

Supplementary Material: Self-Supervised Effective Resolution Estimation with Adversarial Augmentations

Manuel Kansy^{1,2} *, Julian Balletshofer², Jacek Naruniec², Christopher Schroers², Graziana Mignone², Markus Gross^{1,2}, and Romann M. Weber²

¹Department of Computer Science, ETH Zurich, ²DisneyResearch|Studios, Zurich
{manuel.kansy, grossm}@inf.ethz.ch, {<first name>.<last name>}@disneyresearch.com

1. Training details and hyperparameters

Our network consists of a ResNet50 [3] pretrained on ImageNet [1] as a backbone, followed by an average pooling and a fully connected layer with no activation function to get a single output. During inference, we clip the output to $[0, 1]$. We use a batch size of 4 patches but accumulate the gradients to simulate a batch size of 512 to stabilize the training process. We train the model for 10 epochs with the Adam [7] optimizer and a learning rate of 10^{-3} that is decayed by a factor of 0.9 every epoch. Training takes around one or two days on a TITAN X GPU. To determine the best model, we use a validation data set constructed similarly to the evaluation data but smaller and with fewer test subjects. As a loss function, we use mean absolute percentage error (MAPE).

We calculate face masks using an implementation [20] of a modified BiSeNet [17]. The following classes are considered background during masking: *background*, *neck*, *neck_l*, *cloth*, *hat*, and *invalid*. To generate training samples, we sample the downscaling factor uniformly in $[\frac{1}{16}, 1]$ and the interpolation method uniformly from: *area*, *bicubic*, *bilinear*, *gaussian*, *lanczos3*, *lanczos5*, *mittchellcubic*, and *nearest neighbor*. For 10% of the samples, we do not perform downscaling, so that the network sees images without synthetic degradations sometimes. To be more robust to different face sizes, we prescale the training images to a random resolution in $[384, 2048]$ for 80% of the samples, adjusting the regression target y accordingly. Afterwards, we extract patches of size 256×256 (or 128×128) with a patch stride of 128 and a random start offset. Patches that contain less than 50% foreground pixels are filtered out during training.

To generate adversarial augmentations, we use projected gradient descent (PGD) attacks [10] with 10 PGD steps of size 30 in the L_2 norm (where the image values are in the range $[0, 255]$). We further project the adversarial noise to the L_∞ ball of size 10 to avoid any large changes of the input image that could affect the perceived sharpness. We perform regular and adversarial training steps at the same frequency and weigh them equally for the loss.

During inference, we calculate the patch stride dynamically to obtain about 100 patches per image. We then filter out patches that contain less than 90% foreground. Lastly, we take the median of the patch scores as final output.

Table 1 lists the hyperparameters used in the paper.

*Corresponding author.

| Hyperparameter | Value |
|--|--|
| <u>Model parameters</u> | |
| Backbone | ResNet50 [3] |
| Final activation function | None / linear |
| Pretraining | ImageNet [1] |
| <u>Training parameters</u> | |
| Number of epochs | 10 |
| Batch size (real) | 4 16 |
| Batch size (simulated through gradient accumulation) | 512 |
| <u>Loss parameters</u> | |
| Loss function | Mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) |
| Optimizer | Adam [7] with $\beta_1 = 0.9$, $\beta_2 = 0.999$, and $\epsilon = 10^{-8}$ |
| Learning rate | 10^{-3} with staircase decay factor 0.9 every epoch |
| <u>Adversarial noise parameters</u> | |
| Ratio number of regular vs. adversarial training steps | 1 |
| Ratio weight of regular vs. adversarial training step losses | 1 |
| Method for generating adversarial noise | Projected gradient descent (PGD) |
| Number of PGD steps | 10 |
| Step size | $L_2 = 30$ 15 |
| Epsilon ball to project to after each step | $L_\infty = 10$ |
| Random initialization within epsilon ball | False |
| Range of values to clip perturbed images | [0, 255] |
| <u>Preprocessing parameters</u> | |
| Patch size | 256×256 128×128 |
| Patch stride | 128 |
| Use random patch offset when generating patches | True |
| Background masking | True |
| Minimum foreground percentage | 50% |
| Interpolation methods | area, bicubic, bilinear, gaussian, lanczos3, lanczos5, mitchellcubic, nearest neighbor |
| Interpolation sampling | Uniform |
| Maximum downscale factor df_m | 16 |
| Downscale factor sampling | Uniform ($\frac{1}{df_m}$, 1) |
| Range prescale height | [384, 2048] [256, 2048] |
| Prescaling frequency | 80% |
| Downscaling frequency | 90% |
| Use antialiasing for downscaling | True |
| <u>Postprocessing parameters</u> | |
| Number of patches | 100 |
| Background masking | True |
| Minimum foreground percentage | 90% |
| Patch score aggregation | Median |

