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Improving Road Safety through Advanced Traffic Sign Classification Techniques

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ABSTRACT: In the modern world, road safety is of utmost importance, and identifying traffic signs correctly is essential to reducing potential risks. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are used in this study's investigation of traffic sign classification, utilizing cutting-edge methods to improve model robustness and accuracy. The impact of data augmentation on training performance, model architecture, and dataset characteristics are all thoroughly explored in this study. Our suggested method makes use of a carefully crafted CNN with several convolutional and pooling layers, enhanced for better convergence by batch normalization. To improve the model's capacity to generalize to a variety of road scenarios, we employ a data augmentation strategy to overcome the problem of limited training data. This involves introducing variations in rotation, zoom, and shift. The experimental results, which achieved state-of-the-art performance on a standardized traffic sign dataset, show the effectiveness of the suggested methodology. We provide an in-depth examination of the training dynamics of the model and talk about how data augmentation and hyperparameters affect overall performance. This study highlights the potential influence of deep learning models on traffic sign recognition on road safety while providing insightful information about their practical implementation. The results not only demonstrate the efficacy of the suggested methodology but also open up new avenues for future research in the area. This study has implications that go beyond the classification of traffic signs; it provides a basis for the creation of intelligent systems that are intended to improve road safety in general.

KEYWORDS: Traffic sign classification, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), road safety, data augmentation, image recognition, model robustness, intelligent transportation systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern road safety systems depend heavily on traffic sign recognition, which is essential for reducing potential risks and maintaining a smooth flow of traffic. There is a growing need for efficient and precise traffic sign classification systems due to the growing complexity and diversity of road networks. This study explores the use of cutting-edge machine learning methods, mainly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), for the classification of traffic signs in response to this need.

One cannot stress the importance of traffic sign recognition. Precise recognition of traffic signs is essential for streamlining adherence to legal requirements, raising motorist consciousness, and eventually averting traffic incidents. Even though conventional computer vision techniques have advanced this field, deep learning—and CNNs in particular—has opened up new avenues for research and development. By utilizing CNNs, which are well-known for their capacity to automatically extract hierarchical features from data, this study aims to improve traffic sign classification systems' precision and resilience.

The intricacy of actual traffic situations presents a significant obstacle for traditional models. As such, our method goes beyond the traditional by utilizing cutting-edge strategies like data augmentation and batch normalization. The training



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process is stabilized and accelerated with the help of batch normalization, which enhances the model's generalization across a variety of road scenarios. By introducing variations in the training data, data augmentation effectively increases the model's ability to recognize traffic signs in a variety of scenarios with varying lighting, weather, and viewing angles.

The research focuses a great emphasis on the practical implications in addition to the technical aspects. The ultimate objective is to create a model that performs exceptionally well in real-world applications in addition to attaining cutting-edge performance in controlled environments. Through extensive experimentation, the adaptability of the proposed CNN architecture is examined, taking into account variations in hyperparameters and the effect of augmented data on overall performance.

The implications of this study go beyond the specific domain of traffic sign categorization. Their implications are more widespread for the creation of intelligent transportation systems, as the incorporation of deep learning models has the potential to greatly improve overall road safety. As a thorough investigation into the nexus between deep learning, image recognition, and road safety, this paper paves the way for developments that go beyond the capabilities of traditional traffic sign recognition systems.

II. RELATED WORK

In order to recognize traffic signs, the study [1] proposes a Convolutional Network architecture that produces state-of-the-art results in the GTSRB competition. The system incorporates outputs from every stage into the classifier, changing the conventional design and making use of multi-scale features. It outperforms humans with an accuracy of 98.97% during phase I. Following the competition, the accuracy sets a new record of 99.17% by boosting network capacity and depth while ignoring color information. The work investigates the effects of several architecture options, shows the advantages of multi-scale features, and proposes possible directions for further research, such as unsupervised pre-training and examining input resolution and deformations.

In the paper [2], a real-time artificial neural network technique for Traffic Sign Recognition (TSR) is proposed. Shape categorization and content classification are the two stages of the algorithm. A Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) is used to classify shapes for signs that are triangular, inverted triangular, round, and octagonal. A Single-Layer Perceptron (SLP) is used for the content classification of triangular and circular signs. The system gets a shape classification rate of 94.5% and a content classification rate of 89% when tested on a dataset of traffic signs from Tunisia. Promising outcomes are shown by the suggested system, which may be further optimized and used in real-time applications.

