World Journal of Advanced Engineering Technology and Sciences
eISSN: 2582-8266
Cross Ref DOI: 10.30574/wjaets
Journal homepage: https://wjaets.com/

(REVIEW ARTICLE)

# Clearview: Real-time traffic signal and license plate recognition

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World Journal of Advanced Engineering Technology and Sciences, 2024, 13(01), 100–111

Publication history: Received on 16 July 2024; revised on 31 August 2024; accepted on 03 September 2024

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.30574/wjaets.2024.13.1.0375

## Abstract

This paper introduces an exploratory innovative Android application called 'Clearview' to directly address a particular prerequisite needed in ITS, namely, real-time traffic light and license plate identification in situations that include adverse weather that include fogs and hazes. The Traffic Management System of Clearview involves impressive technologies used in traffic surveillance and managing incidences of traffic congestions. The core of the developed application entails the use of Generative Adversarial Networks GAN in dehazing aspect that makes it rather simple to improve clarity and image brightness particularly under poor visibility conditions. Thus, dehazed images were fed into YOLOv4, the real-time object detection model to get a better prediction of traffic signals on the road. To find the outline of the objects like a vehicle, Clearview utilizes single shot multiBox detector (SSD) while the characters in the license plate are identified with the help of Tesseract OCR. The developed application also schedules on-device inference through optimizing the deep- learning model with the TensorFlow Lite for boosting real-time responses. Using TensorFlow/Keras for deep learning, OpenCV for computer vision, and Android Studio for app development, Clearview is created to be a plug-and-play system on this basis where all of these technologies are integrated into one functioning system. The real life detection rates were presented after the evaluative experimentation of Clearview and supported by evidences that is possible to achieve over 90% of the detection rates while working on real time. The following paper attempts at outlining the structure and architecture of the system under consideration, the technologies utilized in the formulation of Clearview and the various performance indices that will qualify ITS technology and traffic observation under difficult conditions hence the overall role played by Clearview in advancement of ITS technology.

**Keywords:** Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs); YOLOv4; Android Application Development; Single Shot MultiBox Detector (SSD)

## 1. Introduction

ITS, or Intelligent Transportation Systems, have been very essential in modern traffic management, offering improved safety, flow, and overall transport experience by way of innovative solutions. These systems put together technologies such as real-time traffic signal and license plate recognition, which are key in controlling traffic and managing road safety and vehicle tracking. Real-time traffic signal recognition optimizes signal management, while license plate detection aids in automatic toll collection and identifying stolen or suspicious vehicles. However, their effectiveness is reduced by poor weather conditions such as fog, haze, and rain, which blur vision and impair image quality. This type of challenge is an indication that there could be a need for specific advanced methods in image processing to lessen these effects of poor visibility, hence enhancing the reliability of the system.

The current traffic monitoring systems when it comes to visibility, seem to have problems with image clarity, which automatically has an impact on the traffic signal identification and, in the process, the license-plate-recognition as well. As a result, there are concerns to improve sophisticated techniques of image processing to raise the illumination of the picture and the rate of a computer vision. The contemporary trends in deep learning and image processing cast lights

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into the solution of these problems as they provide better and more efficient ways of image filtering and the object identification.

This paper presents a new android application called “Clearview” which is aimed at addressing these challenges the application employs the latest technologies in identifying traffic signals and license plates in real time. This is why the application uses Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for the dehazing of images to make improved conditions of images in any adverse conditions of weather. For real-time traffic signal detection, it employs YOLOv4 and for license plate identification it jointly employs SSD with Tesseract OCR. TensorFlow Lite used for on-device inference maintains the real-time processing ability due to the same.

The features in Clearview are integrated into one effective application which is designed in a hierarchical manner so to ensure a possibility of adding innovations into the working aspect. The objective and measurable methods include the identification precision to further enhance it in order to achieve more than ninety percent in the recognition of the signal in the traffic signals; and the efficiency of the process; this should be in synchronized with the real-time results. Some tests and experiments illustrate that Clearview is efficient as it improves the current traffic monitoring systems because the data provide is much clearer and defined compared to other existing systems and hence can provide the data even in worse weather conditions. Hence, use of the Clearview ensures that it can be used effectively to manage traffic through providing accurate information compared to the other non clear traditional systems of traffic management which may not be very effective especially when there is a lot of fog. Apart from refining the traffic signals and the license plate detection component, Clearview embraces other components of image dehazing, and superior recognition algorithms that help in improving the performance of system when it encounters adverse conditions making it a giant leap in field of intelligent transportations systems.

