture::grab()` copies frames. The other important difference between `cv::VideoCapture::read()` and `cv::VideoCapture::retrieve()` is the additional argument `channel`. The `channel` argument is used when the device being accessed natively has multiple “heads” (i.e., multiple imagers). This is typically the case for devices designed specifically to be stereo imagers, as well as slightly more exotic devices such as the *Kinect*.<sup>7</sup> In these cases, the value of `channel` will indicate which image from the device is to be retrieved. In these cases, you would call `cv::VideoCapture::grab()` just once and then call `cv::VideoCapture::retrieve()` as many times as needed to retrieve all of the images in the camera (each time with a different value for `channel`).

#### Camera Properties: `cv::VideoCapture::get()` and `cv::VideoCapture::set()`

Video files contain not only the video frames themselves, but also important metadata, which can be essential for handling the files correctly. When a video file is opened, that information is copied into the `cv::VideoCapture` object’s internal data area. It is very common to want to read that information from the `cv::VideoCapture` object, and sometimes also useful to write to that data area ourselves. The `cv::VideoCapture::get()` and `cv::VideoCapture::set()` functions allow us to perform these two operations:

```
double cv::VideoCapture::get(  
    int    propid                // Property identifier (see Table 4-4)  
);  
  
bool cv::VideoCapture::set(  
    int    propid                // Property identifier (see Table 4-4)  
    double value                // Value to which to set the property  
);
```

The routine `cv::VideoCapture::get()` accepts any of the property IDs shown in Table 4-4<sup>8</sup>.

*Table 4-4: Video capture properties used by `cv::VideoCapture::get()` and `cv::VideoCapture::set()`*

Video capture property	Camera Only	Meaning
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_POS_MSEC</code>		Current position in video file (milliseconds) or video

---

<sup>7</sup> The currently supported multihead cameras are Kinect and Videre; others may be added later.

<sup>8</sup> It should be understood that not all of the properties recognized by OpenCV will be recognized or handled by the “backend” behind the capture. For example, the capture mechanisms operating behind the scenes on Android, Firewire on Linux (via dc1394), Quicktime, or a Kinect (via OpenNI) are all going to be very different, and not all of them will offer all of the services implied by this long list of options. Expect this list to grow as well, as new system types make new options possible.

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		capture timestamp
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_POS_FRAMES</code>		Zero-based index of next frame
		Relative position in the video (range is 0.0 to 1.0)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_POS_AVI_RATIO</code>		
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_WIDTH</code>		Width of frames in the video
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_HEIGHT</code>		Height of frames in the video
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_FPS</code>		Frame rate at which the video was recorded
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_FOURCC</code>		Four character code indicating codec
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_FRAME_COUNT</code>		Total number of frames in a video file
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_FORMAT</code>		Format of the Mat objects returned (e.g., <code>CV::U8C3</code> )
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_MODE</code>		Indicates capture mode, values are specific to video backend being used (i.e., DC1394, etc.)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_BRIGHTNESS</code>	✓	Brightness setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_CONTRAST</code>	✓	Contrast setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_SATURATION</code>	✓	Saturation setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_HUE</code>	✓	Hue setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_GAIN</code>	✓	Gain setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_EXPOSURE</code>	✓	Exposure setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_CONVERT_RGB</code>	✓	If nonzero, captured images will be converted to have three channels
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_WHITE_BALANCE</code>	✓	White balance setting for camera (when supported)
<code>cv::CAP_PROP_RECTIFICATION</code>	✓	Rectification flag for stereo cameras (DC1394-2.x only)

Most of these properties are self-explanatory. `POS_MSEC` is the current position in a video file, measured in milliseconds. `POS_FRAME` is the current position in frame number. `POS_AVI_RATIO` is the position given as a number between 0.0 and 1.0. (This is actually quite useful when you want to position a trackbar to allow folks to navigate around your video.) `FRAME_WIDTH` and `FRAME_HEIGHT` are the dimensions of the individual frames of the video to be read (or to be captured at the camera's current settings). `FPS` is specific to video files and indicates the number of frames per second at which the video was captured; you will need to know this if you want to play back your video and have it come out at the right speed. `FOURCC` is the four-character code for the compression codec to be used for the video you are currently reading (more on these shortly). `FRAME_COUNT` should be the total number of frames in the video, but this figure is not entirely reliable.

All of these values are returned as type `double`, which is perfectly reasonable except for the case of `FOURCC` (FourCC) [FourCC85]. Here you will have to recast the result in order to interpret it, as shown in [Example 4-1](#).

*Example 4-1. Unpacking a four-character code to identify a video codec*

```
cv::VideoCapture cap( "my_video.avi" );
double          f      = cap.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FOURCC );
char*           fourcc = (char*) (&f);
```

For each of these video capture properties, there is a corresponding `cv::VideoCapture::set()` function that will attempt to set the property. These are not all meaningful things to do; for example, you should not be setting the `FOURCC` of a video you are currently reading. Attempting to move around the video by setting one of the position properties will sometimes work, but only for some video codecs (we'll have more to say about video codecs in the next section).

---

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## Writing Video with the `cv::VideoWriter` Object

The other thing we might want to do with video is writing it out to disk. OpenCV makes this easy; it is essentially the same as reading video but with a few extra details.

Just as we did with the `cv::VideoCapture` device for reading, we must first create a `cv::VideoWriter` device before we can write out our video. The video writer has two constructors; one is a simple default constructor that just creates an uninitialized video object that we will have to open later, and the other has all of the arguments necessary to actually set up the writer.

```
cv::VideoWriter::VideoWriter(  
    const string& filename,           // Input filename  
    int fourcc,                       // codec, use CV_FOUR_CC() macro  
    double fps,                       // Frame rate (stored in output file)  
    cv::Size frame_size,              // Size of individual images  
    bool is_color = true              // if false, you can pass gray frames  
);
```

You will notice that the video writer requires a few extra arguments relative to the video reader. In addition to the filename, we have to tell the writer what codec to use, what the frame rate is, and how big the frames will be. Optionally, we can tell OpenCV that the frames are already in color (i.e., three-channel). If you set `isColor` to `false`, you can pass grayscale frames and the video writer will handle them correctly.

As with the video reader, you can also create the video writer with a default constructor, and then configure the writer with the `cv::VideoWriter::open()` method, which takes the same arguments as the full constructor.

```
cv::VideoWriter out();  
out.open(  
    "my_video.mpg",  
    CV_FOUR_CC('D','I','V','X'), // MPEG-4 codec  
    30.0,                       // fps  
    cv::Size( 640, 480 ),  
    true                         // expect only color frames  
);
```

Here, the codec is indicated by its four-character code. (For those of you who are not experts in compression codecs, they all have a unique four-character identifier associated with them). In this case, the `int` that is named `fourcc` in the argument list for `cv::VideoWriter::VideoWriter()` is actually the four characters of the `fourcc` packed together. Since this comes up relatively often, OpenCV provides a convenient macro `CV_FOURCC(c0,c1,c2,c3)` that will do the bit packing for you.

Once you have given your video writer all the information it needs to set itself up, it is always a good idea to ask it if it is ready to go. This is done with the `cv::VideoWriter::isOpened()` method, which will return true if you are good to go. If it returns false, this could mean that you don't have write permission to the directory for the file you indicated, or (most often) that the codec you specified is not available.

---

The codecs available to you will depend on your operating system installation and the additional libraries you have installed. For portable code, it is especially important to be able to gracefully handle the case in which the desired codec is not available on any particular machine.

---

### Writing Frames with `cv::VideoWriter::write()`

Once you have verified that your video writer is ready to write, you can write frames by simply passing your array to the writer:

```
cv::VideoWriter::write(  
    const Mat& image                // Image to write as next frame  
);
```

---

---

This image must have the same size as the size you gave to the writer when you configured it in the first place. If you told the writer that the frames would be in color, this must also be a three-channel image. If you indicated to the writer (via `isColor`) that the images is just one channel, you should supply a single-channel (grayscale) image.

### Writing Frames with `cv::VideoWriter::operator<<()`

The video writer also supports the idiom of the overloaded output stream operator (`operator<<()`). In this case, once you have your video writer open, you can write images to the video stream in the same manner you would write to `cout` or a file `ofstream` object:

```
| my_video_writer << my_frame;
```

## Working with Windows

The HighGUI toolkit provides some rudimentary built-in features for creating windows, displaying images in those windows, and for making some user interaction possible with those windows. The native OpenCV graphical user interface (GUI) functions have been part of the library for a very long time, and have the advantage of being stable, portable,<sup>9</sup> and very easy to use.

On the other hand, the native GUI features have the disadvantage of being not particularly complete. As a result, there has been an effort to modernize the GUI portion of HighGUI, and to add a number of useful new features. This was done by converting from “native” interfaces to the use of Qt. Qt is a cross-platform toolkit, and so new features can be implemented only once in the library, rather than once each for each of the native platforms. Needless to say, this has the result of making development of the Qt interface more attractive, and so it does more stuff, and will probably grow in the future, leaving the features of the native interface to become static legacy code.

In this section, we will first take a look at the native functions, and then move on to look at the differences, and particularly the new features, offered by the Qt-based interface.

### HighGUI Native Graphical User Interface

This section describes the core interface functions that are part of OpenCV and require no external toolkit support. Some of them, when you are using the Qt backend, will also behave somewhat differently or have some additional options, but we will put those details off until the next section.

The native HighGUI user input tools support only two basic interactions. Specifically, mouse clicks on the image area can be responded to, and a simple track bar can be added. These basic functions are usually sufficient for basic mock-ups and debugging, but hardly ideal for end-user facing applications. For that, you will (at least) want to use the Qt-based interface or some other UI toolkit.

The main advantages of the native tools are that they are fast and easy to use, and don’t require you to install any additional libraries.

#### Creating a Window with `cv::namedWindow()`

First, we want to be able to create a window and show an image on the screen using HighGUI. The function that does the first part for us is `cv::namedWindow()`. The function expects a name for the new window and one flag. The name appears at the top of the window, and the name is also used as a handle for

---

<sup>9</sup> They are “portable” because they make use of native window GUI tools on various platforms. This means X11 on Linux, Cocoa on MacOSX, and the raw Win32 API on Microsoft Windows machines. However, this portability only extends to those platforms for which there is an implementation in the library. There exist platforms on which OpenCV can be used for which there are no available implementations of the HighGUI library (e.g., Android).

---

---

the window that can be passed to other HighGUI functions.<sup>10</sup> The `flag` argument indicates if the window should autosize itself to fit an image we put into it. Here is the full prototype:

```
int cv::namedWindow(  
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window  
    int flags = 0                 // Used to tell window to autosize  
);
```

For now, the only valid options available for `flags` are to set it to `0` (it's the default value), which indicates that users are to be able (and required) to resize the window, or to set it to `cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE`.<sup>11</sup> If `cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE` is set, then HighGUI resizes the window to fit automatically whenever a new image is loaded, but users cannot resize the window.

Once we create a window, we usually want to put something inside it. But before we do that, let's see how to get rid of the window when it is no longer needed. For this, we use `cv::destroyWindow()`, a function whose only argument is a string: the name given to the window when it was created.

```
int cv::destroyWindow(  
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window  
);
```

### Drawing an Image with `cv::imshow()`

Now we are ready for what we really want to do, and that is to load an image and to put it into the window where we can view it and appreciate its profundity. We do this via one simple function, `cv::imshow()`:

```
void cv::imshow(  
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window  
    cv::InputArray image          // Image to display in window  
);
```

The first argument is the name of the window within which we intend to draw. The second argument is the image to be drawn.

### Updating a Window and `cv::waitKey()`

The function `cv::waitKey()` has two functions. The first is the one from which it derives its name, which is to wait for some specified (possibly indefinite) amount of time for a key-press on the keyboard, and to return that key value when it is received. `cv::waitKey()` accepts a key-press from any open OpenCV window (but will not function if no such window exists).

```
int cv::waitKey(  
    int delay = 0                 // Milliseconds until giving up (0='never')  
);
```

`cv::waitKey()` takes a single argument `delay`, which is the amount of time (in milliseconds) which it will wait for a key-press before returning automatically. If the delay is set to `0`, `cv::waitKey()` will wait indefinitely for a key-press. If no key-press comes before `delay` milliseconds has passed, `cv::waitKey()` will return `-1`.

The second, less obvious function of `cv::waitKey()` is that it provides an opportunity for any open OpenCV window to be updated. This means that if you do not call `cv::waitKey()`, your image may

---

<sup>10</sup> In OpenCV, windows are referenced by name instead of by some unfriendly (and invariably OS-dependent) "handle." Conversion between handles and names happens under the hood of HighGUI, so you needn't worry about it.

<sup>11</sup> Later in this chapter, we will look at the (optional) Qt-based backend for HighGUI. If you are using that backend, there are more options available for `cv::namedWindow()` as well as other functions.

---

---

never be drawn in your window, or your window may behave strangely (and badly) when moved, resized, or uncovered.<sup>12</sup>

### An Example Displaying an Image

Let's now put together a simple program that will display an image on the screen. We can read a filename from the command line, create a window, and put our image in the window in 15 lines (including comments!). This program will display our image as long as we want to sit and appreciate it, and then exit when the **ESC**-key (ASCII value of 27) is pressed.

*Example 4-2. A simple example of creating a window and displaying an image in that window*

```
int main( int argc, char** argv ) {  
  
    // Create a named window with the name of the file  
    cv::namedWindow( argv[1], 1 );  
  
    // Load the image from the given filename  
    cv::Mat = cv::imread( argv[1] );  
  
    // Show the image in the named window  
    cv::imshow( argv[1], img );  
  
    // Idle until the user hits the "Esc" key  
    while( true ) {  
        if( cv::waitKey( 100 ) == 27 ) break;  
    }  
  
    // Clean up and don't be piggies  
    cv::destroyWindow( argv[1] );  
  
    exit(0);  
}
```

For convenience, we have used the filename as the window name. This is nice because OpenCV automatically puts the window name at the top of the window, so we can tell which file we are viewing (see Figure 4-1). Easy as cake.

---

<sup>12</sup> What this sentence really means is that `cv::waitKey()` is the *only* function in HighGUI that can fetch and handle events. This means that if it is not called periodically, no normal event processing will take place. As a corollary to this, if HighGUI is being used within an environment that takes care of event processing, then you may not need to call `cv::waitKey()`.

---



Figure 4-1: A simple image displayed with `cv::imshow()`

Before we move on, there are a few other window-related functions you ought to know about. They are:

```
void cv::moveWindow( const char* name, int x, int y );
void cv::destroyAllWindows( void );
int  cv::startWindowThread( void );
```

`cv::moveWindow()` simply moves a window on the screen so that its upper-left corner is positioned at `x,y`. `cv::destroyAllWindows()` is a useful cleanup function that closes all of the windows and de-allocates the associated memory.

On Linux and MacOS, `cv::startWindowThread()` tries to start a thread that updates the window automatically and handles resizing and so forth. A return value of `0` indicates that no thread could be started—for example, because there is no support for this feature in the version of OpenCV that you are using. Note that, if you do not start a separate window thread, OpenCV can react to user interface actions only when it is explicitly given time to do so (this happens when your program invokes `cv::waitKey()`).

## Mouse Events

Now that we can display an image to a user, we might also want to allow the user to interact with the image we have created. Since we are working in a window environment and since we already learned how to capture single keystrokes with `cv::waitKey()`, the next logical thing to consider is how to “listen to” and respond to mouse events.

Unlike keyboard events, mouse events are handled by a more typical callback mechanism. This means that, to enable response to mouse clicks, we must first write a callback routine that OpenCV can call whenever a mouse event occurs. Once we have done that, we must register the callback with OpenCV, thereby informing OpenCV that this is the correct function to use whenever the user does something with the mouse over a particular window.

Let’s start with the callback. For those of you who are a little rusty on your event-driven program lingo, the *callback* can be any function that takes the correct set of arguments and returns the correct type. Here, we must be able to tell the function to be used as a callback exactly what kind of event occurred and where it occurred. The function must also be told if the user was pressing such keys as Shift or Alt when the mouse event occurred. A pointer to such a function is called a `cv::MouseCallback`. Here is the exact prototype that your callback function must match:

```
void your_mouse_callback(
    int  event,           // Event type (see Table 4-5)
    int  x,               // x-location of mouse event
    int  y,               // y-location of mouse event
    int  flags,           // More details on event (see Table 4-6)
```

---

```
void* param // Parameters from cv::setMouseCallback()
);
```

Now, whenever your function is called, OpenCV will fill in the arguments with their appropriate values. The first argument, called the `event`, will have one of the values shown in Table 4-5.

*Table 4-5: Mouse event types*

Event	Numerical value
<code>cv::EVENT_MOUSEMOVE</code>	0
<code>cv::EVENT_LBUTTONDOWN</code>	1
<code>cv::EVENT_RBUTTONDOWN</code>	2
<code>cv::EVENT_MBUTTONDOWN</code>	3
<code>cv::EVENT_LBUTTONUP</code>	4
<code>cv::EVENT_RBUTTONUP</code>	5
<code>cv::EVENT_MBUTTONUP</code>	6
<code>cv::EVENT_LBUTTONDBLCLK</code>	7
<code>cv::EVENT_RBUTTONDBLCLK</code>	8
<code>cv::EVENT_MBUTTONDBLCLK</code>	9

The second and third arguments will be set to the `x` and `y` coordinates of the mouse event. It is worth noting that these coordinates represent the pixel coordinates in the image independent of the size of the window.<sup>13</sup>

The fourth argument, called `flags`, is a bit field in which individual bits indicate special conditions present at the time of the event. For example, `cv::EVENT_FLAG_SHIFTKEY` has a numerical value of 16 (i.e., the fifth bit, or  $1 << 4$ ) and so, if we wanted to test whether the shift key were down, we could simply compute the bitwise AND of `flags & cv::EVENT_FLAG_SHIFTKEY`. Table 4-6 shows a complete list of the flags.

*Table 4-6: Mouse event flags*

Flag	Numerical value
<code>cv::EVENT_FLAG_LBUTTON</code>	1
<code>cv::EVENT_FLAG_RBUTTON</code>	2
<code>cv::EVENT_FLAG_MBUTTON</code>	4
<code>cv::EVENT_FLAG_CTRLKEY</code>	8
<code>cv::EVENT_FLAG_SHIFTKEY</code>	16
<code>cv::EVENT_FLAG_ALTKEY</code>	32

The final argument is a void pointer that can be used to have OpenCV pass additional information in the form of a pointer to whatever kind of structure you need.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> In general, this is not the same as the pixel coordinates of the event that would be returned by the OS. This is because OpenCV is concerned with telling you where *in the image* the event happened, not *in the window* (to which the OS typically references mouse event coordinates).

<sup>14</sup> A common situation in which you will want to use the `param` argument is when the callback itself is a static member function of a class. In this case, you will probably find yourself wanting to pass the `this` pointer and so indicate which class object instance the callback is intended to affect.

---

---

Next, we need the function that registers the callback. That function is called `cv::setMouseCallback()`, and it requires three arguments.

```
void cv::setMouseCallback(  
    const string&    windowName,           // Handle used to identify window  
    cv::MouseCallback on_mouse,           // Callback function  
    void*            param = NULL         // Additional parameters for callback fn.  
);
```

The first argument is the name of the window to which the callback will be attached. Only events in that particular window will trigger this specific callback. The second argument is your callback function. Finally, the third `param` argument allows us to specify the `param` information that should be given to the callback whenever it is executed. This is, of course, the same `param` we were just discussing with the callback prototype.

In [Example 4-3](#), we write a small program to draw boxes on the screen with the mouse. The function `my_mouse_callback()` responds to mouse events, and it uses the event to determine what to do when it is called.

*Example 4-3. Toy program for using a mouse to draw boxes on the screen*

```
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>  
  
// Define our callback which we will install for  
// mouse events  
//  
void my_mouse_callback(  
    int event, int x, int y, int flags, void* param  
);  
  
Rect box;  
bool drawing_box = false;  
  
// A little subroutine to draw a box onto an image  
//  
void draw_box( cv::Mat& img, cv::Rect box ) {  
    cv::rectangle(  
        img,  
        box.tl(),  
        box.br(),  
        cv::Scalar(0x00,0x00,0xff)    /* red */  
    );  
}  
  
void help() {  
    std::cout << "Call: ./ch4_ex4_1\n" <<  
        " shows how to use a mouse to draw regions in an image." << std::endl;  
}  
  
int main( int argc, char** argv ) {  
  
    help();  
    box = cv::Rect(-1,-1,0,0);  
    cv::Mat image(200, 200, CV_8UC3), temp;  
    image.copyTo(temp);  
  
    box = cv::Rect(-1,-1,0,0);  
    image = cv::Scalar::all(0);  
  
    cv::namedWindow( "Box Example" );  
  
    // Here is the crucial moment where we actually install  
    // the callback. Note that we set the value of 'params' to
```

---

---

```
// be the image we are working with so that the callback
// will have the image to edit.
//
cv::setMouseCallback(
    "Box Example",
    my_mouse_callback,
    (void*)&image
);

// The main program loop. Here we copy the working image
// to the temp image, and if the user is drawing, then
// put the currently contemplated box onto that temp image.
// Display the temp image, and wait 15ms for a keystroke,
// then repeat.
//
for(;;) {

    image.copyTo(temp);
    if( drawing_box ) draw_box( temp, box );
    cv::imshow( "Box Example", temp );

    if( cv::waitKey( 15 ) == 27 ) break;
}

return 0;
}

// This is our mouse callback. If the user
// presses the left button, we start a box.
// when the user releases that button, then we
// add the box to the current image. When the
// mouse is dragged (with the button down) we
// resize the box.
//
void my_mouse_callback(
    int event, int x, int y, int flags, void* param
) {

    cv::Mat& image = *(cv::Mat*) param;

    switch( event ) {
        case cv::EVENT_MOUSEMOVE: {
            if( drawing_box ) {
                box.width = x-box.x;
                box.height = y-box.y;
            }
        }
        break;
        case cv::EVENT_LBUTTONDOWN: {
            drawing_box = true;
            box = cv::Rect( x, y, 0, 0 );
        }
        break;
        case cv::EVENT_LBUTTONUP: {
            drawing_box = false;
            if( box.width < 0 ) {
                box.x += box.width;
                box.width *= -1;
            }
            if( box.height < 0 ) {
                box.y += box.height;
                box.height *= -1;
            }
        }
    }
}
```

---

---

```
        draw_box( image, box );
    }
    break;
}
}
```

### Sliders, Trackbars, and Switches

HighGUI provides a convenient slider element. In HighGUI, sliders are called *trackbars*. This is because their original (historical) intent was for selecting a particular frame in the playback of a video. Of course, once added to HighGUI, people began to use trackbars for all of the usual things one might do with a slider as well as many unusual ones (we'll discuss some of these in the next section, "No Buttons").

As with the parent window, the slider is given a unique name (in the form of a character string) and is thereafter always referred to by that name. The HighGUI routine for creating a trackbar is:

```
int cv::createTrackbar(
    const string&      trackbarName,      // Handle used to identify trackbar, label
    const string&      windowName,        // Handle used to identify window
    int*               value,              // Slider position gets put here
    int                count,              // Total counts for slider at far right
    cv::TrackbarCallback onChange         = NULL, // Callback function (optional)
    void*              param              = NULL // Additional parameters for callback fn.
);
```

The first two arguments are the name for the trackbar itself and the name of the parent window to which the trackbar will be attached. When the trackbar is created, it is added to either the top or the bottom of the parent window;<sup>15</sup> it will not occlude any image that is already in the window, rather it will make the window slightly bigger. The name of the trackbar will appear as a "label" for the trackbar. As with the location of the trackbar itself, the exact location of this label depends on the operating system, but most often it is immediately to the left.



*Figure 4-2: A simple application displaying an image; this window has two trackbars attached named "Trackbar0" and "Trackbar1"*

---

<sup>15</sup> Whether it is added to the top or bottom depends on the operating system, but it will always appear in the same place on any given platform.

---

---

The next two arguments are `value`, a pointer to an integer that will be set automatically to the value to which the slider has been moved, and `count`, a numerical value for the maximum value of the slider.

The last argument is a pointer to a callback function that will be automatically called whenever the slider is moved. This is exactly analogous to the callback for mouse events. If used, the callback function must have the form specified by `cv::TrackbarCallback`, which means that it must match the following prototype:

```
void your_trackbar_callback(  
    int pos,                      // Trackbar slider position  
    void* param = NULL           // Parameters from cv::setTrackbarCallback()  
);
```

This callback is not actually required, so if you don't want a callback, then you can simply set this value to `NULL`. Without a callback, the only effect of the user moving the slider will be the value of `*value` being updated when the slider is moved. (Of course, if you don't have a callback, you will be responsible for polling this value if you are going to respond to it being changed.)

The final argument to `cv::createTrackbar()` is `params`, which can be any pointer. This pointer will be passed to your callback as its `params` argument whenever the callback is executed. This is very helpful, among other things, for allowing you to handle trackbar events without having to introduce global variables.

Finally, here are two more routines that will allow you to programmatically read or set the value of a trackbar just by using its name:

```
int cv::getTrackbarPos(  
    const string& trackbarName,    // Handle used to identify trackbar, label  
    const string& windowName,      // Handle used to identify window  
);  
  
void cv::setTrackbarPos(  
    const string& trackbarName,    // Handle used to identify trackbar, label  
    const string& windowName,      // Handle used to identify window  
    int pos                       // Trackbar slider position  
);
```

These functions allow you to read or set the value of a trackbar from anywhere in your program.

## No Buttons

Unfortunately, the native interface in HighGUI does not provide any explicit support for buttons. It is thus common practice, among the particularly lazy,<sup>16</sup> to instead use sliders with only two positions. Another option that occurs often in the OpenCV samples in `../opencv/samples/c/` is to use keyboard shortcuts instead of buttons (see, e.g., the *floodfill* demo in the OpenCV source-code bundle).

*Switches* are just sliders (trackbars) that have only two positions, “on” (1) and “off” (0) (i.e., `count` has been set to 1). You can see how this is an easy way to obtain the functionality of a button using only the available trackbar tools. Depending on exactly how you want the switch to behave, you can use the trackbar callback to automatically reset the button back to 0 (as in [Example 4-4](#); this is something like the standard behavior of most GUI “buttons”) or to automatically set other switches to 0 (which gives the effect of a “radio button”).

---

<sup>16</sup> For the less lazy, the common practice was to compose the image you are displaying with a “control panel” you have drawn and then use the mouse event callback to test for the mouse’s location when the event occurs. When the (x, y) location is within the area of a button you have drawn on your control panel, the callback is set to perform the button action. In this way, all “buttons” are internal to the mouse event callback routine associated with the parent window. Really however, if you need this kind of functionality now, it is probably just best to use the Qt backend.

---

---

*Example 4-4. Using a tracker to create a “switch” that the user can turn on and off; this program plays a video, and uses the switch to create a pause functionality*

```
// An example program in which the user can draw boxes on the screen.
//
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>
#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

//
// Using a tracker to create a "switch" that the user can turn on and off.
// We make this value global so everyone can see it.
//
int g_switch_value = 1;
void switch_off_function() { cout << "Pause\n"; }; //YOU COULD DO MORE WITH THESE FUNCTIONS
void switch_on_function() { cout << "Run\n"; };

// This will be the callback that we give to the tracker.
//
void switch_callback( int position, void* ) {
    if( position == 0 ) {
        switch_off_function();
    } else {
        switch_on_function();
    }
}

void help() {
    cout << "Call: my.avi" << endl;
    cout << "Shows putting a pause button in a video." << endl;
}

int main( int argc, char** argv ) {

    cv::Mat frame; // To hold movie images
    cv::VideoCapture g_capture;
    help();
    if( argc < 2 || !g_capture.open( argv[1] ) ){
        cout << "Failed to open " << argv[1] << " video file\n" << endl;
        return -1;
    }

    // Name the main window
    //
    cv::namedWindow( "Example", 1 );

    // Create the tracker. We give it a name,
    // and tell it the name of the parent window.
    //
    cv::createTracker(
        "Switch",
        "Example",
        &g_switch_value,
        1,
        switch_callback
    );

    // This will just cause OpenCV to idle until
    // someone hits the "Escape" key.
    //
    for(;;) {
        if( g_switch_value ) {
```

---

---

```
        g_capture >> frame;
        if( frame.empty() ) break;
        cv::imshow( "Example", frame);
    }
    if( cv::waitKey(10)==27 ) break;
}

return 0;
}
```

You can see that this will turn on and off just like a light switch. In our example, whenever the trackbar “switch” is set to 0, the callback executes the function `switch_off_function()`, and whenever it is switched on, the `switch_on_function()` is called.

## Working with the Qt Backend

As we described earlier, the trend in the development of the HighGUI portion of OpenCV is to rely increasingly on a separate library for GUI functionality. This makes sense, as it is not OpenCV’s purpose to reinvent that particular wheel, and there are plenty of great GUI toolkits out there that are well maintained and which evolve and adapt to the changing times under their own development teams.

From the perspective of the OpenCV library, there is a great advantage to using such an outside toolkit. Functionality is gained, and at the same time, development time is reduced (which would otherwise be taken away from the core goal of the library).

However, an important clarification is that using HighGUI with the Qt backend is not the same as using Qt directly (we will explore this possibility briefly at the end of this chapter). The HighGUI interface is still the HighGUI interface; it simply uses Qt behind the scenes in place of the various native libraries. One side effect of this is that it is not that convenient to extend the Qt interface. If you want more than HighGUI gives you, you are still pretty stuck with writing your own window layer. On the bright side, the Qt interface gives you a lot more to work with, and so perhaps you will not find that extra level of complexity necessary as often.

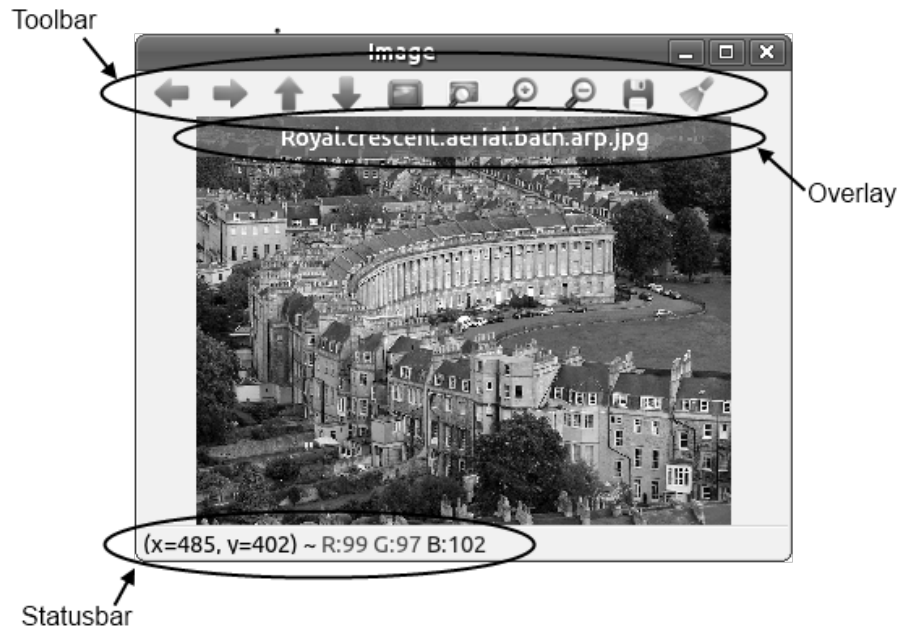
### Getting Started

If you have built your OpenCV installation with Qt support on,<sup>17</sup> opening a window will automatically open a window with two new features. These are the *Toolbar* and the *Status Bar* (see Figure 4-3). These objects come up complete, with all of the contents you see in the figure. In particular, the Toolbar contains buttons which will allow you to pan (the first four arrow buttons), zoom (the next four buttons), save the current image (the ninth button), and a final button which can be used to pop up a properties window (more on this last one a little later).

---

<sup>17</sup> This means that when you configured the build with `cmake`, you used the `-D WITH_QT=ON` option.

---



*Figure 4-3: This image is displayed with the Qt interface enabled; it shows the Toolbar, the Status Bar, and a text Overlay (in this case, containing the name of the image)*

The lower Status Bar in Figure 4-3 contains information about what is under your mouse at any given moment. The x-y location is displayed, as well as the RGB value of the pixel currently pointed at.

All of this you get “for free” just for compiling your code with the Qt interface enabled. If you have compiled with Qt and you *do not* want these decorations, then you can simply add the `cv::GUI_NORMAL` flag when you call `cv::namedWindow()` and they will disappear.<sup>18</sup>

### The Actions Menu

As you can see, when you create the window with `cv::GUI_EXTENDED`, you will see a range of buttons in the Toolbar. An alternative to the toolbar, which will always be available whether you use `cv::GUI_EXTENDED` or not, is the *pop-up menu*. This pop-up menu contains the same options as the toolbar and can be made to appear at any time by right-clicking on the image.

---

<sup>18</sup> There is also a flag `CV_GUI_EXTENDED`, which (in theory) creates these decorations, but its numerical value is 0x00, so it is the default behavior anyhow.

