Plug-and-Play Image Restoration (Part 1)

Arthur Leclaire

Joint work with Samuel Hurault and Nicolas Papadakis

MVA Generative Modeling
February 17th, 2026

Goals for this Session

- We will introduce Plug-and-Play (PnP) methods to solve inverse problems.
- We will give tools for **convergence analysis of PnP methods** based on **fixed point theory** (with *averaged* operators) or **optimization**.
- We will discuss the practical setup of such PnP algorithms.

Outline

Plug-and-Play Algorithms

Convergence by Fixed Point Theory

Plug-and-Play imaging in practice

Image Inverse Problems

Find x_0 from observation $y = Ax_0 + \xi$

- $y \in \mathbb{R}^m$ observation
- $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$ unknown input
- $A \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$ degradation operator
- ξ random noise, often $\xi \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \nu^2 \mathrm{Id})$

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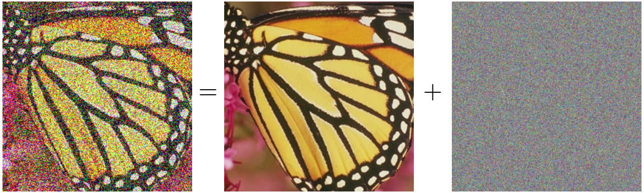
Denoising:



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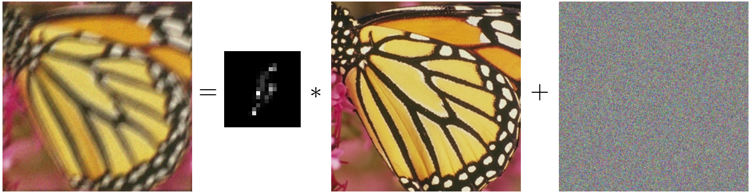
Deblurring:



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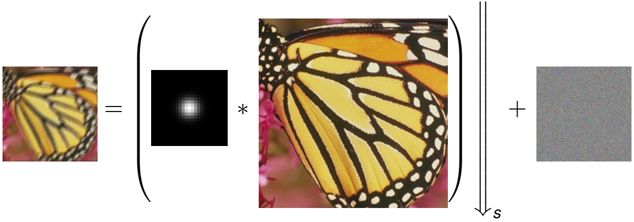
Super-resolution:



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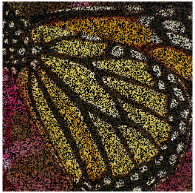
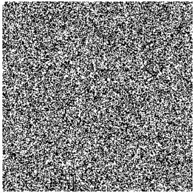
Inpainting:

 $=$  $\otimes$

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Compressed Sensing: *e.g.* Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

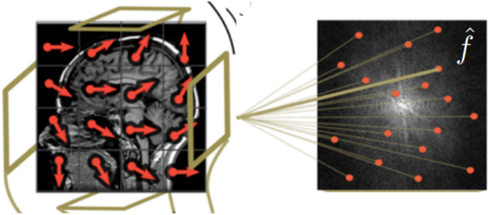
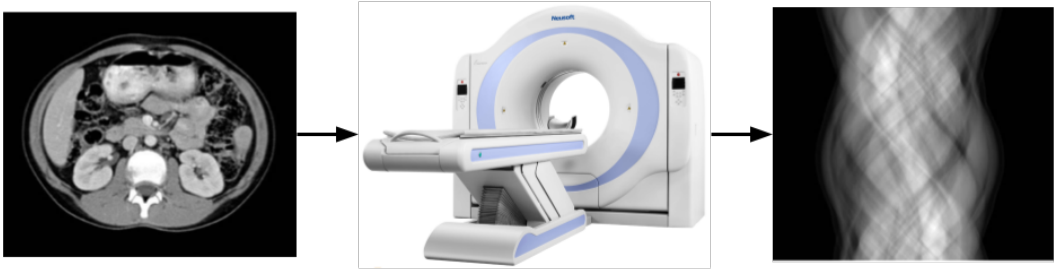


