

Revisiting Generalizability in Deepfake Detection: Improving Metrics and Stabilizing Transfer

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Abstract

"Generalizability" is seen as the hallmark quality of a good deepfake detection model. However, standard out-ofdomain evaluation datasets are very similar in form to the training data and lag behind the advancements in modern synthesis methods, making them highly insufficient metrics for robustness. We extend the study of transfer performance of three state-of-the-art methods (that use spatial, temporal, and lip-reading features respectively) on four newer fake types released within the last year. Depending on the artifact modes they were trained on, detection methods fail in different scenarios. On diffusion fakes, the aforementioned methods get 96%, 75%, and 51% AUC respectively, whereas on talking-head fakes, the same methods get 80%, 99%, and 92% AUC. We compare various methods of combining spatial and temporal modalities through joint training and feature fusion in order to stabilize generalization performance.

We also propose a new, randomized algorithm to synthesize videos that emulate diverse, visually apparent artifacts with implausibilities in human facial-structure. By testing deepfake detectors on highly randomized artifacts, we can measure the level to which detection networks have learned a strong model for "reality", as opposed to memorizing subtle artifact patterns.

1. Introduction

Deepfakes are artificially generated videos of humans, created using deep neural network-based generators. While these videos are often visually impressive, their potential for deception and misuse is significant [53]. The threat of deep-fake videos has prompted significant research into techniques for detection, which often involves training bi-



Figure 1. Artifacts can manifest very differently depending on the type of deepfake. Notice that the Face-Swap fake (left) from [27] has a discolored spot on the right cheek, which can be detected with a typical spatial classifier. While the frame-level quality of the 3D-motion driven fake [8] is high, temporal detection methods with strong attention mechanisms between adjacent frames should be able to pick up the sudden change in shape of the highlighted hair strand. The diffusion synthesized video [41] has an unnatural blotting of the shadow under the left nostril across two frames.

nary classifiers to detect manipulated image sequences on a large set of deep-fakes and measuring their performance on various benchmarks. While one can trivially achieve good results on the training set using out-of-the-box image and video classification models (such as XceptionNets, ResNets, and EfficientNets) [38], achieving good generalization when evaluating on deep-fakes and other types of manipulation that are outside the training domain is considerably more challenging [20, 23]. To overcome this, recent methods introduce inductive biases by restricting the training architecture to features along a single modality [60, 13] or patch-wise constraints [10] to prevent the network from picking up on easy-to-detect artifacts that are specific to the deep-fakes in the training dataset. This is a counterintuitive result: one would imagine that accessing multiple cues and artifact modes would yield superior generalization capabilities; yet, leading detection methods only generalize when they abandon certain detection modes entirely [60, 40]. When artifacts get sparse, overly relying on handpicked cues has its costs. Newer fakes, for example, can be produced by neurally rendering the image from scratch, rather than modifying a target video on a pixel-level using face-swap and warping, without the distributional inconsistencies between the inside and the outside of the face that existing detectors rely on [57] [5].

We conduct evaluations of state-of-the-art detection methods on four such newer, neural rendering deep-fake creation methods [41, 8, 11, 54] along with the common high quality benchmark in Celeb-DF [28], and find that methods can perform well on one fake type and fail dramatically on another. We showcase the variance in artifact modes using anecdotal examples from our proposed evaluation suite in Figure 1. We explore the complementarity of the spatial and temporal modalities as a means to stabilize generalization performance across a variety of fakes in Section 5. Importantly, we note that since prior works have not handcrafted their methods with the fakes from our evaluation-suite in mind, the results in our paper act as a legitimate *test-set* record of how state-of-the-art methods generalize to unseen manipulation types [41, 8, 11, 54].

Still, as such creation methods get incorporated into out-of-domain evaluation datasets, it is possible to design newer inductive biases that can saturate performance on these benchmarks too. Towards this, we propose the use of a *simulated generalizability evaluation* (*SGE*), where we simulate spatial and temporal deepfake artifacts in videos of human faces with a Markov process. We argue that a sufficiently generalizable detection method should be able to identify these artifacts, since they reflect implausibilities in facial structures that can accompany unseen manipulation types. Our design of *SGEs* is modeled off prior work [40, 23] that use synthetic data to train deepfake detectors, but with modifications to produce richer temporal artifacts and spatial localization.