---

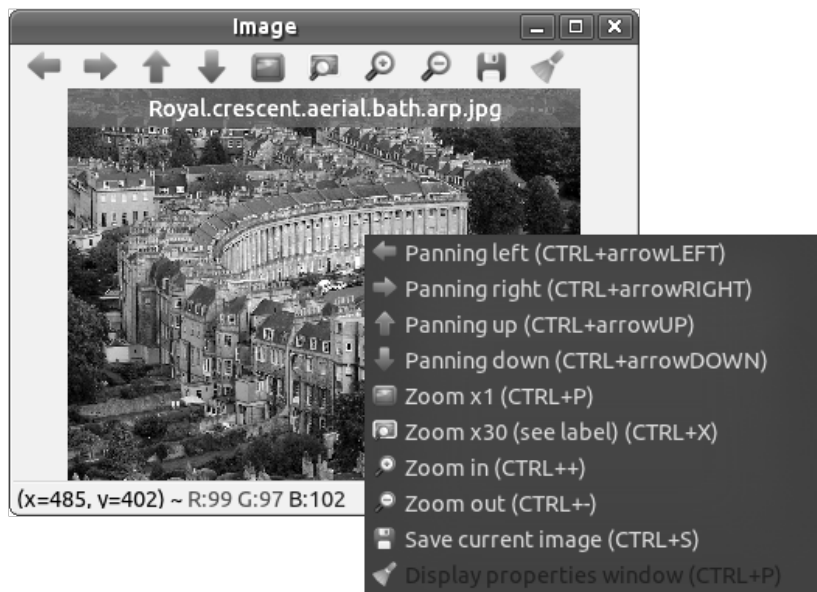


Figure 4-4. Here the Qt extended UI window is shown with the pop-up menu, which provides the same options as the Toolbar (along with an explanation of the buttons and their keyboard shortcuts)

## The Text Overlay

Another option provided by the Qt GUI is the ability to put a short-lived banner across the top of the image you are displaying. This banner is called the Overlay, and appears with a shaded box around it for easy reading. This is an exceptionally handy feature if you just want to throw some simple information like the frame number or frame rate on a video, or a filename of the image you are looking at. You can display an overlay on any window, even if you are using `cv::GUI_NORMAL`.

```
int cv::displayOverlay(
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window
    const string& text,          // Text you want to display
    int delay,                   // Milliseconds to show text (0='forever')
);
```

The function `cv::displayOverlay()` takes three arguments. The first is the name of the window you want the overlay to appear on. The second argument is whatever text you would like to appear in the window. One word of warning here, the text has a fixed size, so if you try to cram too much stuff in there, it will just overflow.<sup>19</sup> By default, the text is always center justified. The third and final argument, `delay`, is the amount of time (in milliseconds) that the overlay will stay in place. If `delay` is set to 0, then the overlay will stay in place indefinitely (or at least until you write over it with another call to `cv::displayOverlay()`). In general, if you call `cv::displayOverlay()` before the delay timer for a previous call is expired, the previous text is removed and replaced with the new text, and the timer is reset to the new delay value regardless of what is left in the timer before the new call.

## Writing Your Own Text into the Status Bar

In addition to the Overlay, you can also write text into the Status Bar. By default, the Status Bar contains information about the pixel over which your mouse pointer is located (if any). You can see in Figure 4-3

<sup>19</sup> You can, however, insert new lines. So, for example, if you were to give the `text` string `"Hello\nWorld"`, then the word "Hello" would appear on the first (top) line, and the word "World" would appear on a second line right below "Hello."

---

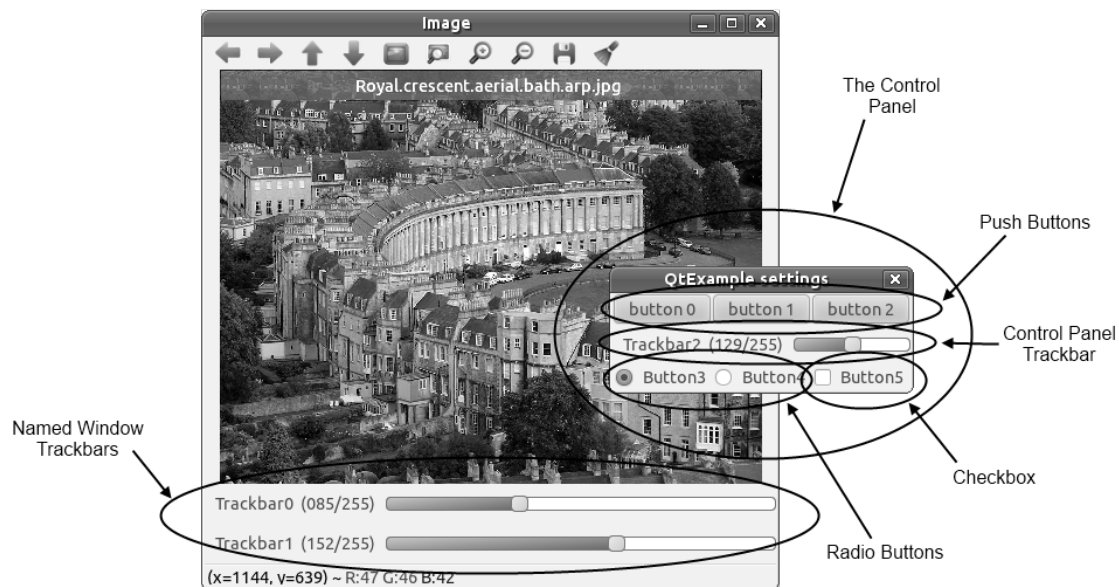
that the status bar contains an x-y location and the RGB color value of the pixel that was under the pointer when the figure was made. You can replace this text with your own text with the `cv::displayStatusBar()` method:

```
int cv::displayStatusBar(  
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window  
    const string& text,          // Text you want to display  
    int          delay           // Milliseconds to show text (0='forever')  
);
```

Unlike `cv::displayOverlay()`, `cv::displayStatusBar()` can only be used on windows that were created with the `cv::GUI_EXTENDED` flag (i.e., ones that have a Status Bar in the first place). When the `delay` timer is expired (if you didn't set it to 0), then the default x-y and RGB text will reappear in the Status Bar.

### The Control Panel

You may have noticed in the earlier figures that there is a last button on the Toolbar, corresponding to a last option (which is “darkened” in Figure 4-4) on the pop-up menu which we have not really discussed yet. This option opens up an entirely new window called the *Control Panel*. The control panel is a convenient place to put trackbars and buttons (the Qt GUI does support buttons) that you don't want in your face all of the time. It is important to remember, however, that there is just one Control Panel *per application*, and you do not really *create* it, you just *configure* it.



*Figure 4-5: In this image, we have added two trackbars to the main window; we also show the Control Panel with three pushbuttons, a trackbar, two radio buttons, and a checkbox*

The Control Panel will not be available unless some trackbars or buttons have been assigned to it (more on how to do this momentarily). If it is available, then the Control Panel can be made to appear by pressing the “Display Properties Window” button on the Toolbar (the one on the far right), the identical button on the Action Menu, or pressing `Ctrl+P` while your mouse is over any window.

### Trackbars Revisited

In the previous section on the HighGUI native interface, we saw that it was possible to add trackbars to windows. The trackbars in 4 were created using the same `cv::createTrackbar()` command we saw

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earlier. The only real difference between the trackbars in the figure, and the ones we created earlier, is that they are prettier (compare with the trackbars using the non-Qt interface in Figure 4-2).

The important new concept in the Qt interface, however, is that we can also create trackbars in the Control Panel. This is done simply by creating the trackbar as you normally would, but by specifying an empty string as the window name to which the trackbar is to be attached.

```
int contrast = 128;
cv::createTrackbar( "Contrast:", "", &contrast, 255, on_change_contrast );
```

For example, this fragment would create a trackbar in the Control Panel that would be labeled “Contrast:”, and whose value would start out at 128, with a maximum value of 255. Whenever the slider is adjusted, the callback `on_change_contrast()` will be called.

### Creating Buttons with `cv::createButton()`

One of the most helpful new capabilities provided by the Qt interface is the ability to create buttons. This includes normal push-buttons, radio style (mutually exclusive) buttons, and checkboxes. All buttons created are always located in the Control Panel.

All three styles of buttons are created with the same method:

```
int cv::createButton(
    const string&    buttonName,          // Handle used to identify trackbar, label
    cv::ButtonCallback onChange           = NULL, // Callback for button event
    void*            params,              // (Optional) parameters for button event
    int              buttonType           = cv::PUSH_BUTTON, // PUSH_BUTTON or RADIOBOX
    int              initialState         = 0  // Start state of the button
);
```

The button expects a name `buttonName` that will appear on or next to the button. If you like, you can neglect this and simply provide an empty string, in which case the button name will be automatically generated in a serialized manner (e.g., “button 0,” “button 1,” etc.). The second argument `onChange` is a callback that will be called whenever the button is pressed. The prototype for such a callback must match the declaration for `cv::ButtonCallback`, which is:

```
void your_button_callback(
    int state,                          // Identifies button event type
    void* params                        // Parameters from cv::createButton()
);
```

When your callback is called as a result of someone pressing a button, it will be given the value `state`, which is derived from what just happened to the button. The pointer `param` that you gave to `cv::createButton()` will also be passed to your callback, filling its `param` argument.

The `buttonType` argument can take one of three values: `cv::PUSH_BUTTON`, `cv::RADIOBOX`, or `cv::CHECKBOX`. The first corresponds to your standard button—you press it, it calls your callback. In the case of the checkbox, the value will be 1 or 0 depending on whether the box was checked or unchecked. The same is true for a radio button, except that when you click a radio button, the callback is called both for the button you just clicked, and for the button that is now unclicked (as a result of the mutex nature of radio buttons). All buttons in the same row (see *button bars* below) are assumed to be part of the same mutex group.

When buttons are created, they are automatically organized into *button bars*. A button bar is a group of buttons that occupies a “row” in the Control Panel. Consider the following code, which generated the Control Panel you see in Figure 4-5.

```
cv::namedWindow( "Image", cv::GUI_EXPANDED );
cv::displayOverlay( "Image", file_name, 0 );
cv::createTrackbar( "Trackbar0", "Image", &mybar0, 255 );
cv::createTrackbar( "Trackbar1", "Image", &mybar1, 255 );

cv::createButton( "", NULL, NULL, cv::PUSH_BUTTON );
cv::createButton( "", NULL, NULL, cv::PUSH_BUTTON );
```

---

---

```

cv::createButton( "", NULL, NULL, cv::PUSH_BUTTON );
cv::createTrackbar( "Trackbar2", "", &mybar1, 255 );
cv::createButton( "Button3", NULL, NULL, cv::RADIOBOX, 1 );
cv::createButton( "Button4", NULL, NULL, cv::RADIOBOX, 0 );
cv::createButton( "Button5", NULL, NULL, cv::CHECKBOX, 0 );

```

You will notice that Trackbar0 and Trackbar1 are created in the window called “Image,” while Trackbar2 is created in an unnamed window (the Control Panel). The first three `cv::createButton()` calls are not given a name for the button, and you can see in Figure 4-5 the automatically assigned names are placed onto the buttons. You will also notice in Figure 4-5 that the first three buttons are in one row, while the second group of three is on another. This is because of the trackbar.

Buttons are created one after another, each to the right of its predecessor, until (unless) a trackbar is created. Because a trackbar consumes an entire row, it is given its own row below the buttons. If more buttons are created, they will appear on a new row thereafter.<sup>20</sup>

### Text and Fonts

Just as the Qt interface allowed for much prettier trackbars and other elements, Qt also allows for much prettier and more versatile text. To write text using the Qt interface, you must first create a `CvFont` object,<sup>21</sup> which you then use whenever you want to put some text on the screen. Fonts are created using the `cv::fontQt()` function:

```

CvFont fontQt(                                     // Return OpenCV font characterization struct
    const string& fontName,                          // e.g., "Times"
    int          pointSize,                          // Size of font, using "point" system.
    cv::Scalar    color    = cv::Scalar::all(0),      // BGR color as a scalar (no alpha)
    int          weight    = cv::FONT_NORMAL,        // Font weights, 1-100 or see Table 4-7
    int          spacing   = 0                       // Space between individual characters
);

```

The first argument to `cv::fontQt()` is the system font name. This might be something like “Times.” If your system does not have an available font with this name, then a default font will be chosen for you. The second argument `pointSize` is the size of the font (i.e., `12` = “12 point”, `14` = “14 point”, etc.) You may set this to `0`, in which case a default font size (typically 12 point) will be selected for you.

The argument `color` can be set to any `cv::Scalar` and will set the color in which the font is drawn; the default value is black. `weight` can take one of several pre-defined values, or any integer you like between `1` and `100`. The pre-defined aliases and their values are shown in Table 4-7.

*Table 4-7: Pre-defined aliases for Qt-font weight and their associated values*

Camera capture constan	Numerical value
<code>cv::FONT_LIGHT</code>	25
<code>cv::FONT_NORMAL</code>	50
<code>cv::FONT_DEMIBOLD</code>	63
<code>cv::FONT_BOLD</code>	75
<code>cv::FONT_BLACK</code>	87

The final argument is `spacing`, which controls the spacing between individual characters. It can be negative or positive.

---

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, there is no “carriage return” for button placement.

<sup>21</sup> You will notice that the name of this object is `CvFont` rather than what you might expect: `cv::Font`. This is a legacy to the old pre-C++ interface. `CvFont` is a `struct`, and is not in the `cv::` namespace.

---

---

Once you have your font, you can put text on an image (and thus on the screen)<sup>22</sup> with `cv::addText()`.

```
void cv::addText(
    cv::Mat&      image,           // Image onto which to write
    const string& text,           // Text to write
    cv::Point     location,        // Location of lower-left corner of text
    CvFont*       font             // OpenCV font characterization struct
);
```

The arguments to `cv::addText()` are just what you would expect, the `image` to write on, the `text` to write, where to write it, and the `font` to use—with the latter being a font you defined using `cv::fontQt`. The `location` argument corresponds to the lower-left corner of the first character in text (or, more precisely, the beginning of the *baseline* for that character).

### Setting and Getting Window Properties

Many of the state properties of a window set at creation are queryable, and many of those can be changed (set) even after the window's creation.

```
void cv::setWindowProperty(
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window
    int          prop_id,         // Identifies window property (see Table 4-8)
    double       prop_value       // Value to which to set property
);

double cv::getWindowProperty(
    const string& name,           // Handle used to identify window
    int          prop_id         // Identifies window property (see Table 4-8)
);
```

To get a window property, you need only call `cv::getWindowProperty()` and supply the `name` of the window and the property ID (`prop_id` argument) of the property you are interested in (see Table 4-8).

*Table 4-8: Gettable and settable window properties*

Property name	Description
<code>cv::WIND_PROP_FULL_SIZE</code>	Set to either <code>cv::WINDOW_FULLSCREEN</code> for full screen window, or to <code>cv::WINDOW_NORMAL</code> for regular window.
<code>cv::WIND_PROP_AUTOSIZE</code>	Set to either <code>cv::WINDOW_AUTOSIZE</code> to have the window automatically size to the displayed image, or <code>cv::WINDOW_NORMAL</code> to have the image size to the window.
<code>cv::WIND_PROP_ASPECTRATIO</code>	Set to either <code>cv::WINDOW_FREERATIO</code> to allow the window to have any aspect ratio (as a result of user resizing) or <code>cv::WINDOW_KEEPRATIO</code> to only allow user resizing to affect absolute size (and not aspect ratio).

---

<sup>22</sup> It is important to notice here that `cv::addText()` is somewhat unlike all of the rest of the functions in the Qt interface (though not inconsistent with the behavior of its non-Qt analog `cv::putText()`). Specifically, `cv::addText()` does not put text in or on a *window*, but rather in an *image*. This means that you are actually changing the pixel values of the image—which is different than what would happen if, for example, you were to use `cv::displayOverlay()`.

---

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## Saving and Recovering Window State

The Qt interface also allows the state of windows to be saved and restored. This can be very convenient, as it includes not only the location and size of your windows, but also the state of all of the trackbars and buttons. The interface state is saved with the `cv::saveWindowParameters()` function, which takes a single argument indicating the window to be saved:

```
void cv::saveWindowParameters(  
    const string& name           // Handle used to identify window  
);
```

Once the state of the window is saved, it can be restored with the complementary `cv::loadWindowParameters()` function:

```
void cv::loadWindowParameters(  
    const string& name           // Handle used to identify window  
);
```

The real magic here is that the load command will work correctly even if you have quit and restarted your program. The nature of how this is done is not important to us here, but one detail you should know is that the state information, wherever it is saved, is saved under a key that is constructed from the executable name. So if you should change the name of the executable (though you can change its location), the state will not restore.

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## Interacting with OpenGL

On many contexts, it is very useful to be able to use OpenGL to render synthetic images and display them on top of camera or other processed images. The HighGUI and Qt GUI's provide a convenient way to use OpenGL to perform that rendering right on top of the whatever image you are already showing.<sup>23</sup> This can be extremely effective for visualizing and debugging robotic or augmented-reality applications, or anywhere in which you are trying to generate a three-dimensional model from your image and want to see the resulting model visualized on top of the original incoming image.

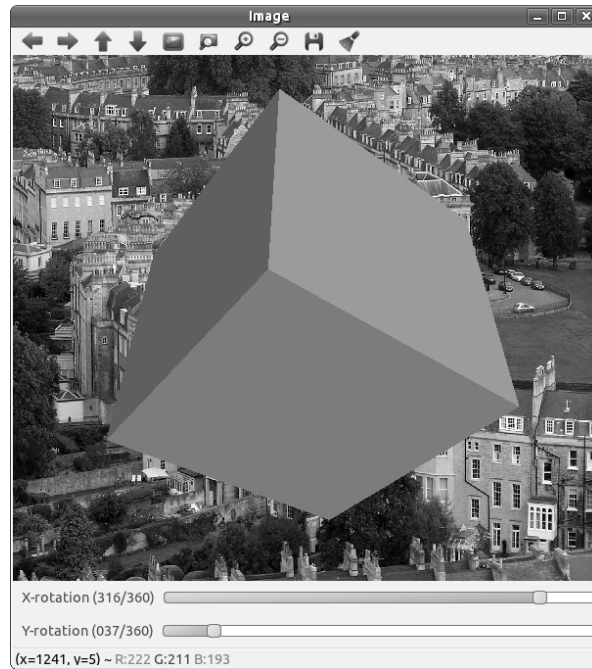


Figure 4-6. Here OpenGL is used to render a cube on top of our previous image

The basic concept is very simple; you create a callback that is an OpenGL draw function, and register it with the interface. From there, OpenCV takes care of the rest. The callback is then called every time the window is drawn (which includes whenever you call `cv::imshow()`, as you would with successive frames of a video stream). Your callback should match the prototype for `cv::OpenGLCallback()`, which means that it should be something like the following:

```
void your_opengl_callback(  
    void* params          // (Optional) Parameters from cv::createOpenGLCallback()  
);
```

Once you have your callback, you can configure the OpenGL interface with `cv::setOpenGLDrawCallback()`:

```
void cv::setOpenGLDrawCallback(  
    const string& windowName,          // Handle used to identify window  
    cv::OpenGLCallback callback,       // OpenGL callback routine  
    void* params = NULL               // (Optional) parameters for callback  
);
```

As you can see, there is not much one needs to really set things up. In addition to specifying the name of the window on which the drawing will be done and supplying the `callback` function, you have a third

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<sup>23</sup> By way of reminder, in order to use these commands, you will need to have built OpenCV with the cmake flag `-DWITH_OPENGL=ON`.

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argument `params`, which allows you to specify a pointer that will be passed to `callback` whenever it is called.

---

It is probably worth calling out here explicitly that none of this sets up the camera, lighting, or other aspects of your OpenGL activities. Internally there is a wrapper around your OpenGL callback that will set up the projection matrix using a call to `gluPerspective()`. If you want anything different (which you almost certainly will), you will have to clear and configure the projection matrix at the beginning of your callback.

---

In Figure 4-6, we have taken a simple example code from the OpenCV documentation which draws a cube in OpenGL, but we have replaced the fixed rotation angles in that cube with variables (`rotx` and `roty`) which we have made the values of the two sliders in our earlier examples. Now the user can rotate the cube with the sliders while enjoying the beautiful scenery behind.

*Example 4-5: Slightly modified code from the OpenCV documentation that draws a cube every frame; this modified version uses the global variables `rotx` and `roty` that are connected to the sliders in Figure 4-6*

```
void on_opengl( void* param )
{
    glMatrixMode( GL_MODELVIEW );
    glLoadIdentity();

    glTranslated( 0.0, 0.0, -1.0 );

    glRotatef( rotx, 1, 0, 0 );
    glRotatef( roty, 0, 1, 0 );
    glRotatef( 0, 0, 0, 1 );

    static const int coords[6][4][3] = {
        { { +1, -1, -1 }, { -1, -1, -1 }, { -1, +1, -1 }, { +1, +1, -1 } },
        { { +1, +1, -1 }, { -1, +1, -1 }, { -1, +1, +1 }, { +1, +1, +1 } },
        { { +1, -1, +1 }, { +1, -1, -1 }, { +1, +1, -1 }, { +1, +1, +1 } },
        { { -1, -1, -1 }, { -1, -1, +1 }, { -1, +1, +1 }, { -1, +1, -1 } },
        { { +1, -1, +1 }, { -1, -1, +1 }, { -1, -1, -1 }, { +1, -1, -1 } },
        { { -1, -1, +1 }, { +1, -1, +1 }, { +1, +1, +1 }, { -1, +1, +1 } }
    };

    for (int i = 0; i < 6; ++i) {
        glColor3ub( i*20, 100+i*10, i*42 );
        glBegin(GL_QUADS);
        for (int j = 0; j < 4; ++j) {
            glVertex3d(0.2 * coords[i][j][0], 0.2 * coords[i][j][1], 0.2 * coords[i][j][2]);
        }
        glEnd();
    }
}
```

As was mentioned above, whenever you call `cv::imshow()`, a call will be generated to your OpenGL callback. You can also induce a call directly to that callback by calling `cv::updateWindow()`.<sup>24</sup>

## Integrating OpenCV with Full GUI Toolkits

Even OpenCV's built-in Qt interface is still just a handy way of accomplishing some simple tasks that come up often while developing code or exploring algorithms. When it comes time to actually build an end

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<sup>24</sup> You will really use `cv::updateWindow()` only when you are using OpenGL. The utility of `cv::updateWindow()` is precisely that it induces an OpenGL draw event (and thus calls your callback which you would have set up with `cv::setOpenGLDrawCallback()`).

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user facing application, neither the native UI nor the Qt-based interface are going to do it. In this section, we will (very) briefly explore some of the issues and techniques for working with OpenCV and two existing toolkits: wxWidgets and Qt.

Clearly there are countless UI toolkits out there, and we would not want to waste time digging into each of them. Having said that, it is useful to explore how to handle the issues which will arise if you want to use OpenCV with a more fully featured toolkit.

The primary issue is how to convert OpenCV images to the form that the toolkit expects for graphics, and to know which widget or component in the toolkit is going to do that display work for you. From there, you don't need much else that is specific to OpenCV. Notably, you will not need or want the features of the UI toolkits we have covered in this chapter.

### An Example of OpenCV and Qt

Here we will show an example of using the actual Qt toolkit to write a program that reads a video file and displays it on the screen. There are several subtleties, some of which have to do with how one uses Qt, and others to do with OpenCV. Of course, we will focus on the latter, but it is worth taking a moment to notice how the former affect our current goal.

Below is the top-level code for our example; it just creates a Qt application and adds our `QMoviePlayer` widget. Everything interesting will happen inside that object.

*Example 4-6. An example program `ch4_qt.cpp`, which takes a single argument indicating a video file; that video file will be replayed inside of a Qt object which we will define, called `QMoviePlayer`*

```
#include <QApplication>
#include <QLabel>
#include <QMoviePlayer.hpp>
int main( int argc, char* argv[] ) {

    QApplication app( argc, argv );

    QMoviePlayer mp;
    mp.open( argv[1] );
    mp.show();

    return app.exec();
}
```

The interesting stuff is in the `QMoviePlayer` object. Let's take a look at the header file which defines that object:

#### *4-6 cont. The `QMoviePlayer` object header file `QMoviePlayer.hpp`*

```
#include "ui_QMoviePlayer.h"
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>
#include <string>

using namespace std;

class QMoviePlayer : public QWidget {

    Q_OBJECT;

public:
    QMoviePlayer( QWidget *parent = NULL );
    virtual ~QMoviePlayer() {};

    bool open( string file );

private:
    Ui::QMoviePlayer ui;
    cv::VideoCapture m_cap;
```

---

---

```

    QImage m_qt_img;
    cv::Mat m_cv_img;
    QTimer* m_timer;

    void paintEvent( QPaintEvent* q );
    void _copyImage( void );

    public slots:
    void nextFrame();

};

```

There is a lot going on here. The first thing that happens is the inclusion of the file *ui\_QMoviePlayer.h*. This file was automatically generated by the Qt Designer. What matters here is that it is just a *QWidget* that contains nothing but a *QFrame* called *frame*. The member *ui::QMoviePlayer* is that interface object which is defined in *ui\_QMoviePlayer.h*.

In this file, there is also a *QImage* called *m\_qt\_img* and a *cv::Mat* called *m\_cv\_img*. These will contain the Qt and OpenCV representations of the image we are getting from our video. Finally, there is a *QTimer*, which is what will take the place of *cv::waitKey()*, allowing us to replay the video frames at the correct rate. The remaining functions will become clear as we look at their actual definitions in *QMoviePlayer.cpp*.

*4-6 cont. The QMoviePlayer object source file: QMoviePlayer.cpp*

```

#include "QMoviePlayer.hpp"
#include <QTimer>
#include <QPainter>

QMoviePlayer::QMoviePlayer( QWidget *parent )
: QWidget( parent )
{
    ui.setupUi( this );
}

```

The top-level constructor for *QMoviePlayer* just calls the setup function, which was automatically built for us for the UI member.

*4-6 cont. Open.*

```

bool QMoviePlayer::open( string file ) {

    if( !m_cap.open( file ) ) return false;

    // If we opened the file, set up everything now:
    //
    m_cap.read( m_cv_img );
    m_qt_img = QImage(
        QSize( m_cv_img.cols, m_cv_img.rows ),
        QImage::Format_RGB888
    );
    ui.frame->setMinimumSize( m_qt_img.width(), m_qt_img.height() );
    ui.frame->setMaximumSize( m_qt_img.width(), m_qt_img.height() );
    _copyImage();

    m_timer = new QTimer( this );
    connect(
        m_timer,
        SIGNAL( timeout() ),
        this,
        SLOT( nextFrame() )
    );
    m_timer->start( 1000. / m_cap.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FPS ) );
}

```

---

---

```
    return true;
}
```

When an `open()` call is made on the `QMoviePlayer`, several things have to happen. The first is that the `cv::VideoCapture` member object `m_cap` needs to be opened. If that fails, we just return. Next we read the first frame into our OpenCV image member `m_cv_img`. Once we have this, we can set up the Qt image object `m_qt_img`, giving it the same size as the OpenCV image. Next we resize the frame object in the UI element to be the same size as the incoming images as well.

We will look at the call to `QMoviePlayer::_copyImage()` in a moment; this is going to handle the very important process of converting the image we have already captured into `m_cv_img` onto the Qt image `m_qt_img`, which we are actually going to have Qt paint onto the screen for us.

The last thing we do in `QMoviePlayer::open()` is to set up a `QTimer` which, when it “goes off,” will call the function `QMoviePlayer::nextFrame()` (which will, not surprisingly, get the next frame). The call to `m_timer->start()` is how we both start the timer running, and indicate that it should go off at the correct rate implied by `cv::CAP_PROP_FPS` (i.e., 1,000 milliseconds divided by the frame rate).

*4-6 cont. cv::Mat to QImage.*

```
void QMoviePlayer::_copyImage( void ) {
    // Copy the image data into the Qt QImage
    //
    cv::Mat cv_header_to_qt_image(
        cv::Size(
            m_qt_img.width(),
            m_qt_img.height()
        ),
        cv::U8C3,
        m_qt_img.bits()
    );
    cv::cvtColor( m_cv_img, cv_header_to_qt_image, cv::BGR2RGB );
}
```

The function `QMoviePlayer::_copyImage()` is responsible for copying the image from the buffer `m_cv_img` into the Qt image buffer `m_qt_img`. The way we do this shows off a nice feature of the `cv::Mat` object. We first define a `cv::Mat` object called `cv_header_to_qt_image`. When we define that object, we actually tell it what area to use for its data area, and hand it the data area for the Qt `QImage` object `m_qt_img.bits()`. We then call `cv::cvtColor` to do the copying, which handles the subtlety that OpenCV prefers BGR ordering, while Qt prefers RGB.

*4-6 cont. nextFrame.*

```
void QMoviePlayer::nextFrame() {
    // Nothing to do if capture object is not open
    //
    if( !m_cap.isOpened() ) return;

    m_cap.read( m_cv_img );
    _copyImage();

    this->update();
}
```

The `QMoviePlayer::nextFrame()` function actually handles the reading of subsequent frames. Recall that this routine is called whenever the `QTimer` expires. It reads the new image into the OpenCV buffer, calls `QMoviePlayer::_copyImage()` to copy it into the Qt buffer, and then makes an update call on the `QWidget` that this is all part of (so that Qt knows that something has changed).

---

---

#### 4-6 cont. *paintEvent*.

```
void QMoviePlayer::paintEvent( QPaintEvent* e ) {  
  
    QPainter painter( this );  
    painter.drawImage( QPoint( ui.frame->x(), ui.frame->y()), m_qt_img );  
  
}
```

Last, but not least, is the function `QMoviePlayer::paintEvent()`. This is the function that is called by Qt whenever it is necessary to actually draw the `QMoviePlayer` widget. This function just creates a `QPainter` and tells it to draw the current Qt image `m_qt_img` (starting at the corner of the screen).

#### An Example of OpenCV and wxWidgets

In this example, we will use a different cross-platform toolkit, wxWidgets. The wxWidgets toolkit is similar in many ways to Qt in terms of its GUI components, but of course, it is in the details that things tend to become difficult. As with the Qt example, we will have one top-level file that basically puts everything in place and a code and header file pair that define an object which encapsulates our example task of playing a video. This time our object will be called `WxMoviePlayer`, and we will build it based on the UI classes provided by wxWidgets.

*Example 4-7: An example program `ch4_wx.cpp`, which takes a single argument indicating a video file; that video file will be replayed inside of a wxWidgets object which we will define called `WxMoviePlayer`*

```
#include "wx/wx.h"  
#include "WxMoviePlayer.hpp"  
  
// Application class, the top level object in wxWidgets  
//  
class MyApp : public wxApp {  
public:  
    virtual bool OnInit();  
};  
  
// Behind the scenes stuff to create a main() function and attach MyApp  
//  
DECLARE_APP( MyApp );  
IMPLEMENT_APP( MyApp );  
  
// When MyApp is initialized, do these things.  
//  
bool MyApp::OnInit() {  
  
    wxFrame* frame = new wxFrame( NULL, wxID_ANY, wxT("ch4_wx") );  
    frame->Show( true );  
    WxMoviePlayer* mp = new WxMoviePlayer(  
        frame,  
        wxPoint( -1, -1 ),  
        wxSize( 640, 480 )  
    );  
    mp->open( wxString(argv[1]) );  
    mp->Show( true );  
  
    return true;  
  
}
```

The structure here is a little more complicated in appearance than with the Qt example, but the content is very similar. The first thing we do is create a class definition for our application, which we derive from the library class `wxApp`. The only thing different about our class is that it will overload the `MyApp::OnInit()` function with our own content. After declaring `class MyApp`, we call two macros `DECLARE_APP()` and `IMPLEMENT_APP()`. In short, these are creating the `main()` function,

---

---

and installing an instance of MyApp as “the application.” The last thing we do in our main program is to actually fill out the function `MyApp::OnInit()`. This is going to get called when our program starts: this functions largely as the equivalent to `main()` from our point of view. This function creates the window (called a “frame” in wxWidgets), and an instance of our WxMoviePlayer object in that frame. It then calls the open method on the WxMoviePlayer and hands it the name of the movie file we want to open.

Of course, all of the interesting stuff is happening inside of the WxMoviePlayer object. Here is the header file for that object:

*The WxMoviePlayer object header file WxMoviePlayer.hpp*

```
#include "opencv2/opencv.hpp"

#include "wx/wx.h"
#include <string>

#define TIMER_ID 0

using namespace std;

class WxMoviePlayer : public wxWindow {

public:
    WxMoviePlayer(
        wxWindow*    parent,
        const wxPoint& pos,
        const wxSize&  size
    );
    virtual ~WxMoviePlayer() {};
    bool open( wxString file );

private:

    cv::VideoCapture m_cap;
    cv::Mat          m_cv_img;
    wxImage          m_wx_img;
    wxBitmap         m_wx_bmp;
    wxTimer*         m_timer;
    wxWindow*        m_parent;

    void _copyImage( void );

    void OnPaint( wxPaintEvent& e );
    void OnTimer( wxTimerEvent& e );
    void OnKey(   wxKeyEvent&   e );

protected:
    DECLARE_EVENT_TABLE();
};
```

The important things to notice in the above declaration are the following. The `WxMoviePlayer` object is derived from `wxWindow`, which is the generic class used by wxWidgets for just about anything that will be visible on the screen. We have three event-handling methods `OnPaint()`, `onTimer()`, and `OnKey()`. These will handle drawing, getting a new image from the video, and closing the file with the ESC key, respectively. Finally, you will notice that there is an object of type `wxImage` and an object of type `wxBitmap`, in addition to the OpenCV `cv:Mat` type image. In wxWidgets, bitmaps (which are operating system dependant) are distinguished from “images” (which are device independent representations of image data). The exact role of these two will be clear shortly as we look at the code file `WxMoviePlayer.cpp`.