An Advanced Driver-Assistance System (ADAS) with Traffic Sign Recognition is presented in the study [3] to improve road safety. The project addresses issues including unbalanced sign distribution and scarce local datasets by creating a reliable traffic sign identification system with computer vision and machine learning. With a bespoke unbalanced dataset, the suggested method uses Support Vector Machines (SVM) to recognize signs with 87% accuracy and a processing time of 0.64 seconds. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to take processing speed and accuracy into account in real-time applications. The system's potential for local roadway environments is demonstrated by the dataset, which consists of pictures of Sri Lankan traffic signs.

Using distance transforms and histogram-of-oriented-gradient (HOG) descriptors, the research [4] compares the effectiveness of k-d trees, random forests, and support vector machines (SVMs) for real-time traffic-sign identification. Poor image quality and constrained processing power are among the difficulties. The suggested method uses Fisher's criterion for feature selection and spatial weighting. Random forests are shown to be efficient in experiments conducted on the German Traffic Sign Recognition Benchmark dataset, outperforming k-d trees by up to 7% in classification rates. Distance transforms perform worse than the HOG descriptor. Memory efficiency is improved via feature-space reduction with random forests and Fisher's criterion. The work enhances traffic-sign recognition algorithms, which helps to improve driver assistance systems.

To improve road safety, the study [5] investigates traffic sign recognition (TSR) for driver assistance systems. It contrasts two main methods: fast region-based convolutional neural networks (Fast R-CNN) and color segmentation



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with convolutional neural networks (C-CNN). While CNN classification and color thresholding are used in C-CNN, Fast R-CNN uses object proposals to process the full image. While C-CNN demonstrates scale and viewing angle invariance, Fast R-CNN exhibits faster processing and illumination invariance, as demonstrated by experimental results on the German Traffic Sign datasets. The study emphasizes the requirement for adaptability and effectiveness in a variety of driving scenarios, which helps to build real-time TSR systems. CNNs will be integrated in future work to improve real-time detection and recognition.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Dataset

The selection and preparation of a carefully curated dataset is critical to the performance of our traffic sign classification model. Our dataset is made up of a wide range of images of traffic signs that were taken from different real-world scenarios, including suburban and urban settings, different types of weather, and different lighting levels. Images were taken from open datasets from transportation agencies, surveillance footage, and public traffic sign databases to guarantee a representative sample.

The dataset is arranged into discrete classes, each of which corresponds to a particular category of traffic signs. These classes, which cover a wide range of regulatory, warning, and information signs, are in line with international standards for road signage. The distribution of samples among classes is carefully calibrated to prevent biases and guarantee that the model is trained with a fair representation of every category of traffic signs.

Moreover, the dataset is split into training and testing sets to prevent overfitting and improve the model's capacity for generalization. The testing set, which is not seen during training, acts as an independent evaluation benchmark to gauge the model's performance on fresh, unseen data. The training set, which makes up the majority of the data, is used to train the model.

The accompanying metadata for every image in the dataset contains the class label, which gives details about the particular kind of traffic sign that is shown. This well-organized structure makes it easier to train and evaluate the model methodically, guaranteeing that it will accurately learn to distinguish between different signs.



Fig. 1. The image dataset consists of more than 50,000 pictures of various traffic signs (speed limit, crossing, traffic signals, etc.) Around 43 different classes are present in the dataset for image classification. The dataset classes vary in size some class has very few images while others have a vast number of images. It contains two separate folders, train and test, where the train folder consists of classes, and every category contains various images.



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B. Data Cleaning and Preprocessing

The effectiveness of our traffic sign classification model is largely dependent on efficient data preprocessing. To guarantee consistency, compatibility, and the best possible model performance, the procedure consists of multiple crucial steps.