2. Related Work: Deepfake Synthesis

2.1. Facial Retargetting

Synthesizing deepfakes has historically been formulated as a face retargetting problem. Early methods used alpha and poisson blending schemes to replace the pixels in the target image [49]. Eventually, to deal with pose and posture in the target video, Thies *et al.* adopted explicit 3D models or texture maps to estimate facial motion from RGB video and transfer it to a target face [45, 44]. The landscape for facial retargetting changed dramatically with generative models such as GANs that reapplied similar ideas from previous facial retargetting and face-swap methods using an adversarial classifier for hyperrealism [21] [34] [32]. Li *et al.* developed *FaceShifter* to incorporate the crucial lighting details of the scene into facial retargetting to enhance the realism of the rendered videos [22]. *Wav2Lip* changes the formulation of the facial retargetting, conditioning on an input audio sequence, rather than facial movement, to get around structural differences between the source and target [35].

2.2. Neural Rendering

Recently, neural rendering-based deepfakes have become a popular way to generate deepfakes with fewer artifacts. While these methods are still conditioned on pose or input audio, they do not modify a target video sequence to produce the deepfake. These methods use generative models and volumetric representations to render the video sequence from scratch. Recently, Shen *et al.* and Stypulkowski *et al.* use denoising diffusion models to auto-regressively sample frames of the target speaker conditioned on source audio and a single image [39, 41]. Other methods use normalizing-flows [47], and GANs to do motion-transfer, also using a single target image [54, 46]. *MegaPortraits* uses super-resolution networks to generate particularly high resolution talking heads [8].

Recent work has shown that hybrid graphics pipelines too, potentially including the use of 3D models, also allow for more realistic facial expressions and movements [43]. Ji *et al.* and Gurunani *et al.* decompose the audio-conditioned generation problem into predicting facial landmark trajectories, and then rendering them with either a neural transfer or computer graphics model [18] [11]. Liu *et al.* [30] use Neural Radiance Fields to train implicit representation networks for each scene. Due to their novelty, neural rendering methods have not been represented in deepfake detection datasets. This can be a problem in measuring generalizability of detection methods, since their artifact modes diverge significantly from facial-retargetting methods.

3. Related Work: Deep-fake Detection

3.1. Detection: Early Approaches

While supervised face-forgery detection methods initially focused on relatively shallow convolutional neural networks [2, 1], works such as [12, 33, 56, 31, 38, 58, 61, 33, 37, 50] found success training unconstrained deep end-to-end networks that implicitly learn to detect low-level textural artifacts. These methods have now been shown to be highly unstable, with dramatic drops in performance on unseen fake types [4], video compression and perturbations [13], as well as adversarial attacks [17].

3.2. Detection Methods Today

Recent work has stepped away from training models end-to-end without constraints on their representational capacity. High-level semantic methods have shown superior generalization abilities compared to low-level techniques, with some of the best performance on highly compressed videos. They focus on specific features such as blinking and head pose [55, 19, 25], biological and neural patterns [51, 16], and the readability of lip-movements (Lip-Forensics) [13]. Among these, LipForensics achieves strong generalization performance and is considered a benchmark for measuring face-forgery detection methods. They use a frozen lipreading network as an encoder, which they feed into a temporal classification head. Prashnani et al. use the same architecture, but replace RGB lip-region inputs with hand-crafted frequency-domain features [36]. Zheng et al. [60] observe that temporal inconsistencies in generators are more transferable between manipulation-types than spatial artifacts, and modify the convolutional kernel size of 3D ResNet-50 to 1x1 along the spatial axes. Another recent method, Guan et al. [10], uses a modified version of a vision transformer [7], analyzing temporal inconsistencies along independent 16x16 patch sequences.

3.3. Training on Synthetic Data

In parallel, there has been an effort to increase the diversity of the training set by augmenting or replacing the training-set fakes entirely with fake emulation schemes. Li et al. [26] reproduces face warping artifacts that appear on GAN-fakes, whereas [24, 59] focus on source-target blending region artifacts associated most commonly with faceswaps. [40] modifies these algorithms to produce selfblended images that use a single-image as both the source and the target. It outperforms state-of-the-art supervised methods on uncompressed fakes and cross-dataset generalization. This method, however, is purely image-based and could suffer dramatically when conditions around blendingboundaries in manipulations reduce (See Figure 5). Further, it does not consider temporal or multi-modal inconsistencies that can be valuable signal for even better generalization.

4. Improving Generalizability Metrics

4.1. Methods being Evaluated

We evaluate the following state-of-the-art methods with publicly available code-bases:

 Temporal: Zheng *et al.* [60] use a 3D Res-Net 50 [14], and modify it to reduce the spatial kernel to a 1x1. This is then received by multi-layer transformer network [48] with the class token as proposed in [6]. The class token is then linearly projected to predict the final logit.