*The WxMoviePlayer object source file WxMoviePlayer.cpp*

---

---

```
#include "WxMoviePlayer.hpp"

BEGIN_EVENT_TABLE( WxMoviePlayer, wxWindow )
    EVT_PAINT( WxMoviePlayer::OnPaint )
    EVT_TIMER( TIMER_ID, WxMoviePlayer::OnTimer )
    EVT_CHAR( WxMoviePlayer::OnKey )
END_EVENT_TABLE()
```

The first thing we do is to set up the callbacks that will be associated with individual events. This is done by macros provided by the wxWidgets framework.<sup>25</sup>

```
WxMoviePlayer::WxMoviePlayer(
    wxWindow*      parent,
    const wxPoint& pos,
    const wxSize&  size
) : wxWindow( parent, -1, pos, size, wxSIMPLE_BORDER ) {
    m_timer      = NULL;
    m_parent      = parent;
}
```

When the movie player is created, its timer element is NULL (we will set that up when we actually have a video open). We do take note of the parent of the player, however. (In this case, that parent will be the wxFrame we created to put it in.) We will need to know who the parent frame is when it comes time to closing the application in response to the ESC key.

```
void WxMoviePlayer::OnPaint( wxPaintEvent& event ) {
    wxPaintDC dc( this );

    if( !dc.Ok() ) return;

    int x,y,w,h;
    dc.BeginDrawing();
    dc.GetClippingBox( &x, &y, &w, &h );
    dc.DrawBitmap( m_wx_bmp, x, y );
    dc.EndDrawing();

    return;
}
```

The `WxMoviePlayer::OnPaint()` routine is called whenever the window needs to be repainted on screen. You will notice that when we execute `WxMoviePlayer::OnPaint()`, the information we need to actually do the painting is assumed to be in `m_wx_bmp`, the `wxBitmap` object. Because the `wxBitmap` is the system dependant representation, it is already prepared to be copied to the screen. The next two methods, `WxMoviePlayer::_copyImage()` and `WxMoviePlayer::open()` will show how it got created in the first place.

```
void WxMoviePlayer::_copyImage( void ) {
    m_wx_bmp = wxBitmap( m_wx_img );

    Refresh( FALSE ); // indicate that the object is dirty
    Update();
}
```

---

<sup>25</sup> The astute reader will notice that the keyboard event is “hooked up” to the `WxMoviePlayer` widget and not to the top-level application or the frame (as was the case for the Qt example, and is the case for HighGUI). There are various ways to accomplish this, but wxWidgets really prefers your keyboard events to be bound locally to visible objects in your UI, rather than globally. Since this is a simple example, we chose to just do the easiest thing and bind the keyboard events directly to the movie player.

---

---

The `WxMoviePlayer::_copyImage()` method is what is going to get called whenever a new image is read from the `cv::VideoCapture` object. It does not appear to do much, but actually a lot is going on in its short body. First and foremost is the construction of the `wxBitmap m_wx_bmp` from the `wxImage m_wx_img`. The constructor is handling the conversion from the abstract representation used by `wxImage` (which, we will see, looks very much like the representation used by OpenCV) to the device and system specific representation used by your particular machine. Once that copy is done, a call to `Refresh()` indicates that the widget is “dirty” and needs redrawing, and the subsequent call to `Update()` actually indicates that the time for that redrawing is now.

```
bool WxMoviePlayer::open( wxString file ) {
    if( !m_cap.open( std::string( file.mb_str() ) ) ) {
        return false;
    }

    // If we opened the file, set up everything now:
    //
    m_cap.read( m_cv_img );

    m_wx_img = wxImage(
        m_cv_img.cols,
        m_cv_img.rows,
        m_cv_img.data,
        TRUE // static data, do not free on delete()
    );

    _copyImage();

    m_timer = new wxTimer( this, TIMER_ID );
    m_timer->Start( 1000. / m_cap.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FPS ) );

    return true;
}
```

The `WxMoviePlayer::open()` method also does several important things. The first is to actually open the `cv::VideoCapture` object, but there is a lot more to be done. Next, an image is read off of the player, and it is used to create a `wxImage` object which “points at” the OpenCV `cv::Mat` image. This is the opposite philosophy to the one we used in the Qt example: in this case, it turns out to be a little more convenient to create the `cv::Mat` first and have it own the data, and the GUI toolkit’s image object second and have it be just a header to that existing data. Next, we call `WxMoviePlayer::_copyImage()`, and that function converts the OpenCV image `m_cv_img` into the native bitmap for us.

Finally, we create a `wxTimer` object and tell it to wake us up every few milliseconds—with that number being computed from the FPS reported by the `cv::VideoCapture` object. Whenever that timer expires, a `wxTimerEvent` is generated and passed to `WxMoviePlayer::OnTimer()`, which you will recall to be the handler of such events.

```
void WxMoviePlayer::OnTimer( wxTimerEvent& event ) {
    if( !m_cap.isOpened() ) return;
    m_cap.read( m_cv_img );
    cv::cvtColor( m_cv_img, m_cv_img, cv::BGR2RGB );
    _copyImage();
}
```

That handler does not do too much; primarily it just iterates the reading of a new frame from the video and the conversion of that frame from BGR to RGB for display, and then calls our `WxMoviePlayer::_copyImage()`, which makes the next bitmap for us.

```
void WxMoviePlayer::OnKey( wxKeyEvent& e ) {
    if( e.GetKeyCode() == WXK_ESCAPE ) m_parent->Close();
}
```

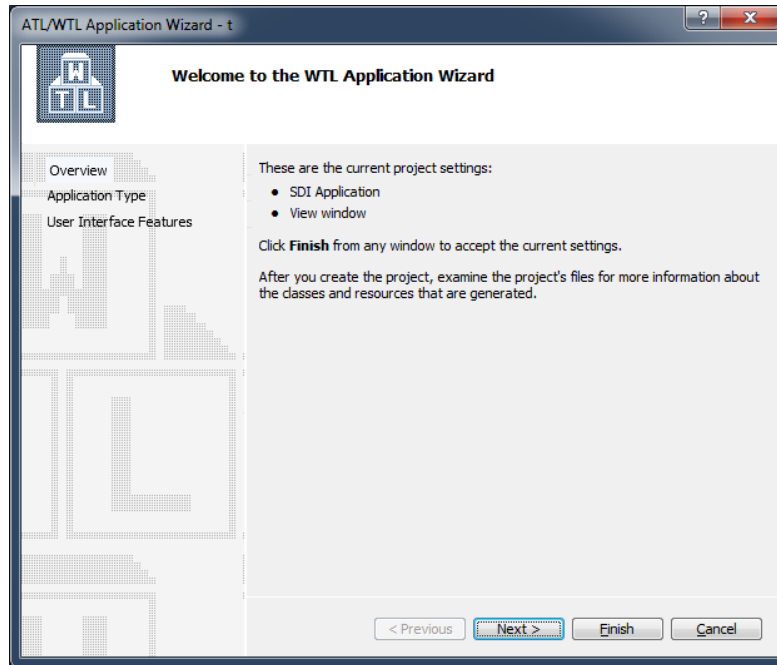
---

---

Finally, we have our handler for any key-presses. It simply checks to see if that key was the Escape key, and if so, closes the program. It is worth noting that we do not close the `WxMoviePlayer` object, but rather the parent frame. Closing the frame is the same as closing the window any other way; it shuts down the application.

### An Example of OpenCV and the Windows Template Library

In this example, we will use the native windows GUI API.<sup>26</sup> The Windows Template Library, WTL, is a very thin C++ wrapper around the raw Win32 API. WTL applications are structured similarly to MFC, in that there is an application/document-view structure. For the purposes of this sample, we will start by running the WTL Application Wizard from within Visual Studio, and creating a new “SDI Application” and under “User Interface Features” ensuring “Use a View Window” is selected (it should be, by default).



*Figure 4-7: The WTL Application Wizard*

The exact file names generated will depend on the name you give your project. For this example, the project is named *OpenCVTest*, and we will mostly be working in the *COpenCVTestView* class.

#### *Example 4-8: An example header file for our custom View class*

```
class COpenCVTestView : public CWindowImpl<COpenCVTestView> {
public:
    DECLARE_WND_CLASS(NULL)

    bool OpenFile(std::string file);
    void _copyImage();

    BOOL PreTranslateMessage(MSG* pMsg);

    BEGIN_MSG_MAP(COpenCVTestView)
        MESSAGE_HANDLER(WM_ERASEBKGD, OnEraseBkgnd)
        MESSAGE_HANDLER(WM_PAINT, OnPaint)
    END_MSG_MAP()
};
```

---

<sup>26</sup> Special thanks to Sam Leventer, who is the original author of this WTL example code.

---

---

```

    MESSAGE_HANDLER(WM_TIMER, OnTimer)
END_MSG_MAP()

// Handler prototypes (uncomment arguments if needed):
// LRESULT MessageHandler(
//     UINT    /*uMsg*/,
//     WPARAM  /*wParam*/,
//     LPARAM  /*lParam*/,
//     BOOL&    /*bHandled*/
// );
// LRESULT CommandHandler(
//     WORD     /*wNotifyCode*/,
//     WORD     /*wID*/,
//     HWND     /*hWndCtl*/,
//     BOOL&    /*bHandled*/
// );
// LRESULT NotifyHandler(
//     int      /*idCtrl*/,
//     LPNMHDR  /*pnmh*/,
//     BOOL&    /*bHandled*/
// );

LRESULT OnPaint(
    UINT    /*uMsg*/,
    WPARAM  /*wParam*/,
    LPARAM  /*lParam*/,
    BOOL&    /*bHandled*/
);
LRESULT OnTimer(
    UINT    /*uMsg*/,
    WPARAM  /*wParam*/,
    LPARAM  /*lParam*/,
    BOOL&    /*bHandled*/
);
LRESULT OnEraseBkgnd(
    UINT    /*uMsg*/,
    WPARAM  /*wParam*/,
    LPARAM  /*lParam*/,
    BOOL&    /*bHandled*/
);

private:
    cv::VideoCapture m_cap;
    cv::Mat          m_cv_img;

    RGBTRIPLE*      m_bitmapBits;
};

```

The structure here is very similar to the preceding wx example. The only change outside of the view code is for the **Open** menu item handler, which will be in your **CMainFrame** class. It will need to call into the view class to open the video:

```

LRESULT CMainFrame::OnFileOpen(
    WORD /*wNotifyCode*/,
    WORD /*wID*/,
    HWND /*hWndCtl*/,
    BOOL& /*bHandled*/
) {
    WTL::CFileDialog dlg(TRUE);
    if (IDOK == dlg.DoModal(m_hWnd)) {
        m_view.OpenFile(dlg.m_szFileName);
    }
}

```

---

---

```
    return 0;
}

bool COpenCVTestView::OpenFile(std::string file) {

    if( !m_cap.open( file ) ) return false;

    // If we opened the file, set up everything now:
    //
    m_cap.read( m_cv_img );

    // could create a DIBSection here, but lets just allocate memory for the raw bits
    m_bitmapBits = new RGBTRIPLE[m_cv_img.cols * m_cv_img.rows];

    _copyImage();

    SetTimer(0, 1000.0f / m_cap.get( cv::CAP_PROP_FPS ) );

    return true;
}

void COpenCVTestView::_copyImage() {

    // Copy the image data into the bitmap
    //
    cv::Mat cv_header_to_qt_image(
        cv::Size(
            m_cv_img.cols,
            m_cv_img.rows
        ),
        CV_8UC3,
        m_bitmapBits
    );
    cv::cvtColor( m_cv_img, cv_header_to_qt_image, cv::BGR2RGB );
}

LRESULT COpenCVTestView::OnPaint(
    UINT /*uMsg*/,
    WPARAM /*wParam*/,
    LPARAM /*lParam*/,
    BOOL& /*bHandled*/
) {
    CPaintDC dc(m_hWnd);

    WTL::CRect rect;
    GetClientRect(&rect);

    if( m_cap.isOpened() ) {
        BITMAPINFO bmi = {0};
        bmi.bmiHeader.biSize = sizeof(bmi.bmiHeader);
        bmi.bmiHeader.biCompression = BI_RGB;
        bmi.bmiHeader.biWidth = m_cv_img.cols;
        // note that bitmaps default to bottom-up, use negative height to
        // represent top-down
        bmi.bmiHeader.biHeight = m_cv_img.rows * -1;

        bmi.bmiHeader.biPlanes = 1;
        bmi.bmiHeader.biBitCount = 24; // 32 if you use RGBQUADs for the bits

        dc.StretchDIBits(
            0, 0, rect.Width(), rect.Height(),
            0, 0, rect.Width(), rect.Height(),
            m_bitmapBits, DIB_RGB_COLORS, DIB_RGB_COLORS, 0);
    }
}
```

---

---

```

        0,
        bmi.bmiHeader.biWidth, abs(bmi.bmiHeader.biHeight),
        m_bitmapBits,
        &bmi,
        DIB_RGB_COLORS,
        SRCCOPY
    );
} else {
    dc.FillRect(rect, COLOR_WINDOW);
}

return 0;
}

LRESULT COpenCVTestView::OnTimer(
    UINT /*uMsg*/,
    WPARAM /*wParam*/,
    LPARAM /*lParam*/,
    BOOL& /*bHandled*/
) {
    // Nothing to do if capture object is not open
    //
    if( !m_cap.isOpened() ) return 0;

    m_cap.read( m_cv_img );
    _copyImage();

    Invalidate();

    return 0;
}

LRESULT COpenCVTestView::OnEraseBkgnd(
    UINT /*uMsg*/,
    WPARAM /*wParam*/,
    LPARAM /*lParam*/,
    BOOL& /*bHandled*/
) {
    // since we completely paint our window in the OnPaint handler, use
    // an empty background handler
    return 0;
}

```

This code illustrates how to use bitmap-based drawing in a C++ application under Windows. This method is simpler, but less efficient than using DirectShow to handle the video stream.

---

If you are using the .NET Runtime (either through C#, VB.NET or Managed C++), then you may want to look into a package that completely wraps OpenCV, such as Emgu (<http://emgu.com>).

---

## Drawing Things

We often want to draw some kind of picture, or to draw something on top of an image obtained from somewhere else. Toward this end, OpenCV provides a menagerie of functions that will allow us to make lines, squares, circles, and the like.

The drawing functions available will work with images of any depth, but most of them only affect the first three channels—defaulting to only the first channel in the case of single-channel images. Most of the drawing functions support a color, a thickness, what is called a “line type” (which really means whether or not to anti-alias lines), and subpixel alignment of objects.

---

When specifying colors, the convention is to use the `cv::Scalar` object, even though only the first three values are used most of the time. (It is sometimes convenient to be able to use the fourth value in a `cv::Scalar` to represent an alpha-channel, but the drawing functions do not currently support alpha blending.) Also, by convention, OpenCV uses BGR ordering<sup>27</sup> for converting multichannel images to color renderings (this is what is used by the draw functions `imshow()`, which actually paints images onto your screen for viewing). Of course, you don't have to use this convention, and it might not be ideal if you are using data from some other library with OpenCV headers on top of it. In any case, the core functions of the library are always agnostic to any "meaning" you might assign to a channel.

## Line Art and Filled Polygons

Functions that draw lines of one kind or another (segments, circles, rectangles, etc.) will usually accept a `thickness` and `lineType` parameter. Both are integers, but the only accepted values for the latter are 4, 8, or `cv::AA`. `thickness` will be the thickness of the line measured in pixels. For circles, rectangles, and all of the other closed shapes, the `thickness` argument can also be set to `cv::FILL` (which is an alias for `-1`). In that case, the result is that the drawn figure will be filled in the same color as the edges. The `lineType` argument indicates whether the lines should be "4-connected," "8-connected," or anti-aliased. For the first two, the Bresenham algorithm is used, while for the anti-aliased lines, Gaussian filtering is used. Wide lines are always drawn with rounded ends.

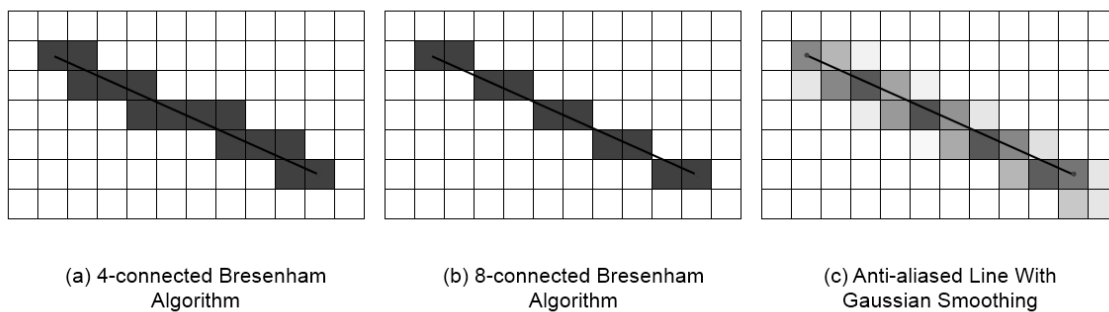


Figure 4-8: The same line as it would be rendered using the 4-connected (a), 8-connected (b), and anti-aliased (c) line types

For the drawing algorithms, endpoints (lines), center-points (circles), corners (rectangles), and so on are typically specified as integers. However, these algorithms support subpixel alignment, through the `shift` argument. Where `shift` is available, it is interpreted as the number of bits in the integer arguments to treat as fractional bits. For example, if you say you want a circle centered at (5,5), but set `shift` to 1, then the circle will be drawn at (2.5,2.5). The effect of this will typically be quite subtle, and depend on the line type used. The effect is most noticeable for anti-aliased lines.

Table 4-9: Drawing Functions

Function	Description
<code>cv::circle()</code>	Draw a simple circle

<sup>27</sup> There is a slightly confusing point here, which is mostly due to legacy in origin. That is that the macro `CV_RGB(r,g,b)` produces a `cv::Scalar s` with value `s.val[] = { b, g, r, 0 }`. This is as it should be, as general OpenCV functions only know what is red, green, or blue by the order, and the ordering convention for image data is BGR as stated in the text.

---

<code>cv::clipLine()</code>	Determine if a line is inside a given box
<code>cv::ellipse()</code>	Draw an ellipse, which may be tilted or an elliptical arc
<code>cv::ellipse2Poly()</code>	Compute a polygon approximation to an elliptical arc
<code>cv::fillConvexPoly()</code>	Fast algorithm for drawing filled versions of simple polygons
<code>cv::fillPoly()</code>	General algorithm for drawing filled versions of arbitrary polygons
<code>cv::line()</code>	Draw a simple line
<code>cv::rectangle()</code>	Draw a simple rectangle
<code>cv::polyLines()</code>	Draw multiple polygonal curves

### `cv::circle()`

```
void circle(
    cv::Mat&          img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Point         center,       // Location of circle center
    int               radius,       // Radius of circle
    const cv::Scalar& color,        // Color, RGB form
    int               thickness = 1, // Thickness of line
    int               lineType = 8, // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int               shift      = 0 // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);
```

The first argument to `cv::circle()` is just your image `img`. Next, are the `center`, a two-dimensional point, and the `radius`. The remaining arguments are the standard `color`, `thickness`, `lineType`, and `shift`. The shift is applied to both the radius and the center location.

### `cv::clipLine()`

```
bool clipLine(
    cv::Rect          imgRect,      // True if any part of line in 'imgRect'
    cv::Point&        pt1,         // Rectangle to clip to
    cv::Point&        pt2,         // First end-point of line, overwritten
    cv::Point&        pt2,         // Second end-point of line, overwritten
);

bool clipLine(
    cv::Size          imgSize,      // True if any part of line in image size
    cv::Point&        pt1,         // Size of image, implies rectangle at 0,0
    cv::Point&        pt2,         // First end-point of line, overwritten
    cv::Point&        pt2,         // Second end-point of line, overwritten
);
```

This function is used to determine if a line, specified by the two points `pt1` and `pt2` lies inside of a rectangular boundary. In the first version, a `cv::Rect` is supplied and the line is compared to that rectangle. `cv::clipLine()` will return `False` only if the line is entirely outside of the specified rectangular region. The second version is the same, except that it takes a `cv::Size` argument. Calling this second version is equivalent to calling the first version with a rectangle whose `(x,y)` location is `(0,0)`.

### `cv::ellipse()`

```
bool ellipse(
    cv::Mat&          img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Point         center,       // Location of ellipse center
    cv::Size          axes,        // Length of major and minor axes
    double            angle,       // Tilt angle of major axis
    double            startAngle,  // Start angle for arc drawing
    double            endAngle,    // End angle for arc drawing
);
```

---

```

const cv::Scalar&    color,           // Color, BGR form
int                 thickness = 1,     // Thickness of line
int                 lineType = 8,     // Connectedness, 4 or 8
int                 shift = 0        // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);

bool ellipse(
    cv::Mat&          img,             // Image to be drawn on
    const cv::RotatedRect& rect,       // Rotated rectangle bounds ellipse
    const cv::Scalar& color,           // Color, BGR form
    int               thickness = 1,   // Thickness of line
    int               lineType = 8,   // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int               shift = 0       // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);

```

The `cv::ellipse()` function is very similar to the `cv::circle()` function, with the primary difference being the `axes` argument, which is of type `cv::Size`. In this case, the `height` and `width` arguments represent the length of the ellipse's major and minor axes. The `angle` is the angle (in degrees) of the major axis, which is measured counterclockwise from horizontal (i.e., from the `x`-axis). Similarly, the `startAngle` and `endAngle` indicate (also in degrees) the angle for the arc to start and for it to finish. Thus, for a complete ellipse, you must set these values to 0 and 360, respectively.

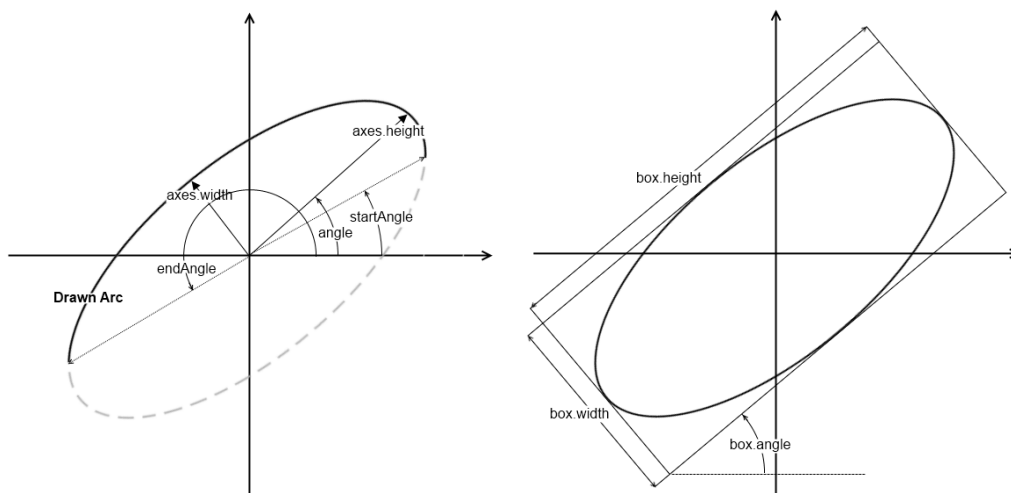


Figure 4-8: An elliptical arc specified by the major and minor axes with tilt angle (left); a similar ellipse specified using a `cv::RotatedRect` (right).

The alternate way to specify the drawing of an ellipse is to use a bounding box. In this case, the argument `box` of type `cv::RotatedRect` completely specifies both the size and the orientation of the ellipse. Both methods of specifying an ellipse are illustrated in Figure 4-8.

### `cv::ellipse2Poly()`

```

void ellipse2Poly(
    cv::Point          center,         // Location of ellipse center
    cv::Size           axes,           // Length of major and minor axes
    double             angle,          // Tilt angle of major axis
    double             startAngle,     // Start angle for arc drawing
    double             endAngle,       // End angle for arc drawing
    int                delta,          // Angle between sequential vertices
    vector<cv::Point>& pts             // Result, STL-vector of points
);

```

---

The `cv::ellipse2Poly()` function is used by `cv::ellipse()` internally to compute elliptical arcs, but you can call it yourself as well. Given information about an elliptical arc (`center`, `axes`, `angle`, `startAngle`, and `endAngle`—all as defined in `cv::ellipse()`) and a parameter `delta`, which specifies the angle between subsequent points you want to sample, `cv::ellipse2Poly()` computes a sequence of points that form a polygonal approximation to the elliptical arc you specified. The computed points are returned in the `vector<> pts`.

### `cv::fillConvexPoly()`

```
void fillConvexPoly(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    const cv::Point* pts,        // C-style array of points
    int           npts,          // Number of points in 'pts'
    const cv::Scalar& color,      // Color, BGR form
    int           lineType = 8,   // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int           shift = 0       // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);
```

This function draws a filled polygon. It is much faster than `cv::fillPoly()` because it uses a much simpler algorithm. This algorithm, however, will not work correctly if the polygon you pass to it has self-intersections.<sup>28</sup> The points in `pts` are treated as sequential, and a segment from the last point in `pts` and the first point is implied (i.e., the polygon is assumed to be closed).

### `cv::fillPoly()`

```
void fillPoly(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    const cv::Point* pts,        // C-style array of arrays of points
    int           npts,          // Number of points in 'pts[i]'
    int           ncontours,     // Number of arrays in 'pts'
    const cv::Scalar& color,      // Color, BGR form
    int           lineType = 8,   // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int           shift = 0,      // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
    cv::Point      offset = Point() // Uniform offset applied to all points
);
```

This function draws any number of filled polygons. Unlike `cv::fillConvexPoly()`, it can handle polygons with self-intersections. The argument `ncontours` specifies how many different polygon contours there will be, and the argument `npts` is a C-style array that indicates how many points there are in each contour (i.e., `npts[i]` indicates how many points there are in polygon `i`). `pts` is a C-style array of C-style arrays containing all of the points in those polygons (i.e., `pts[i][j]` contains the  $j^{\text{th}}$  point in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  polygon.) `cv::fillPoly()` also has one additional argument `offset`, which is a pixel offset that will be applied to all vertex locations when the polygons are drawn. The polygons are assumed to be closed (i.e., a segment from the last element of `pts[i][]` to the first element will be assumed).

### `cv::line()`

```
void line(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Point      pt1,          // First end-point of line
    cv::Point      pt2,          // Second end-point of line
    const cv::Scalar& color,      // Color, BGR form
    int           lineType = 8,   // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int           shift = 0       // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);
```

---

<sup>28</sup> The algorithm used by `cv::fillConvexPoly()` is actually somewhat more general than implied here. It will correctly draw any polygon whose contour intersects every horizontal line at most twice (though it is allowed for the top or bottom of the polygon to be flat with respect to the horizontal). Such a polygon is said to be “monotone with respect to the horizontal.”

---

---

The function `cv::line()` draws a straight line from `pt1` to `pt2` in the image `img`. Lines are automatically clipped by the image boundaries.

#### `cv::rectangle()`

```
void rectangle(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Point     pt1,           // First corner of rectangle
    cv::Point     pt2,           // Opposite corner of rectangle
    const cv::Scalar& color,     // Color, BGR form
    int           lineType = 8,  // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int           shift   = 0    // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);

void rectangle(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Rect      r,             // Rectangle to draw
    const cv::Scalar& color,     // Color, BGR form
    int           lineType = 8,  // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int           shift   = 0    // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);
```

The function `cv::rectangle()` draws a rectangle with corners `pt1` to `pt2` in the image `img`. An alternate form of `cv::rectangle()` allows the rectangle's location and size to be specified by a single `cv::Rect` argument `r`.

#### `cv::polyLines()`

```
void polyLines(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    const cv::Point* pts,       // C-style array of arrays of points
    int           npts,         // Number of points in 'pts[i]'
    int           ncontours,    // Number of arrays in 'pts'
    bool          isClosed,     // If true, connect last and first points
    const cv::Scalar& color,    // Color, BGR form
    int           lineType = 8, // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    int           shift   = 0   // Bits of radius to treat as fraction
);
```

This function draws any number of unfilled polygons. It can handle general polygons including polygons with self-intersections. The argument `ncontours` specifies how many different polygon contours there will be, and the argument `npts` is a C-style array that indicates how many points there are in each contour (i.e., `npts[i]` indicates how many points there are in polygon `i`). `pts` is a C-style array of C-style arrays containing all of the points in those polygons (i.e., `pts[i][j]` contains the  $j^{\text{th}}$  point in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  polygon.) Polygons are not assumed to be closed. If the argument `isClosed` is `true`, then a segment from the last element of `pts[i][]` to the first element will be assumed. Otherwise the contour is taken to be an open contour containing only `npts[i]-1` segments between the `npts[i]` points listed.

#### `cv::LineIterator()`

The `cv::LineIterator` object is an iterator that is used to get each pixel of a raster line in sequence. It is another one of those “objects that do stuff.” The constructor for the line iterator takes the two endpoints for the line as well as a line type specifier and an additional Boolean that indicates which direction the line should be traversed.

```
LineIterator::LineIterator(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    cv::Point     pt1,           // First end-point of line
    cv::Point     pt2,           // Second end-point of line
    int           lineType = 8,  // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    bool          leftToRight = false // If true, always start steps on the left
);
```

---

---

Once initialized, the number of pixels in the line is stored in the member integer `cv::LineIterator::count`. The overloaded dereferencing operator `cv::LineIterator::operator*()` returns a pointer of type `uchar*`, which points to the “current” pixel. The current pixel starts at one end of the line, and is incremented by means of the overloaded increment operator `cv::LineIterator::operator++()`. The actual traversal is done according to the Bresenham algorithm mentioned earlier.

The purpose of the `cv::LineIterator` is to make it possible for you to take some specific action on each pixel along the line. This is particularly handy when creating special effects such as switching the color of a pixel from black to white and white to black (i.e., an XOR operation on a binary image).

When accessing an individual “pixel,” remember that this pixel may have one or many channels and it might be any kind of image depth. The return value from the dereferencing operator is always `uchar*`, so you are responsible for casting that pointer to the correct type. For example, if your image were a three-channel image of 32-bit floating-point numbers, and your iterator were called `iter`, then you would want to cast the return (pointer) value of the dereferencing operator like this: `(Vec3f*)*iter`.

---

The style of the overloaded dereferencing operator `cv::LineIterator::operator*()` is slightly different than what you are probably used to from libraries like STL. The difference is that the return value from the iterator is itself a pointer, so the iterator itself behaves not like a pointer, but like a pointer to a pointer.

---

## Fonts and Text

One additional form of drawing is to draw text. Of course, text creates its own set of complexities, but—as always with this sort of thing—OpenCV is more concerned with providing a simple “down and dirty” solution that will work for simple cases than a robust, complex solution (which would be redundant anyway given the capabilities of other libraries).

*Table 4-10: Text drawing functions*

Function	Description
<code>cv::putText()</code>	Draw the specified text in an image
<code>cv::getTextSize()</code>	Determine the width and height of a text string

### `cv::putText()`

```
void cv::putText(
    cv::Mat&      img,           // Image to be drawn on
    const string& text,         // String to write (often from cv::format)
    cv::Point     origin,       // Upper-left corner of text box
    int           fontFace,     // Font to use (e.g., cv::FONT_HERSHEY_PLAIN)
    double        fontScale,    // Scale of font (not “point”, but multiple)
    cv::Scalar    color,        // Color, RGB form
    int           thickness = 1, // Thickness of line
    int           lineType = 8,  // Connectedness, 4 or 8
    bool          bottomLeftOrigin = false // If true, measure ‘origin’ from lower left
);
```

OpenCV has one main routine, called `cv::putText()` that just throws some text onto an image. The text indicated by `text` is printed with its upper-left corner of the text box at `origin` and in the color indicated by `color`, unless the `bottomLeftOrigin` flag is `true`, in which case the lower-left corner of the text box is located at `origin`. The font used is selected by the `fontFace` argument, which can be any of those listed in **Error! Reference source not found.**

---

---

Table 4-11: Available fonts (all are variations of Hershey)

Identifier	Description
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_SIMPLEX</code>	Normal size sans-serif
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_PLAIN</code>	Small size sans-serif
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_DUPLEX</code>	Normal size sans-serif, more complex than <code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_SIMPLEX</code>
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_COMPLEX</code>	Normal size serif, more complex than <code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_DUPLEX</code>
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_TRIPLEX</code>	Normal size serif, more complex than <code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_COMPLEX</code>
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_COMPLEX_SMALL</code>	Smaller version of <code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_COMPLEX</code>
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_SCRIPT_SIMPLEX</code>	Handwriting style
<code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_SCRIPT_COMPLEX</code>	More complex variant of <code>cv::FONT_HERSHEY_SCRIPT_SIMPLEX</code>

Any of the font names listed in **Error! Reference source not found.** can also be combined (with an OR operator) with `cv::FONT_HERSHEY_ITALIC` to render the indicated font in italics. Each font has a “natural” size. When `fontScale` is not 1.0, then the font size is scaled by this number before drawing.



Figure 4-9: The eight fonts of Table 4-11, with the origin of each line separated from the vertical by 30 pixels

#### `cv::getTextSize()`

```
cv::Size cv::getTextSize(  
    const string& text,  
    cv::Point      origin,  
    int            fontFace,  
    double         fontScale,  
    int           thickness,  
    int*          baseLine  
);
```

The function `cv::getTextSize()` answers the question of how big some text would be if you were to draw it (with some set of parameters), without actually drawing it on an image. The only novel argument to

---

---

`cv::getTextSize()` is `baseLine`, which is actually an output parameter. `baseLine` is the y-coordinate of the text baseline relative to the bottom-most point in the text.<sup>29</sup>

## Data Persistence

OpenCV provides a mechanism for serializing and de-serializing its various data types to and from disk in either YAML or XML format, which can load and store any number of OpenCV data objects (including basic types like `int`, `float`, etc.) in a single file. These functions are separate from the special functions we saw earlier in the chapter that handle the more specialized situation of loading and saving image files and video data. In this section, we will focus on general object persistence: reading and writing matrices, OpenCV structures, configuration, and log files.

The basic mechanism for reading and writing files is the `cv::FileStorage` object. This object essentially represents a file on disk, but does so in a manner that makes accessing the data represented in the file easy and natural.

### Writing to a `cv::FileStorage`

```
| FileStorage::FileStorage();  
| FileStorage::FileStorage( string fileName, int flag );
```

The `cv::FileStorage` object is a representation of an XML or YML data file. You can create it and pass a file name to the constructor, or you can just create an unopened storage object with the default constructor and open the file later with `cv::FileStorage::open()` where the `flag` argument should be either `cv::FileStorage::WRITE` or `cv::FileStorage::APPEND`.

```
| FileStorage::open( string fileName, int flag );
```

Once you have opened the file you want to write to, you can write using the operator `cv::FileStorage::operator<<()` in the same manner you might write to `stdout` with an STL stream. Internally, however, there is quite a bit more going on when you write in this manner.