Image Inverse Problems

Find x_0 from observation $y \sim p(y|x_0)$

- $y \in \mathbb{R}^m$ observation
- $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$ unknown input
- $p(y|x)$ forward model

Computed Tomography:



Maximum A-Posteriori

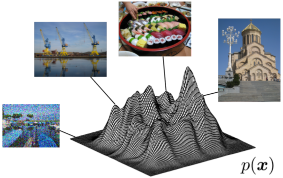
Find x from observation $y \sim p(y|x)$ with an a-priori $p(x)$ on the solution

$$\underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\text{Argmax}}\, p(x|y) = \underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\text{Argmax}}\, \frac{p(y|x)p(x)}{p(y)} = \underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\text{Argmin}} -\log p(y|x) - \log p(x)$$

Maximum A-Posteriori

$$x^* \in \underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\text{Argmin}}\ f(x) + \lambda\, g(x)$$

$$\iff \underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\text{Argmin}}\ \underbrace{f(x) = -\log p(y|x)}_{\text{data-fidelity}} + \underbrace{g(x) \propto -\log p(x)}_{\text{regularization}}$$



A variety of data-fidelity terms *f*

- Assuming Gaussian noise model $\xi \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \nu^2 \mathrm{Id})$,

$$f(x) = -\log p(y|x) = \frac{1}{2\nu^2} \|Ax - y\|^2$$

$\rightarrow$ *convex and smooth f, non-strongly convex in general*

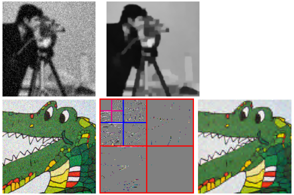
- Less regular cases
  - Noiseless case: $f(x) = \imath_{\{x \mid Ax=y\}} \rightarrow$ *non-smooth f*
  - Laplace / Poisson noise model $\rightarrow$ *non-smooth f*
  - Phase retrieval $\rightarrow$ *non-convex f*

- More complex non-linear modeling of real complex physical systems (e.g. X-ray computed tomography, electron-microscopy...) (Kamilov et al., 2017).

A variety of explicit image priors

Design an explicit regularization on image features:

- Total variation (Rudin et al., 1992)
- Fourier spectrum (Ruderman, 1994)
- Wavelet sparsity (Mallat, 2009)



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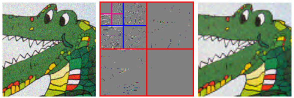
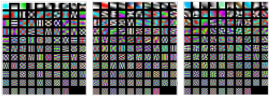


Learn an explicit prior on patches:

- Dictionary learning (Elad and Aharon, 2006), (Mairal et al., 2008)
- Gaussian mixture models (Yu et al., 2011), (Zoran and Weiss, 2011)



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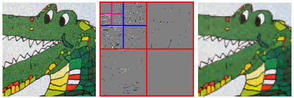

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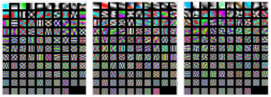
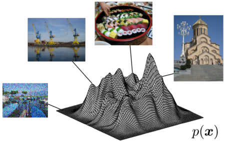


Learn an explicit deep prior on full images (generative models):

- Variational Auto-encoders (Kingma and Welling, 2019)
- Normalizing flows (Rezende and Mohamed, 2015)
- Score-based/Diffusion models (Song et al., 2021)



Plug-and-Play motivations

$$\text{Find } x^* \in \underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\text{Argmin}} \ \text{Data-fidelity}(x) + \text{Regularization}(x)$$

- **Decouple** data-fidelity and regularization via splitting algorithms (Combettes and Pesquet, 2011), (Zoran and Weiss, 2011)

✓ **Image Denoising** is relatively easy and well understood.