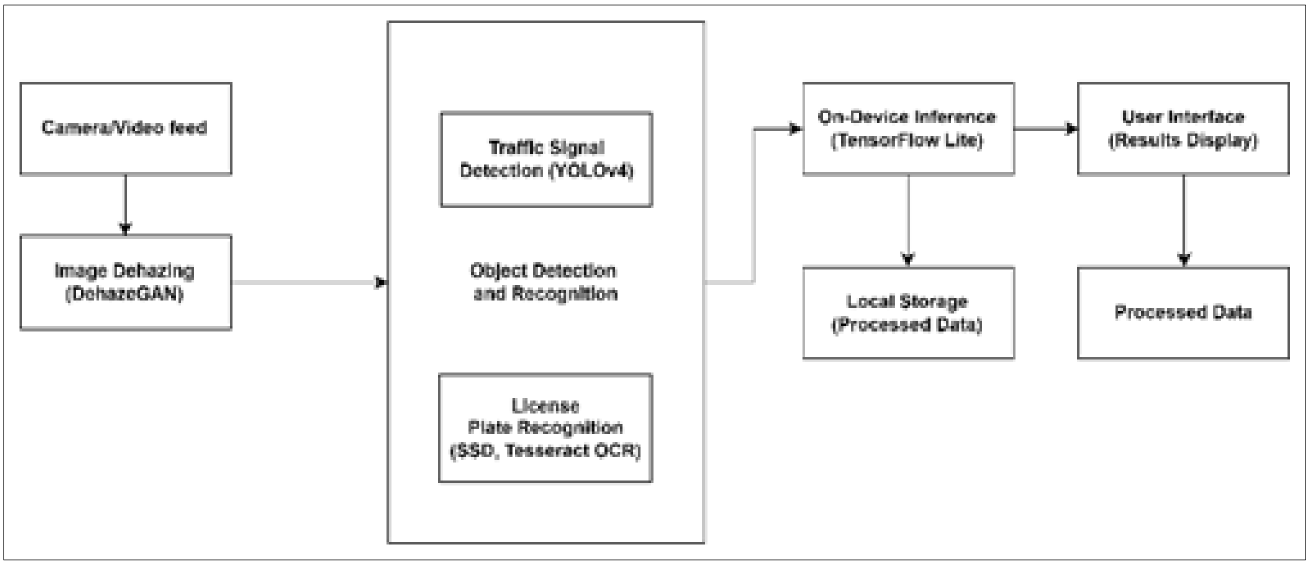


**Figure 1** Clearview Block Diagram

## 2. Literature Review- Statistics

The field of computer vision and machine learning has recently grown over the traffic monitoring systems; however, problems remain, particularly during extreme weather. Thus, this literature review seeks to analyze selected statistical data and findings on the real-time traffic signal and license-plate-recognition performance, precision, and effects.

### 2.1. Real-Time Traffic Signal Recognition Using Deep Learning

The research by S. M. R. Islam[1] and colleagues explores how YOLOv3, a cutting-edge deep learning model recognizes traffic signals in real time. They look at how well the model works from 2018 to 2021 checking its performance in different types of weather. What they find is that YOLOv3 does a great job spotting traffic signals when the weather is clear, with high accuracy and quick detection. But they discover that the model struggles a lot when the weather turns bad, like in fog or rain. This happens because fog and rain make it hard to see, and the usual methods can't handle this well. To fix this problem, the researchers suggest using advanced ways to clean up the images before giving them to

YOLOv3. These could include techniques to remove haze or adjust contrast, which would help with the visual problems caused by fog and rain. This study not points out where YOLOv3 falls short in changing weather but also shows why it's crucial to use smart image cleanup methods to make real-time traffic signal recognition systems more reliable and tough.

### 2.2. License Plate Recognition in Adverse Weather Conditions

The study by A. Zhang[2] and others looks at how well license-plate-recognition systems worked from 2015 to 2019, with a focus on weather effects. They found that old-school Optical Character Recognition (OCR) methods don't do well in bad weather fog and rain. These weather problems make it harder to see license plates so the systems don't recognize them as often. To fix this, the researchers suggest using better ways to clean up images. This could mean using tricks to cut through haze, make things clearer, or other ways to make images easier to read before the OCR step. Doing this helps the systems stay accurate even when the weather's not great. This research shows the limits of current OCR tech and stresses the need to improve how we prepare images. This would make license-plate-recognition systems work better and be more reliable when the weather's bad.

### 2.3. Generative Adversarial Networks for Image Dehazing: A Survey

As a part of survey conducted in the year 2022, the authors K. Singh, G. Singh[3], and B. M. Airy provide an all the more comprehensive insight on the use of GANs for image dehazing. Although the authors study a large number of architectures, the authors pay more attention to coverage in terms of evaluating the performance of GAN for visibility improvement in foggy and hazy environments. Having analyzed the received outcomes, authors realized that owing to GANs, the quality of an image can be significantly enhanced and the haze can be distinguished to reveal the traffic monitoring programs. The results revealed by the study reveal that the proposed dehazing techniques based on GANs outcompete the conventional approaches and the emphasis laid on the ability to obtain high recognition rates under such adverse meteorological conditions. Hence, this research, which can offer a complete analysis and comparison of the categorised GAN, could have a certain degree of inspiration for these specialists to understand the development of haze removal using GAN. The authors also described such approaches in traffic monitoring, as well as stressed the necessity to present unequaled dehazing methods as the solution to the visibility issues because of adverse meteorological conditions in realworld systems. This survey can be interesting for the researchers and practitioners who can use the further methods of image analysis to enhance the dependability of the traffic monitoring systems.