Table 1. List of hyperparameters and their corresponding values. If multiple values are listed, the value left of | refers to patch size 256×256 and the value right of | to patch size 128×128 .

2. Comparison with state-of-the-art methods for unmasked images

Table 2 shows the results of the state-of-the-art methods with unmasked evaluation images. Note that the performance of most methods degrades tremendously for generated images, likely due to the strong and unnatural background degradations occurring in them. Classical approaches (such as Δ DOM [8]) suffer especially from this whereas deep learning approaches handle unmasked images fairly well. Similar to the masked evaluation, our method outperforms all other methods by more than 2%.

| Method Type | Method | Generated | | Real | | All | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | | SRCC \uparrow | PRA \uparrow | SRCC \uparrow | PRA \uparrow | SRCC \uparrow | PRA \uparrow |
| Baselines | Frequency baseline | -0.0965 | 0.4907 | 0.7305 | 0.7795 | 0.3170 | 0.6351 |
| | Compression baseline | -0.1106 | 0.4850 | 0.6121 | 0.7128 | 0.2508 | 0.5989 |
| Classic general | BRISQUE [11] | 0.1288 | 0.5678 | 0.5561 | 0.7091 | 0.3424 | 0.6385 |
| | NIQE [12] | 0.5030 | 0.6790 | 0.6985 | 0.7671 | 0.6008 | 0.7230 |
| | IL-NIQE [18] | 0.5152 | 0.6990 | 0.4636 | 0.6959 | 0.4894 | 0.6974 |
| Deep learning general | NIMA [15] | 0.5848 | 0.7020 | 0.4606 | 0.6518 | 0.5227 | 0.6769 |
| | PaQ-2-PiQ [16] | 0.5652 | 0.7207 | 0.7455 | 0.8090 | 0.6553 | 0.7648 |
| | DB-CNN [19] | 0.4909 | 0.7175 | 0.7273 | 0.7864 | 0.6091 | 0.7520 |
| | MUSIQ (PaQ-2-PiQ) [6, 16] | <u>0.8803</u> | <u>0.8806</u> | <u>0.8667</u> | <u>0.8716</u> | <u>0.8735</u> | <u>0.8761</u> |
| | MUSIQ (SPAQ) [6, 2] | 0.5288 | 0.7102 | 0.8015 | 0.8195 | 0.6652 | 0.7649 |
| | MUSIQ (KonIQ-10k) [6, 4] | <u>0.8318</u> | <u>0.8469</u> | 0.8576 | 0.8635 | <u>0.8447</u> | <u>0.8552</u> |
| Classic blur-specific | CPBD [13] | -0.2894 | 0.4312 | 0.2288 | 0.5857 | -0.0303 | 0.5084 |
| | Δ DOM [8] | 0.4500 | 0.6781 | 0.7833 | 0.8051 | 0.6167 | 0.7416 |
| Deep learning blur-specific | SFA [9] | 0.6500 | 0.7385 | 0.8045 | 0.8209 | 0.7273 | 0.7797 |
| | MT-A [2] | 0.5500 | 0.7139 | 0.8394 | 0.8490 | 0.6947 | 0.7815 |
| | KonIQ++ [14] | 0.7015 | 0.7786 | 0.9242 | 0.9127 | 0.8129 | 0.8457 |
| Ours | Ours (patch size 256) | 0.8985 | 0.9091 | <u>0.8970</u> | <u>0.8845</u> | 0.8977 | 0.8968 |
| Ground truth | Mean | 0.9407 | 0.9250 | 0.9466 | 0.9317 | 0.9436 | 0.9284 |
| | Standard deviation | 0.0256 | 0.0213 | 0.0186 | 0.0178 | 0.0172 | 0.0151 |