→ State-of-the art denoisers **without explicit prior**

Filtering methods (Dabov et al., 2007), (Lebrun et al., 2013)

Deep denoisers (Zhang et al., 2017b,a), (Song et al., 2021)

→ Denoising is taking a step towards the manifold of clean images: **implicit prior**

We will alternate between

1. Taking a denoising step
2. Enforcing data-fidelity

First-order optimization algorithms

$$\text{Find } x^* \in \operatorname*{Argmin}_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} F(x)$$

- **Gradient Descent**

$$x_{k+1} = (\mathrm{Id} - \tau \nabla F)(x_k) \quad \text{i.e.} \quad x_{k+1} = x_k - \tau \nabla F(x_k)$$

- **Proximal Point Algorithm**

$$x_{k+1} \in \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau F}(x_k) \quad \text{i.e.} \quad x_{k+1} + \tau \nabla F(x_{k+1}) = x_k$$

$$\text{where} \quad \mathrm{Prox}_F(x) := \operatorname*{Argmin}_{z \in \mathbb{R}^n} \frac{1}{2}||z - x||^2 + F(z)$$

Warning: Computing Prox_F (uniquely) requires some conditions on F, and is sometimes difficult.

Proximal Splitting

(Bauschke and Combettes, 2011)

$$\text{Find } x^* \in \underset{x\in\mathbb{R}^n}{\operatorname{Argmin}}\, f(x) + g(x)$$

- Gradient Descent (GD)

$$x_{k+1} = (\mathrm{Id} - \tau(\nabla f + \nabla g))(x_k)$$

- Proximal Gradient Descent (PGD, ISTA)

$$x_{k+1} = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g} \circ (\mathrm{Id} - \tau \nabla f)(x_k)$$

- Half Quadratic Splitting (HQS)

$$x_{k+1} = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g} \circ \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f}(x_k)$$

☡ *does not target $f + g$*

- Douglas-Rashford Splitting (DRS) / ADMM

$$x_{k+1} = \left(\frac{1}{2}\mathrm{Id} + \frac{1}{2}(2\,\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g} - \mathrm{Id}) \circ (2\,\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f} - \mathrm{Id})\right)(x_k) \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{x}_k = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f}(x_k)$$

Denoising prior

Find x from observation $y = x + \xi$

- Input distribution $p(x)$.
- Gaussian noise $\xi \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2 \mathrm{Id})$.
- Noisy observation y with density $p_\sigma(y)$ where $p_\sigma = p * \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2 \mathrm{Id})$.

MAP estimator

$$D_\sigma^{\mathrm{MAP}}(y) = \operatorname*{Argmax}_x p(x|y)$$

MMSE estimator

$$D_\sigma^{\mathrm{MMSE}}(y) = \mathbb{E}_{x \sim p(x|y)}[x]$$

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$$\begin{aligned}
\operatorname*{Argmax}_x p(x|y) &= \operatorname*{Argmax}_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} \frac{p(y|x)p(x)}{p(y)} \\
&= \operatorname*{Argmin}_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} -\log p(y|x) - \log p(x) \\
&= \operatorname*{Argmin}_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} \frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \|x - y\|^2 - \log p(x) = \mathrm{Prox}_{-\sigma^2 \log p}(y)
\end{aligned}$$

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Bayes formula:

$$D_\sigma^{\mathrm{MAP}} = \mathrm{Prox}_{-\sigma^2 \log p}$$

Tweedie formula:

$$D_\sigma^{\mathrm{MMSE}} = \mathrm{Id} - \nabla(-\sigma^2 \log p_\sigma)$$

A denoiser is related to an **implicit prior**

PnP and RED algorithms

Find $x^* \in \operatorname{Argmin} f(x) + \lambda g(x)$ with $f = -\log p(y|.)$ and $g \propto -\log p$

$$\begin{cases} \text{GD} & : x_{k+1} = (\mathrm{Id} - \tau(\nabla f + \lambda \nabla g))(x_k) \\ \text{HQS} & : x_{k+1} = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau\lambda g} \circ \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f}(x_k) \\ \text{PGD} & : x_{k+1} = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau\lambda g} \circ (\mathrm{Id} - \tau \nabla f)(x_k) \\ \text{DRS} & : x_{k+1} = \frac{1}{2}\mathrm{Id} + \frac{1}{2}(2\,\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau\lambda g} - \mathrm{Id}) \circ (2\,\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f} - \mathrm{Id})(x_k) \end{cases}$$