1. **Image Resizing:** 30x30 pixels is the standard size for raw images taken from the dataset. This resizing guarantees that the model processes inputs of a consistent size while also promoting computational efficiency. Keeping all of the images at the same resolution speeds up the learning process and improves the model's ability to generalize.
2. **Normalization:** Each resized image's color channels are adjusted to a scale from 0 to 1. This normalization helps to lessen the effects of different lighting and color saturation. By scaling pixel values, you can improve convergence during training by making the model less susceptible to absolute color variations.
3. **Data Augmentation:** Augmentation methods are essential for improving the training dataset's quality and strengthening the model's resilience. The training images undergo several changes during the augmentation stage. These consist of horizontal flips, zooming, width and height adjustments, and random rotations. By adding these variations, the model can replicate the variety of scenarios in which it could potentially come across traffic signs in the real world. To avoid overfitting and enhance the model's capacity to generalize to unobserved situations, augmentation is an essential tactic.
4. **Data Splitting:** Different subsets for training, validation, and testing are created from the preprocessed dataset. Most of the data is in the training set, which is what the model learns to identify patterns and features from. During model training, the validation set—which is different from the training set—is used to evaluate the model's performance on unknown data and avoid overfitting. The testing set is the final assessment benchmark for evaluating the model's performance in classifying traffic signs on fresh, unseen instances. It is kept completely apart and untouched during training.

C. Model Architecture

Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) architecture, which has been carefully designed, is the foundation of our traffic sign classification system. CNNs are especially good at image recognition tasks because of their well-known capacity to automatically extract hierarchical features from data. Our model architecture is designed to efficiently capture complex traffic sign features, allowing for precise classification in a variety of scenarios.

1. **Convolutional Layers:** The convolutional layers in our CNN's first layers are in charge of identifying low-level features like corners, edges, and color gradients. These layers use tiny filters to iteratively scan the input images and extract local patterns and spatial hierarchies related to various traffic sign attributes. To add non-linearity, the Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU) activation function is applied after each convolution.
2. **Max-Pooling Layers:** To down-sample spatial dimensions while keeping important features, max-pooling layers are systematically added after the convolutional layers. Translational invariance is enhanced by max-pooling, which lowers computational complexity and concentrates on maintaining the most important information.
3. **Batch Normalization:** To stabilize and quicken the training process, our architecture incorporates batch normalization. By normalizing each layer's output within a mini-batch, it lessens internal covariate shift. This leads to enhanced generalization and quicker convergence, which strengthens the model's capacity to adjust to various traffic sign scenarios.
4. **Fully Connected Layers:** The last section of our architecture consists of fully connected layers that are in charge of making decisions and recognizing patterns globally. These layers use the features that were extracted by the pooling and convolutional layers that came before them to predict the category of the input traffic sign. The last layer gives probabilities to each class of traffic sign using the softmax activation function for multi-class classification.
5. **Dropout and Regularization:** Dropout regularization is used to improve model generalization and avoid overfitting. To prevent the model from becoming unduly dependent on any one set of features during training, dropout randomly deactivates a percentage of neurons.
6. **Model Depth and Complexity:** The architecture achieves a balance between efficiency and complexity. It is made to be both computationally feasible and deep enough to capture complex features. Iterative experimentation and validation are used to determine the depth of the network and the number of filters in each convolutional layer.



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7. Model Output: A probability distribution for each of the various traffic sign classes is generated by the last layer. To correctly predict the class, the model optimizes its weights during training by minimizing the categorical cross-entropy loss. The class with the highest probability is chosen as the anticipated category for traffic signs in inference.