- 2. **Self-Blended Images**: Shiohara *et al.* train an EfficientNet-b4 [42] on a synthetic image blending scheme using Sharpness-Aware Minimization, a second-order optimization method [40].
- 3. **Lip-Forensics** Haliassos *et al.* [13] use a frozen ResNet-18 [15] pre-trained on lip-reading, and feed it to a MS-TCN based temporal classification head [9]. This is designed to capture unnatural movement in the lip-region.

4.2. Higher Quality Deepfakes

Typical generalizability paradigms involve training on four fakes types in the FaceForensics++ [38], and are then measured on standard datasets such as DFDC [3], FFIW [62], or Celeb-DFv2[29]. However, solely using these datasets to measure out of domain robustness is not sufficient since they are predominantly comprised of facialretargetting deepfakes which are similar in domain to the training fakes, even if they come from different generators.

Further, since these datasets have existed for a while, one runs the risk of "overfitting to the metric". It is possible that the handcrafted methods that measure to be generalizable are relying on a single artifact mode that is shared between the the training domain and out-of-domain datasets. To test this hypothesis, we re-evaluate transfer accuracy by complementing the Celeb-DFv2 dataset with four other unseen manipulation types that are released within the last year.

We detail the manipulation types below:

1. Face-Swap (2020)

We use 340 samples from test set of Celeb-DFv2 [27] to evaluate *generalizability* on Face-Swap fakes. The fakes are generated using an undisclosed Deep-Fake algorithm with additional post-processing to remove otherwise clearly visible color and frequency related artifacts. The results from our re-evaluation are on Figure 2.

2. MegaPortraits (2022)

We use 48 samples from the test-set output of the method from [8]. This method transfers the expression from the source video onto a target image. To encode the appearance of the target frame [8] predict volumetric features, a global descriptor, and an appearance encoder. In parallel, they predict the motion representations from the driving video, including head motions and latent descriptors. This in turn outputs a 3D warping operations that map the current expression to a canonical space, and then re-warp it into the target expression. Figure 3 plots the logit distribution of state-of-the-art methods on this synthesis method.



Figure 2. Logit Distribution on Face-Swap Fakes: We use a fixed bin width histogram to plot the predicted logit distribution $(\ln \frac{P_{\text{fake}}}{1-P_{\text{fake}}})$ using the models from [60], [40], and [13] and the fake-set from [29]. AUC scores are parenthesized for reference.



Figure 3. Logit Distribution on Mega-Portrait Fakes: We use a fixed bin width histogram to plot the predicted logit distribution $(\ln \frac{P_{\text{fake}}}{1-P_{\text{fake}}})$ using the models from [60], [40], and [13] and the fake-set from [8]. AUC scores are parenthesized for reference.

3. Diffusion (2023)

Diffusion methods originally popularized for text-toimage-synthesis have been successfully repurposed for talking head generation. Stypulkowski *et al.* uses an auto-regressive diffusion model that samples frames conditioned on input audio and an image of the target speaker [41]. The results from evaluating on 820 test-set outputs are in Figure 4.

4. Speech Conditioned Face-Vid2Vid (2022)

Face-Vid2Vid was originally proposed by [52], where they synthesize a talking-head video using the target



Figure 4. Logit Distribution on Diffusion Fakes: We use a fixed bin width histogram to plot the predicted logit distribution $(\ln \frac{P_{\text{fake}}}{1-P_{\text{fake}}})$ using the models from [60], [40], and [13] and the fake-set from [41]. AUC scores are parenthesized for reference.

person's appearance and a driving video. Gurunani *et al.* extend this [11] to be speech conditioned by predicting target landmarks using an LSTM before *Face-Vid2Vid* renders them from projected latents. We evaluate on 100 sample videos (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Logit Distribution on Face-Vid2Vid Fakes: We use a fixed bin width histogram to plot the predicted logit distribution $(\ln \frac{P_{\text{fake}}}{1-P_{\text{fake}}})$ using the models from [60], [40], and [13] and the fake-set from [11]. AUC scores are parenthesized for reference.

5. AniFaceGAN (2022)

AniFaceGAN is an animatable 3D-aware GAN for multi-view consistent face animation generation [54]. They explicitly formulate deformation fields to synthesize an input image using driving facial motion.