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MAP denoiser

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Plug-and-play (PnP)

(Venkatakrishnan et al., 2013)

$$\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau\lambda g} \longrightarrow D_\sigma$$

Regularization by denoising (RED)

(Romano et al., 2017)

$$\mathrm{Id} - \nabla g \longrightarrow D_\sigma$$

PnP and RED algorithms

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PnP algorithms

(Venkatakrishnan et al., 2013)

$$\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau\lambda g} \longrightarrow D_\sigma$$

RED algorithms

(Romano et al., 2017)

$$\mathrm{Id} - \nabla g \longrightarrow D_\sigma$$

$$\begin{cases} \text{PnP-HQS} & : x_{k+1} = D_\sigma \circ \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f}(x_k) \\ \text{PnP-PGD} & : x_{k+1} = D_\sigma \circ (\mathrm{Id} - \tau \nabla f)(x_k) \\ \text{PnP-DRS} & : x_{k+1} = \frac{1}{2}\mathrm{Id} + \frac{1}{2}(2 D_\sigma - \mathrm{Id}) \circ (2\,\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f} - \mathrm{Id})(x_k) \end{cases}$$

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PnP algorithms

(Venkatakrishnan et al., 2013)

$$\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau\lambda g} \longrightarrow D_\sigma$$

RED algorithms

(Romano et al., 2017)

$$\mathrm{Id} - \nabla g \longrightarrow D_\sigma$$

$$\begin{cases} \text{RED-GD} & : x_{k+1} = (\tau\lambda D_\sigma + (1-\tau\lambda)\mathrm{Id} - \tau \nabla f)(x_k) \\ \text{RED-PGD} & : x_{k+1} = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f} \circ (\tau\lambda D_\sigma + (1-\tau\lambda)\mathrm{Id})(x_k) \end{cases}$$

What about convergence?

⚠ But in practice, $D_\sigma \neq \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g}$, $D_\sigma \neq \mathrm{Id} - \nabla g$...

Goal: Find minimal conditions on D_σ to get back convergence guarantees.

Outline

Plug-and-Play Algorithms

Convergence by Fixed Point Theory

Plug-and-Play imaging in practice

PnP Convergence by Fixed Point

The previous PnP algorithms can be written as

$$x_{k+1} = T_{PnP}(x_k)$$

$$\text{with} \quad T_{PnP} = \begin{cases} T_{HQS} & = D_\sigma \circ \operatorname{Prox}_{\tau f} \\ T_{PGD} & = D_\sigma \circ (\operatorname{Id} - \tau \nabla f) \\ T_{DRS} & = \frac{1}{2}\operatorname{Id} + \frac{1}{2}(2D_\sigma - \operatorname{Id}) \circ (2\operatorname{Prox}_{\tau f} - \operatorname{Id}) \end{cases}$$

Goal: Show that $x_k \to x^* \in \operatorname{Fix}(T_{PnP})$.

where we used the notation

$$\operatorname{Fix}(T) = \{\, x \in \mathbf{R}^n \mid T(x) = x \,\}.$$

Reminder: Averaged operators

(Bauschke and Combettes, 2011)

Let $T : \mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R}^n$. We will consider $\mathbf{R}^n$ equipped with **the Euclidean norm**.

Definition

We say that T is nonexpansive if it is 1-Lipschitz.

Definition

T is θ**-averaged** (with $\theta \in (0, 1)$) if there exists a nonexpansive $R : \mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R}^n$ such that

$$T = \theta R + (1 - \theta)\mathrm{Id}.$$

- "T θ-averaged" is equivalent to "$(1 - \frac{1}{\theta})\mathrm{Id} + \frac{1}{\theta} T$ nonexpansive", and also to

$$\forall x, y \in \mathbf{R}^n, \; \|T(x) - T(y)\|^2 + \frac{1 - \theta}{\theta}\|(\mathrm{Id} - T)(x) - (\mathrm{Id} - T)(y)\|^2 \leq \|x - y\|^2.$$

- T is θ-averaged $\Longrightarrow$ T is nonexpansive.
- T is $\frac{1}{2}$-averaged $\Longleftrightarrow$ T is firmly nonexpansive.