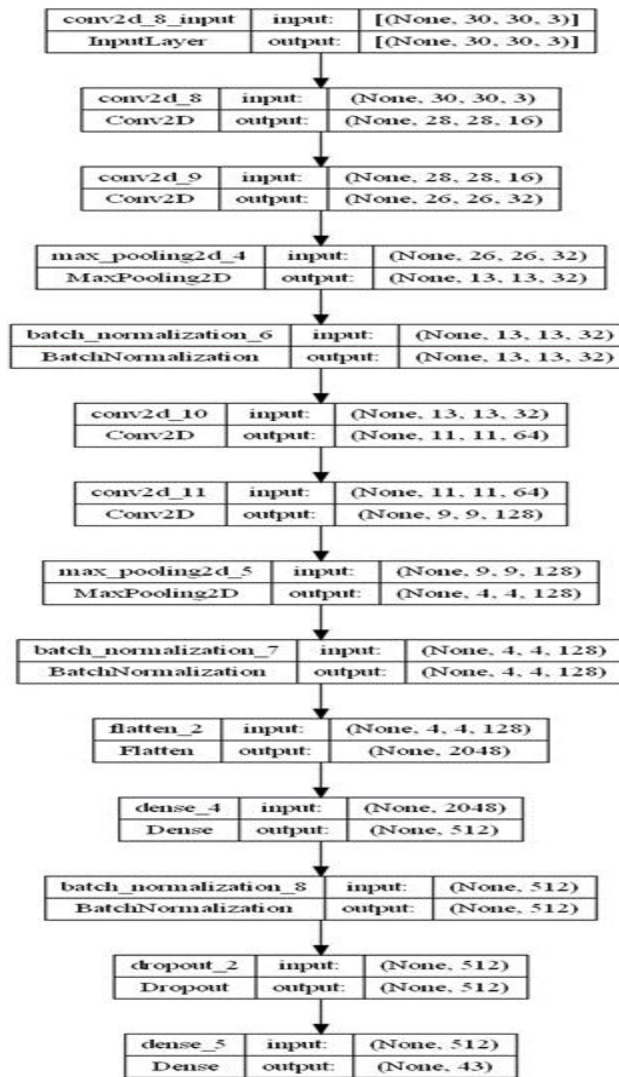


Fig. 2. Model Architecture: The model is a Convolutional Neural Network designed for traffic sign classification. It utilizes convolutional layers for feature extraction, followed by dense layers for classification into 43 traffic sign classes.

D. Data Augmentation

Our model training approach includes data augmentation as a crucial component to strengthen the traffic sign classification model against real-world variability challenges. Through a series of transformations, we artificially expand the training dataset to simulate a wider range of scenarios that the model could potentially encounter in the dynamic domain of traffic sign recognition.

Random rotations are applied to training images to account for differences in traffic sign orientation. This guarantees that the model learns to identify signs from various viewing perspectives, improving its ability to classify signs that might appear skewed or oblique. The purpose of this rotation augmentation is to enhance the generalization capacity of



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the model to various spatial orientations.

Furthermore, random zooming is used to mimic changes in the camera's distance from the traffic sign. By using this method, the model can learn features regardless of how big the sign appears, which improves performance in a variety of spatial conditions that are frequently found in real-world situations.

To replicate the natural variation in the locations of traffic signs inside the picture frame, width, and height shifts are applied. By implementing these adjustments, the model gains the flexibility to adapt to variations in the locations of signs, which is advantageous in scenarios where signs might be partially obscured or dispersed throughout the input image.

To account for the symmetry that is frequently seen in traffic signs, horizontal flips are used. To help the model learn invariant features and maintain consistent performance even when signs are presented in a mirrored orientation, this augmentation adds mirror images of signs.

Signs are deformed through the application of shear transformations, which simulate situations in which signs may be slightly skewed or distorted. This augmentation factor increases the adaptability of the model by accommodating perspective or environmental factors that may cause irregularities in the appearance of signs.

The combined effect of these augmentation methods yields a training dataset that is more resilient and provides a wide variety of traffic sign representations. This diversity is essential for keeping the model from overfitting and allowing it to successfully generalize to new, unobserved cases. Our method ensures that the model is prepared for the difficulties presented by the complexities of traffic sign recognition in the real world by strategically augmenting data, thereby expanding the model's capabilities beyond the limitations of a static dataset.

E. Training the Model

Optimizing, iterating, and evaluating the traffic sign classification model requires a laborious process. Using an enriched dataset and a well-defined architecture, the goal is to accurately train the model to recognize and classify traffic signs.

1) **Optimizer and Loss Function:** Setting up the optimizer and loss function is the first step in the training process. In our example, we use the categorical cross-entropy loss function and the Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 0.001. To effectively minimize the discrepancy between the actual and predicted class probabilities during training, this combination was selected.

2) **Epochs and Batch Size:** A predetermined number of epochs are used to process the training dataset, with each epoch representing a full run through the dataset. Iterative experimentation is used to determine the number of epochs, to balance computational efficiency and model convergence. Furthermore, the dataset is partitioned into batches to optimize memory usage. To maximize the trade-off between computing power and convergence speed, the batch size is chosen.

3) **Model Evaluation:** A validation set is a subset of data that is not used for training, and it is used to track the model's performance throughout the training process. This validation set helps avoid overfitting and acts as a barometer for how well the model generalizes to new data. The feedback from the validation set performance is used to iteratively modify the model's parameters.