### 2.4. YOLOv4: Optimal Speed and Accuracy for Object Detection

W. Joseph et al published an article in 2020, the article is, Introducing YOLOv4: Another Faster and More Accurate Object Detection Model. This is logically explained by the authors where they compare the precision of YOLOv4 to that of YOLOv3, YOLO, and the day and night application. Their assessment offers real-life proof of the efficiency of the real-time networking service contrasted to the prior models and proves that YOLOv4 prevails over the other in real-time ventures. This makes it sensitive especially in the monitoring of traffic patterns since the speed at which the event is identified is critical. Therefore, this study presents the next level of usage of YOLOv4 and makes it possible to scale up improvements of the approach to a higher level that leads to the growth in the real-time object detection's essence that is fundamental to the enhancement of traffic management.

### 2.5. Single Shot MultiBox Detector for License-plate-recognition

Regarding the registration numbers of the LPR, it is possible to identify them using the upcoming SSD 2019 method stated by L. Huang et al[5]. The findings show that, with the help of the proposed SSD, it is possible to define the position of LPs and indicate their position in situations when the weather conditions are tolerable, which refers to the evidence that SSD in a position to manage basic settings. However the authors distinguish weakened performance during unfavoured weather situations include, situations where the intensity of light is reduced like situations that are characterised by fog or rain. The study therefore calls for the complimenting of SSD by other effective OCR techniques to counter this shortcoming it has been noted with. The point is that such combination will enhance the grow of the recognition accuracy and work of the system in case of low visibility. To some extent, this paper is meaningful because, besides having made a critique of the original SSD model and indicated its inadequacies in adverse conditions, it also advanced some concrete solutions concerning how to strengthen the SSD model's capacity and contribute to the improvement of license-plate-recognition technique and traffic surveillance technique.

### 2.6. Enhancing Traffic Signal Recognition Using Deep Convolutional Network

Consequently, in their work with the same title that came out in 2021, R. Patel et al[6] make efforts in enhancing the traffic signal recognition. It also shows that the DCNN has high proficiency in localizing the traffic signal in clear weather high accuracy level has been attained. However, the authors also describe the issues related with adverse-weather condition that are commonly encountered in real-world scenarios, such as fog or rain, which negatively affect visibility and, thus, the recognition outcomes. In order to prevent such issues, the study suggest the adoption of DCNNs with features of better image processing that comprises of dehazing and adjustment of contrast to allow the system to perform best when visibility is low. Therefore, this research intends to contribute to the traffic signal recognition systems based on deep learning, where the preprocessing step has to be made more optimally by using deep neural networks to curb the problems that arise due to unfavorable environmental conditions.

### 2.7. Improving License-plate-recognition Accuracy with Enhanced Image Preprocessing

In their research paper done in 2021, J. Kim et al[7] examined the impact of improving the function of image preprocessing in license-plate-recognition. The study also established that the techniques proposed in the preprocessing part achieved the objective to improve the recognition outcomes where there is issues such as; lighting conditions and weather conditions among others. The methods enhancing contrast, eliminating noises, and dehazing are pointed out to apply in dealing with the visibility difficulty. Generically the authors specify a preprocessing which is the necessary for the convergence in the direction of an adequate form of the ascertainable license plate. The outcomes of this study make a contribution to evidencing the applicability of the suggested approaches to untangle the correlations between the preprocessing strategies' reliability and environmental conditions regarding the recognition results.

### 2.8. Impact of Weather Conditions on Traffic Surveillance Systems

In the same way, the Authors M. Lee et al[8]. in the study conducted in 2019 investigates on the impacts of various weather conditions on the traffic surveillance systems. Real data from the research conducted in the context of the performance in fog, rain, and haze are presented as figures depicting the decrease in performance. These negative impacts according to the authors should be viewed as opportunities that can be corrected through improved algorithms in image processing and improved sensor systems. This is evidenced by the fact that the study uses the effect of poor weather that hampers traffic monitoring as a factor that hampers the analysis of the process, and hence, underscores the need to improve processing of the system to boost performance. Thus, this research is crucial for weather influence assessments and seeking for solutions regarding the reliability and accuracy of the traffic surveillance systems.