Data inside of the `cv::FileStorage` is stored in one of two forms, either as a “mapping” (i.e., key-value pairs) or a “sequence” (which is a series of unnamed entries). At the top level, the data you write to the file storage is all a mapping, and inside of that mapping you can place other mappings or sequences, and mappings or sequences inside of those as deep as you like.

```
| myFileStorage << "someInteger" << 27; // save an integer  
| myFileStorage << "anArray" << cv::Mat::eye(3,3,CV::F32); // save an array
```

To create a sequence entry, you first provide the string name for the entry, and then the entry itself. The entry can be a number (integer, float, etc.), a string, or any OpenCV data type.

If you would like to create a new mapping or sequence you can do so with the special characters “{” (for a mapping) or “[” (for a sequence). Once you have started the mapping or sequence, you can add new elements and then finally close the mapping or sequence with “}” or “]” (respectively).

```
| myFileStorage << "theCat" << "{";  
| myFileStorage << "fur" << "gray" << "eyes" << "green" << "weightLbs" << 16;  
| myFileStorage << "}";
```

Once you have created a mapping, you enter each element with a name and the data following, just as you did for the top-level mapping. If you create a sequence, you simply enter the new data one item after another until you close the sequence.

```
| myFileStorage << "theTeam" << "[";
```

---

<sup>29</sup> The “baseline” is the line on which the bottoms of characters such as a and b are aligned. Characters such as y and g hang below the baseline.

---

---

```
myFileStorage << "eddie" << "tom" << "scott";
myFileStorage << "]";
```

Once you are completely done writing, you close the file with the `cv::FileStorage::release()` member function.

Here is an explicit code sample from the OpenCV documentation:

```
#include "opencv2/opencv.hpp"
#include <time.h>

int main(int, char** argv)
{
    cv::FileStorage fs("test.yml", cv::FileStorage::WRITE);

    fs << "frameCount" << 5;
    time_t rawtime; time(&rawtime);
    fs << "calibrationDate" << asctime(localtime(&rawtime));
    cv::Mat cameraMatrix = (
        cv::Mat_<double>(3,3)
        << 1000, 0, 320, 0, 1000, 240, 0, 0, 1
    );
    cv::Mat distCoeffs = (
        cv::Mat_<double>(5,1)
        << 0.1, 0.01, -0.001, 0, 0
    );
    fs << "cameraMatrix" << cameraMatrix << "distCoeffs" << distCoeffs;
    fs << "features" << "[";
    for( int i = 0; i < 3; i++ )
    {
        int x = rand() % 640;
        int y = rand() % 480;
        uchar lbp = rand() % 256;

        fs << "{" << "x" << x << "y" << y << "lbp" << ":";
        for( int j = 0; j < 8; j++ )
            fs << ((lbp >> j) & 1);
        fs << "]" << "}";
    }
    fs << "]";
    fs.release();
    return 0;
}
```

The result of running this program would be a YAML file with the following contents:

```
%YAML:1.0
frameCount: 5
calibrationDate: "Fri Jun 17 14:09:29 2011\n"
cameraMatrix: !!opencv-matrix
  rows: 3
  cols: 3
  dt: d
  data: [ 1000., 0., 320., 0., 1000., 240., 0., 0., 1. ]
distCoeffs: !!opencv-matrix
  rows: 5
  cols: 1
  dt: d
  data: [ 1.0000000000000001e-01, 1.0000000000000000e-02,
    -1.0000000000000000e-03, 0., 0. ]
features:
- { x:167, y:49, lbp:[ 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 1, 1 ] }
- { x:298, y:130, lbp:[ 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1 ] }
- { x:344, y:158, lbp:[ 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0 ] }
```

---

---

In the example code, you will notice that sometimes all of the data in a mapping or sequence is stored on a single line and other times it is stored with one element per line. This is not an automatic formatting behavior. Instead, it is created by a variant of the mapping and sequence creation strings: “{:” and “:}” mappings, and “[:” and “:]” for sequences. This feature is only meaningful for YAML output; if the output file is XML, this nuance is ignored and the mapping or sequence is stored as it would have been without the variant.

### Reading from a `cv::FileStorage`

```
| FileStorage::FileStorage( string fileName, int flag );
```

The `cv::FileStorage` can be opened for reading the same way it is opened for writing, except that the `flag` argument should be set to `cv::FileStorage::READ`. As with writing, you can also create an unopened file storage object with the default constructor and open it later with `cv::FileStorage::open()`.

```
| FileStorage::open( string fileName, int flag );
```

Once the file has been opened, the data can be read with either the overloaded array operator `cv::FileStorage::operator[]()` or with the iterator `cv::FileNodeIterator`. Once you are completely done reading, you then close the file with the `cv::FileStorage::release()` member function.

To read from a mapping, the `cv::FileStorage::operator[]()` is passed the string key associated with the desired object. To read from a sequence, the same operator can be called with an integer argument instead. The return value of this operator is not the desired object, however; it is an object of type `cv::FileNode`, which represents the value that goes with the given key in an abstract form.

### `cv::FileNode`

Once you have a `cv::FileNode` object, you can do one of several things with it. If it represents an object (or a number or a string) you can just load it into a variable of the appropriate type with the overloaded extraction operator `cv::FileNode::operator>>()`.

```
| cv::Mat anArray;  
| myFileStorage["calibrationMatrix"] >> anArray;
```

The `cv::FileNode` object also supports direct casting to any of the basic data types.

```
| int aNumber;  
| myFileStorage["someInteger"] >> aNumber;
```

is equivalent to:

```
| int aNumber;  
| aNumber = (int)myFileStorage["someInteger"];
```

As mentioned earlier, there is also an iterator for moving through file nodes that can be used as well. Given a `cv::FileNode` object, the member functions `cv::FileNode::begin()` and `cv::FileNode::end()` have their usual interpretations as providing the first and “after last” iterator for either a mapping or a sequence. The iterator, on dereferencing with the usual overloaded dereferencing operator `cv::FileNodeIterator::operator*()`, will return another `cv::FileNode` object. Such iterators support the usual incrementing and decrementing operators. If the iterator was iterating through a mapping, then the returned `cv::FileNode` object will have a name that can be retrieved with `cv::FileNode::name()`.

*Table 4-12: Member functions of `cv::FileNode`*

Example	Description
<code>cv::FileNode fn()</code>	File node object default constructor

---

<code>cv::FileNode fn1( fn0 )</code>	File node object copy constructor, creates a node fn1 from a node fn0
<code>cv::FileNode fn1( fs, node )</code>	File node constructor that creates a C++ style <code>cv::FileNode</code> object from a C-style <code>CvFileStorage*</code> pointer fs and a C-style <code>CvFileNode*</code> pointer node
<code>fn[ (string)key ]</code> <code>fn[ (char*)key ]</code>	STL string or C-string accessor for named child (of mapping node), converts key to the appropriate child node
<code>fn[ (int)id ]</code>	Accessor for numbered child (of sequence node), converts ID to the appropriate child node
<code>fn.type()</code>	Returns node type enum
<code>fn.empty()</code>	Determine if node is empty
<code>fn.isNone()</code>	Determine if node has value “None”
<code>fn.isSeq()</code>	Determine if node is a sequence
<code>fn.isMap()</code>	Determine if node is a mapping
<code>fn.isInt()</code> <code>fn.isReal()</code> <code>fn.isString()</code>	Determine if node is an integer, a floating-point number, or a string (respectively)
<code>fn.name()</code>	Return nodes name if node is a child of a mapping
<code>size_t sz=fn.size()</code>	Return size of node (in bytes)
<code>(int)fn</code> <code>(float)fn</code> <code>(double)fn</code> <code>(string)fn</code>	Extract the value from a node containing an integer, 32-bit float, 64-bit float, or string (respectively)

Of the methods in Table 4-12, one requires special clarification: `cv::FileNode::type()`. The returned value is an enumerated type defined in the class `cv::FileNode`. The possible values are given in Table 4-13.

*Table 4-13: Possible return values for `cv::FileNode::type()`*

Example	Description
<code>cv::FileNode::NONE</code> = 0	Node is of type “None”
<code>cv::FileNode::INT</code> = 1	Node contains an integer

<code>cv::FileNode::REAL</code>	<code>= 2</code>	Node contains a floating-point number <sup>30</sup>
<code>cv::FileNode::FLOAT</code>	<code>= 2</code>	
<code>cv::FileNode::STR</code>	<code>= 3</code>	Node contains a string
<code>cv::FileNode::STRING</code>	<code>= 3</code>	
<code>cv::FileNode::REF</code>	<code>= 4</code>	Node contains a reference (i.e., a compound object)
<code>cv::FileNode::SEQ</code>	<code>= 5</code>	Node is itself a sequence of other nodes
<code>cv::FileNode::MAP</code>	<code>= 6</code>	Node is itself a mapping of other nodes
<code>cv::FileNode::FLOW</code>	<code>= 8</code>	Node is a Compact representation of a sequence or mapping
<code>cv::FileNode::USER</code>	<code>= 16</code>	Registered object (e.g., a Matrix)
<code>cv::FileNode::EMPTY</code>	<code>= 32</code>	Node has no value assigned to it
<code>cv::FileNode::NAMED</code>	<code>= 64</code>	Node is a child of a mapping (i.e., it has a name)

It is worth noting that the last four `enum` values are powers of two starting at 8. This is because a node may have any or all of these properties in addition to one of the first eight listed types.

The following code example (also from the OpenCV documentation) shows how we could read the file we wrote previously:

```
cv::FileStorage fs2("test.yml", cv::FileStorage::READ);

// first method: use (type) operator on FileNode.
int frameCount = (int)fs2["frameCount"];

std::string date;
// second method: use cv::FileNode::operator >>
fs2["calibrationDate"] >> date;

cv::Mat cameraMatrix2, distCoeffs2;
fs2["cameraMatrix"] >> cameraMatrix2;
fs2["distCoeffs"] >> distCoeffs2;

cout << "frameCount: " << frameCount << endl
     << "calibration date: " << date << endl
     << "camera matrix: " << cameraMatrix2 << endl
     << "distortion coeffs: " << distCoeffs2 << endl;

cv::FileNode features = fs2["features"];
cv::FileNodeIterator it = features.begin(), it_end = features.end();
int idx = 0;
std::vector<uchar> lbpval;

// iterate through a sequence using FileNodeIterator
for( ; it != it_end; ++it, idx++ )
```

<sup>30</sup> Note that the floating-point types are not distinguished. This is a somewhat subtle point. Recall that XML and YML are ASCII text file formats. As a result, all floating-point numbers are of no specific precision until cast to an internal machine variable type. So, at the time of parsing, all floating-point numbers are represented only as an abstract floating-point type.

---

```
{
    cout << "feature #" << idx << ": ";
    cout << "x=" << (int)(*it)["x"] << ", y=" << (int)(*it)["y"] << ", lbp: ("
    // you can also easily read numerical arrays using FileNode >> std::vector operator.
    (*it)["lbp"] >> lbpval;
    for( int i = 0; i < (int)lbpval.size(); i++ )
        cout << " " << (int)lbpval[i];
    cout << ")" << endl;
}
fs.release();
```

## Summary

We have seen that OpenCV provides a number of ways to bring computer vision programs to the screen. The native HighGUI tools are convenient and easy to use, but not so great for functionality or final polish.

For a little more capability, the Qt-based HighGUI tools add buttons and some nice gadgets for manipulating your image on the screen—which is very helpful for debugging, parameter tuning, and for studying the subtle effects of changes in your program. Because those methods lack extensibility and are likely unsuitable for the production of professional applications, we went on to look at a few examples of how you might combine OpenCV with existing fully featured GUI toolkits.

We then touched on some other important functions you will need for manipulating arrays in basic ways and went on to drawing functions. Finally, we reviewed how OpenCV can store and retrieve objects from files.

## Exercises

1. This chapter completes our introduction to basic I/O programming and data structures in OpenCV. The following exercises build on this knowledge and create useful utilities for later use.
    - a) Create a program that (1) reads frames from a video, (2) turns the result to grayscale, and (3) performs Canny edge detection on the image. Display all three stages of processing in three different windows, with each window appropriately named for its function.
    - b) Display all three stages of processing in one image.  
*Hint: Create another image of the same height but three times the width as the video frame. Copy the images into this, either by using pointers or (more cleverly) by creating three new `cv::Mat` objects that reference into the beginning of, to one-third, and to two-thirds of the way into, the image data and then copying directly into these (i.e. with the `copyTo()` function).*
    - c) Write appropriate text labels describing the processing in each of the three slots.
  2. Create a program that reads in and displays an image. When the user's mouse clicks on the image, read in the corresponding pixel (blue, green, red) values and write those values as text to the screen at the mouse location.
    - a) For the program of Exercise 1b, display the mouse coordinates of the individual image when clicking anywhere within the three-image display.
  3. Create a program that reads in and displays an image.
    - a) Allow the user to select a rectangular region in the image by drawing a rectangle with the mouse button held down, and highlight the region when the mouse button is released. Be careful to save an image copy in memory so that your drawing into the image does not destroy the original values there. The next mouse click should start the process all over again from the original image.
    - b) In a separate window, use the drawing functions to draw a graph in blue, green, and red for how many pixels of each value were found in the selected box. This is the *color histogram* of that color region. The *x*-axis should be eight bins that represent pixel values falling within the ranges 0–31,
-

- 
- 32–63,..., 223–255. The *y*-axis should be counts of the number of pixels that were found in that bin range. Do this for each color channel, BGR.
4. Make an application that reads and displays a video and is controlled by sliders. One slider will control the position within the video from start to end in 10 increments; another binary slider should control pause/unpause. Label both sliders appropriately.
    - a) Do this using the built in HighGUI native toolkit functions.
    - b) Do this using the Qt Backend.
  5. Create your own simple paint program.
    - a) Write a program that creates an image, sets it to 0, and then displays it. Allow the user to draw lines, circles, ellipses, and polygons on the image using the left mouse button. Create an eraser function when the right mouse button is held down.
    - b) Allow “logical drawing” by allowing the user to set a slider setting to AND, OR, and XOR. That is, if the setting is AND then the drawing will appear only when it crosses pixels greater than 0 (and so on for the other logical functions).
  6. Write a program that creates an image, sets it to 0, and then displays it. Hitting Enter should fix the label at the spot it was typed.
    - a) When the user clicks on a location, he or she can type in a label there.
    - b) Enable Backspace during editing and provide for an abort key.
  7. Perspective transform.
    - a) Write a program that reads in an image and uses the numbers 1–9 on the keypad to control a perspective transformation matrix (refer to our discussion of the `cv::warpPerspective()` in the Dense Perspective Transform section of Chapter 6). Tapping any number should increment the corresponding cell in the perspective transform matrix; tapping with the Shift key depressed should decrement the number associated with that cell (stopping at 0). Each time a number is changed, display the results in two images: the raw image and the transformed image.
    - b) Add functionality to zoom in or out.
    - c) Add functionality to rotate the image.
  8. Face fun. Go to the `../samples/cpp/` directory and build the `facedetect.cpp` code. Draw a skull image (or find one on the Web) and store it to disk. Modify the `facedetect` program to load in the image of the skull.
    - a) When a face rectangle is detected, draw the skull in that rectangle.

Hint: `cv::convertImage()` can convert the size of the image, or you could look up the `cv::resize()` function. One may then set the ROI to the rectangle and use `copyTo()` to copy the properly resized image there.
    - a) Add a slider with 10 settings corresponding to 0.0 to 1.0. Use this slider to alpha blend the skull over the face rectangle using the `cv::addWeighted()` function.
  9. Image stabilization. Go to the `../samples/cpp/` directory and build the `lkdemo.cpp` code (this code does motion tracking, also known as *optical flow*). Create and display a video image in a much larger window image. Move the camera slightly but use the optical flow vectors to display the image in the same place within the larger window. This is a rudimentary image stabilization technique.
  10. Create a structure of an integer, a `cv::Point2i` and a `cv::Rect`; call it `my_struct`.
    - a) Write two functions:

```
void write_my_struct(
    cv::FileStorage* fs,
    const char*      name,
    my_struct*       ms
);
```

and:
-

---

```
void read_my_struct(  
    cv::FileStorage* fs,  
    CvFileNode*      ms_node,  
    my_struct*        ms  
) ;
```

Use them to write and read `my_struct`.

- b) Write and read an array of 10 `my_struct` structures.

---

## Filters and Convolution

### Overview

At this point, we have all of the basics at our disposal. We understand the structure of the library as well as the basic data structures it uses to represent images. We understand the HighGUI interface and can actually run a program and display our results on the screen. Now that we understand these primitive methods required to manipulate image structures, we are ready to learn some more sophisticated operations.

We will now move on to higher-level methods that treat the images as images, and not just as arrays of colored (or grayscale) values. When we say “image processing,” we mean just that: using higher-level operators that are defined on image structures in order to accomplish tasks whose meaning is naturally defined in the context of graphical, visual images.

### Before We Begin

There are a couple of important concepts we will need throughout this chapter, so it is worth taking a moment to review these ideas before we dig into the specific image processing functions that make up the bulk of this chapter. We will need to learn two main concepts: first, we’ll need to understand filters (also called kernels) and how they are handled in OpenCV. Next, we’ll take a look at how boundaries are handled, and what happens when OpenCV needs to compute something that is a function of the area around a pixel if that area spills off of the edge of the image.

### Filters, Kernels, and Convolution

Most of the functions we will discuss in this chapter are special cases of a general concept called *image filtering*. A filter is any algorithm that starts with some image  $I(x, y)$  and computes a new image  $I'(x, y)$  by computing for each pixel location  $x, y$  in  $I'$  some function of the pixels in  $I$  that are in some area around that point. The template that defines both this area’s shape, as well as how the elements of that area are combined, is called a *filter* or a *kernel*.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, many of the important kernels we encounter will be

---

<sup>1</sup> These two terms can be considered essentially interchangeable for our purposes. The signal processing community typically prefers the word *filter*, while the mathematical community tends to prefer *kernel*.

---

**linear kernels.** This means that the value assigned to point  $x, y$  in  $I'$  can be expressed as a weighted sum of the points around (and usually including)  $x, y$  in  $I^2$ . If you like equations, this can be written as:

$$I'(x, y) = \sum_{i, j \in \text{kernel}} k_{i, j} \cdot I(x + i, y + j).$$

This basically says that for some kernel of whatever size (e.g., 5-by-5), we should sum over the area of the kernel, and for each pair  $i, j$  (representing one point in the kernel), we should add a contribution equal to some value  $k_{i, j}$  multiplied by the value of the pixel in  $I$  that is offset from  $x, y$  by  $i, j$ . The size of the array  $k_{i, j}$  is called the **support** of the kernel.<sup>3</sup> Any filter which can be expressed in this way (i.e., with a linear kernel) is also known as **convolutions**.

It is often convenient (and more intuitive) to represent the kernel graphically as an array of the values of  $k_{i, j}$  (Figure 5-1). We will typically use this representation throughout the book when it is necessary to represent a kernel.

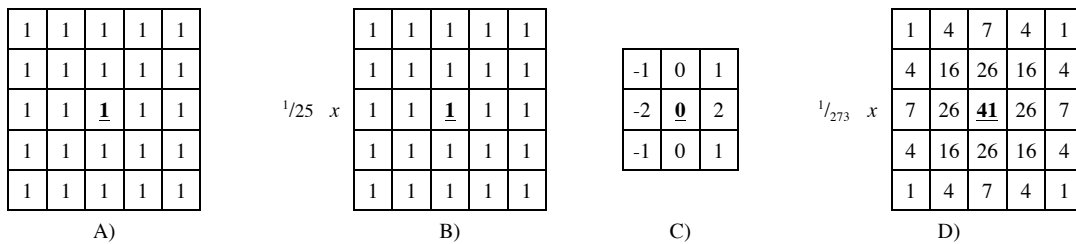


Figure 5-1: (a) A 5-by-5 box kernel; (b) a normalized 5-by-5 box kernel; (c) a 3-by-3 Sobel "x-derivative" kernel; and (d) a 5-by-5 normalized Gaussian kernel; in each case, the "anchor" is represented in bold.

## Anchor Points

Each kernel shown in Figure 5-1 has one value depicted in bold. This is the **anchor point** of the kernel. This indicates how the kernel is to be aligned with the source image. For example, in Figure 5-1 (d), the number 41 appears in bold. This means that in the summation used to compute  $I'(x, y)$ , it is  $I(x, y)$  that is multiplied by  $41/273$  (and similarly, the terms corresponding to  $I(x - 1, y)$  and  $I(x + 1, y)$  are multiplied by  $26/273$ ).

## Border Extrapolation and Boundary Conditions

Something that will come up with some frequency as we look at how images are processed in OpenCV is the issue of how borders are handled. Unlike some other image handling libraries,<sup>4</sup> the filtering operations in OpenCV (e.g., `cv::blur()`, `cv::erode()`, `cv::dilate()`, etc.) produce output images of the same size as the input. To achieve that result, OpenCV creates "virtual" pixels outside of the image at the borders. You can see this would be necessary for operation like `cv::blur()`, which is going to take all of the pixels in a neighborhood of some point and average them to determine a new value for that point. How could a meaningful result be computed for an edge pixel that does not have the correct number of neighbors? In fact, it will turn out that in the absence of any clearly "right" way of handling this, we will often find ourselves explicitly asserting how this issue is to be resolved in any given context.

<sup>2</sup> An example of a nonlinear kernel that comes up relatively often is the **median filter**, which replaces the pixel at  $x, y$  with the median value inside of the kernel area.

<sup>3</sup> For technical purists, the "support" of the kernel actually consists of only the nonzero portion of the kernel array.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., MATLAB.

---

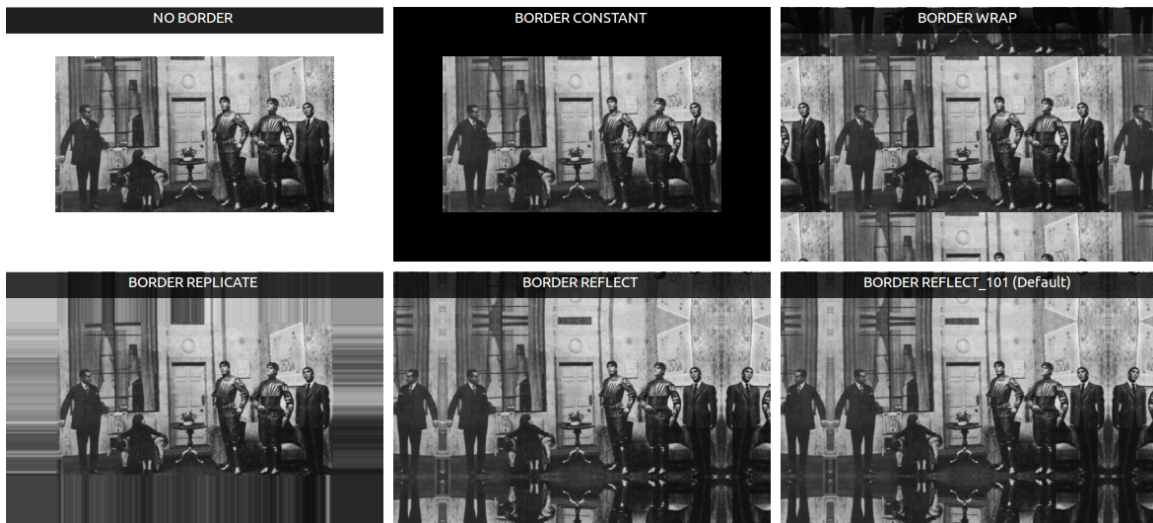
## Making Borders Yourself

Most of the library functions you will use will create these virtual pixels for you. In that context, you will only need to tell the particular function how you would like those pixels created.<sup>5</sup> Just the same, in order to know what the options you have mean, it is best to take a look at the function that allows you to explicitly create “padded” images that use one method or another.

The function that does this is `cv::copyMakeBorder()`. Given an image you want to pad out, and a second image that is somewhat larger, you can ask `cv::copyMakeBorder()` to fill all of the pixels in the larger image in one way or another.

```
void cv::copyMakeBorder(  
    cv::InputArray  src,                // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,                // Result image  
    int             top,                // Top side padding (pixels)  
    int             bottom,             // Bottom side padding (pixels)  
    int             left,               // Left side padding (pixels)  
    int             right,              // Right side padding (pixels)  
    int             borderType,         // Pixel extrapolation method  
    const cv::Scalar& value = cv::Scalar() // Used for constant borders  
);
```

The first two arguments to `cv::copyMakeBorder()` are the smaller source image and the larger destination image. The next four arguments specify how many pixels of padding are to be added to the source image on the `top`, `bottom`, `left`, and `right` edges. The next argument `borderType` actually tells `cv::copyMakeBorder()` how to determine the correct values to assign to the padded pixels (as shown in Figure 5-2).



*Figure 5-2: The same image is shown padded using each of the six different `borderType` options available to `cv::copyMakeBorder()` (the “NO BORDER” image in the upper-left is the original for comparison)*

To understand what each option does in detail, it is useful to consider an extremely zoomed in section at the edge of each image (Figure 5-3).

---

<sup>5</sup> Actually, the pixels are usually not even really created, but rather they are just “effectively created” by the generation of the correct boundary conditions in the evaluation of the particular function in question.

---

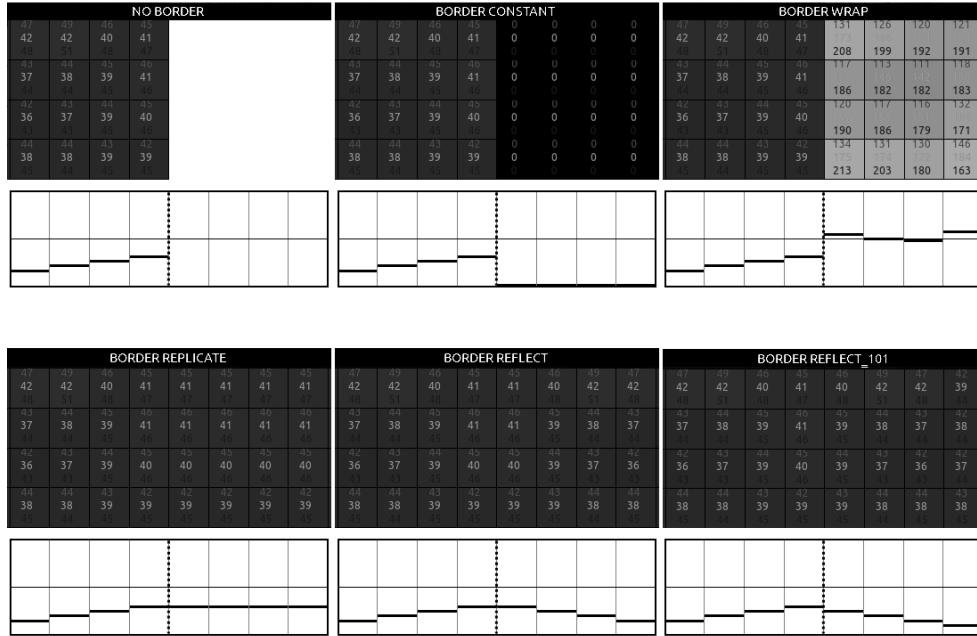


Figure 5-3: An extreme zoom in at the left side of each image; for each case, the actual pixel values are shown, as well as a schematic representation; the vertical dotted line in the schematic represents the edge of the original image

As you can see by inspecting the figures, some of the available options are quite different. The first option, a constant border `cv::BORDER_CONSTANT` sets all of the pixels in the border region to some fixed value. This value is set by the `value` argument to `cv::copyMakeBorder()`. (In Figure 5-2 and Figure 5-3, this value happens to be `cv::Scalar(0,0,0)`) The next option is to wrap around `cv::BORDER_WRAP`, assigning each pixel that is a distance `n` off of the edge of the image the value of the pixel that is a distance `n` in from the opposite edge. The replicate option `cv::BORDER_REPLICATE` assigns every pixel off of the edge the same value as the pixel on that edge. Finally, there are two slightly different forms of reflection available: `cv::BORDER_REFLECT` and `cv::BORDER_REFLECT_101`. The first assigns each pixel that is a distance `n` off of the edge of the image the value of the pixel that is a distance `n` in from that same edge. In contrast, `cv::BORDER_REFLECT_101` assigns each pixel that is a distance `n` off of the edge of the image the value of the pixel that is a distance `n + 1` in from that same edge (with the result that the very edge pixel is not replicated). In most cases, `cv::BORDER_REFLECT_101` is the default behavior for OpenCV methods. The value of `cv::BORDER_DEFAULT` resolves to `cv::BORDER_REFLECT_101`. Table 5-1 summarizes these options.

Table 5-1: `borderType` options available to `cv::copyMakeBorder()`, as well as many other functions that need to implicitly create boundary conditions

Border Type	Effect
<code>cv::BORDER_CONSTANT</code>	Extend pixels by using a supplied (constant) value
<code>cv::BORDER_WRAP</code>	Extend pixels by replicating from opposite side
<code>cv::BORDER_REPLICATE</code>	Extend pixels by copying edge pixel
<code>cv::BORDER_REFLECT</code>	Extend pixels by reflection
<code>cv::BORDER_REFLECT_101</code>	Extend pixels by reflection, edge pixel is not “doubled”
<code>cv::BORDER_DEFAULT</code>	Alias for <code>cv::BORDER_REFLECT_101</code>

---

## Manual Extrapolation

On some occasions, you will want to compute the location of the reference pixel to which a particular off-the-edge pixel is referred. For example, given an image of width  $w$  and height  $h$ , you might want to know what pixel in that image is being used to assign a value to virtual pixel  $(w + dx, h + dy)$ . Though this operation is essentially extrapolation, the function that computes such a result for you is (somewhat confusingly) called `cv::borderInterpolate()`:

```
int cv::borderInterpolate(           // Returns coordinate of "donor" pixel
    int p,                          // 0-based coordinate of extrapolated pixel
    int len,                         // Length of array (on relevant axis)
    int borderType                   // Pixel extrapolation method
);
```

The function `cv::borderInterpolate()` computes the extrapolation for one dimension at a time. It takes a coordinate `p`, a length `len` (which is the actual size of the image in the associated direction), and a `borderType` value. So, for example, you could compute the value of a particular pixel in an image under a mixed set of boundary conditions, using `BORDER_REFLECT_101` in one dimension, and `BORDER_WRAP` in another:

```
float val = img.at<float>(
    cv::borderInterpolate( 100, img.rows, BORDER_REFLECT_101 ),
    cv::borderInterpolate( -5, img.cols, BORDER_WRAP )
);
```

This function is typically used internally to OpenCV, for example inside of `cv::copyMakeBorder` or the `cv::FilterEngine` class (more on that later), but it can come in handy in your own algorithms as well. The possible values for `borderType` are exactly the same as those used by `cv::copyMakeBorder`. Throughout this chapter, we will encounter functions that take a `borderType` argument; in all of those cases, they take the same list of argument.

## Threshold Operations

Frequently we have done many layers of processing steps and want either to make a final decision about the pixels in an image or to categorically reject those pixels below or above some value while keeping the others. The OpenCV function `cv::threshold()` accomplishes these tasks (see survey [Sezgin04]). The basic idea is that an array is given, along with a threshold, and then something happens to every element of the array depending on whether it is below or above the threshold. If you like, you can think of threshold as a very simple convolution operation that uses a 1-by-1 kernel and performs one of several nonlinear operations on that one pixel:<sup>6</sup>

```
double cv::threshold(
    cv::InputArray  src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result image
    double          thresh,       // Threshold value
    double          maxValue,     // Max value for upward operations
    int             thresholdType // Threshold type to use (see Example 5-2)
);
```

As shown in Table 5-2, each threshold type corresponds to a particular comparison operation between the  $i^{\text{th}}$  source pixel (`srci`) and the threshold `thresh`. Depending on the relationship between the source pixel and the threshold, the destination pixel `dsti` may be set to 0, the `srci`, or the given maximum value `maxValue`.

---

<sup>6</sup> The utility of this point of view will become clearer as we proceed through this chapter, and look at other more complex convolutions. Many useful operations in computer vision can be expressed as a sequence of common convolutions, and more often than not, the last one of those convolutions is a threshold operation.

---

Table 5-2: *thresholdType* options for *cv::threshold()*

Threshold type	Operation
<code>cv::THRESH_BINARY</code>	$DST_I = (SRC_I > THRESH) ? MAXVALUE : 0$
<code>cv::THRESH_BINARY_INV</code>	$DST_I = (SRC_I > THRESH) ? 0 : MAXVALUE$
<code>cv::THRESH_TRUNC</code>	$DST_I = (SRC_I > THRESH) ? THRESH : SRC_I$
<code>cv::THRESH_TOZERO</code>	$DST_I = (SRC_I > THRESH) ? SRC_I : 0$
<code>cv::THRESH_TOZERO_INV</code>	$DST_I = (SRC_I > THRESH) ? 0 : SRC_I$

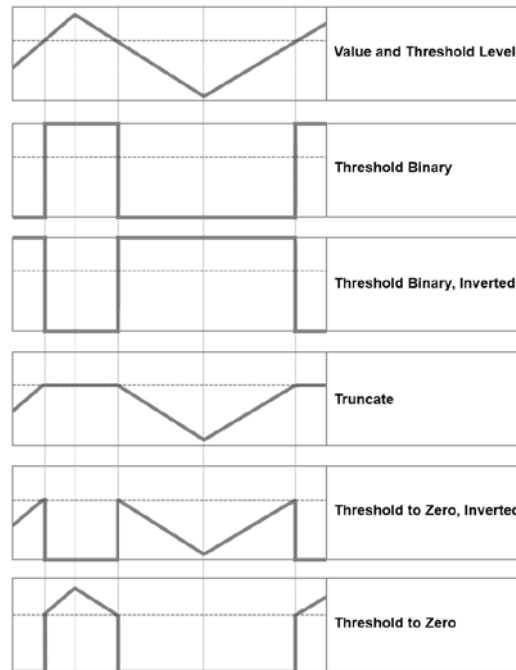


Figure 5-4 should help to clarify the exact implications of each of the available values for *thresholdType*, the thresholding operation.