Composition of Averaged operators

Proposition

Let T be θ-averaged and $\alpha \in [0,1]$. Then

- $\alpha T + (1-\alpha)\mathrm{Id}$ *is $\alpha\theta$-averaged.*
- *T is θ'-averaged for any $\theta' \in [\theta, 1)$.*

Remark: If T is L-Lipschitz with $L < 1$, then T is $\frac{L+1}{2}$-averaged.

Proposition (Combettes and Yamada, 2015)

Let T_1 be θ_1-averaged and T_2 be θ_2-averaged, with any $\theta_1, \theta_2 \in (0,1)$.
Then $T_1 \circ T_2$ is θ-averaged with $\theta = \frac{\theta_1+\theta_2-2\theta_1\theta_2}{1-\theta_1\theta_2} \in (0,1)$.

Proximity operator of Convex Functions

Let $\Gamma_0(\mathbf{R}^n)$ be the set of $f : \mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ that are convex, l.s.c., and proper (i.e. $f \not\equiv +\infty$).

For $f : \mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$, and $x \in \mathbf{R}^n$, we define the subgradient

$$\partial f(x) = \{\ v \in \mathbf{R}^n \mid \forall z \in \mathbf{R}^n,\ f(z) \geqslant f(x) + \langle v, z - x \rangle\ \}.$$

It is easy to see that the subgradient of a proper function f is monotone, that is,

$$\forall x_1, x_2 \in \mathbf{R}^n, \forall v_1 \in \partial f(x_1), \forall v_2 \in \partial f(x_2), \quad \langle v_1 - v_2, x_1 - x_2 \rangle \geqslant 0.$$

Proposition

For $f \in \Gamma_0(\mathbf{R}^n)$, for any $x \in \mathbf{R}^n$, we can uniquely define

$$\mathrm{Prox}_f(x) = \operatorname*{Argmin}_{z \in \mathbf{R}^n} f(z) + \frac{1}{2}\|z - x\|^2.$$

The point $p = \mathrm{Prox}_f(x)$ is characterized by $x - p \in \partial f(p)$.

Consequence: If $f \in \Gamma_0(\mathbf{R}^n)$, then Prox_f is $\frac{1}{2}$-averaged (i.e. firmly nonexpansive).

Exercise (Important for next practical Session)

Exercise: (solve it for practical session of next week!)

Let $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}\|Ax - y\|^2$ where $A \in \mathbf{R}^{p \times n}$ is a linear operator. Let $\tau > 0$.

- Find an explicit expression of $\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f}$.
- Suppose that A is the periodic convolution with a kernel k: $Ax = k * x$.
  How can you compute $\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau f}$ in practice?

Argmin and Fixed Points

Proposition

Let $f, g : \mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ *be convex proper l.s.c. with* f *differentiable, and let* $\tau > 0$*. Then*

$$\mathrm{Argmin}(f+g) = \mathrm{Fix}\left(\mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g} \circ (\mathrm{Id} - \tau \nabla f)\right).$$

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Proof.

$$\begin{aligned} x \in \mathrm{Argmin}(f+g) &\iff 0 \in \nabla f(x) + \partial g(x) \\ &\iff -\tau \nabla f(x) \in \partial \tau g(x) \\ &\iff x \in \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g}(x - \tau \nabla f(x)). \end{aligned}$$

□

In order to minimize $f+g$, it is thus relevant to study the convergence of the sequence

$$x_{k+1} = \mathrm{Prox}_{\tau g}(x_k - \tau \nabla f(x_k)).$$

Reflected Proxity Operator

We define

$$\mathrm{RProx}_f = 2\,\mathrm{Prox}_f - \mathrm{Id}.$$

Then, Prox_f is $\frac{1}{2}$-averaged if and only if RProx_f is 1-Lipschitz.

