International Journal of Scientific Research & Engineering Trends
Volume 12, Issue 1, Jan-Feb-2026, ISSN (Online): 2395-566X

Retinaseg: Deep Learning-Based Segmentation Of Retinal

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Abstract- Retinal vessel segmentation is essential for the early diagnosis of diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, hypertensive retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration. Manual segmentation of fundus images is time-consuming and prone to variability, limiting large-scale screening. This paper presents RETINASEG, a deep learning-based system for automated pixel-level segmentation of retinal vessels from fundus images. The proposed framework combines image enhancement techniques such as contrast normalization, CLAHE, and noise reduction with an encoder–decoder architecture based on U-Net and transformer-enhanced models. To address challenges including thin vessel detection and class imbalance, data augmentation and class-balanced loss functions are employed during training. Experimental results on DRIVE and STARE datasets demonstrate strong performance, achieving high accuracy and robustness across datasets. A web-based interface with real-time visualization and explainable AI support further enhances clinical usability. RETINASEG enables scalable, reliable, and automated retinal analysis for early disease detection and tele-ophthalmology applications.

Keywords – Retinal vessel segmentation, Fundus image analysis, Deep learning, U-Net, Transformer-based models, Medical image segmentation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The retina provides critical biomarkers for detecting ocular and systemic diseases such as diabetic and hypertensive retinopathy. Accurate segmentation of retinal vessels from fundus images is essential for early diagnosis; however, manual analysis is time-consuming and subjective. To address this, we propose RETINASEG, a deep learning-based framework for automated pixel-level retinal vessel segmentation, enabling efficient, scalable, and reliable computer-aided diagnosis.

II.METHODOLOGY

About The Project

RETINASEG is a deep learning-based system developed for automated segmentation of retinal blood vessels from fundus images. The project aims to improve early detection of vision-threatening and systemic diseases by providing accurate pixel-level vessel extraction. The framework integrates image preprocessing techniques, an encoder–decoder segmentation architecture, and class-balanced training strategies to address challenges such as low contrast, thin vessel structures, and dataset variability. Additionally, a web-based interface enables secure image upload, real-time visualization, and explainable AI support, making the system suitable for clinical and tele-ophthalmology applications.

Scope Of The Project

The scope of RETINASEG includes automated segmentation of retinal blood vessels from fundus images to support early detection of ocular and systemic diseases. The system is designed for clinical screening, tele-ophthalmology, and large-scale public health programs. It can be extended to multi-structure segmentation, including optic disc, macula, and lesion detection. Future enhancements may include mobile deployment, integration with hospital information systems, and longitudinal monitoring for tracking disease progression, enabling scalable and accessible AI-assisted retinal diagnosis.

Application Of Project

RETINASEG can be applied in hospitals, diagnostic centers, and tele-ophthalmology platforms for automated retinal vessel analysis and early disease detection. It supports screening programs for diabetic retinopathy, hypertensive retinopathy, and other vascular-related eye conditions. The system can assist ophthalmologists in clinical decision-making by providing accurate segmentation and visual explanations. Additionally, it can be integrated into mobile screening units and public health initiatives to enable large-scale, cost-effective retinal disease monitoring.

Existing System

The existing system for retinal vessel segmentation primarily relies on manual examination by ophthalmologists or traditional image processing techniques such as thresholding, edge detection, and morphological operations. Manual segmentation is time-consuming, subjective, and prone to inter-observer variability, making it unsuitable for large-scale screening. Conventional machine learning methods require handcrafted features and often struggle with low contrast, thin vessel structures, and dataset variability. These limitations highlight the need for a more accurate, automated, and scalable deep learning-based solution.

III. USAGE

RETINASEG is designed for automated retinal image analysis to assist in early detection and diagnosis of vascular-related eye diseases. Healthcare professionals can upload fundus images through a secure web-based interface, where the system performs preprocessing, deep learning-based segmentation, and generates a pixel-level vessel mask. The segmented output is displayed as an overlay on the original image, enabling clear visualization of retinal blood vessels.

The system can be used in hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, and tele-ophthalmology platforms to support clinical decision-making and large-scale screening programs. It helps reduce the workload of ophthalmologists by providing consistent and accurate vessel extraction. Additionally, explainable AI features such as saliency maps enhance trust and interpretability, making the system practical for real-world medical applications.

IV. FEATURES

RETINASEG incorporates several advanced features to ensure accurate, reliable, and clinically useful retinal vessel segmentation:

- **Automated Vessel Segmentation:** Performs pixel-level extraction of retinal blood vessels using a deep learning-based encoder–decoder architecture.
- **Advanced Preprocessing Pipeline:** Utilizes contrast normalization, CLAHE, gamma correction, and noise reduction to enhance vessel visibility.
- **Multi-Scale Feature Learning:** Captures both thick and thin vessel structures through skip connections and contextual feature extraction.
- **Class Imbalance Handling:** Employs class-balanced loss functions and data augmentation to improve detection of fine capillaries.
- **High Performance:** Achieves strong accuracy, sensitivity, specificity, and AUC on standard datasets such as DRIVE and STARE.
- **Web-Based Interface:** Provides secure image upload, real-time segmentation visualization, and easy accessibility.
- **Explainable AI Support:** Integrates Grad-CAM saliency maps to highlight decision regions for improved clinical interpretability.
- Scalability: Designed for integration with tele-ophthalmology systems and large-scale screening programs.

These features make RETINASEG a robust and scalable solution for AI-assisted retinal analysis.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The proposed RETINASEG framework was evaluated using publicly available benchmark datasets, including DRIVE and STARE, which are widely used for retinal vessel segmentation research. The model achieved an overall accuracy of approximately 96% and an AUC score exceeding 98%, indicating strong discriminative performance between vessel and background pixels. The system demonstrated high specificity (around 98%), reflecting its ability to effectively suppress false positives, while maintaining a sensitivity of approximately 82%, ensuring reliable detection of both major vessels and thin capillary structures.

The incorporation of preprocessing techniques such as contrast normalization, CLAHE, gamma correction, and noise filtering significantly improved vessel visibility, particularly in low-contrast regions. These enhancements contributed to improved segmentation accuracy across images with varying illumination and pathological conditions.

The encoder–decoder architecture successfully captured multi-scale contextual features, enabling accurate boundary delineation and preservation of fine vascular structures. Cross-dataset evaluation confirmed the robustness and generalization capability of the model under domain shifts.

Overall, the results demonstrate that RETINASEG provides consistent, accurate, and scalable retinal vessel segmentation, making it suitable for real-world clinical deployment and large-scale screening applications.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this work, RETINASEG presents an efficient and automated deep learning-based framework for retinal vessel segmentation from fundus images. By integrating advanced preprocessing techniques with a robust encoder–decoder architecture, the system effectively addresses challenges such as low contrast, thin vessel detection, and class imbalance. Experimental results on standard benchmark datasets demonstrate high accuracy, strong generalization capability, and reliable vessel extraction performance.

The developed web-based interface further enhances usability by providing real-time visualization and explainable AI support, making the system suitable for clinical and tele-ophthalmology applications. Overall, RETINASEG highlights the potential of artificial intelligence in improving early disease detection, supporting ophthalmologists, and enabling scalable retinal screening solutions for accessible healthcare.

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