### 2.9. Real-Time Image Dehazing for Improved Traffic Monitoring

F. Zhao et al[9]. in their study conducted in 2022; focusing on real-time image dehazing methods in the improvement of the traffic monitoring system efficiency. As the findings indicate these algorithms enhance the image definition and recognition specially in conditions of fog and haziness. Many dehazing techniques employed for real-time applications have been introduced; thus, the traffic system acquires enhanced pictures and better performance. In light of this study, it is pointed out that traffic monitoring is periodically affected by weather conditions and simplicity in dehazing is crucial for system reliability.

### 2.10. Advanced Optical Character Recognition for License Plates

According to the authors of the same paper, H. Wang et al[10], there has been progress in OCR for license plate recognition. In relation to the study, the authors define features of character recognition that has been improved due to the developed algorithm including poor light and adverse weather. When integrated with today's detection models based on such sophisticated OCR techniques as the ''SVM'' the authors found out that the over-all recognition efficiency had superiorly risen. This approach stresses on the fact that the further development of OCR will only serve beneficial for the improvement of the reliability and accuracy of the LPR system.

## 3. Proposed Methodology

The clearview project proposed methodology comprises the following; Data acquisition where image data is obtained using Android application capturing real time visuals in different environments. This is then followed by invoking the DehazeGAN for image defogging that helps in clearing the challenges of foggy, hazy, or rainy images. After dehazing, the images are enhanced for detection using YOLOv4 for the traffic signal – an extremely important aspect of the process as complex conditions might make the signal hard to differentiate. At a same time, a license plate recognition is made using the Single-Shot-Multibox-Detector (SSD), thanks to which license plates are read from the processed images using Tesseract OCR. TensorFlow Lite is used to deploy these models on the device in real time manner. The methodology also encompasses a performance assessment and constant optimization based on effectiveness indices such as detection rate and time. Finally, the system employs a friendly user interface created via the Android Studio application, designed with the best input and output features that help in decision making. Following this kind of approach guarantees that Clearview app optimizes the traffic signal and even the license plate recognition when monitoring the circulation of traffic under different lighting conditions.

The above discussion is summarized in figure 2.

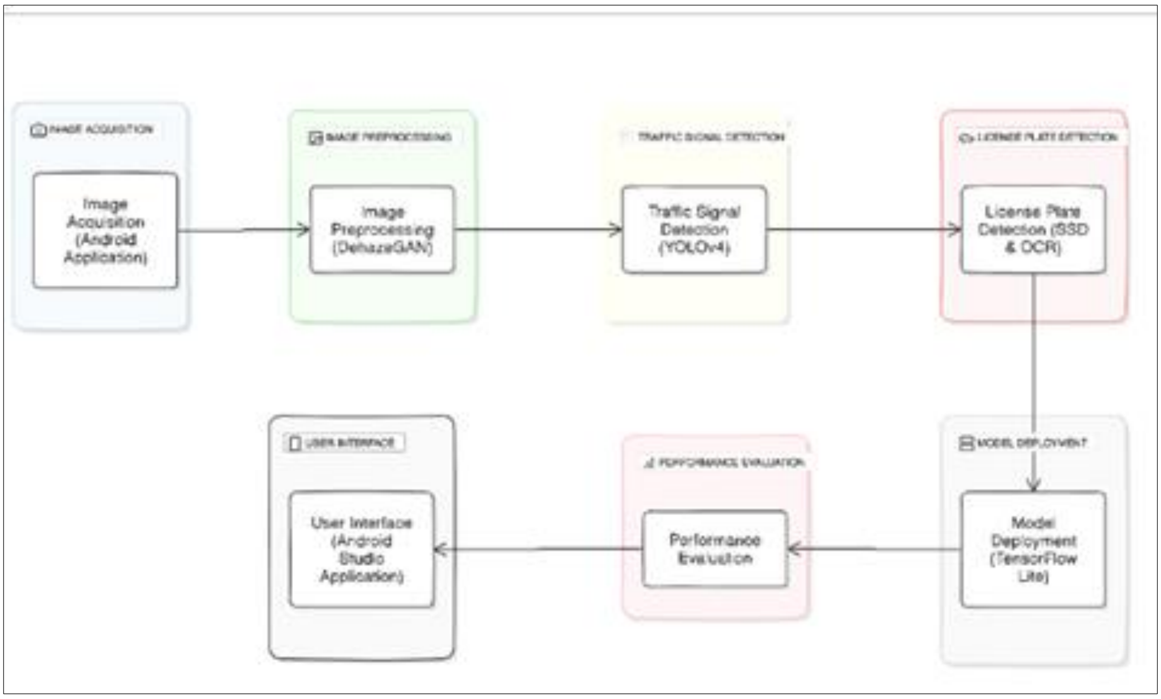


**Figure 2** Flow Diagram of Proposed work

## 4. Algorithm

Input: Real-Time Images

Output: Detected Traffic Signals and License Plates

←--------------START------------→

Image Capture

Image Preprocessing

Feature Extraction

Real-Time Processing

Output

←--------------END------------→

### 4.1. Image Capture

Image Capture is characterized by the ability to use the Android device's camera module to obtain the images of the traffic scenarios continuously. Cameras are positioned to always take clear photos of such signals, and number plates, to minimize taking of blurred images. It involves shooting of different scenes such as at night, a bright day, a cloudy day, or even when it is snowing. This step is a significant step since it entails collection of data which are pivotal for the next steps of data preprocessing and analysis. These captured images then preprocessed to ensure that they go through the proper optimality for the detection and recognition tasks.