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Let $f, g \in \Gamma_0(\mathbf{R}^n)$ and let $\tau > 0$. Then

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If $f, g \in \Gamma_0(\mathbf{R}^n)$, then $\frac{1}{2}\mathrm{Id} + \frac{1}{2}\operatorname{RProx}_{\tau g} \circ \operatorname{RProx}_{\tau f}$ is $\frac{1}{2}$-averaged.

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In order to minimize $f+g$, it is thus relevant to study the convergence of the iterative sequence

$$x_{k+1} = \left(\frac{1}{2}\operatorname{Id} + \frac{1}{2}\operatorname{RProx}_{\tau g} \circ \operatorname{RProx}_{\tau f}\right)(x_k) \quad \text{and set} \quad \tilde{x}_k = \operatorname{Prox}_{\tau f}(x_k).$$

PnP convergence via averaged operator theory

PnP algorithms:

$$x_{k+1} = T_{PnP}(x_k)$$

$$\text{with} \quad T_{PnP} = \begin{cases} T_{HQS} & = D_\sigma \circ \text{Prox}_{\tau f} \\ T_{PGD} & = D_\sigma \circ (\text{Id} - \tau \nabla f) \\ T_{DRS} & = \frac{1}{2}\text{Id} + \frac{1}{2}(2D_\sigma - \text{Id}) \circ (2\,\text{Prox}_{\tau f} - \text{Id}) \end{cases}$$

Theorem

*Let $f : \mathbb{R}^n \to \mathbb{R}$ be convex, differentiable with ∇f L-Lipschitz, and D_σ be θ-averaged, $\theta \in (0, 1)$. Assume that the iterated operator **has** a fixed point.*

- ***PnP-HQS** converges towards a fixed point of T_{HQS}.*
- *If $\tau L < 2$, **PnP-PGD** converges towards a fixed point of T_{PGD}.*
- *If $\theta \leq 1/2$, **PnP-DRS** converges towards a fixed point of T_{DRS}.*

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Remark:

✗ Does not extend to **nonconvex** data-fidelity terms f.

- If f is L-smooth and **strongly convex**, for $\tau L < 2$, $\operatorname{Id} - \tau \nabla f$ is contractive (Ryu et al., 2019)
  $\to$ allows to relax the denoiser hypothesis for D_σ $(1 + \epsilon)$-Lipschitz.

Outline

Plug-and-Play Algorithms

Convergence by Fixed Point Theory

Plug-and-Play imaging in practice

Which denoiser to use?

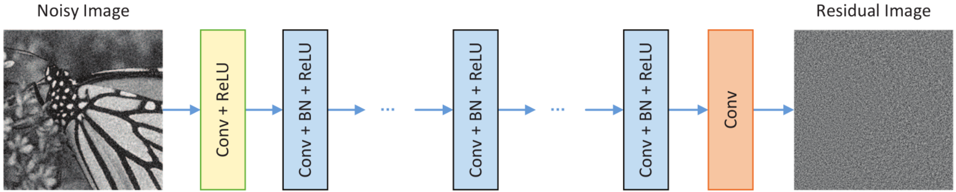
- One can use off-the-shelf denoisers: BM3D (Dabov et al., 2007), NLBayes (Lebrun et al., 2013), ...
- One can also use denoisers given as neural networks.
- Such a deep denoiser is trained to approximate the MMSE:

$$\underset{\text{Param}(D_\sigma)}{\text{Argmin}}\ \mathbb{E}_{x\sim p_X,\xi\sim\mathcal{N}(0,\sigma^2\text{Id})}\left[\|D_\sigma(x+\xi)-x\|^2\right]$$

  where p_X is a data distribution of clean images.
- For training, L^1 loss (instead of squared L^2 loss) sometimes gives better results.
- For certain denoising architectures, the noise level σ is given as input.
  ⚠ In PnP, the denoising strength σ may be different from the noise level of the input!