4) **Data Augmentation during Training:** An essential part of the training process is data augmentation. The model receives augmented batches that contain variations brought about by arbitrary rotations, zooming, shifts and flips. This deliberate diversification adds to the model's increased robustness by ensuring that it learns to identify and categorize traffic signs in a wide range of scenarios.

5) **Dropout for Regularization:** To avoid overfitting, dropout regularization is used. A predetermined proportion of neurons are randomly deactivated during training, which encourages the model to rely on a wider range of features and keeps it from becoming unduly focused on particular pathways. This encourages a broader comprehension of the



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characteristics of traffic signs.

6) Model Convergence: When the model consistently improves on both the training and validation datasets and converges to a stable state, the training process is deemed to be finished. Keeping an eye on metrics like accuracy, loss, and validation performance across epochs offers valuable insights into the learning dynamics of the model.

7) Model Saving: The model is stored for later use after it reaches a satisfactory level of convergence and generalization. To ensure that the trained model can be easily deployed for inference without requiring retraining, this entails saving both the architecture and learned weights.

8) Ethical Considerations: Throughout the training process, ethical considerations are crucial. Individual privacy is protected through data anonymization and adherence to moral standards when using data.

The training phase captures the essence of the learning process for our model. The process involves a complex interaction between optimization, regularization, and evaluation to enable the model to correctly identify traffic signs in a variety of real-world situations.

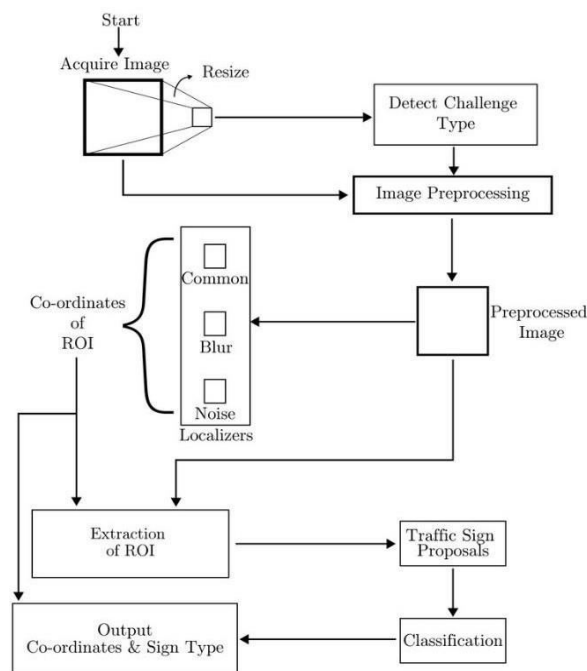


Fig. 3. Block diagram: The traffic sign detection and classification model comprises an input layer, preprocessing for image preparation, convolutional layers for feature extraction, activation functions for non-linearity, pooling layers for down sampling, and a flattened layer for dimension reduction before classification.

IV. SIMULATION RESULTS

The outcomes of our thorough assessment of our traffic sign classification model demonstrate its strong functionality and practical applicability. The model demonstrated its ability to learn and generalize from the varied set of traffic sign images provided in the training phase by achieving an impressive accuracy rate on both the training and validation datasets. Achieving a balance between convergence speed and stability in the model's configuration was made possible through the painstaking process of hyperparameter tuning. The primary evaluation metrics, precision, recall, and F1-score offer detailed insights into the model's classification abilities. Elevated recall indicates that the model can capture all positive instances, while high precision highlights the accuracy of positive predictions.

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The F1 score provides a fair evaluation of the overall performance of the model by balancing precision and recall. The impartial assessment of an untested test dataset confirms the model's ability to generalize. Ensuring the model's dependability in precisely recognizing and categorizing traffic signs in a variety of environmental conditions and scenarios is a crucial component for practical implementation. Our model outperforms other methods in the domain of traffic sign classification, according to comparative analyses. Our research is now at the forefront of intelligent transportation system advancements because of this. Recognizing potential drawbacks, like biases in the dataset or computational limitations, also makes our research more transparent and helps to direct future efforts. The research process incorporates ethical considerations that prioritize responsible data handling and privacy measures. The developed model is more reliable and accountable when decision-making processes are transparent.