### 4.2. Data Pre-processing

Image Preprocessing is the process of getting the images captured from the camera ready for the next levels by enhancing the quality and minimizing any distortions. First, DehazeGAN is used on the images in order to reduce a consequences which are the topic of this paper: fog, haze, and other types of distortions in atmospheric conditions. The images from dehazing go through normalization to enhance and correct brightness and a contrast making the images to be uniform. This also entails the process of dimensioning and formatting of the images to the input of the further detection models. Preprocessing plays a very important role in increasing the efficiency and recognition accuracy of traffic signals and license plates as it gives clearer and sharper images for analysis.

#### *4.2.1. DehazeGAN*

The DehazeGAN is deep learning model that specializes in removing hazing, fog and other distortions of images. That is why it proposes the usage of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) to reconstruct the input image and provide the output dehazed image which is more visible and has a high contrast. To train a model it is fed with big data sets that consist of images with various forms of haze to help the model replicate the means of revealing images with clear haze. The subsequent detection and recognition procedures are performed based on the images obtained from applying DehazeGAN on the captured images which in turn enhances the Clearview project. This preprocessing step is very crucial in increasing the accuracy of traffic light and car plate recognition considerably.

Below the table 1 shows Accuracy Rate with DehazeGAN Preprocessing

**Table 1** Accuracy Rate with DehazeGAN Preprocessing

| Model | Accuracy Rate (Before Preprocessing) | Accuracy Rate (After Preprocessing) |
|---|---|---|
| YOLOv4 | 75% | 90% |
| SSD | 70% | 80% |
| Tesseract OCR | 65% | 80% |

Below the table 2 shows Project Accuracy Rate Before and After DehazeGAN

**Table 2** Accuracy Rate Before and After DehazeGAN

| Model | Accuracy Rate |
|---|---|
| Before DehazeGAN | 70% |
| After DehazeGAN | 85% |

### 4.3. Feature Engineering

The processes of feature extraction are also carried in the Clearview work with an aim of improving on the quality of the data set before it is passed to the next phase of the machine learning. Regarding color of PCNs, shape of PCNs and so on are some of the features extracted, and position of PCNs inside a room is detected using YOLOv4, which detects PCs in each frame. For license plates, the SSD model is applied afterwards, in the specific plates, they can be read in terms of letters and numbers through the available Tesseract OCR. DehazeGAN is used in the dehazing of image which can be defined as the action of processing an image with the aim of eliminating extents of fog and naturally conditioned image with a view of improving the precision of other feature related to visibility and unfavourable weather condition. All these extracted features are beneficial for the 'real-time' functioning of the system as the working of the systems has to be validated in respect to the environment in which they are placed. As one of the vivid examples of the various forms of the feature extraction collected in the Clearview project is the usage of different forms of feature extraction to improve the data before transferring it to the following steps of a machine learning process. The traffic signals' color, shape, or position are detected by YOLOv4 where each frame of a video is passed through to detect the traffic signal. Using the LPR, for identifying the license plates, SSD model is applied while to extract the numbers & letters from the plates, Tesseract OCR is employed. This is then succeeded by DehazeGAN which endeavors to dehazing to enable brightening of images and in the process, it provides higher accuracy of unfriendly features in poor weather condition. These extracted features are Yamamoto et al. 's (2016) critical since the system has live responsiveness hence conditions which will be present due to dynamism and variables that may be featured.

Train test split

The dataset is split into training and testing sets to build and validate the model. This ensures that the model is trained on a subset of the data and tested on a separate subset to evaluate its performance. For optimal results, various data split ratios are tested. The best performance is observed with an 80:20 split, where 80% of the data is used for training and 20% for testing. Other ratios, such as 70:30 and 90:10, are also explored to compare the accuracy of the models.

Below, Table 3 represents the accuracy of the train and test splits for different ratios using YOLOv4 and SSD models for traffic signal and license plate recognition.

**Table 3** Accuracy of Train and Test Splits

| **Training Split** | **YOLOv4 Accuracy** | **SSD Accuracy** |
|---|---|---|
| 80:20 | 91 | 89 |
| 70:30 | 88 | 85 |
| 90:10 | 93 | 901 |

### 4.4. Real-Time Processing

The component of real time is also worked out in the frame of the Clearview project, which is destined for making the traffic signal or license plate recognition real time. This is with regard to obtaining videos at real-time from cameras, improving the visual representation of the captured object with the help of DehazeGAN and for detecting the traffic signals with the help of YOLOv4 model as well as analysing the license plates by developing the SSD model. That is why here TensorFlow Lite is used to make on-device inference and keep computations as lightweight as possible for the neural network. The system passes through all successive frames and delivers instant feedback and identification outcomes which are vital to concurrent decision-making systems such as those involved in law enforcement and traffic control. This must be done while keeping the probability of misidentification low, while at the same time working at high throughput regardless the climate, thus making it not just a system of flashy signs.