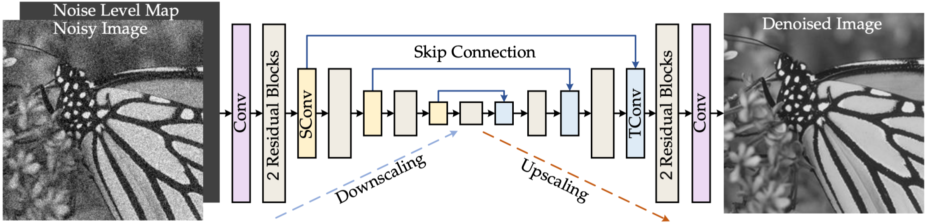
DnCNN (Zhang et al., 2017a)

- DnCNN is a deep convolutional neural network for denoising (Zhang et al., 2017a).
- It is based on residual learning: $D(x) = x + R(x)$ where R is the network.
- R has 20 layers of hidden dimension 64 (3×3 convolutions, BatchNorm, ReLU)
- It is trained on noise levels $\sigma \in [0, 50]$ and can be applied blindly (without σ).



DRUNet (Zhang et al., 2021)

- DRUNet is a deep convolutional neural network for denoising (Zhang et al., 2021).
- It is a UNet that includes residual blocks, convolutions (bias-free!), and skip connections.
- The UNet has 4 “scales” of dimensions $64, 128, 256, 512$.
- It is trained on noise levels $\sigma \in [0, 50]$ and take a noise level map as input.
- Zhang et al. (2021) propose to do PnP image restoration with this denoising prior (DPIR).



How to build averaged deep denoisers ?

- Weight clipping or Spectral normalization (Miyato et al., 2018), (Ryu et al., 2019)
  ✗ Lipschitz constant $\ll 1$ for large networks
- Or we can penalize a Lipschitz constant in the training loss:

$$\underset{\text{Param}(D_\sigma)}{\text{Argmin}}\ \mathbb{E}_{x\sim p_X,\xi\sim\mathcal{N}(0,\sigma^2\text{Id})}\left[\|D_\sigma(x+\xi)-x\|^2\right]+\mu\text{Lip}(D_\sigma).$$

- Convolutional Proximal Neural Networks (Hertrich et al., 2021)
- Firmly nonexpansive denoisers (Terris et al., 2020)
- Deep spline neural networks (Goujon et al., 2023)
- $D_\sigma = \text{Id} - \nabla g_\sigma$ with g_σ Input Convex Neural Network (ICNN) (Meunier et al., 2022)

☡ Non-expansiveness can harm denoising performance.

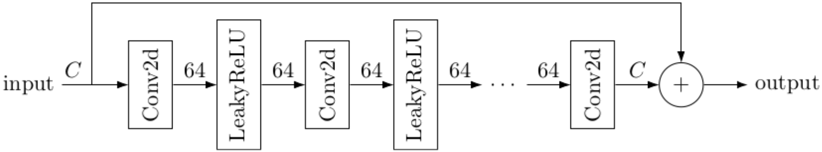
Nonexpansive convolutional neural networks (Pesquet et al., 2021)

Idea:

- Build a nonexpansive convolutional neural network (CNN)

$$D = T_M \circ \cdots \circ T_1 \quad \text{with} \quad T_m(x) = R_m(W_m x + b_m)$$

  where R_m is an (averaged) activation function, W_m a convolution, and b_m a bias.
- We want to have $D = \frac{\mathrm{Id}+Q}{2}$ with Q nonexpansive.
- During training, the Lipschitz constant of $2D - \mathrm{Id}$ is penalized.