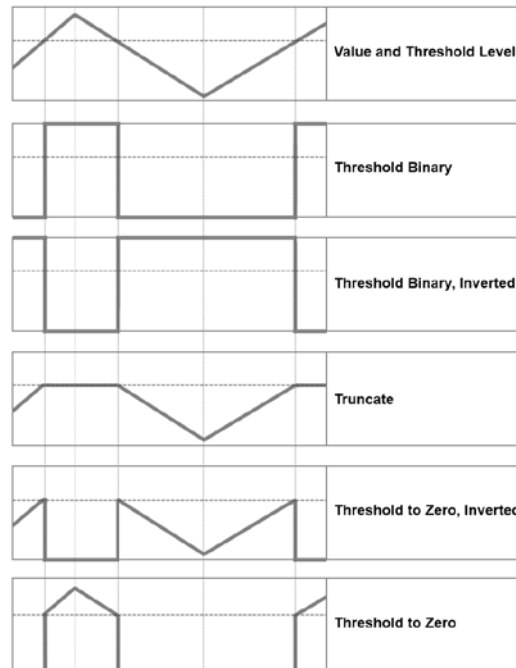


Figure 5-4: Results of varying the threshold type in `cv::threshold()`; the horizontal line through each chart represents a particular threshold level applied to the top chart and its effect for each of the five types of threshold operations below

Let's look at a simple example. In Example 5-1, we sum all three channels of an image and then clip the result at 100.

Example 5-1: Example code making use of `cv::threshold()`

```
#include <opencv2/opencv.hpp>
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

void sum_rgb( const cv::Mat& src, cv::Mat& dst ) {

    // Split image onto the color planes.
    vector< cv::Mat> planes;
    cv::split(src, planes);

    cv::Mat b = planes[0], g = planes[1], r = planes[2], s;

    // Add equally weighted rgb values.
    cv::addWeighted( r, 1./3., g, 1./3., 0.0, s );
    cv::addWeighted( s, 1., b, 1./3., 0.0, s );

    // Truncate values above 100.
    cv::threshold( s, dst, 100, 100, cv::THRESH_TRUNC );
}

void help()
{
    cout << "Call: ./ch5_ex5_2 faceScene.jpg" << endl;
    cout << "Shows use of alpha blending (addWeighted) and threshold" << endl;
}

int main(int argc, char** argv)
```

---

```

{
    help();
    if(argc < 2) { cout << "specify input image" << endl; return -1; }

    // Load the image from the given file name.
    cv::Mat src = cv::imread( argv[1] ), dst;
    if( src.empty() ) { cout << "can not load " << argv[1] << endl; return -1; }
    sum_rgb( src, dst);

    // Create a named window with the name of the file and
    // show the image in the window
    cv::imshow( argv[1], dst );

    // Idle until the user hits any key.
    cv::waitKey(0);

    return 0;
}

```

Some important ideas are shown here. One thing is that we don't want to add directly into an 8-bit array (with the idea of normalizing next) because the higher bits will overflow. Instead, we use equally weighted addition of the three color channels (`cv::addWeighted()`); then the sum is truncated to saturate at the value of 100 for the return. Had we used a floating-point temporary image for `s` in Example 5-1, we could have substituted the code shown in Example 5-2 instead. Note that `cv::accumulate()` can accumulate 8-bit integer image types into a floating-point image.

*Example 5-2: Alternative method to combine and threshold image planes*

```

void sum_rgb( const cv::Mat& src, cv::Mat& dst ) {

    // Split image onto the color planes.
    vector<cv::Mat> planes;
    cv::split( src, planes );

    cv::Mat b = planes[0], g = planes[1], r = planes[2];

    // Accumulate separate planes, combine and threshold
    cv::Mat s = cv::Mat::zeros( b.size(), cv::F32 );
    cv::accumulate( b, s );
    cv::accumulate( g, s );
    cv::accumulate( r, s );

    // Truncate values above 100 and rescale into dst
    cv::threshold( s, s, 100, 100, cv::THRESH_TRUNC );
    s.convertTo(dst, b.type());
}

```

## Otsu's Algorithm

It is also possible to have `cv::threshold()` attempt to determine the optimal value of the threshold for you. This is done by passing the special value `cv::THRESH_OTSU` as the value of `thresh`.

Briefly, Otsu's algorithm is to consider all possible thresholds, and to compute the variance  $\sigma_t^2$  for each of the two classes of pixels (i.e., the class below the threshold and the class above it). Otsu's algorithm minimizes:

$$\sigma_w^2 \equiv w_1(t) \cdot \sigma_1^2 + w_2(t) \cdot \sigma_2^2,$$

where  $w_1(t)$  and  $w_2(t)$  are the relative weights for the two classes given by the relative (normalized) number of pixels in each class (that is, their probability) and  $\sigma_1^2$  and  $\sigma_2^2$  are the variances in each class. Some thought (think of an image with 2 colors) will convince you that minimizing the variance over both

---

---

classes is the same as maximizing the variance between the two classes. Because an exhaustive search of the space of possible thresholds is required, this is not a particularly fast process.

## Adaptive Threshold

There is a modified threshold technique in which the threshold level is itself variable (across the image). In OpenCV, this method is implemented in the `cv::adaptiveThreshold()` [Jain86] function:

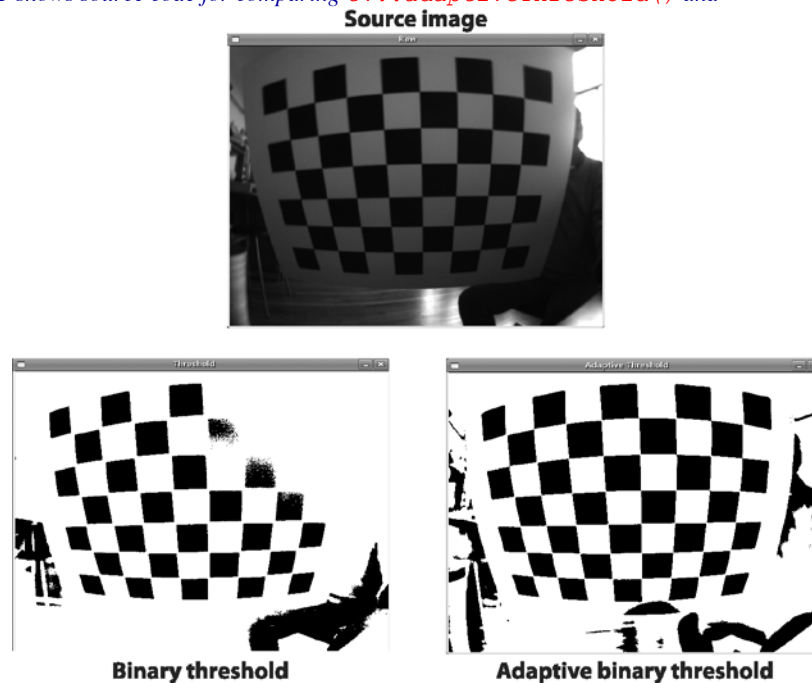
```
void cv::adaptiveThreshold(  
    cv::InputArray  src,           // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result image  
    double          maxValue,      // Max value for upward operations  
    int             adaptiveMethod, // Method to weight pixels in block by  
    int             thresholdType,  // Threshold type to use (see Example 5-2)  
    int             blockSize,      // Block size  
    double          C              // Constant to offset sum over block by  
);
```

`cv::adaptiveThreshold()` allows for two different adaptive threshold types depending on the settings of `adaptiveMethod`. In both cases, the *adaptive threshold*  $T(x, y)$  is set on a pixel-by-pixel basis by computing a weighted average of the  $b$ -by- $b$  region around each pixel location minus a constant, where  $b$  is given by `blockSize` and the constant is given by `C`. If the method is set to `cv::ADAPTIVE_THRESH_MEAN_C`, then all pixels in the area are weighted equally. If it is set to `cv::ADAPTIVE_THRESH_GAUSSIAN_C`, then the pixels in the region around  $(x, y)$  are weighted according to a Gaussian function of their distance from that center point.

Finally, the parameter `thresholdType` is the same as for `cv::threshold()` shown in Table 5-2.

The adaptive threshold technique is useful when there are strong illumination or reflectance gradients that you need to threshold relative to the general intensity gradient. This function handles only single-channel 8-bit or floating-point images, and it requires that the source and destination images be distinct.

*Example 5-3 shows source code for comparing `cv::adaptiveThreshold()` and*

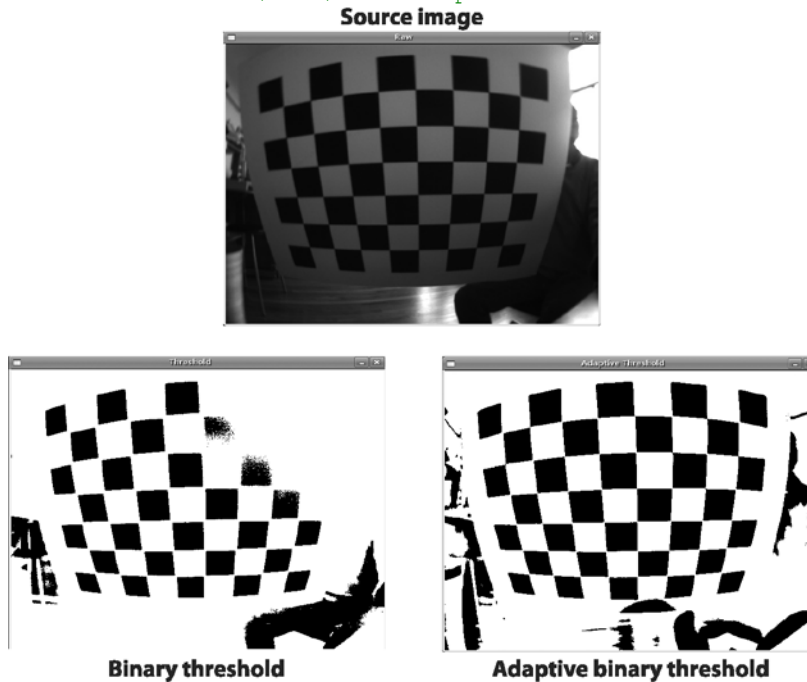


`cv::threshold()`.

---

Figure 5-5 illustrates the result of processing an image that has a strong lighting gradient across it with both functions. The lower-left portion of the figure shows the result of using a single global threshold as in `cv::threshold()`; the lower-right portion shows the result of adaptive local threshold using `cv::adaptiveThreshold()`. We see that we get the whole checkerboard via adaptive threshold, a result that is impossible to achieve when using a single threshold. Note the calling-convention comments at the top of the code in Example 5-3; the parameters used for Figure 5-5 were:

```
| ./adaptThresh 15 1 1 71 15 ../Data/cal3-L.bmp
```



*Figure 5-5: Binary threshold versus adaptive binary threshold: the input image (top) was turned into a Boolean image using a global threshold (lower-left) and an adaptive threshold (lower-right); raw image courtesy of Kurt Konolige*

#### *Example 5-3: Threshold versus adaptive threshold*

```
#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

int main( int argc, char** argv )
{
    if(argc != 7) { cout <<
        "Usage: ch5_ex5_3 fixed_threshold invert(0=off|1=on) "
        "adaptive_type(0=mean|1=gaussian) block_size offset image\n"
        "Example: ch5_ex5_3 100 1 0 15 10 fruits.jpg\n"; return -1; }

    // Command line
    double fixed_threshold = (double)atof(argv[1]);
    int threshold_type = atoi(argv[2]) ? cv::THRESH_BINARY : cv::THRESH_BINARY_INV;
    int adaptive_method = atoi(argv[3]) ? cv::ADAPTIVE_THRESH_MEAN_C
        : cv::ADAPTIVE_THRESH_GAUSSIAN_C;

    int block_size = atoi(argv[4]);
    double offset = (double)atof(argv[5]);
    cv::Mat Igray = cv::imread(argv[6], cv::LOAD_IMAGE_GRAYSCALE);

    // Read in gray image
```

```

if( Igray.empty() ){ cout << "Can not load " << argv[6] << endl; return -1; }

// Declare the output images
cv::Mat It, Iat;

// Thresholds
cv::threshold(
    Igray,
    It,
    fixed_threshold,
    255,
    threshold_type);
cv::adaptiveThreshold(
    Igray,
    Iat,
    255,
    adaptive_method,
    threshold_type,
    block_size,
    offset
);

// Show the results
cv::imshow("Raw", Igray);
cv::imshow("Threshold", It);
cv::imshow("Adaptive Threshold", Iat);
cv::waitKey(0);
return 0;
}

```

## Smoothing

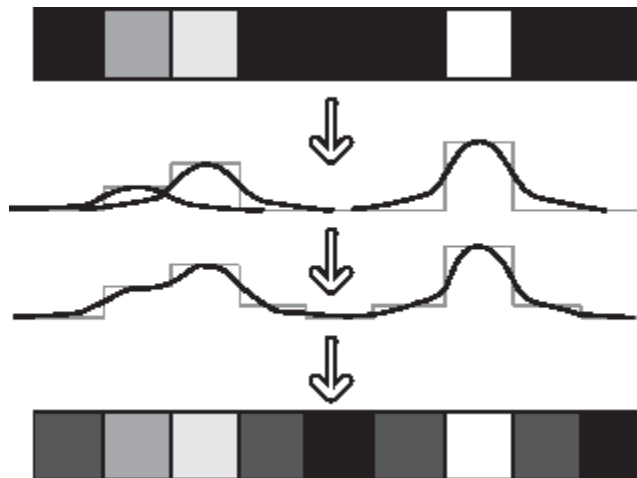


Figure 5-6: Gaussian blur on 1D pixel array

**Smoothing**, also called **blurring**, is a simple and frequently used image processing operation. There are many reasons for smoothing, but it is often done to reduce noise or camera artifacts. Smoothing is also important when we wish to reduce the resolution of an image in a principled way (we will discuss this in more detail in the “Image Pyramids” section of this chapter).

OpenCV offers five different smoothing operations, each with its own associated library function, which each accomplish slightly different kinds of smoothing.

The `src` and `dst` arguments in all of these functions are the usual source and destination arrays. After that, each smoothing operation has parameters that are specific to the associated operation. Of these, the only common parameter is the last, `borderType`. This argument tells the smoothing operation how to handle pixels at the edge of the image.

## Simple Blur and the Box Filter

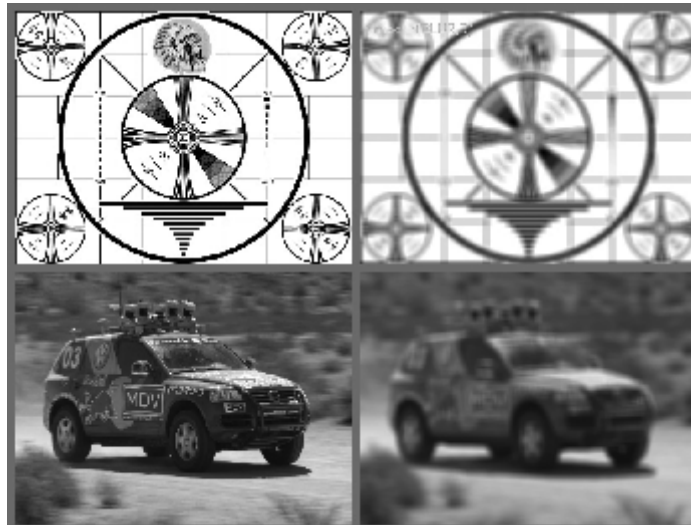


Figure 5-7: Image smoothing by block averaging: on the left are the input images; on the right, the output images

```
void cv::blur(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image
    cv::Size ksize,              // Kernel size
    cv::Point anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

The *simple blur* operation is provided by `cv::blur()`. Each pixel in the output is the simple mean of all of the pixels in a window, usually called a *kernel*, around the corresponding pixel in the input. The size of this window is specified by the argument `ksize`. The argument `anchor` can be used to specify how the kernel is aligned with the pixel being computed. By default, the value of `anchor` is `cv::Point(-1,-1)`, which indicates that the kernel should be centered relative to the filter. In the case of multichannel images, each channel will be computed separately.

$$\frac{1}{25} \times \begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|} \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & \underline{1} & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Figure 5-8: A 5-by-5 blur filter, also called a normalized box filter.

---

The simple blur is a specialized version of the *box filter*. A box filter is any filter that has a rectangular profile and for which the values  $k_{i,j}$  are all equal. In most cases,  $k_{i,j} = 1$  for all  $i,j$ , or  $k_{i,j} = 1/A$ , where  $A$  is the area of the filter. The latter case is called a *normalized box filter*.

```
void cv::boxFilter(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image  
    int ddepth,                  // Pixel depth of output image (e.g., cv::U8)  
    cv::Size ksize,              // Kernel size  
    cv::Point anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point  
    bool normalize = true,        // If true, divide by box area  
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use  
);
```

The OpenCV function `cv::boxFilter()` is the somewhat more general form of which `cv::blur()` is essentially a special case. The main difference between `cv::boxFilter()` and `cv::blur()` is that the former can be run in an un-normalized mode (`normalize = false`), and that the depth of the output image `dst` can be controlled. (In the case of `cv::blur()`, the depth of `dst` will always equal the depth of `src`.) If the value of `ddepth` is set to `-1`, then the destination image will have the same depth as the source; otherwise, you can use any of the usual aliases (e.g., `cv::F32`).

## Median Filter

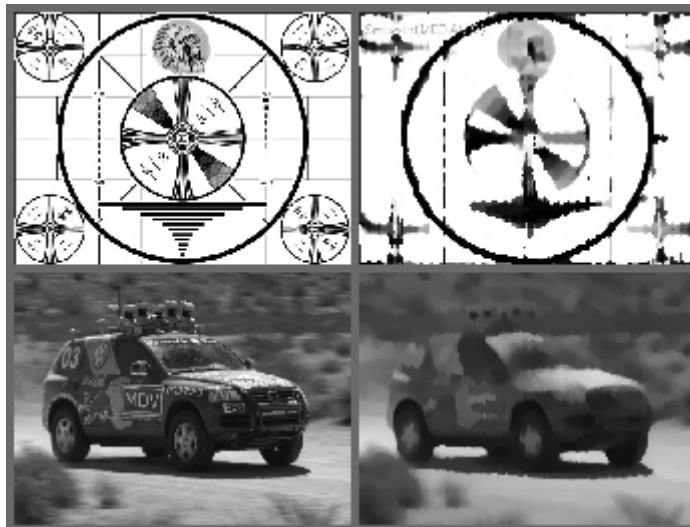


Figure 5-9: Image blurring by taking the median of surrounding pixels

---

---

The **median filter** [Bardyn84] replaces each pixel by the median or “middle-valued” pixel (as opposed to the mean pixel) in a rectangular neighborhood around the center pixel.<sup>7</sup> Results of median filtering are



Figure 5-9. Simple blurring by averaging can be sensitive to noisy images, especially images with large isolated outlier values (sometimes called “shot noise”). Large differences in even a small number of points can cause a noticeable movement in the average value. Median filtering is able to ignore the outliers by selecting the middle points, though at a cost in speed.

```
void cv::medianBlur(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image  
    cv::Size       ksize         // Kernel size  
);
```

The arguments to `cv::medianBlur` are essentially the same as with previous filters, the source array `src`, the destination array `dst`, and the kernel size `ksize`. For `cv::medianBlur()`, the anchor point is always assumed to be at the center of the kernel.

---

<sup>7</sup> Note that the median filter is an example of a nonlinear kernel, which cannot be represented in the pictorial style shown in Figure 5-1.

---

---

## Gaussian Filter

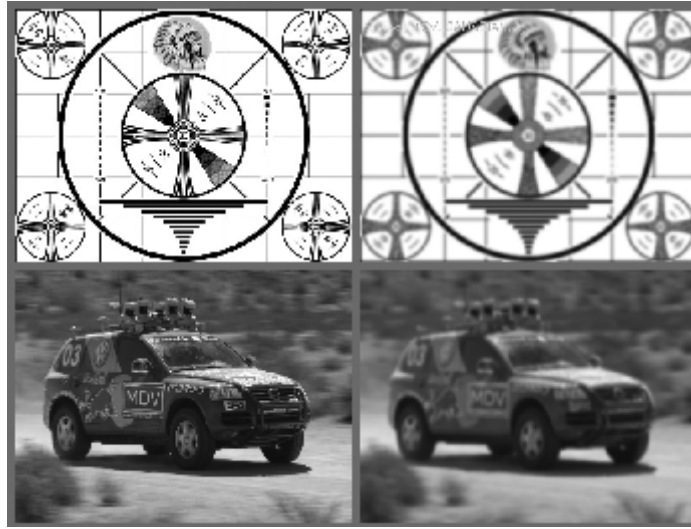


Figure 5-10: Gaussian filtering (blurring)

The next smoothing filter, the *Gaussian filter*, is probably the most useful. Gaussian filtering is done by convolving each point in the input array with a Gaussian kernel and then summing to produce the output array:

```
void cv::GaussianBlur(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image  
    cv::Size ksize,              // Kernel size  
    double sigmaX,               // Gaussian half-width in x-direction  
    double sigmaY = 0.0,         // Gaussian half-width in y-direction  
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use  
);
```

For the Gaussian blur (Figure 5-11), the parameter `ksize` gives the width and height of the filter window. The next parameter indicates the sigma value (half width at half max) of the Gaussian kernel in the x-dimension. The fourth parameter similarly indicates the sigma value in the y-dimension. If you specify only the x value, and set the y value to zero (its default value), then the y and x values will be taken to be equal. If you set them both to zero, then the Gaussian's parameters will be automatically determined from the window size using the following formulae:

$$\sigma_x = \left( \frac{n_x - 1}{2} \right) \cdot 0.30 + 0.80, \quad n_x = \text{ksize.width} - 1,$$
$$\sigma_y = \left( \frac{n_y - 1}{2} \right) \cdot 0.30 + 0.80, \quad n_y = \text{ksize.height} - 1.$$

Finally, `cv::GaussianBlur()` takes the usual `borderType` argument.

$\frac{1}{141} \times$	1	4	7	4	1
	7	26	<b>41</b>	26	7
	1	4	7	4	1

Figure 5-11: An example Gaussian kernel. Here `ksize=(5,3)`, `sigmaX=1`, and `sigmaY=0.5`

Gaussian smoothing is faster than one might expect. Because convolution by Gaussians is linearly combinable, we may separate the convolution along the x and the y axis converting the operation from

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being  $n^2$  in an  $n$ -by- $n$  kernel size to being  $2n$  for each pixel. The OpenCV implementation of Gaussian smoothing also provides even higher performance for several common kernels. 3-by-3, 5-by-5, and 7-by-7 with the “standard” sigma (i.e., `sigmaX = 0.0`) give better performance than other kernels. Gaussian blur supports single- or three-channel images in either 8-bit or 32-bit floating-point formats, and it can be done in place. Results of Gaussian blurring are shown in Figure 5-10.

## Bilateral Filter



Figure 5-12: Results of bilateral smoothing

```
void cv::bilateralFilter(  
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image  
    int d,                       // Pixel neighborhood size (max distance)  
    double sigmaColor,           // Width parameter for color weighting function  
    double sigmaSpace,           // Width parameter for spatial weighting function  
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use  
);
```

The fifth and final form of smoothing supported by OpenCV is called *bilateral filtering* [Tomasi98], an example of which is shown in Figure 5-12. Bilateral filtering is one operation from a somewhat larger class of image analysis operators known as *edge-preserving smoothing*. Bilateral filtering is most easily understood when contrasted to Gaussian smoothing. A typical motivation for Gaussian smoothing is that pixels in a real image should vary slowly over space and thus be correlated to their neighbors, whereas random noise can be expected to vary greatly from one pixel to the next (i.e., noise is not spatially correlated). It is in this sense that Gaussian smoothing reduces noise while preserving signal. Unfortunately, this method breaks down near edges, where you do expect pixels to be uncorrelated with their neighbors across the edge. As a result, Gaussian smoothing blurs away edges. At the cost of what is unfortunately substantially more processing time, bilateral filtering provides a means of smoothing an image without smoothing away the edges.

Like Gaussian smoothing, bilateral filtering constructs a weighted average of each pixel and its neighboring components. The weighting has two components, the first of which is the same weighting used by Gaussian smoothing. The second component is also a Gaussian weighting but is based not on the spatial distance from the center pixel but rather on the difference in intensity<sup>8</sup> from the center pixel.<sup>9</sup> When intensities are

---

<sup>8</sup> In the case of multichannel (i.e., color) images, the difference in intensity is replaced with a weighted sum over colors. This weighting is chosen to enforce a Euclidean distance in the CIE Lab color space.

---

---

close, the intensity weighting is nearly 1.0 and we get Gaussian smoothing, but when there are large differences in intensity, the weight is nearly zero and almost no averaging is done, keeping high-contrast edges sharp. The effect of this filter is typically to turn an image into what appears to be a watercolor painting of the same scene.<sup>10</sup> This can be useful as an aid to segmenting the image.

Bilateral filtering takes three parameters (other than the source and destination). The first is the diameter `d` of the pixel neighborhood that is considered when filtering. The second is the width of the Gaussian kernel used in the color domain called `sigmaColor`, which is analogous to the sigma parameters in the Gaussian filter. The third is the width of the Gaussian kernel in the spatial domain called `sigmaSpace`. The larger this second parameter, the broader the range of intensities (or colors) that will be included in the smoothing (and thus the more extreme a discontinuity must be in order to be preserved).

The filter size has a strong effect (as you might expect) on the speed of the algorithm. Typical values are less than or equal to five for video processing, but might be as high as nine for non-real-time applications. As an alternative to specifying `d` explicitly, it can be set to `-1`, in which case, it will be automatically computed from `sigmaSpace`.

---

In practice, small values (e.g., `10`) give a very light, but noticeable effect, while large values (e.g., `150`) have a very strong effect and tend to render the image into a somewhat “cartoonish” appearance.

---

## Derivatives and Gradients

One of the most basic and important convolutions is the computation of derivatives (or approximations to them). There are many ways to do this, but only a few are well suited to a given situation.

### The Sobel Derivative

In general, the most common operator used to represent differentiation is the *Sobel derivative* [Sobel68] operator (see Figure 5-13 and Figure 5-14). Sobel operators exist for any order of derivative as well as for mixed partial derivatives (e.g.,  $\partial^2/\partial x\partial y$ ).

---

<sup>9</sup> Technically, the use of Gaussian distribution functions is not a necessary feature of bilateral filtering. The implementation in OpenCV uses Gaussian weighting even though the method allows many possible weighting functions.

<sup>10</sup> This effect is particularly pronounced after multiple iterations of bilateral filtering.

---

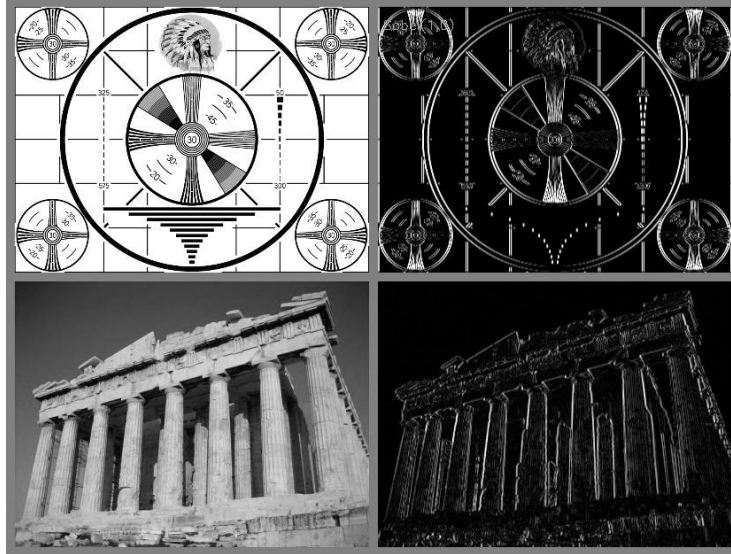


Figure 5-13: The effect of the Sobel operator when used to approximate a first derivative in the  $x$ -dimension.

```
void cv::Sobel(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image
    int ddepth,                  // Pixel depth of output image (e.g., cv::U8)
    int xorder,                  // order of corresponding derivative in x
    int yorder,                  // order of corresponding derivative in y
    cv::Size ksize = 3,          // Kernel size
    double scale = 1,            // Scale applied before assignment to dst
    double delta = 0,            // Offset applied before assignment to dst
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

Here, `src` and `dst` are your image input and output. The argument `ddepth` allows you to select the depth (type) of the generated output (e.g., `cv::F32`). As a good example of how to use `ddepth`, if `src` is an 8-bit image, then the `dst` should have a depth of at least `cv::S16` to avoid overflow. `xorder` and `yorder` are the orders of the derivative. Typically, you'll use 0, 1, or at most 2; a 0 value indicates no derivative in that direction.<sup>11</sup> The `ksize` parameter should be odd and is the width (and the height) of the filter used. Currently, aperture sizes up to 31 are supported.<sup>12</sup> The `scale` factor and `delta` are applied to the derivative before storing in `dst`. This can be useful when you want to actually visualize a derivative in an 8-bit image you can show on the screen:

$$dst_i = scale \cdot \left\{ \sum_{i,j \in \text{sobel}_{kernel}} k_{i,j} * I(x+i, y+j) \right\} + delta.$$

The `borderType` argument functions exactly as described for other convolution operations.

Sobel computations are fast for the same reason Gaussian blurring is fast: the kernel can be separated and so, rather than a 2D  $x,y$  convolution over the area of the kernel, we reduce to a 1D  $x$  convolution combined with a 1D  $y$  convolution (see the exercises below).

<sup>11</sup> Either `xorder` or `yorder` must be nonzero.

<sup>12</sup> In practice, it really only makes sense to set the kernel size to 3 or greater. If you set `ksize` to 1, then the kernel size will automatically be adjusted up to 3.



*Figure 5-14: The effect of the Sobel operator when used to approximate a first derivative in the y-dimension.*

Sobel derivatives have the nice property that they can be defined for kernels of any size, and those kernels can be constructed quickly and iteratively. Up to the limit of not spanning key image structures, larger kernels give a better approximation to the derivative because they span more area and are thus less sensitive to noise.

To understand this more exactly, we must realize that a Sobel derivative is not really a derivative as it is defined on a discrete space. What the Sobel operator actually represents is a fit to a polynomial. That is, the Sobel derivative of second order in the *x*-direction is not really a second derivative; it is a local fit to a parabolic function. This explains why one might want to use a larger kernel: that larger kernel is computing the fit over a larger number of pixels.

## Scharr Filter

In fact, there are many ways to approximate a derivative in the case of a discrete grid. The downside of the approximation used for the Sobel operator is that it is less accurate for small kernels. For large kernels, where more points are used in the approximation, this problem is less significant. This inaccuracy does not show up directly for the *x* and *y* filters used in `cv::Sobel()`, because they are exactly aligned with the *x*- and *y*-axes. The difficulty arises when you want to make image measurements that are approximations of

---

---

*directional derivatives* (i.e., direction of the image gradient by using the arctangent of the *y/x* filter responses)<sup>13</sup>.

To put this in context, a concrete example of where you may want image measurements of this kind would be in the process of collecting shape information from an object by assembling a histogram of gradient angles around the object. Such a histogram is the basis on which many common shape classifiers are trained and operated. In this case, inaccurate measures of gradient angle will decrease the recognition performance of the classifier because the data to be learned will vary depending on the rotation of the object.

For a 3-by-3 Sobel filter, the inaccuracies are more apparent the further the gradient angle is from horizontal or vertical. OpenCV addresses this inaccuracy for small (but fast) 3-by-3 Sobel derivative filters by a somewhat obscure use of the special *ksize* value *cv::SCHARR* in the *cv::Sobel()* function. The Scharr filter is just as fast but more accurate than the Sobel filter, so it should always be used if you want to make image measurements using a 3-by-3 filter. The filter coefficients for the Scharr filter are shown in Figure 5-15 [Scharr00].