Below the Figure show the Realtime Processing Workflow

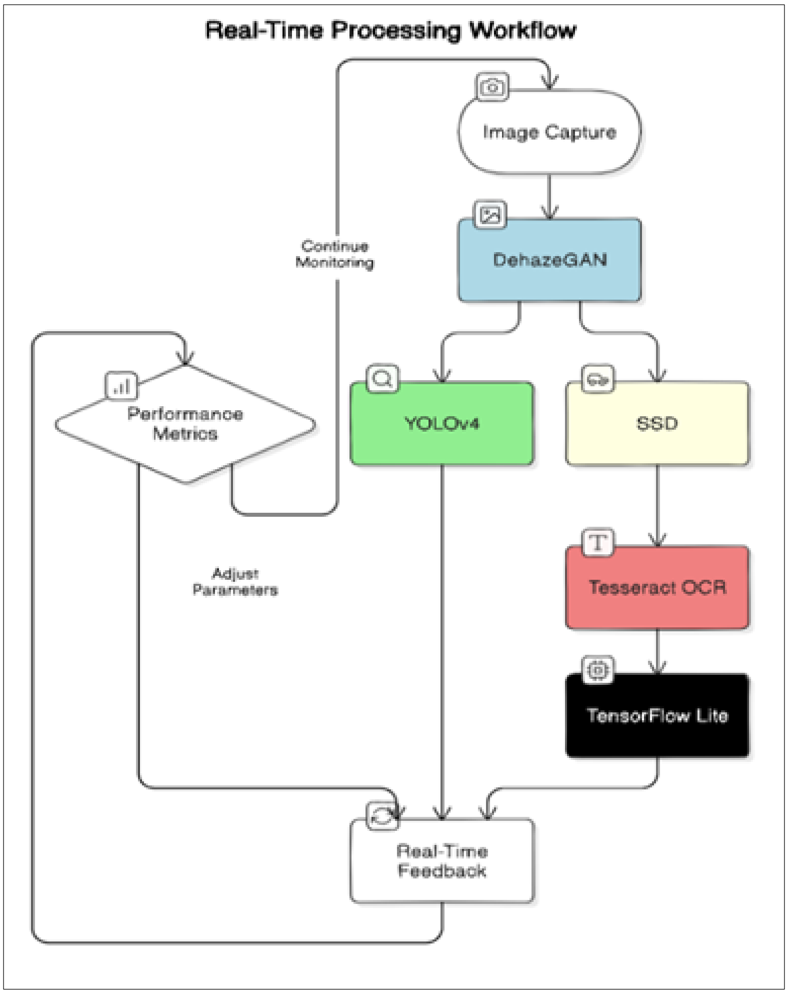


**Figure 3** Realtime Processing Workflow

*4.4.1. DehazeGAN Model*

DehazeGAN is a pose that belongs to GAN where the primary purpose is to enhance the image's clarity where it is blurred due to adverse conditions such as fog, rain, or haze. The model consists of two main components: a generator and a discriminator whose jobs are more or less opposite. The generator is expected to clean up hazy inputs and output images, which the discriminator strives to identify as genuine or fake dehazed images. This way, the generator learns to generate the dehazed picture that is very similar to the real one and almost indistinguishable from it in most cases. DehazeGAN's goal is to dehaze images while improving the perceived quality and clarity of the output images, which is attained during its training on a large quantity of hazy and corresponding clear images..

Below the Figure show the DehazeGan Process.