Convolution proximal neural networks (Hertrich et al., 2021)

Idea: Build a convolutional proximal neural network (cPNN)

$$\Phi_u = T_M \circ \cdots \circ T_1 \quad \text{with} \quad T_m(x) = W_m^T \sigma_m(W_m x + b_m)$$

where $u = (W_m, \sigma_m, b_m)_{1 \leq m \leq M}$ is a collection of parameters.
The linear operators W_m (or W_m^T) are convolutions lying in a Stiefel manifold

$$\mathrm{St}(d, n) = \{ \, W \in \mathbf{R}^{n \times d} \mid W^T W = \mathrm{Id} \, \}.$$

The resulting denoiser is then $D = \mathrm{Id} - \gamma \Phi_u$.

- Ideally, Φ_u is a composition of M firmly non-expansive operators, thus averaged.
- In practice, W_m is a convolution with limited filter length.
- Condition $W_m \in \mathrm{St}$ is approximated with a term $\| W_m^T W_m - \mathrm{Id} \|_F^2$ in the learning cost.
- Φ_u is verified in practice to be t-averaged with t close to $\frac{1}{2}$.

Deep Spline Neural Networks (Goujon et al., 2023)

Idea: Approximate the proximal operator of a convex-ridge regularizer

$$R(x) = \sum_{p=1}^{P} \sum_{i} \psi_p(h_p * x(i))$$

where h_p are convolution kernels, and ψ_p are particular $\mathcal{C}^1$ convex functions.

Given a noisy z,

$$\mathrm{Prox}_{\lambda R}(z) = \operatorname*{Argmin}_{x \in \mathbf{R}^n} \frac{1}{2}\|x - z\|^2 + \lambda R(x)$$

is approximated with t iterations of the gradient-step

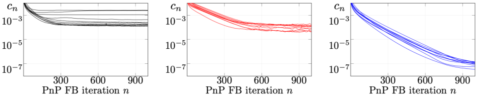
$$x \mapsto x - \alpha((x - z) + \lambda \nabla R(x)).$$

The output after t iterations is denoted by $T^t_{R,\lambda,\alpha}(z)$.

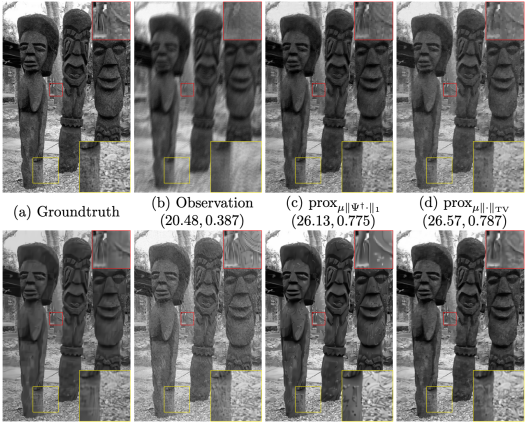
- $T^t_{R,\lambda,\alpha}$ approximates the prox of a convex function
- Linear spline parameterization of ψ_p justified by a density result

Example for Image Deblurring (Pesquet et al., 2021)

- PnP-PGD (aka Forward-Backward)
- Denoiser: Adapted DnCNN
- Below, evolution of $r_k = \frac{\|x_k - x_{k-1}\|}{\|x_0\|}$



(a) BM3D (b) RealSN (c) Proposed



(a) Groundtruth

(b) Observation (20.48, 0.387)

(c) $\mathrm{prox}_{\mu\|\Psi^\dagger\cdot\|_1}$ (26.13, 0.775)

(d) $\mathrm{prox}_{\mu\|\cdot\|_{\mathrm{TV}}}$ (26.57, 0.787)

(e) BM3D (26.09, 0.732)

(f) RealSN (24.68, 0.726)

(g) DnCNN (26.12, 0.643)

(h) Proposed (**27.09**, **0.789**)

Take-home Messages

- Convergence by fixed point relies on a particular kind of non-expansiveness.
- For now, we cannot constrain non-expansiveness exactly in practice.
  Instead we penalize some Lipschitz constant when training the denoiser.
- This way, PnP methods lead to very good restoration results.
- Once learned a denoiser, it can be used to address many other inverse problems.
- PnP algorithms are (surprisingly) stable as soon as parameters are properly adjusted.
- Numerical control can be improved by relying on explicit minimization (see next session).

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