-3	0	+3
-10	0	+10
-3	0	+3

A)

-3	-10	-3
0	0	0
+3	+10	+3

B)

Figure 5-15: The 3-by-3 Scharr filter using flag *cv::SCHARR*

## The Laplacian

The OpenCV *Laplacian* function (first used in vision by Marr [Marr82]) implements a discrete approximation to the Laplacian operator<sup>14</sup>:

$$\text{Laplace}(f) = \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2}$$

Because the Laplacian operator can be defined in terms of second derivatives, you might well suppose that the discrete implementation works something like the second-order Sobel derivative. Indeed it does, and in fact, the OpenCV implementation of the Laplacian operator uses the Sobel operators directly in its computation:

```
void cv::Laplacian(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image
    int ddepth,                  // Pixel depth of output image (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::Size_1 ksize = 3,        // Kernel size
    double scale = 1,            // Scale applied before assignment to dst
    double delta = 0,            // Offset applied before assignment to dst
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

The *cv::Laplacian()* function takes the same arguments as the *cv::Sobel()* function, with the exception that the orders of the derivatives are not needed. This aperture *ksize* is precisely the same as the aperture appearing in the Sobel derivatives and, in effect, gives the size of the region over which the pixels are sampled in the computation of the second derivatives. In the actual implementation, for *ksize* anything other than 1, the Laplacian is computed directly from the sum of the corresponding Sobel

---

<sup>13</sup> As you might recall, there are functions *cv::cartToPolar()* and *cv::polarToCart()* that implement exactly this transformation. If you find yourself wanting to call *cv::cartToPolar()* on a pair of *x*- and *y*-derivative images, you should probably be using *CV\_SCHARR* to compute those images.

<sup>14</sup> Note that the *Laplacian operator* is distinct from the *Laplacian pyramid*, which we will discuss in Chapter 6.

---

operators. In the special case of `ksize=1`, the Laplacian is computed by convolution with the following single kernel:

0	1	0
1	-4	1
0	1	0

Figure 5-16. The single kernel used by `cv::Laplacian()` when `ksize=1`

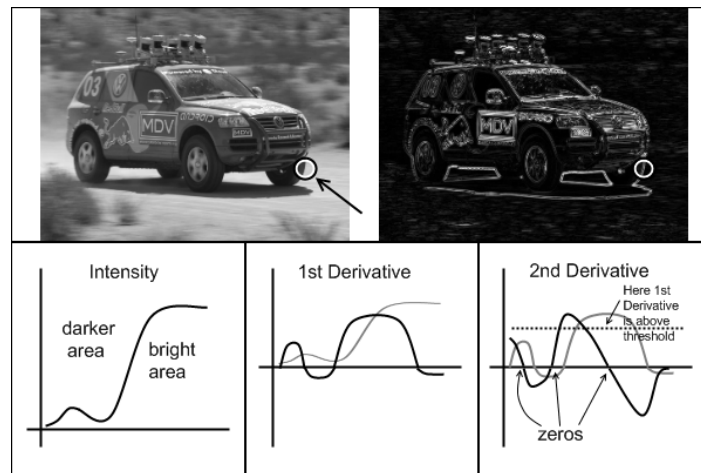


Figure 5-17: Laplace transform (upper right) of the racecar image: zooming in on the tire (circled in white) and considering only the *x*-dimension, we show a (qualitative) representation of the brightness as well as the first and second derivatives (lower three cells); the 0s in the second derivative correspond to edges, and the 0 corresponding to a large first derivative is a strong edge

The Laplace operator can be used in a variety of contexts. A common application is to detect “blobs.” Recall that the form of the Laplacian operator is a sum of second derivatives along the *x*-axis and *y*-axis. This means that a single point or any small blob (smaller than the aperture) that is surrounded by higher values will tend to maximize this function. Conversely, a point or small blob that is surrounded by lower values will tend to maximize the negative of this function.

With this in mind, the Laplace operator can also be used as a kind of edge detector. To see how this is done, consider the first derivative of a function, which will (of course) be large wherever the function is changing rapidly. Equally important, it will grow rapidly as we approach an edge-like discontinuity and shrink rapidly as we move past the discontinuity. Hence, the derivative will be at a local maximum somewhere within this range. Therefore, we can look to the 0s of the second derivative for locations of such local maxima. Got that? Edges in the original image will be 0s of the Laplacian. Unfortunately, both substantial and less meaningful edges will be 0s of the Laplacian, but this is not a problem because we can simply filter out those pixels that also have larger values of the first (Sobel) derivative. Figure 5-17 shows an example of using a Laplacian on an image together with details of the first and second derivatives and their zero crossings.

---

## Image Morphology

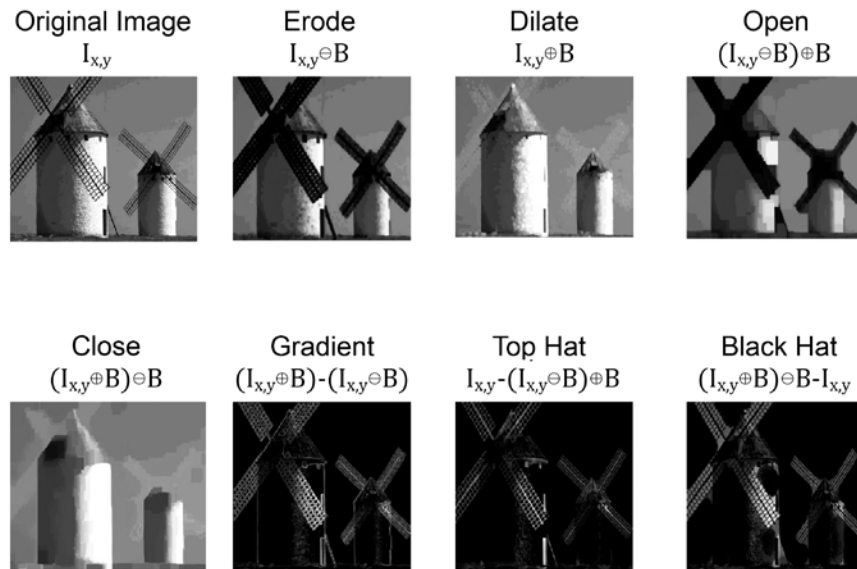


Figure 5-18: Summary results for all morphology operators

OpenCV provides a fast, convenient interface for doing *morphological transformations* [Serra83] on an image. Image morphology is its own topic, and over the years, especially in the early days of computer vision, a great number of morphological operations were developed. Most were developed for one specific purpose or another, and some of those found broader utility over the years. Essentially, all morphology operations are based on just two primitive operations. We will start with those, and then move on to the more complex operations, each of which is typically defined in terms of its simpler predecessors.

### Dilation and Erosion

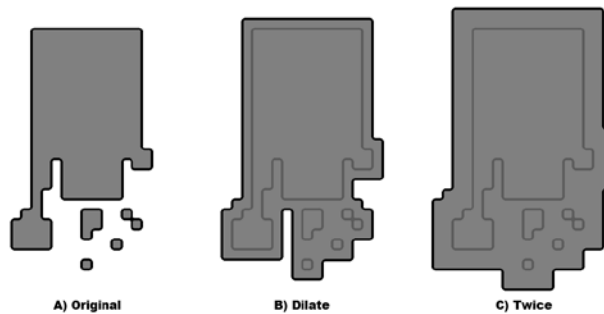


Figure 5-19: Morphological dilation: take the maximum under a square kernel

The basic morphological transformations are called *dilation* and *erosion*, and they arise in a wide variety of contexts such as removing noise, isolating individual elements, and joining disparate elements in an image. More sophisticated morphology operations, based on these two basic operations, can also be used to find intensity peaks (or holes) in an image and to define a particular form of image gradient.

---

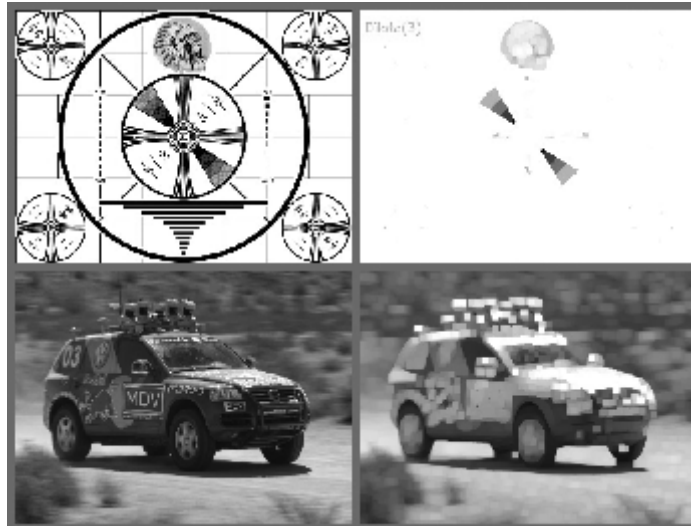


Figure 5-20: Results of the dilation, or “max,” operator: bright regions are expanded and often joined

Dilation is a convolution of some image with a kernel in which any given pixel is replaced with the **local maximum** of all of the pixel values covered by the kernel. As we mentioned earlier, this is an example of a nonlinear operation, so the kernel cannot be expressed in the form shown in Figure 5-1. Most often, the kernel used for Dilation is a “solid” square kernel, or sometimes a disk, with the anchor point at the center. The effect of dilation is to cause filled<sup>15</sup> regions within an image to grow as diagrammed in

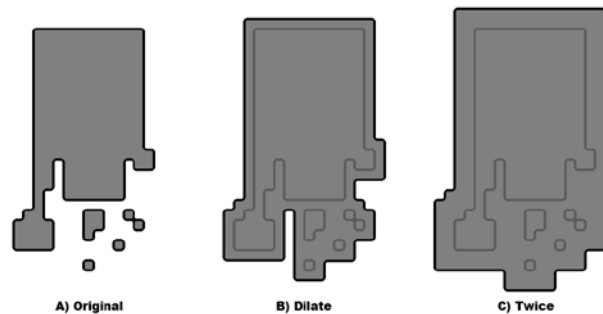


Figure 5-19.

<sup>15</sup> Here the term “filled” actually means those pixels whose value is nonzero. You could read this as “bright,” since the local maximum actually takes the pixel with the highest intensity value under the template (kernel). It is worth mentioning that the diagrams that appear in this chapter to illustrate morphological operators are in this sense inverted relative to what would happen on your screen (because books write with dark ink on light paper instead of light pixels on a dark screen).

---

*Erosion is the converse operation. The action of the erosion operator is equivalent to computing a local minimum over the area of the kernel.<sup>16</sup> Erosion is diagrammed in*

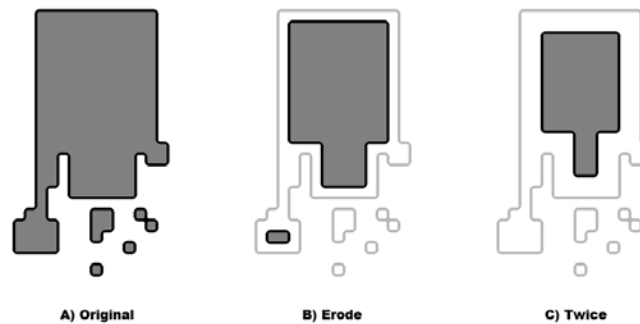


Figure 5-21.

---

Image morphology is often done on Boolean<sup>17</sup> images that result from a threshold operation. However, because dilation is just a max operator and erosion is just a min operator, morphology may be used on intensity images as well.

---

*In general, whereas dilation expands a bright region A, erosion (*

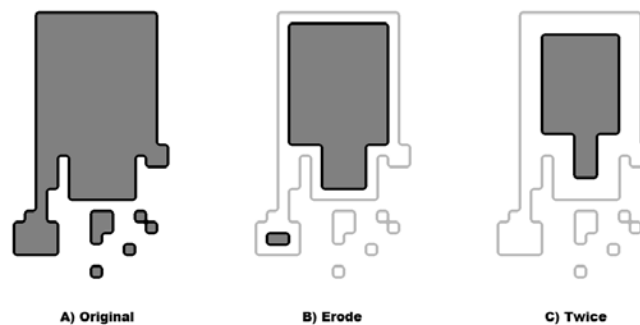


Figure 5-21) reduces such a bright region. Moreover, dilation will tend to fill concavities and erosion will tend to remove protrusions. Of course, the exact result will depend on the kernel, but these statements are generally true so long as the kernel is both convex and filled.

In OpenCV, we effect these transformations using the `cv::erode()` and `cv::dilate()` functions:

```
void cv::erode(
    cv::InputArray  src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result image
    cv::InputArray  element,       // Structuring element, can be cv::Mat()
    cv::Point       anchor        = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    int             iterations    = 1, // Number of times to apply
    int             borderType    = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
    const cv::Scalar& borderValue = cv::morphologyDefaultBorderValue())
```

---

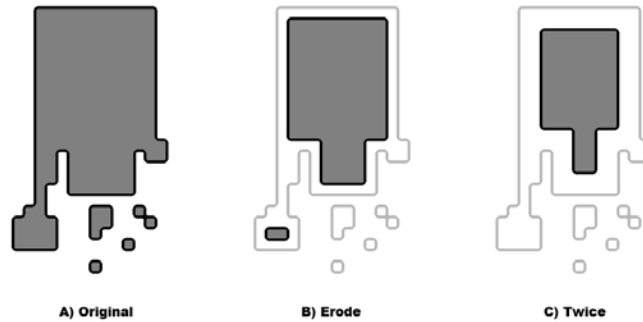
<sup>16</sup> To be precise, the pixel in the destination image is set to the value equal to the minimal value of the pixels under the kernel in the source image.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that OpenCV does not actually have a Boolean image data type. The minimum size representation is 8-bit characters. Those functions which *interpret* an image as Boolean do so by classifying all pixels as either zero (“False” or 0) or nonzero (“True” or 1).

---

---

```
| );
```



*Figure 5-21: Morphological erosion: take the minimum under a square kernel*

```
void cv::dilate(  
    cv::InputArray  src,                // Input Image  
    cv::OutputArray dst,                // Result image  
    cv::InputArray  element,            // Structuring element, can be cv::Mat()  
    cv::Point        anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point  
    int              iterations = 1,        // Number of times to apply  
    int              borderType = cv::BORDER_CONSTANT // Border extrapolation to use  
    const cv::Scalar& borderValue = cv::morphologyDefaultBorderValue()  
);
```

Both `cv::erode()` and `cv::dilate()` take a source and destination image, and both support “in place” calls (in which the source and destination are the same image). The third argument is the kernel, to which you may pass an uninitialized array `cv::Mat()`, which will cause it to default to using a 3-by-3 kernel with the anchor at its center (we will discuss how to create your own kernels later). The fourth argument is the number of iterations. If not set to the default value of 1, the operation will be applied multiple times during the single call to the function. The `borderType` argument is the usual border type, and the `borderValue` is the value that will be used for off-the-edge pixels when the `borderType` is set to `cv::BORDER_CONSTANT`.

*The results of an erode operation on a sample image are shown in*

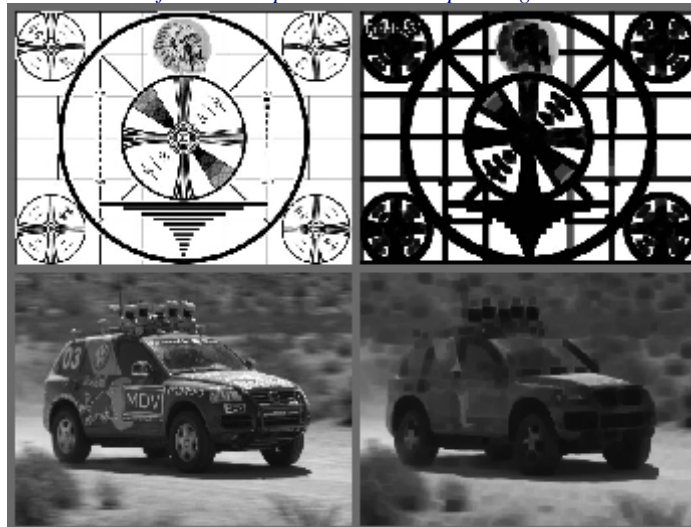


Figure 5-22 and those of a dilation operation on the same image are shown in

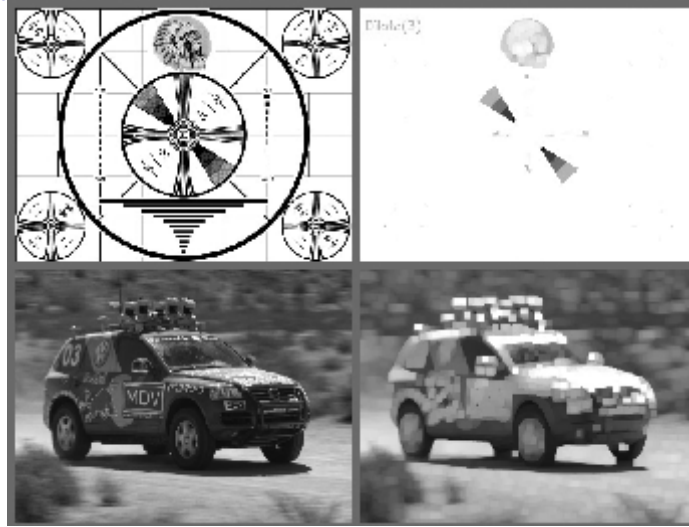


Figure 5-20. The erode operation is often used to eliminate “speckle” noise in an image. The idea here is that the speckles are eroded to nothing while larger regions that contain visually significant content are not affected. The dilate operation is often used when attempting to find *connected components* (i.e., large discrete regions of similar pixel color or intensity). The utility of dilation arises because in many cases a large region might otherwise be broken apart into multiple components as a result of noise, shadows, or some other similar effect. A small dilation will cause such components to “melt” together into one.

To recap: when OpenCV processes the `cv::erode()` function, what happens beneath the hood is that the value of some point `p` is set to the minimum value of all of the points covered by the kernel when aligned at `p`; for the dilation operator, the equation is the same except that max is considered rather than min:

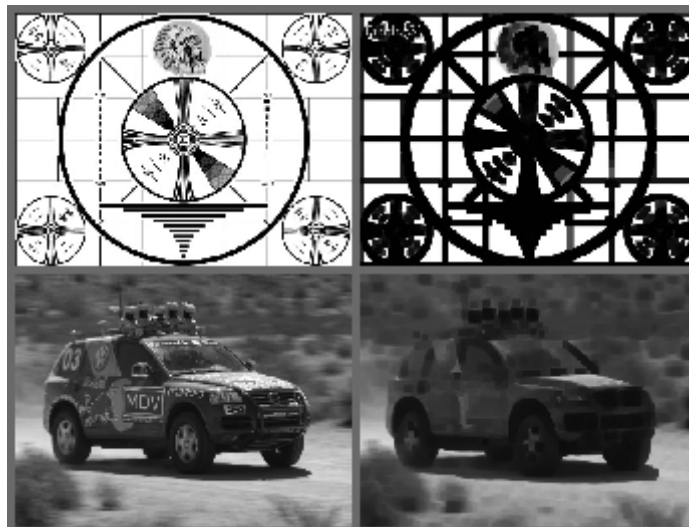


Figure 5-22: Results of the erosion, or “min,” operator: bright regions are isolated and shrunk

$$\text{erode}(x, y) = \min_{(i, j) \in \text{kernel}} \text{src}(x + i, y + j)$$

$$\text{dilate}(x, y) = \max_{(i, j) \in \text{kernel}} \text{src}(x + i, y + j)$$

*You might be wondering why we need a complicated formula when the earlier heuristic description was perfectly sufficient. Some users actually prefer such formulas but, more importantly, the formulas capture*

*some generality that isn't apparent in the qualitative description. Observe that if the image is not Boolean, then the min and max operators play a less trivial role. Take another look at*

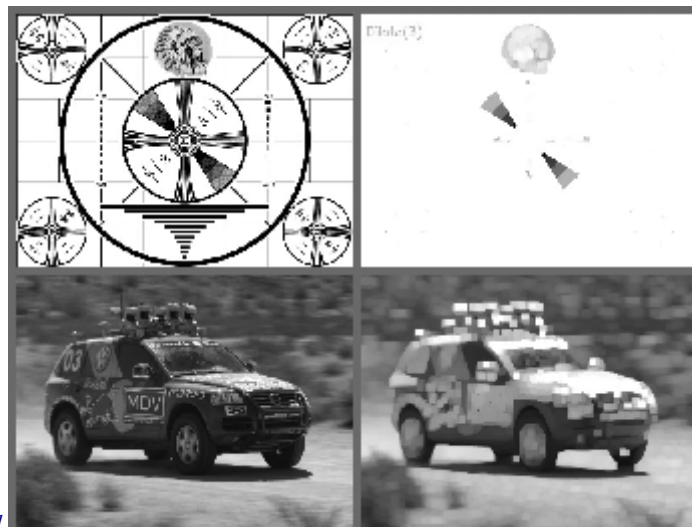
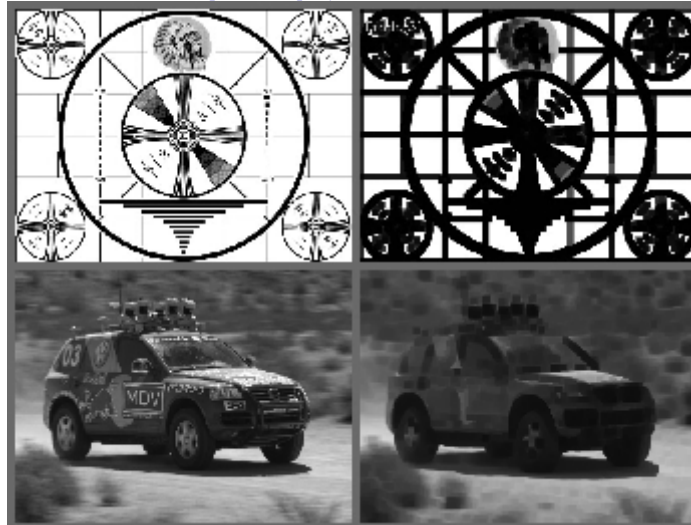


Figure 5-22 and

Figure 5-20, which show the erosion and dilation operators applied to two real images.

## The General Morphology Function

When working with Boolean images and image masks, the basic erode and dilate operations are usually sufficient. When working with grayscale or color images, however, a number of additional operations are often helpful. Several of the more useful operations can be handled by the multipurpose `cv::morphologyEx()` function.

```
void cv::morphologyEx(
    cv::InputArray  src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,           // Result image
    int             op,            // Morphology operator to use e.g. cv::MOP_OPEN
    cv::InputArray  element,       // Structuring element, can be cv::Mat()
    cv::Point       anchor        = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    int             iterations     = 1, // Number of times to apply
    int             borderType     = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
    const cv::Scalar& borderValue = cv::morphologyDefaultBorderValue())
```

---

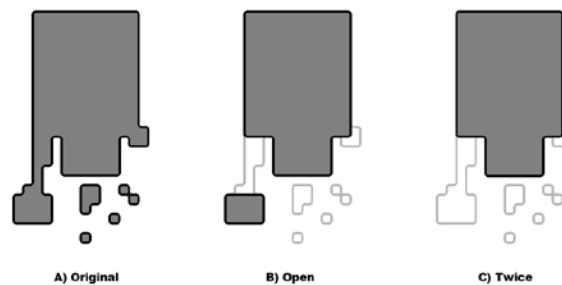
```
| );
```

In addition to the arguments that we saw with the `cv::dilate()` and `cv::erode()` functions, `cv::morphologyEx()` has one new—and very important—parameter. This new argument, called `op`, is the specific operation to be done; the possible values of this argument are listed on Table 5-3.

*Table 5-3: `cv::morphologyEx()` operation options*

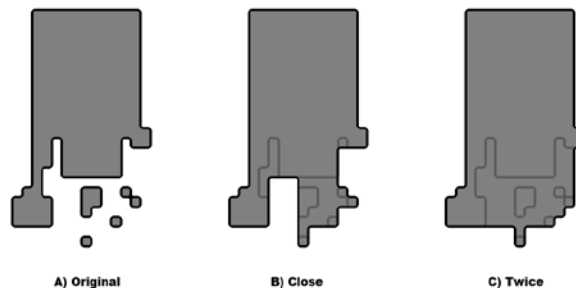
Value of <code>operation</code>	Morphological operator	Requires temp image?
<code>cv::MOP_OPEN</code>	Opening	No
<code>cv::MOP_CLOSE</code>	Closing	No
<code>cv::MOP_GRADIENT</code>	Morphological gradient	Always
<code>cv::MOP_TOPHAT</code>	Top Hat	For in-place only ( <code>src = dst</code> )
<code>cv::MOP_BLACKHAT</code>	Black Hat	For in-place only ( <code>src = dst</code> )

## Opening and closing



*Figure 5-23: Morphological opening applied to a simple Boolean image.*

The first two operations, *opening* and *closing*, are actually simple combinations of the erosion and dilation operators. In the case of opening, we erode first and then dilate (Figure 5-23). Opening is often used to count regions in a Boolean image. For example, if we have thresholded an image of cells on a microscope slide, we might use opening to separate out cells that are near each other before counting the regions.



*Figure 5-24: Morphological closing applied to a simple Boolean image.*

In the case of closing, we dilate first and then erode (Figure 5-24). Closing is used in most of the more sophisticated connected-component algorithms to reduce unwanted or noise-driven segments. For connected components, usually an erosion or closing operation is performed first to eliminate elements that

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arise purely from noise and then an opening operation is used to connect nearby large regions. (Notice that, although the end result of using open or close is similar to using erode or dilate, these new operations tend to preserve the area of connected regions more accurately.)

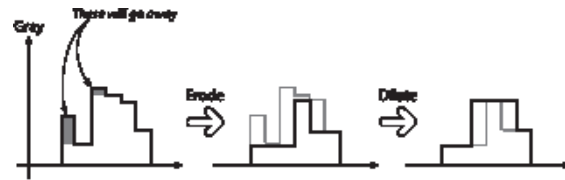


Figure 5-25: Morphological opening operation applied to a (one-dimensional) non-Boolean image: the upward outliers are eliminated as a result

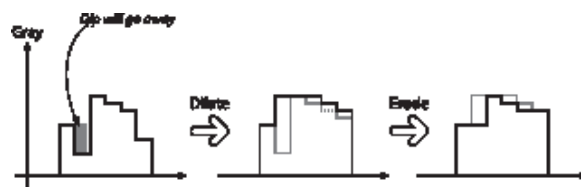


Figure 5-26: Morphological closing operation applied to a (one-dimensional) non-Boolean image: the downward outliers are eliminated as a result

When used on non-Boolean images, the most prominent effect of closing is to eliminate lone outliers that are lower in value than their neighbors, whereas the effect of opening is to eliminate lone outliers that are higher than their neighbors. Results of using the opening operator are shown in

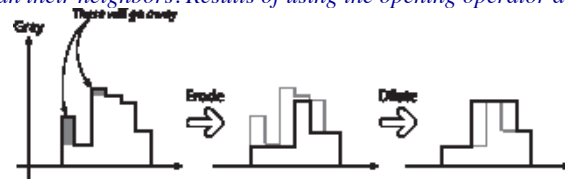


Figure 5-25, and of the closing operator in

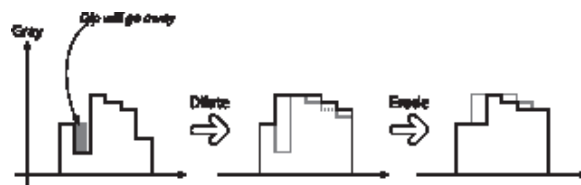


Figure 5-26.

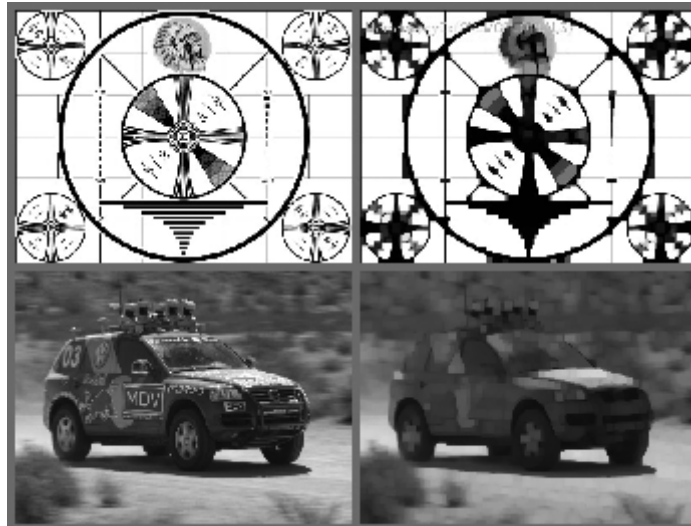


Figure 5-27: Results of morphological opening on an image: small bright regions are removed, and the remaining bright regions are isolated but retain their size

One last note on the opening and closing operators concerns how the *iterations* argument is interpreted. You might expect that asking for two iterations of closing would yield something like dilate-erode-dilate-erode. It turns out that this would not be particularly useful. What you usually want (and what you get) is dilate-dilate-erode-erode. In this way, not only the single outliers but also neighboring pairs of outliers will disappear. Figure 5-23 (c) and

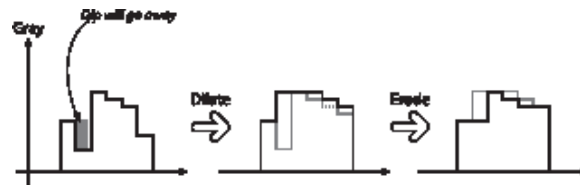


Figure 5-26 (c) illustrate the effect of calling open and close (respectively) with an iteration count of two.

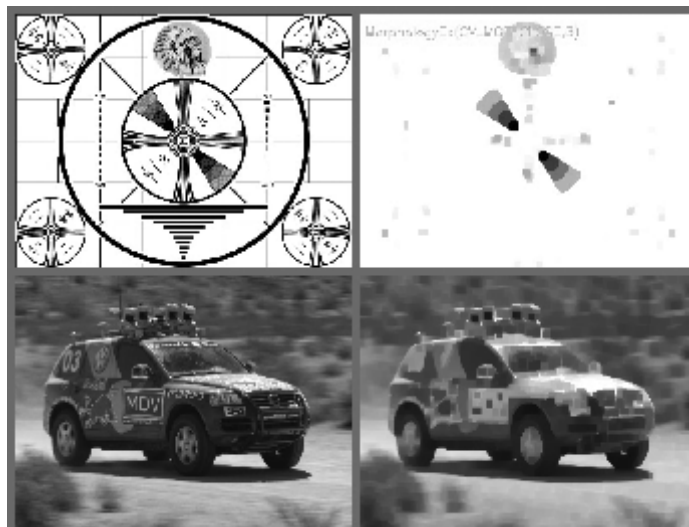


Figure 5-28: Results of morphological closing on an image: bright regions are joined but retain their basic size

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## Morphological gradient

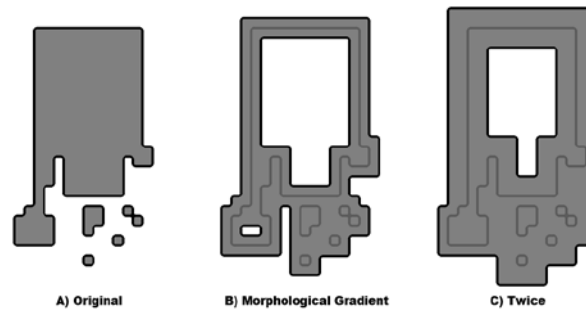


Figure 5-29: Morphological gradient applied to a simple Boolean image.

Our next available operator is the *morphological gradient*. For this one, it is probably easier to start with a formula and then figure out what it means:

$$\text{gradient}(\text{src}) = \text{dilate}(\text{src}) - \text{erode}(\text{src}).$$

As we can see in Figure 5-29, the effect of subtracting the eroded (slightly reduced) image from the dilated (slightly enlarged) image is to leave behind a representation of the edges of objects in the original image.

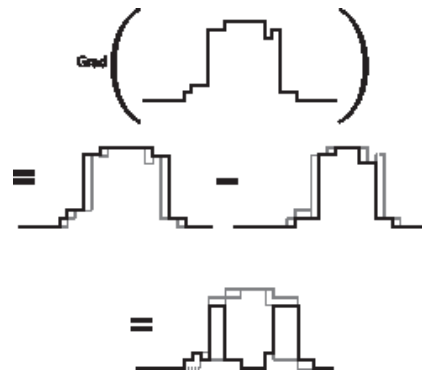
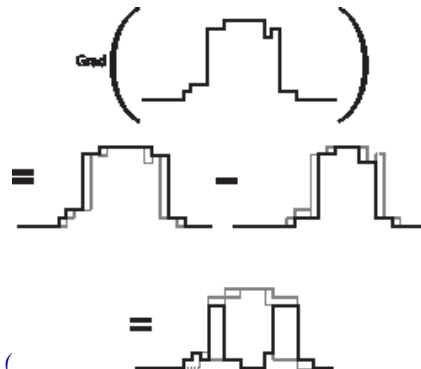


Figure 5-30: Morphological gradient applied to (one-dimensional) non-Boolean image: as expected, the operator has its highest values where the grayscale image is changing most rapidly.



With a grayscale image (

Figure 5-30), we see that the value of the operator is telling us something about how fast the image brightness is changing; this is why the name “morphological gradient” is justified. Morphological gradient is often used when we want to isolate the perimeters of bright regions so we can treat them as whole objects (or as whole parts of objects). The complete perimeter of a region tends to be found because a contracted

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version is subtracted from an expanded version of the region, leaving a complete perimeter edge. This differs from calculating a gradient, which is much less likely to work around the full perimeter of an object.

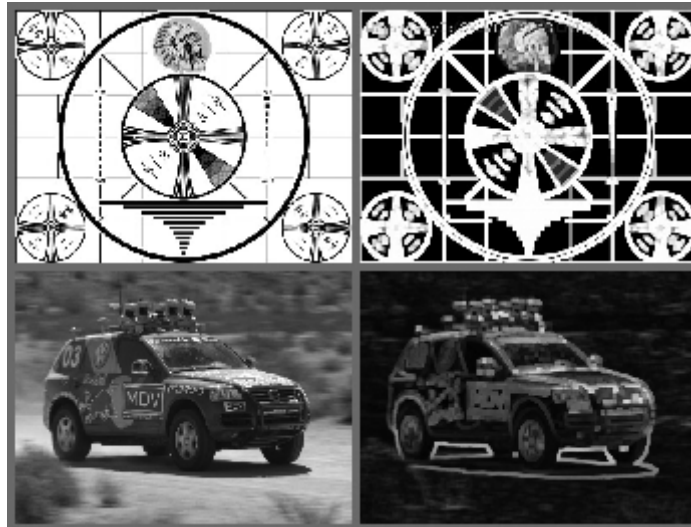


Figure 5-31: Results of the morphological gradient operator: bright perimeter edges are identified

## Top Hat and Black Hat

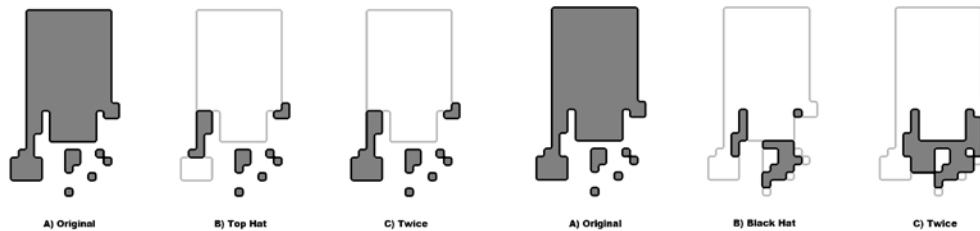
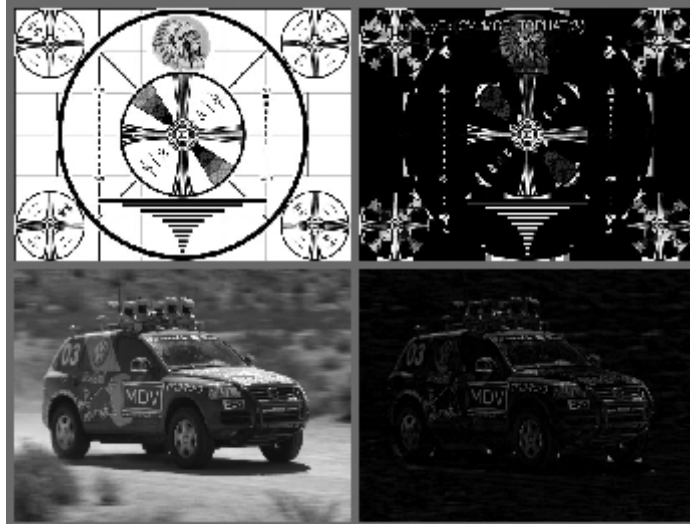


Figure 5-32: The Top Hat (left) and Black Hat (right) morphology operators

The last two operators are called *Top Hat* and *Black Hat* [Meyer78]. These operators are used to isolate patches that are, respectively, brighter or dimmer than their immediate neighbors. You would use these when trying to isolate parts of an object that exhibit brightness changes relative only to the object to which they are attached. This often occurs with microscope images of organisms or cells, for example. Both operations are defined in terms of the more primitive operators, as follows:

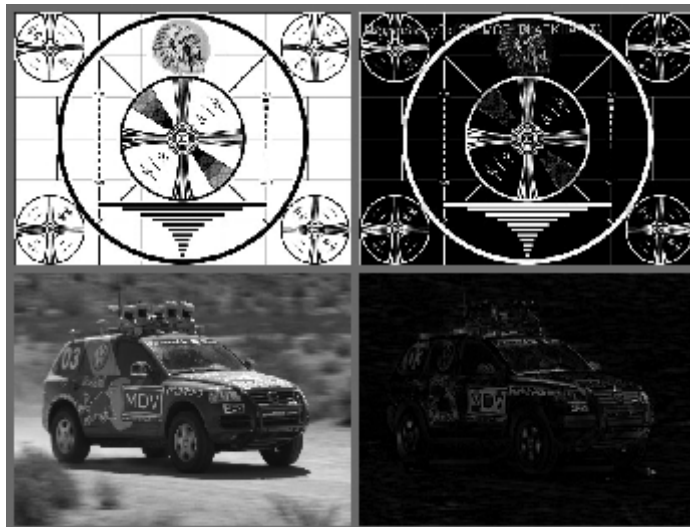
$$TopHat(src) = src - open(src),$$

$$BlackHat(src) = close(src) - src.$$



*Figure 5-33: Results of morphological Top Hat operation: bright local peaks are isolated*

As you can see, the Top Hat operator subtracts the opened form of  $A$  from  $A$ . Recall that the effect of the open operation was to exaggerate small cracks or local drops. Thus, subtracting  $\text{open}(A)$  from  $A$  should reveal areas that are lighter than the surrounding region of  $A$ , relative to the size of the kernel (see Figure 5-33); conversely, the Black Hat operator reveals areas that are darker than the surrounding region of  $A$  (Figure 5-34). Summary results for all the morphological operators discussed in this chapter are assembled in Figure 5-18.<sup>18</sup>



*Figure 5-34: Results of morphological Black Hat operation: dark holes are isolated*

## Making Your Own Kernel

In the morphological operations we have looked at so far, the kernels considered were always square and 3-by-3. If you need something a little more general than that, OpenCV allows you to create your own kernel.

<sup>18</sup> Both of these operations (Top Hat and Black Hat) make more sense in grayscale morphology, where the structuring element is a matrix of real numbers (not just a Boolean mask) and the matrix is added to the current pixel neighborhood before taking a minimum or maximum. Unfortunately, this is not yet implemented in OpenCV.

In the case of morphology, the kernel is often called a *structuring element*, so the routine that allows you to create your own morphology kernels is called `cv::getStructuringElement()`.

In fact, you can just create any array you like and use it as a structuring element in functions like `cv::dilate()`, `cv::erode()`, or `cv::morphologyEx()`, but this is often more work than is necessary. Often what you need is a nonsquare kernel of an otherwise common shape. This is what `cv::getStructuringElement()` is for:

```
cv::Mat cv::getStructuringElement(
    int      shape,           // Element shape, e.g. cv::MORPH_RECT
    cv::Size  ksize,          // Size of structuring element (should be odd)
    cv::Point anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1) // Location of anchor point
);
```

The first argument `shape` controls which basic shape will be used to create the element (Table 5-4), while `ksize` and `anchor` specify the size of the element and the location of the anchor point, respectively. As usual, if the `anchor` argument is left with its default value of `cv::Point(-1,-1)`, then `cv::getStructuringElement()` will take this to mean that the anchor should automatically be placed at the center of the element.

Table 5-4 `cv::getStructuringElement()` element shapes

Value of <code>shape</code>	Element	Description
<code>cv::MORPH_RECT</code>	Rectangular	$E_{i,j} = 1, \forall i, j$
<code>cv::MORPH_ELLIPSE</code>	Elliptic	Ellipse with axes <code>ksize.width</code> and <code>ksize.height</code> .
<code>cv::MORPH_CROSS</code>	Cross-shaped	$E_{i,j} = 1, \text{iff } i == \text{anchor.y or } j == \text{anchor.x}$

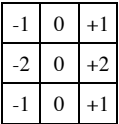
Of the options for `shape` shown in Table 5-4, the last is there only for legacy compatibility. In the old C API (v1.x), there was a separate structure used for the purpose of expressing convolution kernels. There is no need to use this functionality now, as you can simply pass any `cv::Mat` to the morphological operators as a structuring element if you need something more complicated than the basic shape-based elements created by `cv::getStructuringElement()`.

## Convolution with an Arbitrary Linear Filter


In the functions we have seen so far, the basic mechanics of the convolution were happening deep down below the level of the OpenCV API. We took some time to understand the basics of convolution, then we went on to look at a long list of functions that implemented different kinds of useful convolutions. In essentially every case, there was a kernel that was implied by the function we chose, and we just passed that function a little extra information that parameterized that particular filter type. For linear filters, however, it is possible to just provide the entire kernel and let OpenCV handle the convolution for us.

From an abstract point of view, this is very straightforward: we just need a function that takes an array argument to describe the kernel and we are done. At a practical level, there is an important subtlety that strongly affects performance. That subtlety is that some kernels are *separable*, and others are not.


$$\begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline -1 & 0 & +1 \\ \hline -2 & 0 & +2 \\ \hline -1 & 0 & +1 \\ \hline \end{array} = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 1 \\ \hline 2 \\ \hline 1 \\ \hline \end{array} \otimes \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline -1 & 0 & +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$



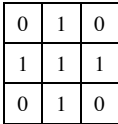
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

---

Figure 5-35: The Sobel kernel (a) is separable; it can be expressed as two one-dimensional convolutions (b and c); (d) is an example of a non-separable kernel

A separable kernel is one that can be thought of as two one-dimensional kernels, the application of which is done by first convolving with the *x*-kernel and then with the *y*-kernel. The benefit of this decomposition is that the computational cost of a kernel convolution is approximately the image area multiplied by the kernel area<sup>19</sup>. This means that convolving your image of area *A* by an *n*-by-*n* kernel takes time proportional to  $An^2$ , while convolving your image once by an *n*-by-1 kernel and then by a 1-by-*n* kernel takes time proportional to  $An + An = 2An$ . For even *n* as small as 3 there is a benefit, and the benefit grows with *n*.

### Applying a general filter with `cv::filter2D()`

Given that the number of operations required for an image convolution, at least at first glance<sup>20</sup>, seems to be the number of pixels in the image multiplied by the number of pixels in the kernel, this can be a lot of computation and so is not something you want to do with some `for` loop and a lot of pointer de-referencing. In situations like this, it is better to let OpenCV do the work for you and take advantage of the internal optimizations. The OpenCV way to do this is with `cv::filter2D()`:

```
cv::filter2D(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image
    int ddepth,                  // Pixel depth of output image (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray kernel,       // Your own kernel
    cv::Point anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    double delta = 0,            // Offset before assignment to dst
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

Here we create an array of the appropriate size, fill it with the coefficients of our linear filter, and then pass it together with the source and destination images into `cv::filter2D()`. As usual, we can specify the depth of the resulting image with `ddepth`, the anchor point for the filter with `anchor`, and the border extrapolation method with `borderType`. The kernel can be of even size if its anchor point is defined; otherwise, it should be of odd size. If you want an overall offset applied to the result after application of the linear filter, you can use the argument `delta`.

### Applying a general separable filter with `cv::sepFilter2D`

In the case where your kernel is separable, you will get the best performance from OpenCV by expressing it in its separated form and passing those one-dimensional kernels to OpenCV (e.g., passing the kernels shown in Figure 5-35b and Figure 5-35c instead of the one shown in Figure 5-35a.) The OpenCV function `cv::sepFilter2D()` is like `cv::filter2D()`, except that it expects these two one-dimensional kernels instead of one two-dimensional kernel.

```
cv::sepFilter2D(
    cv::InputArray src,           // Input Image
    cv::OutputArray dst,         // Result image
    int ddepth,                  // Pixel depth of output image (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray rowKernel,    // 1-by-N row Kernel
    cv::InputArray columnKernel, // M-by-1 column kernel
    cv::Point anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
);
```

---

<sup>19</sup> This statement is only exactly true for convolution in the spatial domain, which is how OpenCV handles only small kernels.

<sup>20</sup> We say “at first glance” because it is also possible to perform convolutions in the frequency domain. In this case, for an *n*-by-*n* image and an *m*-by-*m* kernel with  $n \gg m$ , the computational time will be proportional to  $n^2 \log(n)$  and not to the  $n^2 m^2$  that is expected for computations in the spatial domain. Because the frequency domain computation is independent of the size of the kernel, it is more efficient for large kernels. OpenCV automatically decides whether to do the convolution in the frequency domain based on the size of the kernel.

---

---

```
double    delta      = 0,           // Offset before assignment to dst
int       borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

All the arguments of `cv::sepFilter2D()` are the same as those of `cv::filter2D()`, with the exception of the replacement of the `kernel` argument with the `rowKernel` and `columnKernel` arguments. The latter two are expected to be  $n_1$ -by-1 and 1-by- $n_2$  arrays (with  $n_1$  not necessarily equal to  $n_2$ ).

## The Filter Architecture

Almost all of the functions described in this chapter are based on a unified *Filter Architecture*. The Filter Architecture is a class system that allows you (or the OpenCV developers) to create a new filter and automatically reuse all of the things that every filter has in common (the convolution steps, handling of the borders, etc.)

### The Big Picture

The process of doing convolutions is complex because these are always very computationally intensive operations. As a result, there is a great benefit to doing things very efficiently. On the other hand, writing very efficient code is often very difficult to do in a modular way. As a result, OpenCV has an entire architecture for handling just this problem. This architecture begins at the top with high-level operations like `cv::blur()`. This function takes your image, smoothes it, and gives it back. Sounds simple, but this is actually the result of many different layers operating together. When you want to do your own thing, you will have to figure out exactly which level you want to tinker with. Tinker at too high a level, and you won't have the control you need. Tinker at too low a level, and you will find yourself reinventing every sort of wheel before you are done. To get the most out of OpenCV's filter architecture, it is important to keep the big picture in mind.

The big picture is best understood by working through an example. The “top” layer of the filter architecture is a collection of high-level service routines, like `cv::blur()` mentioned above. Inside of `cv::blur()`, however, your image is given to an object called a *filter engine*. The filter engine is a class that handles all of the general aspects of applying a filter kernel to your image, like iterating over the image, operating on each segment of the image, and handling boundary conditions. As the filter engine moves through the image, it will pass chunks of the image down to the next level that contains the actual filters. These filters, called *base filters* in OpenCV, do the actual work of computing individual destination image pixels from small windows of the source image and the kernel. At the very bottom of this hierarchy are the kernel builders. These are routines that actually compute individual kernels from some specific set of parameters (i.e., the variance of the Gaussian used in the `cv::blur()` code).

### Filter Engines

You can use the Filter Engine layer to implement your own basic filters. The filters you implement need not be linear filters as was the case with `cv::filter2D()`. For performance reasons, you may also want to create composite filters, which—though they may accomplish something similar or identical to some sequence of filters provided for you by OpenCV—will run much faster. This is because combining the operations at a local level will mean that your data will stay in the processor cache, get handled, and get sent back to main memory, in just one transaction (as opposed to one for each filter you used in the composition).

### The Basics of How Filter Engines Work

The basic objects that are used to represent filters in two dimensions are all derived from the `cv::BaseFilter` class. This class essentially defines the kernel operation. For linear kernels, this can

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be thought of as the kernel weights. For nonlinear kernels, in principle, this could be just about any function that maps the weights in the kernel support area to a single number that is the result of the filter.

The object responsible for applying a filter is a `cv::FilterEngine`. The `cv::FilterEngine` class is one of those “classes that do things.” When you want to use a `cv::BaseFilter`-derived kernel object, you have to create a `cv::FilterEngine` object to do the work, and pass it a pointer to your `cv::BaseFilter` object when you create it.

### The `cv::FilterEngine` Class

The filter engine class is both a container for the base filters, as well as a device for actually applying the filter to an image. When constructed, the filter engine constructor will require either a two-dimensional filter (non-separable case) or two one-dimensional filters (separable case). In addition, you will have to tell it what kinds of images it will operate on, what kind it will return, and what data type to use for its intermediate buffer (more on that in a moment). The way the borders are handled is also a property of the filter engine, as it is responsible for the action of the more atomic filter object it contains on the images provided to the engine. Here is the constructor for the `cv::FilterEngine` class:

```
cv::FilterEngine(
    const cv::Ptr< cv::BaseFilter>&      _filter2D,
    const cv::Ptr< cv::BaseRowFilter>&    _rowFilter,
    const cv::Ptr< cv::BaseColumnFilter>& _columnFilter,
    int                                   srcType,
    int                                   dstType,
    int                                   bufType,
    int                                   _rowBorderType = cv::BORDER_REPLICATE,
    int                                   _columnBorderType = -1,
    const Scalar&                          _borderValue = cv::Scalar()
);
```

The first three arguments are used to pass the base filter to the filter engine. We will cover the details of how to make those shortly. What is important at the moment is that you will only use either the first option, `_filter2D`, or the next two, `_rowFilter` and `_columnFilter`. If you are using `_filter2D`, then you should pass `cv::Mat()` (empty matrix constructor) to `_rowFilter` and `_columnFilter`; conversely if you wish to use `_rowFilter` and `_columnFilter`, you should pass `cv::Mat()` to `_filter2D`.

The next three arguments, `srcType`, `dstType`, and `bufType` should all be depth types (e.g., `cv::F32` etc.) All data passed to the filter engine must be of type `srcType`. All final returned data will be of type `dstType`. The buffer type `bufType` must be the same as the source type for non-separable filters. In the case of separable filters, the row filter will be processed first, and its output will be written to a buffer of type `bufType`. The column filter will then be applied on that buffer and the results written to the output area, which will be of the destination type. Thus the row filter must be one that takes arrays of type `srcType` and returns `bufType`, while the column filter must take arrays of type `bufType` and return arrays of type `dstType`.

Row and column borders can be handled differently by the filter engine if you like, by passing different values to `_rowBorderType` and `_columnBorderType`. If you wish, you may pass `-1` (the default value) to `_columnBorderType` to make it the same as the row border type. The border value `_borderValue` is only used for `cv::BORDERTYPE_CONSTANT`, in which case extrapolated pixels will have value `_borderValue`.

You may create a filter engine with the constructor described above, or you may create a filter engine using the default constructor `cv::FilterEngine()`, and then initialize the engine with its `init()` method:

```
cv::FilterEngine::init(
    const cv::Ptr< cv::BaseFilter>&      _filter2D,
    const cv::Ptr< cv::BaseRowFilter>&    _rowFilter,
    const cv::Ptr< cv::BaseColumnFilter>& _columnFilter,
    int                                   srcType,
```

---

---

```

int                                     dstType,
int                                     bufType,
int                                     _rowBorderType = cv::BORDER_REPLICATE,
int                                     _columnBorderType = -1,
const Scalar&                           _borderValue = cv::Scalar()
);

```

Once you have the filter engine, there are several methods that allow you to use the engine to actually do a convolution. They are the methods called `cv::FilterEngine::start()`, `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()`, and `cv::FilterEngine::apply()`. The `start()` methods initializes convolution for processing pixels in a set region of the source image, though it does not actually process the pixels. The `proceed()` method does the processing of pixels in that section of the image after `start()` or a previous call to `proceed()`. The `apply()` method is essentially a higher-level call that processes the entire image at once.

```

virtual int cv::FilterEngine::start( // Return starting y-position in source image
    cv::Size wholeSize,              // Size of entire source image
    Rect roi,                        // Region of interest inside of source image
    int maxBufRows = -1              // Leave this at -1, or see text below
);
virtual int cv::FilterEngine::start( // Return starting y-position in source image
    const cv::Mat& src,              // Source image
    const cv::Rect& srcRoi = cv::Rect(0,0,-1,-1), // Region of interest in source
    bool isolated = false,           // if true, use edge extrapolation
    int maxBufRows = -1              // Leave this at -1, or see text below
);

```

Both forms of `cv::FilterEngine::start()` support a *region of interest*, typically abbreviated ROI. This is the portion of the incoming source image that will be acted on by the filter engine. The first form of `start()` requires to be told both the size of the image that is going to be processed, called `wholeSize`, and the size and location of the ROI, which are together in the `cv::Rect` called `roi`. The argument `maxBufRows` should be left at its default value of `-1`.<sup>21</sup>

The second form is the one you will probably use most often; it takes the source image (and computes the equivalent of `wholeSize` from that), the region of interest, and a new argument called `isolated`. The parameter `isolated` deals with the way off-the-edge pixels are treated for an ROI that is smaller than the entire image. If `isolated` is `true`, those pixels will be extrapolated the same as would be off-the-edge pixels of the image as a whole. If `isolated` is `false`, however, off-the-edge pixels will not be extrapolated. Instead they will be taken from the image outside of the ROI. `cv::FilterEngine::start()` returns an integer indicating the y-position in the image at which processing should begin (as computed from the ROI).

Once you have called `cv::FilterEngine::start()`, you can begin processing your data with `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()`.

---

<sup>21</sup> This parameter is the size of internal ring buffer used for filtering and affects only the processing speed. As `maxBufRows` increases from the minimal value (i.e., `kernel_aperture_height`), the speed will increase until, after a certain value, it will decrease because of the less efficient cache use. The measured difference in speed should be quite small, but you can play with it if filter performance is critical to your application.

In the case of non-separable filters with large apertures however, keep in mind that the function `cv::filter2D()` checks the aperture size and, if it's large enough (~11-by-11 or larger), it uses the fast DFT-based algorithm. This method filters each pixel in  $\sim O(\log n)$  time (i.e. time almost does not depend on the aperture size). By contrast, `FilterEngine` always uses the direct algorithm that takes  $O(n^2)$  operations for each pixel (in the case of an  $n$ -by- $n$  filter). In other words, if you want the highest performance in linear non-separable filtering operations, where aperture size is sufficiently large, it's better to use `cv::filter2D()`, rather than to use `FilterEngine` and try to tune `maxBufRows`.

Thank Vadim Pisarevsky for this important insight.

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```

virtual int cv::FilterEngine::proceed( // Returns the number of produced rows
    const uchar* src,                // Points into source image
    int          srcStep,             // Source image step size
    int          srcCount,            // Number of row steps to process
    uchar*       dst,                // Points into destination image
    int          dstStep             // Destination image step size
);

```

When called, `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` requires to be passed some detailed bookkeeping information. The first argument `src` is the location in memory of the current row being operated on. This means, for example, that the first time you call `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()`, you will need to compute `src` from the y-value returned to you by `cv::FilterEngine::start()`. You will also have to pass the step size from the source image as `srcStep`. The argument `srcCount` is the number or row steps you would like to process in this call to `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()`. Finally, you must give the data pointer and step size for the area to which the results of the filter will be written. These two arguments are `dst` and `dstStep`, respectively. The way in which both `cv::FilterEngine::start()` and `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` are used is best understood by example. Below is an example from the OpenCV source code, which is a (slightly simplified) implementation of the Laplace operator:

*Example 5-4: An example implementation of a Laplace operator using the `cv::FilterEngine()` class*

```

void laplace_f(
    const cv::Mat& src,                // Input image
    cv::Mat&       dst                // Result image
) {
    CV_Assert( src.type() == cv::F32 );
    dst.create( src.size(), src.type() );

    // get the derivative and smooth kernels for d2I/dx2
    // for d2I/dy2 use the same kernels, just swapped
    cv::Mat kd, ks;
    cv::getSobelKernels( kd, ks, 2, 0, ksize, false, ktype );

    // process 10 source rows at once
    int DELTA = std::min(10, src.rows);
    cv::Ptr< cv::FilterEngine> Fxx = cv::createSeparableLinearFilter(
        src.type(),
        dst.type(),
        kd, ks,
        Point(-1,-1),
        0,
        borderType, borderType,
        Scalar()
    );
    cv::Ptr< cv::FilterEngine> Fyy = cv::createSeparableLinearFilter(
        src.type(),
        dst.type(),
        ks, kd,
        Point(-1,-1),
        0,
        borderType, borderType,
        Scalar()
    );

    int y = Fxx->start(src), dsty = 0, dy = 0;
    Fyy->start(src);
    const uchar* sptr = src.data + y*src.step;

    // allocate the buffers for the spatial image derivatives;
    // the buffers need to have more than DELTA rows, because at the
    // last iteration the output may take max(kd.rows-1,ks.rows-1)

```

---

---

```

// rows more than the input.
cv::Mat Ixx( DELTA + kd.rows - 1, src.cols, dst.type() );
cv::Mat Iyy( DELTA + kd.rows - 1, src.cols, dst.type() );

// inside the loop always pass DELTA rows to the filter
// (note that the "proceed" method takes care of possible overflow, since
// it was given the actual image height in the "start" method)
// on output you can get:
// * < DELTA rows (initial buffer accumulation stage)
// * = DELTA rows (settled state in the middle)
// * > DELTA rows (when the input image is over, generate
//                  "virtual" rows using the border mode and filter them)
// this variable number of output rows is dy
// dsty is the current output row
// sptr is the pointer to the first input row in the portion to process
//
for( ; dsty < dst.rows; sptr += DELTA*src.step, dsty += dy )
{
    Fxx->proceed(
        sptr,
        (int) src.step,
        DELTA,
        Ixx.data,
        (int) Ixx.step
    );
    dy = Fyy->proceed(
        sptr,
        (int) src.step,
        DELTA,
        Iyy.data,
        (int) Iyy.step
    );
    if( dy > 0 )
    {
        Mat dstripe = dst.rowRange( dsty, dsty + dy );
        add( Ixx.rowRange(0, dy), Iyy.rowRange(0, dy), dstripe );
    }
}
}

```

We will cover shortly how functions like `cv::createSeparableLinearFilter()` work, but what is important here is that these functions just return instances of classes derived from the `cv::FilterEngine` base class. Also, notice how the `start()` and `proceed()` methods are used. As you can see, the implementation `laplace_f()` loops through the incoming image in chunks of size `DELTA` and processes each chunk before moving on.

Now that you know how to use `start()` and `proceed()`, you might wonder why it is worth the effort. In fact, the next method we will look at called `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` just does the whole thing in one go.<sup>22</sup> The reason is performance. If you have several things you want to do, like applying the two kernels (or more!) in sequence in our example, it is much better to do everything you want to do to a bit of data and then write it out to the destination image. In this way, you can keep all of the working data in processor cache and your filter will run much faster.

If this kind of performance detail is not critical to your application, you can simply tell a filter engine to just go through an entire image and output the result. This is done with the `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method.

---

<sup>22</sup> One additional consequence of this is that when `apply()` calls `start()`, it always passes `maxBufRows` the default value of `-1`.

---

---

```

virtual void apply(
    const cv::Mat& src,           // Input image
    cv::Mat& dst                 // Result image
    const cv::Rect& srcRoi       = cv::Rect(0,0,-1,-1), // Region of interest to be processed
    cv::Point dstOffs           = cv::Point(0,0),      // Offset to write to in destination image
    bool isolated               = false,               // if true, use edge extrapolation
);

```

Internally, `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` just wraps up a call to `cv::FilterEngine::start()` and then one big call to `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()`, which then goes through the entire image. The only new detail is the argument `dstOffs`, which is the *destination offset*. The destination offset is a point that indicates where in the destination image to write the result of the processed ROI. If left at its default value of `cv::Point(0,0)`, then the result data will be written into the upper-left corner of the destination image. Otherwise, it will be offset appropriately. This is particularly useful when you wish to process some ROI in the source image and write the results to the corresponding location in the destination image.

## Filter Engine Builders

OpenCV contains built in functions that will create filter engines for you. It is worth taking a moment to appreciate what this really means. Creating a filter engine means both creating the filters that the engine will apply (i.e., a box filter of a Gaussian filter, etc.), as well as actually implementing the `start()`, `proceed()`, and `apply()` methods of that filter for you. Each of the library routines we will discuss in this section creates an object of a different type, but all of these objects are derived from `cv::FilterEngine`, and so inherit the interface we discussed in the previous section, as well as provide the implementation of that interface.

For each of these `cv::FilterEngine` factories, there is also a corresponding higher-level routine we have already encountered, which (unbeknownst to you) creates the appropriate engine, applies it to your image, and cleans it up, returning you only the result of that computation. For example, `cv::boxFilter()` is really just a higher-level wrapper around `cv::createBoxFilter()` and the subsequent application of the created filter to your image.<sup>23</sup>

You will notice that all of these routines return `cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine>`. It is probably worth taking a moment to appreciate what this means. Notice first that this is a good example of where OpenCV uses its smart pointer construct `cv::Ptr<>`. This way you will not have to deallocate the filter engine you create. You can pass the smart pointer around, do what you need to with it, and trust that at the end of whatever you are doing, when there are no more references to the engine around, the engine itself will be deallocated. It is also worth noting that smart pointer, just like the traditional pointer, can be a base class pointer, and can be used to operate on derived class objects. Thus, just because all of these filter builders return a (smart) *pointer* of type `cv::FilterEngine`, it is not correct to conclude that they return *objects* of type `cv::FilterEngine`. Exactly on the contrary, these functions all return their own specific filter engine types that are all derived from `cv::FilterEngine`.

### `cv::createBoxFilter()`

You can directly create a box filter using `cv::createBoxFilter()`:

```

cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine> cv::createBoxFilter(
    int srcType,           // Source image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int dstType,           // Destination image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::Size ksize,        // Kernel size
    cv::Point anchor       = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    bool normalize          = true,           // If true, divide by box area
);

```

---

<sup>23</sup> Actually, `cv::boxFilter()` does not literally call `cv::createBoxFilter()` explicitly, but it essentially implements the latter's functionality internally before calling the further subroutines shared by both routines.

---

---

```
int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

As you might have expected, the arguments to `cv::createBoxFilter()` are essentially the same as those for `cv::boxFilter()`, with the exception that instead of providing the source and destination images, only the types of those images are required to define the filter. The `ksize` and `anchor` arguments define the size of the kernel and the (optional) anchor point as with `cv::boxFilter`, and the filter can be normalized or not by setting the `normalize` argument to `true` or `false`. The `borderType` argument has the usual effect.

### `cv::createDerivFilter()`

You can create a derivative filter using `cv::createBoxFilter()`:

```
cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine> cv::createDerivFilter(
    int srcType,                // Source image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int dstType,                // Destination image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int dx,                     // order of corresponding derivative in x
    int dy,                     // order of corresponding derivative in y
    int ksize,                  // Kernel size
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

The arguments to `cv::createDerivFilter()` are essentially the same as those for `cv::Sobel()`, with the exception that instead of providing the source and destination images, only the types of those images are required to define the filter. The `dx` and `dy` arguments define the order of the derivative to be approximated, and `ksize` gives the size of the kernel to be used<sup>24</sup>. The `borderType` argument has the usual effect.

### `cv::createGaussianFilter()`

You can directly create a Gaussian filter using `cv::createGaussianFilter()`:

```
cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine> cv::createGaussianFilter(
    int type,                   // Source and destination type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::Size ksize,             // Kernel size
    double sigmaX,              // Gaussian half-width in x-direction
    double sigmaY = 0.0,        // Gaussian half-width in y-direction
    int borderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT // Border extrapolation to use
);
```

As you might expect by now, the arguments to `cv::createGaussianFilter()` are essentially the same as those for `cv::GaussianBlur()`. In this case, however, there is only one `type` argument for the source and destination; this filter requires both to be of the same type<sup>25</sup>. `sigmaX` and `sigmaY` indicate the variance of the Gaussian in the *x*- and *y*-direction respectively, with `sigmaY` being optional (if set to zero `sigmaY` will be equal to `sigmaX`). The `borderType` argument has the usual effect.

### `cv::createLinearFilter()`

You can directly create a general linear filter using `cv::createLinearFilter()`:

```
cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine> cv::createLinearFilter(
    int srcType,                // Source image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int dstType,                // Destination image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray kernel,      // Your own kernel
);
```

---

<sup>24</sup> Note that the `ksize` argument for `cv::createDerivFilter()` is an integer, while the `ksize` argument for `cv::createBoxFilter()` was of type `cv::Size`. This is natural because the kernel of a derivative filter will always be square.

<sup>25</sup> If you need to work around this, you can call `cv::getGaussianKernel()` directly, and then `cv::createSeparableLinearFilter()`. (We will get to both of those functions shortly.)

---

---

```

cv::Point      anchor      = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
double        delta = 0,           // Offset before assignment to dst
int           rowBorderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT, // Row extrapolation
int           columnBorderType = -1,           // Column extrapolation
const cv::Scalar& borderValue = cv::Scalar()    // Value for constant borders
);

```

If you have your own linear kernel, you can have OpenCV make it into a filter engine for you with `cv::createLinearFilter()`; this is the filter engine analog of `cv::filter2D()`. This function should only be used when you have a non-separable kernel, as you will get much better performance from `cv::createSeparableLinearFilter()` if your kernel is separable. The arguments are the source type, `srcType`, and destination type, `dstType`, for the input and output images, the `kernel` you want to use, an optional `anchor` point (the default is to use the center of your kernel), an optional offset `delta`, and the border extrapolation parameters. Unlike most of the other similar functions, `cv::createLinearFilter()` allows you to specify the border extrapolation method for the vertical, `rowBorderType`, and the horizontal, `columnBorderType`, separately. If you omit the latter (or set it to `-1`) it will default to being the same as the former. The final `borderValue` argument is used to define the off-the-edge pixel values when either `rowBorderType` or `columnBorderType` is set to `cv::BORDER_CONSTANT`.

### `cv::createMorphologyFilter()`

You can create a filter which implements the morphological operations using `cv::createMorphologyFilter()`:

```

cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine> cv::createMorphologyFilter(
    int          op,
    int          type,
    cv::InputArray element,
    cv::Point     anchor      = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    int          rowBorderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT, // Row extrapolation
    int          columnBorderType = -1,           // Column extrapolation
    const cv::Scalar& borderValue = cv::Scalar()    // Value for constant borders
);

```

By now you know the pattern. The arguments to `cv::createMorphologyFilter()` are essentially the same as those for `cv::morphologyEx()`. The `op` argument must be one of the operations from Table 5-3, and the type is the type of the source and destination images, which must be the same. The element is your structuring element and the optional anchor lets you locate the anchor point somewhere other than the (default) center of your structuring element. `rowBorderType` and `columnBorderType` let you specify the vertical and horizontal border extrapolation methods, and `borderValue` is the constant used in the case that one of the extrapolation methods is `cv::BORDER_CONSTANT`.

### `cv::createSeparableLinearFilter()`

In the case of a separable linear kernel, you can directly create a filter using `cv::createSeparableLinearFilter()`:

```

cv::Ptr<cv::FilterEngine> cv::createSeparableLinearFilter(
    int srcType,           // Source image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int dstType,           // Destination image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray rowKernel, // 1-by-N row Kernel
    cv::InputArray columnKernel, // M-by-1 column kernel
    cv::Point     anchor      = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    double        delta      = 0,           // Offset before dst
    int          rowBorderType = cv::BORDER_DEFAULT, // Row extrapolation
    int          columnBorderType = -1,           // Column extrapolation
    const cv::Scalar& borderValue = cv::Scalar()    // Value for constant borders
);

```

The `cv::createSeparableLinearFilter()` function is the filter engine analog of the `cv::sepFilter2D()` function. It requires the source type, `srcType`, and the destination type,

---

---

`dstType`. The row and column kernels are each specified separately with `rowKernel` and `columnKernel`. `anchor`, `delta`, and the border extrapolation arguments all have their usual meanings.

## Base Filters

The filter builders we looked at in the last section created the low-level filter object you needed for you, and then wrapped it up in a `cv::FilterEngine` object that you could then use. Of course, if you were always going to rely on these functions, it would not have been necessary to learn so much about how the filter engine itself actually works or gets constructed.

The real reason to use this is when you are going to create your own filter entirely, and then use that to build a filter engine that does your own special thing.

In this section, we will look at how you create a low-level filter object of your own. Because separability plays such an important role in the performance of filters, and because you would not be making your own base-level filters if you were not concerned about performance, the base filter classes are divided into the non-separable `cv::BaseFilter` class, and the two classes used for separable filters, `cv::BaseRowFilter` and `cv::BaseColumnFilter`.