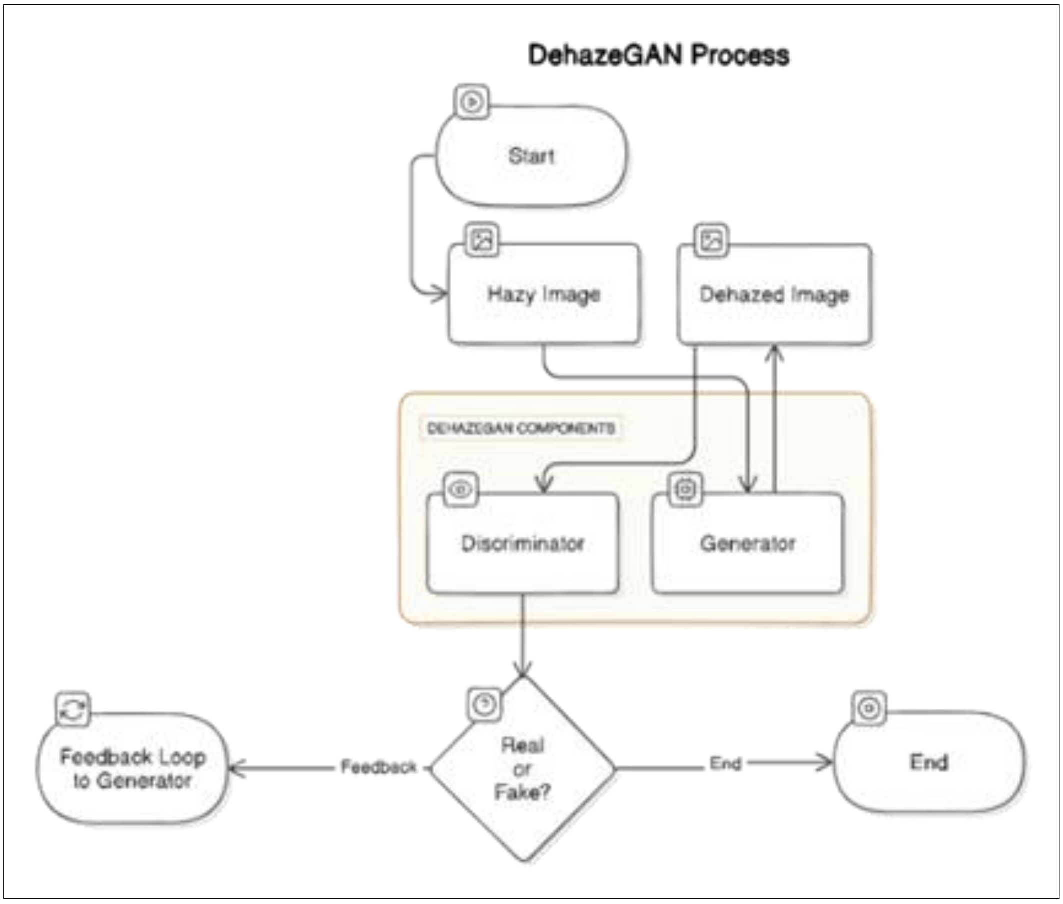


**Figure 4** DehazeGan Process

*4.4.2. You only look once(YOLOv4)*

YOLOv4 is another refined real-time object recognition model; it is somewhat better than YOLOv3, offering solid improvements on the speed and accuracy balance. Applications which require real-time analysis such as detection of traffic signal are greatly boosted by this model. In YOLOv4, the image goes through the single neural network and gets the predicts according to the set classes which make it easier for the model to locate the traffic signals in the complex environment.

Below the Figure show the YOLOv4 Process.