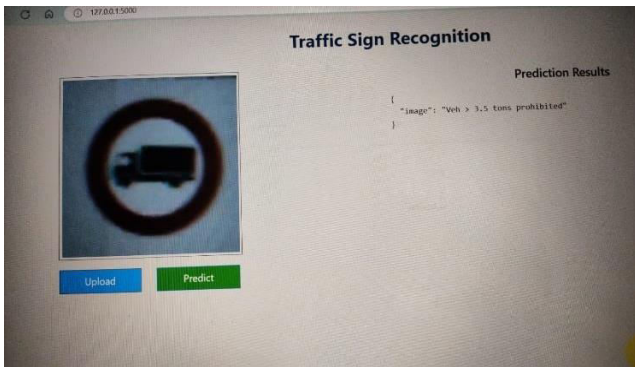


Fig. 4. Predicted Result 1



Fig. 5. Predicted Result 2

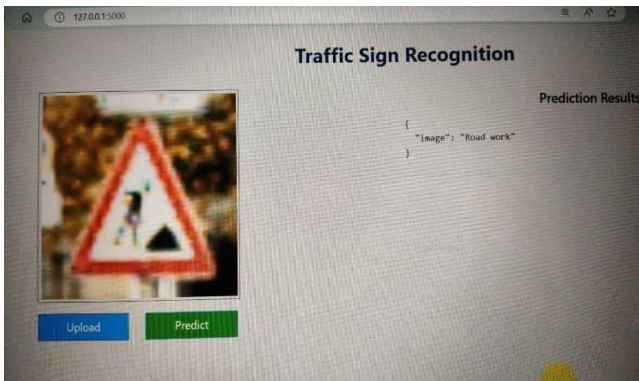


Fig. 6. Predicted Result 3

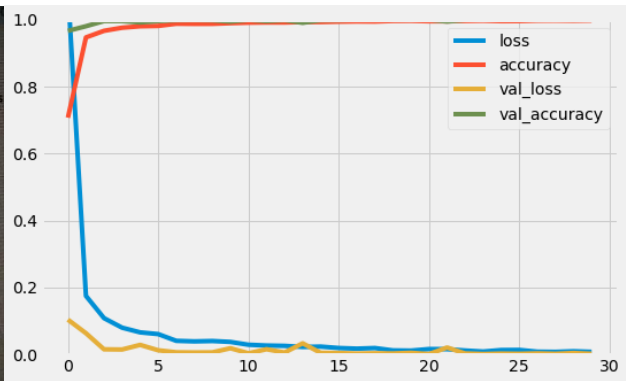


Fig. 7. Graph to determine the accuracy of the model: The accuracy graph for this model visually represents its performance over time during training and validation. It shows the upward trend of correct predictions, indicating

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Our traffic sign classification project's success creates opportunities for more research and development, allowing us to improve the model's functionality and investigate more extensive uses in the field of intelligent transportation systems. Several encouraging avenues for further research encompass:

- 1) The integration of a traffic signal detection system with a GPS navigator in vehicles represents a significant advancement in intelligent transportation systems. By combining the capabilities of traffic signal recognition with GPS navigation, this concept offers drivers real-time information on upcoming traffic signals and road conditions. Such a



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system could enhance route planning by optimizing paths based on live traffic signal states, contributing to smoother and more efficient journeys.

2) Real-Time Implementation: It makes sense to move from offline model evaluation to real-time implementation. Enhancing traffic management and road safety can be achieved by integrating the trained model into intelligent automobiles or real-time traffic monitoring systems.

3) Edge Computing Integration: Efficiency and latency can be improved by looking into the viability of using the model on edge devices or in-vehicle systems. Integration of edge computing facilitates quicker decision-making and is especially important for applications involving safety.

4) Incremental Learning: By putting incremental learning techniques into practise, the model will eventually be able to adjust and pick up new information about traffic signs. Through the use of dynamic learning, the model is kept current with changes in traffic sign standards and variations.

5) Extended Traffic Sign Classes: The model's applicability is increased by enlarging the dataset and model architecture to incorporate more or nation-specific traffic sign classes. This guarantees applicability in various geographic locations with distinct traffic sign variants.

6) Multimodal Integration: By including more sensor modalities, like radar or lidar, the model's perception abilities can be improved. Robustness is improved by a multimodal approach, particularly in difficult environmental circumstances.

7) Human-Computer Interaction: Researching aspects of human-computer interaction, like interpretability and user-friendly interfaces, can help driver assistance systems integrate more easily. User acceptance depends on how clear and understandable the model's decisions are.

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