### The `cv::BaseFilter` Class

Down at the bottom of the image filtering class hierarchy lives `cv::BaseFilter`. It implements the actual operator that combines some kernel with the appropriate window of an input image to compute the corresponding output image pixel. This mapping need not be linear at all, and can be any general function of the input image pixels and the kernel pixels. The only restriction is that this function must be computable on a row-by-row basis<sup>26</sup>.

The definition of the `cv::BaseFilter` class looks like the following:

```
class cv::BaseFilter {
public:
    virtual ~BaseFilter();

    // To be overridden by the user.
    //
    // runs a filtering operation on the set of rows,
    // "dstcount + ksize.height - 1" rows on input,
    // "dstcount" rows on output,
    // each input row has "(width + ksize.width-1)*cn" elements
    // each output row has "width*cn" elements.
    // the filtered rows are written into "dst" buffer.
    //
    virtual void operator() (
        const uchar** src,
        uchar* dst,
        int dststep,
        int dstcount,
        int width,
        int cn
    ) = 0;

    // resets the filter state (may be needed for IIR filters)
    //
```

---

<sup>26</sup> This means that the function  $F$ , which maps the pixels  $\{x_{i,j}\}$  of the image and the values  $\{k_{i,j}\}$  of the kernel may contain terms which are functions of multiple values of  $j$ —the column index—but may not contain terms which are functions of multiple values of  $i$ —the row index.

---

---

```
virtual void reset();

Size ksize;
Point anchor;
};
```

As you can see, the method `operator()` is declared pure virtual, and of course this means that you cannot (directly) instantiate objects of type `cv::BaseFilter`. This should not surprise you, however; the intent is for you to be able to derive your own base filter objects off of `cv::BaseFilter`, and to implement the `operator()` and `reset()` functions yourself as appropriate for your own needs.

The `cv::BaseFilter::operator()` is called by the filter engine (into which you have installed your base filter), so the filter engine is going to supply all of the arguments. The `src` and `dst` pointers will point to the source and destination data respectively, but they will point into those images at the proper place. The `src` pointer actually points to an array of pointers, each of which points to one of the rows that you will need to process the kernel (given by the `ksize` member variable). Similarly, the `dst` pointer points to the row in which the destination pixels are located. At the time when the call to `cv::BaseFilter::operator()` is made, these pointers will be “aligned,” in the sense that the `dst` points to the first pixel you will be computing, and the pointers in `src` point to the first pixels you will need for the kernel you have. All of this was set up for you by the filter engine. At this level, you do not need to worry about boundary conditions either, as the `src` pointers actually point to a place where the necessary boundary values are already computed. `dststep` is the step size you will need in order to increment the `dst` pointer to compute other destination values, while `dstcount` is the total number of destination values you will need to compute. `width` and `cn` are the width of the image rows to be processed and the number of channels respectively.

The `cv::BaseFilter::reset()` method is only used in cases where the filter maintains an internal state. The method is automatically called before any new image is processed<sup>27</sup>.

Once you have created your base filter, you can construct a filter engine to run it with the `cv::FilterEngine()` constructor and you are ready for business.

### The `cv::BaseRowFilter` and `cv::BaseColumnFilter` Classes

As we saw when we looked at `cv::FilterEngine`, it can be given either a single non-separable base filter, or a pair of base filters corresponding to the row and column portions of a separable filter. The `cv::BaseRowFilter` and `cv::BaseColumnFilter` classes are how we implement those components of separable filters. Here are the class definitions for these two (virtual base) classes.

```
class cv::BaseRowFilter {
public:
    virtual ~BaseRowFilter();

    // To be overridden by the user.
    //
    // runs filtering operation on the single input row
    // of "width" element, each element is has "cn" channels.
    // the filtered row is written into "dst" buffer.
    //
    virtual void operator()(
        const uchar* src,
        uchar* dst,
        int width,
        int cn
    ) = 0;
```

---

<sup>27</sup> As an example of where the reset method might be used, the current implementation of the box filter uses a sliding sum buffer, which needs to be cleared before each new call.

---

---

```

    int ksize, anchor;
};

class cv::BaseColumnFilter {
public:
    virtual ~BaseColumnFilter();

    // To be overridden by the user.
    //
    // runs a filtering operation on the set of rows,
    // "dstcount + ksize - 1" rows on input,
    // "dstcount" rows on output,
    // each input and output row has "width" elements
    // the filtered rows are written into "dst" buffer.
    //
    virtual void operator()(
        const uchar** src,
        uchar* dst,
        int dststep,
        int dstcount,
        int width
    ) = 0;

    // resets the filter state (may be needed for IIR filters)
    //
    virtual void reset();

    int ksize, anchor;
};

```

The `cv::BaseRowFilter` class is the simplest because row data is sequential in memory, and so there is a little less bookkeeping. The associated `cv::BaseRowFilter::operator()` inherits this relative simplicity. The arguments are just the pointers to the source and destination rows, the `width` of the rows, and the number of channels, `cn`. As with `cv::BaseFilter::operator()`, the source and destination pointers are of type `uchar*`, and so it will be your responsibility to cast them to the correct type.

The `cv::BaseColumnFilter` class needs to handle the non-sequential nature of the required data. As a result, there are the additional arguments `dststep` and `dstcount`, which the row filter did not require<sup>28</sup>. These have the same meaning as they did for the `cv::BaseFilter()` class.

## Base Filter Builders

There will be times when you want to build your own filter engine, but will want to use existing filters to build it. In these cases, it is not necessary to go and re-implement the low-level filters you want. Instead, you can ask OpenCV to just give you the base filter object it normally uses for a particular task.

### `getLinearFilter()`, `getLinearRowFilter()`, and `getLinearColumnFilter()`

```

cv::Ptr<cv::BaseFilter> cv::getLinearFilter( // Return filter object
    int srcType, // Source image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int dstType, // Destination image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray kernel, // Your own kernel
    cv::Point anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
    double delta = 0, // Offset before assignment to dst
    int bits = 0 // For fixed precision integer kernels
)

```

---

<sup>28</sup> You will also notice that the number of channels is not present. This is because it is, in effect, now absorbed into `dststep`.

---

---

```

);

cv::Ptr<cv::BaseColumnFilter> cv::getLinearColumnFilter( // Return filter object
    int      bufType,           // Buffer image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int      dstType,           // Destination image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray columnKernel, // M-by-1 column kernel
    int      anchor,            // 1-d Location of anchor point
    int      symmetryType,       // See Table 5-5
    double    delta = 0,        // Offset before assignment to dst
    int      bits = 0           // For fixed precision integer kernels
);

cv::Ptr<cv::BaseRowFilter> cv::getLinearRowFilter( // Return filter object
    int      srcType,           // Source image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int      bufType,           // Buffer image type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray rowKernel,    // 1-by-N row Kernel
    int      anchor,            // 1-d Location of anchor point
    int      symmetryType,       // See Table 5-5
);

```

The function `cv::getLinearFilter()` returns a (smart) pointer to a `cv::BaseFilter`-derived object that implements a general two-dimensional non-separable linear filter based on the `kernel` (and `anchor` point) you provide. You can provide an optional output offset `delta`, which will be applied after your kernel and before the result is written to the destination array. The last argument, `bits`, is used when your kernel is an integer matrix, but you want to use it to represent fixed (but nonzero) precision numbers.

The `cv::getLinearRowFilter()` and `cv::getLinearColumnFilter()` functions return (smart) pointers to `cv::BaseRowFilter` and `cv::BaseColumnFilter` objects, respectively. The one additional argument that is interesting in these two is the `symmetryType` argument. The symmetry type may be any of the options shown in Table 5-5, including combinations of the types where meaningful (e.g., a kernel might be both smooth and symmetrical, in which case `symmetryType` would be `cv::KERNEL_SMOOTH | cv::KERNEL_SYMMETRICAL`).

*Table 5-5: Filter kernel symmetry types*

Kernel Symmetry	Meaning
<code>cv::KERNEL_GENERAL</code>	Generic type, means no special symmetries.
<code>cv::KERNEL_SYMMETRICAL</code>	Kernel is symmetrical and anchor is at the center.
<code>cv::KERNEL_ASYMMETRICAL</code>	Kernel is asymmetrical and anchor is at the center.
<code>cv::KERNEL_SMOOTH</code>	Kernel is greater than or equal to zero everywhere and normalized.
<code>cv::KERNEL_INTEGER</code>	All kernel elements are integers.

You should make sure that what you indicate to be the symmetry properties of your kernel are in fact correct. The benefit of this information is that it can lead to a much faster operation of the filter. Alternatively, you can ask OpenCV to automatically inspect your kernel for you, by calling the function `cv::getKernelType( cv::InputArray kernel, cv::Point anchor )`, which will determine the kernel type for you. This is not really the best way to do things if you can compute the answer yourself at coding time—because of the runtime required to inspect the kernel—but can be handy if the kernel itself is being dynamically generated at runtime.

---

---

### **getMorphologyFilter(), getMorphologyRowFilter(), and getMorphologyColumnFilter()**

These functions are the analogs of the linear filter generators above, only for morphological filters. As with the linear filters, there is a function for creating a non-separable two-dimensional filter, and two methods for creating the two one-dimensional filter types needed to define a separable kernel:

```
cv::Ptr<cv::BaseFilter> cv::getMorphologyFilter(
    int          op,           // Morphology operator to use e.g. cv::MOP_OPEN
    int          type,         // Source and destination type (e.g., cv::U8)
    cv::InputArray element,    // Structuring element
    cv::Point     anchor = cv::Point(-1,-1), // Location of anchor point
);

cv::Ptr<cv::BaseRowFilter> cv::getMorphologyRowFilter(
    int          op,           // Morphology operator to use e.g. cv::MOP_OPEN
    int          type,         // Source and destination type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int          esize,        // Element size (width)
    int          anchor = -1    // 1-d Location of anchor point
);

cv::Ptr<cv::BaseColumnFilter> cv::getMorphologyColumnFilter(
    int          op,           // Morphology operator to use e.g. cv::MOP_OPEN
    int          type,         // Source and destination type (e.g., cv::U8)
    int          esize,        // Element size (height)
    int          anchor = -1    // 1-d Location of anchor point
);
```

The first function, `cv::getMorphologyFilter()`, which is used for non-separable kernels expects a morphological operator type `op` (from Table 5-3), the input and output image type given by `type`, a structuring `element` and an optional `anchor` point.

The row and column filter constructors require the same arguments, except that the element size, `esize`, is just an integer that indicates the extent of the row (or column) dimension of the kernel. Similarly, the anchor point, `anchor`, is an integer that, as usual, can be set to `-1` to indicate that the center point of the kernel is to be used.

## **Kernel Builders**

At this point, you have found your way to the absolute bottom of the food chain: the OpenCV filter stack. High-level functions call filter engines. Filter engines call base filter generators. Base filter generators go to the kernel builders to get the actual arrays that represent individual kernels. The two kernel builders that you may want to access yourself are `cv::getDerivKernel()`, which constructs the Sobel and Scharr kernels, and `cv::getGaussianKernel()`, which constructs Gaussian kernels.

### **cv::getDerivKernel()**

The actual kernel array for a derivative filter is generated by `cv::getDerivKernel()`.

```
void cv::getDerivKernels(
    cv::OutputArray kx,
    cv::OutputArray ky,
    int          dx,           // order of corresponding derivative in x
    int          dy,           // order of corresponding derivative in y
    int          ksize,        // Kernel size
    bool         normalize = true, // If true, divide by box area
    int          ktype        = cv::F32 // Type for filter coefficients
);
```

The result of `cv::getDerivKernel()` is placed in the `kx` and `ky` array arguments. You might recall that the derivative type kernels (Sobel and Scharr) are separable kernels. For this reason, you will get back two arrays, one that is 1-by-`ksize` (row coefficients, `kx`) and another that is `ksize`-by-1 (column

---

coefficients, `ky`). These are computed from the x- and y-derivative orders `dx` and `dy`. The derivative kernels are always square, so the size argument `ksize` is an integer. `ksize` can be any of 1, 3, 5, 7, or `cv::SCHARR`. The `normalize` argument tells `cv::getDerivKernels()` if it should normalize the kernel elements “correctly.” For situations where you are operating on floating point images, there is no reason not to set `normalize` to true, but when you are doing operations on integer arrays, it is often more sensible to not normalize the arrays until some later point in your processing, so that you will not throw away precision that you will later need<sup>29</sup>. The final argument `ktype` indicates the type of the filter coefficients (or equivalently the type of the arrays `kx` and `ky`). The value of `ktype` can be either `cv::F32` or `cv::F64`.

### `cv::getGaussianKernel()`

The actual kernel array for a Gaussian filter is generated by `cv::getGaussianKernel()`.

```
cv::Mat cv::getGaussianKernel(
    int         ksize,           // Kernel size
    double      sigmaX,          // Gaussian half-width
    int         ktype            = cv::F32 // Type for filter coefficients
);
```

As with the derivative kernel, the Gaussian kernel is separable. For this reason `cv::getGaussianKernel()` computes only a `ksize`-by-1 array of coefficients. The value of `ksize` can be any odd positive number. The argument `sigma` sets the standard deviation of the approximated Gaussian distribution. The coefficients are computed from sigma according to the following function:

$$k_i = \alpha \cdot e^{-\frac{(i-(ksize-1)/2)^2}{(2\sigma)^2}}$$

That is, the coefficient alpha is computed such that the filter overall is normalized. `sigma` may be set to -1, in which case the value of sigma will be automatically computed from the size `ksize`.<sup>30</sup>

## The Filter Architecture up Close (Advanced)

An architecture as nuanced as the filter architecture in OpenCV is something like an automobile. You can choose to not understand it, and hope it works right (in which case, you could pretty much have skipped this entire section of the chapter), you can understand it at a user level, and be content that this will help you not do terribly unwise things that bite you later (like knowing that the oil does, in fact, have to be changed every few thousand miles), or you can really get down and understand the thing, with the mindset of maintaining it, modifying it, and bending it to your will. This above section of the chapter was mainly for that kind of intermediate users, who want to understand and use wisely, but maybe not seriously get down into it. This little subsection, however, is for the benefit of those of you who really want to go do some work yourself in the filter architecture.

To this end, let’s consider a simple high-level call to `cv::boxFilter()`. This call will manage to use just about every nasty detail of the architecture before it is done. Example 5-5 shows what really happens when you call `cv::boxFilter()` and supply it with a source array, a destination array, and the kernel parameters.

*Example 5-5: A detailed walk-through of the operation of a high-level filter function: `cv::boxFilter()`*

`cv::boxFilter` calls `cv::createBoxFilter`, and passes the kernel parameters.

<sup>29</sup> If you are, in fact, going to do this, you will find yourself needing that normalization coefficient at some point. The normalization coefficient you will need is:  $2^{ksize*2-dx-dy-2}$ .

<sup>30</sup> In this case,  $\sigma = 0.3 \cdot \left( \frac{ksize-1}{2} - 1 \right) + 0.8$ .

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`cv::createBoxFilter` calls `cv::getRowSumFilter()` and gives it type information and kernel parameters

`cv::getRowSumFilter` uses the type information to call the template `RowSum<>()` constructor

`RowSum<>` constructor returns a type-specific object derived from `BaseRowFilter`. `class cv::RowSum<>` implements `operator()` for row summation.

`cv::getRowSumFilter` returns the `cv::RowSum<>` object

`cv::createBoxFilter` calls `cv::getColumnSumFilter()` and gives it type information and kernel parameters

`cv::getColumnSumFilter` uses the type information to call the template `ColumnSum<>()` constructor

`ColumnSum<>()` constructor returns a type-specific object derived from `BaseColumnFilter`. `class cv::ColumnSum<>` implements `operator()` for column summation.

`cv::getColumnSumFilter` returns the `cv::ColumnSum<>` object

`cv::createBoxFilter` creates a new `cv::FilterEngine` object, and passes it the `cv::RowSum<>` and `cv::ColumnSum<>` filter objects.

`cv::createBoxFilter` returns a pointer to the new `cv::FilterEngine` object

`cv::boxFilter()` calls the `apply` method on the new `cv::FilterEngine` object it was given. The source and destination images given to `cv::boxFilter` are passed to the `apply()` method. (note that `apply()` would accept an ROI, but in this context one is not generated).

The (generic) `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method calls the (generic) `cv::FilterEngine::start()` method. It supplies the source image and any source image ROI.

If an ROI was passed in, that is recorded in a `cv::FilterEngine` member variable.

`cv::FilterEngine::start()` does some book-keeping that has to do with whether or not the source image is actually a subwindow of a larger image, we'll ignore this for now.

`cv::FilterEngine::start()` calls another (different) `cv::FilterEngine::start()` method. It passes this `start()` method the size of the "true" source image (i.e., if source is a view on some parent, this is the parent), and the location of the source ROI relative to *that* parent image.

This `cv::FilterEngine::start()` allocates the internal 'rows' buffer of the `FilterEngine`. This is a vector of `N char*` pointers, where `N` is set either by the `maxBufRows` argument to `apply` (which nobody ever uses) or the kernel height.

`cv::FilterEngine::start()` handles the borders

`cv::FilterEngine::start()` computes the first source row that will be used in the computation of all results. Similarly, `cv::FilterEngine::start()` computes the last source row that will be used in the computation of all results. These are stored in in a `cv::FilterEngine` member variable

`cv::FilterEngine::start()` calls the `reset()` member of the `columnFilter` member (which is the `cv::ColumnSum` object constructed above).

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`cv::FilterEngine::start()` (somewhat unnecessarily) returns the computed start source row.

The first `cv::FilterEngine::start()` method returns the computed first row, but adjusted into the “coordinates” of the parent view (if the source image is actually a view on a larger array.)

The `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method computes the destination *pointer* for the first destination pixel. This is just the data area for the source image offset by the “true” start row multiplied by the source step.

The `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method computes the total number of rows that will be analyzed (using the difference of the two row value member variables computed earlier by `cv::FilterEngine::start()`).

The `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method computes the address of the first pixel in the destination image to be computed.

`cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method calls the (generic) `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` method, passing it the locations of the first source pixel, the first destination pixel, the source step, the destination step, the total number of rows to be “used” to compute all destination pixels.

For each destination pixel, `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` calls the member `operator()` of the `rowFilter` member of the `cv::FilterEngine` (our `cv::RowSum<>` object), passing it the source pointer, the destination pointer, and the width of the given to apply (which in this case is null) or the width of the image.

`cv::RowSum<>::operator()` then computes a sum across ‘width’ source pixels accumulating them into the indicated destination pixel. All subsequent destination pixels in the row are then computed from that.

For each destination pixel, `proceed()` calls the member `operator()` of the `cv::columnFilter` member of the `cv::FilterEngine` (our `cv::ColumnSum<>` object), passing it an array of source pointers corresponding to the relevant rows of the source image, a pointer to the destination pixel, the destination step, the number of columns that will be summed, and the `width` of the image (or of any ROI that was given to the filter when it was constructed).

The `cv::ColumnSum<>::operator()` then computes the sum across `count` columns and accumulates the result in the destination pixel. Compute the sum for `width` pixels.

`cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` returns

`cv::FilterEngine::apply()` returns

`cv::boxFilter()` returns

In words, this is what happens. At the top level, the user calls `cv::boxFilter()`, and gives it a source and destination image and the size of the kernel. `cv::boxFilter()`, however, is really just a pretty thin wrapper; its purpose is to create a `cv::FilterEngine` that will handle the box filtering process. In order to do this, however, it will need the actual base filter objects. Because the box filter is a separable filter, two base filter objects are required, one for the horizontal (rows) and one for the vertical (columns).

To create a base filter object, `cv::boxFilter()` will use the `cv::getRowSumFilter()` and `cv::getColumnSumFilter()` methods<sup>31</sup>. What these do is they instantiate and return template base

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<sup>31</sup> It is worth mentioning here that these latter two functions are not officially part of the OpenCV API; they are *below the API* functions. This means that you should probably not be calling them yourself, as they are not guaranteed to

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filters called `cv::RowSum<>` and `cv::ColumnSum<>`. These objects are templates because each filter needs to know what types are being used for the source and destination images in order to implement their functionality in the most efficient way possible. Recall that it is the `operator()` members of these objects that do the low-level work (which we will get to momentarily).

The `cv::getRowSumFilter()` and `cv::getColumnSumFilter()` methods return `cv::Ptr<>` smart pointers to the base filters, which are then passed to the `cv::FilterEngine` constructor. The constructed filter engine is then returned to `cv::boxFilter()` in the form of another `cv::Ptr<>` smart pointer. Once this pointer to the box filter engine is returned, `cv::boxFilter()` then just calls the `apply()` method of the filter engine. Of course, a lot gets done inside of this method.

The `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` method takes as argument the source and destination images. It would also accept a region of interest (ROI), but none is generated in this context (so the default “whole image” is assumed). This `apply()` method is a generic member of `cv::FilterEngine`, in the sense that it is not overloaded in any way. The filter engine object is not a derived object, but the generic base class element. This is the way the architecture is designed; you should not have to overload `cv::FilterEngine`. (This is in contrast to the base filters, which are interfaces only and always need to be overloaded.)

The `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` then calls `cv::FilterEngine::start()`. There is some opportunity for confusion here, because there are two `start()` methods associated with `cv::FilterEnging()`. The first start method takes the source image and the source ROI (and some other stuff) as arguments. It is responsible for some minor checking and housekeeping, and then it calls the second `start()` method. The main piece of housekeeping it does is to resolve the possibility that the source image is actually a view<sup>32</sup> on a larger array, which has implications for the `isolated` argument, for example. Once this is done, the second `start()` method can be called, and given the *parent array* (i.e., if the current source is a view of some other array, it is that other larger array that is passed), and a corrected ROI (which is the given ROI converted to the coordinates of the larger parent array). The second `start()` routine now does some real work.

The main responsibility of this `start()` method is to set up all of the data structures that are going to be needed for the base filters to operate. This is more effort than it might sound like, because the base filters will not be made aware of things like the boundary type, or if they are in an ROI. They will just be handed data to chew on and they will spit out results. In order to achieve this, there will have to be areas for “off the edge” pixels to be placed alongside the real image pixel values so that the base filters will not have to be aware of the difference. This data goes in a filter engine member variable called `rows` which is an array of `char*` pointers, one for each row of scratch space that will be needed (these actually form a circular buffer so that data only needs to be copied in once, and can then be used until it is no longer needed). `start()` is also responsible for computing the (integer ordinal for the) first and last rows that will be used. Again, these are the first and last row of the image in our case, because there is no ROI, but generally, if `start()` were not being called from inside of `cv::boxFilter()`, we might have gotten one from `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` or directly by whomever else might have called `cv::FilterEngine::start()`. A final responsibility that `cv::FilterEngine::start()` has is to call the `reset()` method on the base column filter. (We will understand why shortly when we get into the base column filter’s internal details.) The starting row (in parent image coordinates) is then returned to the first `start()` function, which in turn returns it to `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` in coordinates local to the source image.

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remain in existence or have stable interfaces in future versions of the library. There will be several things in this current exposition which are of this kind.

<sup>32</sup> Recall that a ‘view’ refers to the case in which you have a `cv::Mat A`, and then generate a second `cv::Mat B` with a function like `cv::Mat::getSubRect()`. In this case `B` does not have its own data, it has a pointer to the data area in `A` and offsets and strides which make accesses to `B` appear as if `B` were a separate array.

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Next, `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` calls `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()`, and passes it the source image data, the source image step, the destination image data, the destination step, and the number of rows from the source image that will be required to compute all destination pixels. It is important not to miss here that, in fact, there is a lot more information provided to `proceed()`, because when `start()` was running, it was computing various things that it stored in member variables of the filter engine (like those scratch buffers for the data rows). The source data and destination data areas given to `proceed()` are the location of the first data needed for actual computation of a required destination pixel. This is a little subtle, because all of the implications of ROIs are handled in `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` before calling `proceed()`. These pointers are not just pointers to the data in the images, they are pointers to the beginning or the relevant data.

`cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` is essentially a big `for` loop over all of the desired destination pixels. It actually handles them on a row by row basis. It counts through the destination rows, handles actual copy of data into the buffers (the ones that `start()` allocated for us), as well as updates the circular buffer, and calls the base filters once the data areas are ready. First it calls the `operator()` member of the base row filter for any given destination pixel, then it calls the `operator()` member of the base column filter for those pixels. (At least, that is what it does in this example. If the filter engine were a non-separable filter, then obviously it would just make a single call to the `operator()` member of the installed two-dimensional filter.)

Inside of the base row filter, which in our example is `cv::RowSum<>`, each pixel in the destination row is computed as a sum over the neighboring pixels. The first such destination pixel is a straight sum. All subsequent pixels are computed from the previous pixel, by subtracting the one contributing pixel that is now out of the window and adding the one pixel that has just entered the window. Inside of the base column filter `cv::ColumnSum<>`, the summation over vertical columns (of the results from the row filter summation) is performed. One important difference between the row and column sum filters is that the column filters need to maintain some internal state—this is to enable a similar trick to what the row filter uses for summing, except that the row filter is given an entire row at a time, while the column filter needs to be called many times in order to complete an entire column.

This call to `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` finishes up all of its work and returns. `cv::FilterEngine::apply()` returns, and then `cv::boxFilter()` returns. At this point, the results of your computation are sitting in your destination array and you are all done.

For each destination pixel, `cv::FilterEngine::proceed()` calls the member `operator()` of the `rowFilter` member of the `cv::FilterEngine` (our `cv::RowSum<>` object), passing it the source pointer, the destination pointer, and the width of the given to apply (which in this case is null) or the width of the image.

`cv::RowSum<>::operator()` then computes a sum across `'width'` source pixels accumulating them into the indicated destination pixel. All subsequent destination pixels in the row are then computed from that.

For each destination pixel, `proceed()` calls the member `operator()` of the `cv::columnFilter` member of the `cv::FilterEngine` (our `cv::ColumnSum<>` object), passing it an array of source pointers corresponding to the relevant rows of the source image, a pointer to the destination pixel, the destination step, the number of columns that will be summed, and the `'width'` of the image (or of any ROI that was given to the filter when it was constructed).

The `cv::ColumnSum<>::operator()` then computes the sum across `'count'` columns and accumulates the result in the destination pixel. Compute the sum for `'width'` pixels.

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## Summary

In this chapter, we learned about general image convolution, including the importance of how boundaries are handled in convolutions. We learned about image kernels, and the difference between linear and nonlinear kernels.

We learned how OpenCV implements a number of common image filters, and learned what those filters do to different kinds of input data.

Finally, we learned how OpenCV actually implements the functions that do convolutions. We saw how the general filter architecture is designed, and learned how we could make our own components for that architecture and thus how to “micromanage” the process to tune custom filters for speed.

## Exercises

1. Load an image of an interesting or sufficiently “rich” scene. Using `cv::threshold()`, set the threshold to 128. Use each setting type in Table 5-5 on the image and display the results. You should familiarize yourself with thresholding functions because they will prove quite useful.
    - a) Repeat the exercise but use `cv::adaptiveThreshold()` instead. Set `param1=5`.
    - b) Repeat part a using `param1=0` and then `param1=-5`.
  2. Load an image with interesting textures. Smooth the image in several ways using `cv::smooth()` with `smoothtype=cv::GAUSSIAN`.
    - a) Use a symmetric 3-by-3, 5-by-5, 9-by-9 and 11-by-11 smoothing window size and display the results.
    - b) Are the output results nearly the same by smoothing the image twice with a 5-by-5 Gaussian filter as when you smooth once with two 11-by-11 filters? Why or why not?
  3. Display the filter, creating a 100-by-100 single-channel image. Clear it and set the center pixel equal to 255.
    - a) Smooth this image with a 5-by-5 Gaussian filter and display the results. What did you find?
    - b) Do this again but now with a 9-by-9 Gaussian filter.
    - c) What does it look like if you start over and smooth the image twice with the 5-by-5 filter? Compare this with the 9-by-9 results. Are they nearly the same? Why or why not?
  4. Load an interesting image. Again, blur it with `cv::smooth()` using a Gaussian filter.
    - a) Set `param1=param2=9`. Try several settings of `param3` (e.g., 1, 4, and 6). Display the results.
    - b) This time, set `param1=param2=0` before setting `param3` to 1, 4, and 6. Display the results. Are they different? Why?
    - c) Again use `param1=param2=0` but now set `param3=1` and `param4=9`. Smooth the picture and display the results.
    - d) Repeat part c but with `param3=9` and `param4=1`. Display the results.
    - e) Now smooth the image once with the settings of part c and once with the settings of part d. Display the results.
    - f) Compare the results in part e with smoothings that use `param3=param4=9` and `param3=param4=0` (i.e., a 9-by-9 filter). Are the results the same? Why or why not?
  5. Create a low-variance random image (use a random number call such that the numbers don’t differ by much more than 3 and most numbers are near 0). Load the image into a drawing program such as PowerPoint and then draw a wheel of lines meeting at a single point. Use bilateral filtering on the resulting image and explain the results.
  6. In a drawing program such as PowerPoint, draw a series of concentric circles forming a bull’s-eye.
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- a) Make a series of lines going into the bull's-eye. Save the image.
  - b) Using a 3-by-3 aperture size, take and display the first-order *x*- and *y*-derivatives of your picture. Then increase the aperture size to 5-by-5, 9-by-9, and 13-by-13. Describe the results.
  7. Create a new image that is just a 45 degree line, white on black. For a given series of aperture sizes, we will take the image's first-order *x*-derivative (*dx*) and first-order *y*-derivative (*dy*). We will then take measurements of this line as follows. The (*dx*) and (*dy*) images constitute the gradient of the input image. The magnitude at location (*i, j*) is  $mag(i, j) = \sqrt{dx^2(i, j) + dy^2(i, j)}$  and the angle is  $\theta(i, j) = atan2(dy(i, j), dx(i, j))$ . Scan across the image and find places where the magnitude is at or near maximum. Record the angle at these places. Average the angles and report that as the measured line angle.
    - a) Do this for a 3-by-3 aperture Sobel filter.
    - b) Do this for a 5-by-5 filter.
    - c) Do this for a 9-by-9 filter.
    - d) Do the results change? If so, why?
  8. Find and load a picture of a face where the face is frontal, has eyes open, and takes up most or all of the image area. Write code to find the pupils of the eyes.

A Laplacian “likes” a bright central point surrounded by dark. Pupils are just the opposite. Invert and convolve with a sufficiently large Laplacian.
  9. Use a camera to take two pictures of the same scene while moving the camera as little as possible. Load these images into the computer as *src1* and *src1*.
    - a) Take the absolute value of *src1* minus *src1* (subtract the images); call it *diff12* and display. If this were done perfectly, *diff12* would be black. Why isn't it?
    - b) Create *cleandiff* by using *cv::erode()* and then *cv::dilate()* on *diff12*. Display the results.
    - c) Create *dirtydiff* by using *cv::dilate()* and then *cv::erode()* on *diff12* and then display.
    - d) Explain the difference between *cleandiff* and *dirtydiff*.
  10. Take a picture of a scene. Then, without moving the camera, put a coffee cup in the scene and take a second picture. Load these images and convert both to 8-bit grayscale images.
    - a) Take the absolute value of their difference. Display the result, which should look like a noisy mask of a coffee mug.
    - b) Do a binary threshold of the resulting image using a level that preserves most of the coffee mug but removes some of the noise. Display the result. The “on” values should be set to 255.
    - c) Do a *cv::MOP\_OPEN* on the image to further clean up noise.
  11. Create a clean mask from noise. After completing exercise 10, continue by keeping only the largest remaining shape in the image. Set a pointer to the upper-left of the image and then traverse the image. When you find a pixel of value 255 (“on”), store the location and then flood fill (Chapter 6, *cv::floodFill()*) it using a value of 100. Read the connected component returned from flood fill and record the area of filled region. If there is another larger region in the image, then flood fill the smaller region using a value of 0 and delete its recorded area. If the new region is larger than the previous region, then flood fill the previous region using the value 0 and delete its location. Finally, fill the remaining largest region with 255. Display the results. We now have a single, solid mask for the coffee mug.
  12. For this exercise, use the mask created in exercise 10 or create another mask of your own (perhaps by drawing a digital picture, or simply use a square). Load an outdoor scene. Now use this mask with *copyTo()*, to copy an image of a mug into the scene.
  13. Load an image of a scene and convert it to grayscale.
    - a) Run the morphological Top Hat operation on your image and display the results.
-

- 
- b) Convert the resulting image into an 8-bit mask.
  - c) Copy a grayscale value into the original image where the Top Hat mask (from b) is nonzero. Display the results.
14. Use `cv::filter2D()` to create a filter that detects only 60 degree lines in an image. Display the results on a sufficiently interesting image scene.
  15. Refer to the Sobel derivative filter shown in Figure 5-15. Make a kernel of this figure and convolve an image with it. Then, make two kernels of the separable parts. Take the image again, and convolve with first the x and then the y kernels. Subtract these two images to convince yourself that the separable operation produces the exact same result.
  16. Separable kernels. Create a 3-by-3 Gaussian kernel using rows  $[(1/16, 2/16, 1/16), (2/16, 4/16, 2/16), (1/16, 2/16, 1/16)]$  and with anchor point in the middle.
    - a) Run this kernel on an image and display the results.
    - b) Now create two one-dimensional kernels with anchors in the center: one going “across”  $(1/4, 2/4, 1/4)$ , and one going down  $(1/4, 2/4, 1/4)$ . Load the same original image and use `cv::filter2D()` to convolve the image twice, once with the first 1D kernel and once with the second 1D kernel. Describe the results.
    - c) Describe the order of complexity (number of operations) for the kernel in part a) and for the kernels in part b). The difference is the advantage of being able to use separable kernels and the entire Gaussian class of filters—or any linearly decomposable filter that is separable, since convolution is a linear operation.
  17. Can you make a separable kernel from the filter shown in Figure 5-15? If so, show what it looks like.
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