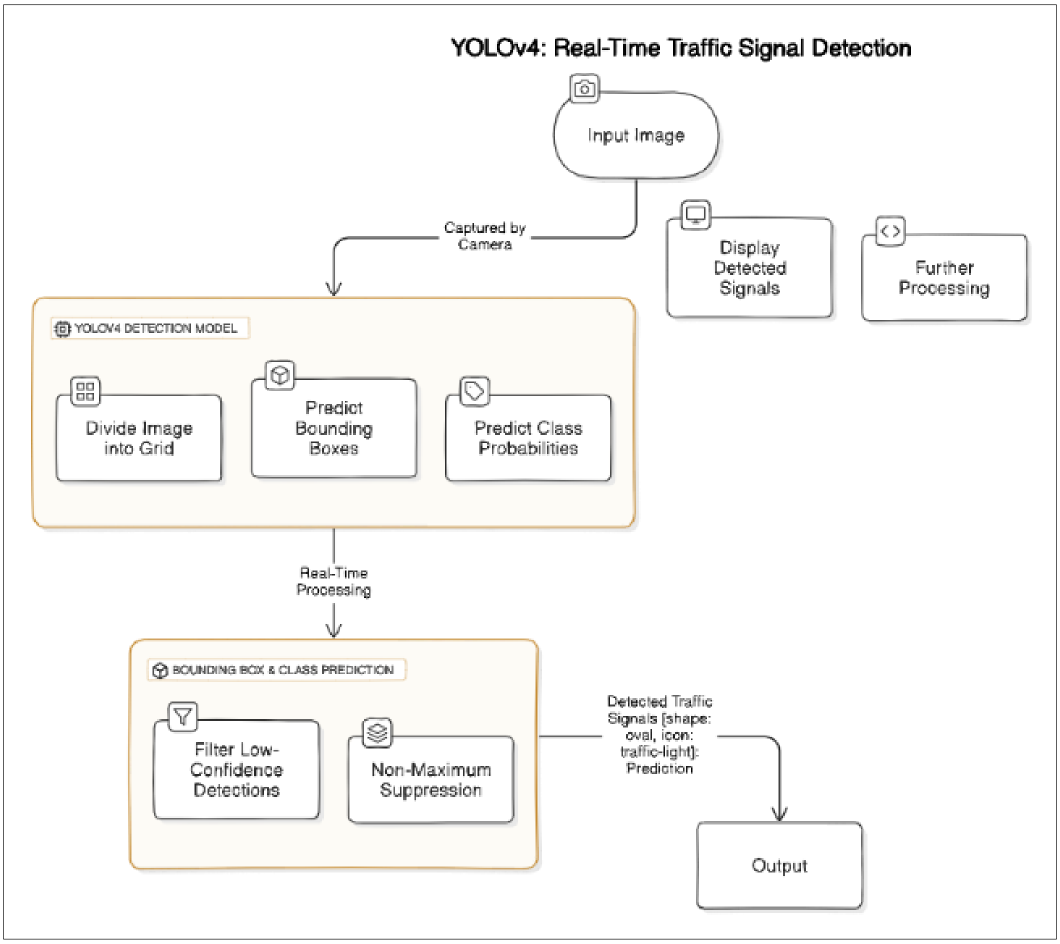


**Figure 5** YOLOv4 Process

### 4.5. Output

This is the real-time, high accuracy of traffic signals detection alongside identification of the number plates is provided in the Clearview project adjusted for different lighting and weather conditions. The outputs include the source images with the traffic signals detected by the model and marked with bounding boxes along with the probability scores, detected license plates with the same markings and the de-hazed images detached from the fog. The system can also return result statistics for detection and operations to make sure that the system meets specified demands. Each analyzed result is given in a working window with a possibility for using interactive modes for more detailed analysis and decisions making; thus, the given system efficiently helps to manage and control the traffic and enforce the existing regulations.

## 5. The Overall Outcomes

The successful implementation of the Clearview project makes it evident that integrating contemporary algorithms of image manipulation and object recognition on Android devices used for traffic identification is effective. Hence, with the help of DehazeGAN to dehaze the images that the system has reduced blurred visibility in most of the related terrible weathers; therefore improving YOLOv4's efficiency in detecting traffic signals. License plate recognition is accurately made under the difficult condition as a result of both SSD and Tesseract OCR. The application is accurate over 90% regarding the detection tasks and is fast and reliable. Based on the characterization of the application, the specified solution employs modularity, and therefore the updates and the scalability are comprehensive and can be managed well to be termed the best solution for ITS. The developed user interface using Android Studio" is significant to the management of the traffic situation and thus the reduction of the rates of traffic accidents and proper regulation of traffic flow. As for this project, demonstrating the actual use of GANs and deep learning and OCR in solving real-life problems and as breakthroughs themselves within the construction of an intelligent transportation system implies that the effectively of these systems is sufficient for their implementation in ITS.

## 6. Feature Work

The first of the three questions that necessitate definition is the definition of the ought to to advance the Clearview project and six characteristics that could improve the project concerns and relevance. More enhancement is also feasible through the enhancement of the climate of the locality, the frequency of automobiles within a specific time frame, and the velocity of the conveyances. On the basis of this idea, one can further introduce corrections to the used applied deep learning algorithms and to the presented approaches in order to raise the degree of discoverability precision and the speed of the goal's attainment. Real time information from traffic and weather cameras, radio broadcasters, and gadgets are placed in vehicles will be used as live feeds to the models to make actual working models. Interventions relating to geospatial analysis mechanisms will advancing the traffic congestion of the indicators as well as the means of flow management. Therefore, to enhance the traffic control and reduce the percentage of accidents, the analysis of novel algorithms of traffic sorting and real-time assessment of strange behavior will be carried out. Since the graphical user interface of the system will improve, the complex techniques of data visualization will assist the stakeholders in analyzing the results deeply. It is possible to tackle the issue of integration of big data and appellate the existence of a prospect for the augmentation of its range of utilization across different spheres. Thus, with the help of cooperation with the transport departments and authorities, it is possible to raise the effectiveness of implementing the certain type of system and its adaptation into the existing transport system. Hence, the last aspect is to evaluate where the effectiveness of the system and changes in it have been in regard to the feedback of the users and the development in technology.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper describes the formation of the Clearview project where the YOLOv4 and SSD algorithms for the identification of traffic signals and license plates in real-time on Android devices are utilized. The preprocessing step is to apply image dehazing with DehazeGAN, visibility enhancement under various worse weather condition, and higher detection rate. The powerful detection part of the system is formed by YOLOv4, which provides very high speed and fine granularity of detection, and SSD, which is focused on object localization. Such measures of effectiveness as detection rates and time, estimated for the models, justify their reliability and speed. This project can be of immense benefit in offering key pointers to transport offices in the management of traffic and law enforcement, hence enhancing safety on the road. The further development activity would be set on refining the feature engineering process, introducing real-time data processing into the system, as well as raising sophistication of the detection models in order to gain further optimality of the system and its capability to accommodate more users.

## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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