We evaluate detection methods on 112 samples and plot logit histograms in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Logit Distribution on AniFaceGAN Fakes: We use a fixed bin width histogram to plot the predicted logit distribution $(\ln \frac{P_{\text{fake}}}{1-P_{\text{fake}}})$ using the models from [60], [40], and [13] and the fake-set from [54]. AUC scores are parenthesized for reference.

4.3. Simulated Generalizability Evaluation

We propose the use of a *simulated generalizability evaluation* (*SGE*), where we simulate spatial and temporal deepfake artifacts using a randomized algorithm. These artifacts reflect implausibilities in facial structures that can accompany unseen manipulation types can be detected with a human eye. We detail the process of generating *SGEs* below:

• Let M be a binary mask representing the sub-region of a face in a given frame of a video. To generate a synthetic training sample, we apply a random affine transform θ_M to M to obtain a distorted mask M'. Similarly, we apply a random affine transform θ_I to the entire frame I and blend the resulting image I' with the original image I using M' as the blending mask:

$$M' = \text{Distort} \circ \text{Affine}(M; \theta_M)$$
$$I' = (M' \odot \text{Distort} \circ \text{Affine}(I; \theta_I)) + ((1 - M') \odot I)$$

where \odot denotes element-wise multiplication.

 Note that, we also post-process masks and images with separate constant distortion operations to the mask as well as the images in the entire frame sequence. For the mask, this involves a combination of feathering of the borders and an elastic distortion, whereas for the image, only an elastic distortion is randomly used.

• To produce a synthetic video, we repeat this process for each subsequent frame of the video, with the twist that the parameters for the random affine transform are chosen to stay the same with probability p, or to be randomly re-selected with probability (1 - p). Additionally, with probability q, we do not blend the next frame and instead use the actual image I_{t+1} as is. In other words, if $\theta_M^{(t)}$ and $\theta_I^{(t)}$ represent the affine transforms applied to the mask and image respectively, for the *t*-th frame, then we have:

$$\boldsymbol{\theta}_{M}^{(t)} = \begin{cases} \boldsymbol{\theta}_{M}^{(t-1)}, & \text{w.p. } p \\ \text{Rand} \boldsymbol{\theta}_{M}(), & \text{w.p. } (1-p) \end{cases}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\theta}_{I}^{(t)} = \begin{cases} \boldsymbol{\theta}_{I}^{(t-1)}, & \text{w.p. } p \\ \text{Rand} \boldsymbol{\theta}_{I}(), & \text{w.p. } (1-p) \end{cases}$$

• While such a set-up emulates sudden flickering artifacts well, it is not well suited to smoother changes over time. In order to reproduce those artifacts, we post-process with an additional randomization of sometimes linearly interpolating between affine transformation matrices. Figure 7 shows a sample rollout from our *SGE* method.

5. Stabilizing Generalizability Performance with Multi-modal Detection

5.1. Spatio-Temporal Detection

An observable outcome of the potpourri of hand-crafted training methods is that *generalizability* is not just a scalar metric. Depending on which set of manipulated fakes you evaluate on, vastly different detection methods outperform one another or fail inexplicably. We hypothesize that a single spatio-temporal architecture can achieve more uniform transfer performance since it has access to more artifact modes. However, this is not a trivial task, since large spatio-temporal networks broadly to tend to overfit on dataset-specific artifacts. We analyze if it is possible to get the best of both words with intermediate and late fusion schemes. We describe the architectures below, with illustrations in Figure 8.

1. **Joint Training**: We modify the architecture from [60], by restoring the spatial kernel size from the original 3D Res-Net architecture [14]. We then concatenate a learnable class token along the time axis and add



Figure 7. A sample rollout from our *SGE* evaluation method. The frames with the red border are manipulated. Notice that artifacts can range from subtle to highly visible: in the second frame there is a slight change in eye position in a way that is inconsistent with previous frames. A generalizable detector should be able to pick up on these randomized artifacts, since the glitch in the sub-mask could not have been plausible in a real human video.



Figure 8. **Spatio-Temporal Architectures:** We illustrate our ablations for combining spatial and temporal features above. We pre-train the spatial and temporal encoders on self-blended images and on FF++ respectively.

	FF++	CDF [29]	V2V* [11]	MP* [8]	DIFF* [41]	GAN* [54]	SGE*	AVG
SBI + EfficientNet-b4 [40]	100.0	89.6	80.1	99.3	96.5	97.2	94.0	92.8
Lip Forensics [13]	100.0	82.4	92.3	17.8	50.6	98.6	93.2	68.3
Temporal (FTCN) [60]	99.9	86.5	99.9	77.1	75.0	83.7	88.0	85.0
LTTD [10]	100.0	89.3	-	-	-	-	-	89.3
<i>Joint S-T (#1)</i>	99.9	47.2	88.6	84.5	49.5	54.6	22.1	57.8
S-T Intermediate Fusion (#2)	99.9	78.2	90.0	85.0	55.6	59.0	71.2	64.1
S-T Ensemble (#3)	99.9	90.7	99.9	81.0	93.9	87.9	94.0	91.2
S-T Late Fusion (#4)	99.9	89.8	99.9	97.9	99.4	93.4	93.7	95.7

Table 1. **AUC Scores when Evaluating SOTA Methods**: The categories with the asterisk are our proposed evaluation metrics. Methods in italics are our spatio-temporal fusion methods. [10] was not evaluated since the codebase was not publicly available and we were not able to reproduce their results with our own code. We also note the limitation that *SGE* is only an upper-bound metric for generalizability, since it is possible for a classifier to achieve high classification performance on algorithmically generated psuedo-fakes, but fail to classify fakes generated by a deep-network. This appears to be the case for [13], which performs well on *SGE*, but poorly on *MegaPortraits* for instance.

a learnable positional embedding. Then, we linearly project the classification token to compute the classification logits.

- 2. Intermediate-Fusion We combine two Res-Net encoders, one with convolutions only along the spatial axes, and another with convolutions only along the temporal axis. These encodings are then projected into a shared latent space with per-modality encoders, and an asymmetric channel-wise dropout scheme. The full-token dropout prevents the network from binding to a specific artifact from a single modality. Finally, once the features are in the same latent space, we add shared learnable positional embeddings. The aforementioned transformer decoder learns to combine features from each modality, and outputs the target logits. We freeze the encoders after pre-training.
- 3. **Independent Training (Ensemble)** We ensemble the independently trained methods from [60] and [40] with equal weight.
- 4. Late-Fusion We freeze the methods from [60] and [40], and project the final embedding vectors from both methods with a three-layer perceptron. To prevent the classifier from picking up on only one of the modalities, we employ a paired modality dropout, i.e. when predicting on fakes we replace a modality input with the corresponding real video with a certain probability. We freeze the spatial and temporal encoders after pre-training on self-blended images and FF++ HQ.

5.2. Analysis

Our results in 1 show that the best performance overall was attained by the late-fusion model. Unlike the single modality detection methods, our late fusion method generalizes universally across fake types, either performing the highest or comparable to the highest AUC score on all fake types. We hypothesize that poor generalization performance in setups 1 and 2 were caused by direct spatial supervision. Prior works [10] conduct experiments describing how training on deepfake datasets with strong convolutions allows deep-fake detectors to cheat by picking subtle, unseen artifacts, rather than generalizable cues. Since the spatial encoder was frozen till the very last layer in setup 4, and we included modality dropout to prevent overfitting to purely the spatial domain, this method of combining did not suffer from the same generalizability issues. Overall, we show that relatively simple adjustments to existing methods can help existing methods generalize better out-of-domain.

The results in table 1 also generally support the validity of our simulated generalizability evaluation (*SGE*) method. Methods with higher *SGE* scores tend to also have high average evaluation score across the five out-of-domain SOTA methods considered.

6. Implementation Details

We first pre-process all videos by clipping into segments of 32 frames, then find the smallest square region that contains the face, and cropped with a static camera. We perform all training experiments using the train and validation sets from *Face Forensics*++ (HQ compression). For evaluations of other methods, we consult the pre-processing steps from their code-bases. When computing prediction logits, we average prediction probabilities for all clips in the video. We use the real set from Celeb-DFv2 [29] for all our evaluations.

For our spatio-temporal experiments in Section 5, we train using Adam Optimizer and a fixed learning rate (0.001) chosen with grid-search on a validation set. We continue training for as many epochs as necessary until the validation loss does not significantly decrease for five consecutive epochs. All reported results are measured on the same out-of-sample test set as prior methods.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we introduce a new evaluation benchmark for measuring generalizability on a modern, more diverse set of deepfakes. We also evaluate the state-of-the-art methods on our new benchmarks and identify multi-modal architectures to mitigate the variance that comes with highly handcrafted detection methods. We are releasing this evaluation set, along with the code for *SGE* to encourage further research in using randomized artifacts to improve generalizability metrics.

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