Table 2. Evaluation results (unmasked). SRCC denotes the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, and PRA denotes the pairwise ranking accuracy. The best score per column is marked in bold, the second- and third-best are underlined.

3. Complete ablation study

Table 3 shows the complete ablation of the most important training parameters. Note that all ablations are based on patch size 256×256 because it resulted in the best validation performance and allows to visualize the adversarial noise better than a patch size of 128×128 .

| Category | Setting | Generated | | Real | | All | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | | SRCC \uparrow | PRA \uparrow | SRCC \uparrow | PRA \uparrow | SRCC \uparrow | PRA \uparrow |
| Training data set | One person | 0.7697 | 0.8070 | 0.8864 | 0.8822 | 0.8280 | 0.8446 |
| | Small | 0.8652 | 0.8721 | 0.8955 | 0.8844 | 0.8803 | 0.8783 |
| | Adding blurry images | 0.9076 | 0.9004 | 0.8970 | 0.8787 | 0.9023 | 0.8896 |
| | Subset of FFHQ [5] | 0.9242 | 0.9176 | 0.8864 | 0.8672 | 0.9053 | 0.8924 |
| Adversarial method | None | -0.1606 | 0.4494 | 0.5773 | 0.7036 | 0.2083 | 0.5765 |
| | Step size $L_2 = 3$ (* / 10) | 0.9500 | 0.9263 | 0.8258 | 0.8394 | 0.8879 | 0.8828 |
| | Step size $L_2 = 300$ (* · 10) | 0.8000 | 0.8442 | 0.8197 | 0.8175 | 0.8098 | 0.8309 |
| | Clip to $L_\infty = 1$ (* / 10) | 0.8894 | 0.8810 | 0.8530 | 0.8578 | 0.8712 | 0.8694 |
| | Clip to $L_\infty = 100$ (* · 10) | 0.9121 | 0.9062 | <u>0.9045</u> | <u>0.8902</u> | 0.9083 | <u>0.8982</u> |
| | FGSM 1 $L_\infty = 0.05$ step | <u>0.9470</u> | <u>0.9231</u> | 0.6955 | 0.7508 | 0.8212 | 0.8370 |
| | FGSM 1 $L_\infty = 0.5$ step | <u>0.9364</u> | 0.9177 | 0.7955 | 0.8253 | 0.8659 | 0.8715 |
| | PGD 10 $L_\infty = 0.005$ steps | 0.9303 | 0.9119 | 0.6182 | 0.7259 | 0.7742 | 0.8189 |
| | PGD 10 $L_\infty = 0.05$ steps | 0.8667 | 0.8777 | 0.8833 | 0.8725 | 0.8750 | 0.8751 |
| | PGD 10 $L_\infty = 0.5$ steps | 0.8545 | 0.8726 | 0.8500 | 0.8535 | 0.8523 | 0.8631 |
| Unmasked | Unmasked training | 0.8379 | 0.8751 | 0.8894 | 0.8729 | 0.8636 | 0.8740 |
| | Unmasked inference | 0.9258 | 0.9091 | 0.9000 | 0.8817 | <u>0.9129</u> | 0.8954 |
| | Unmasked training + inference | 0.8985 | 0.9091 | 0.8970 | 0.8845 | 0.8977 | 0.8968 |
| Pre-processing | Only bicubic interp. | 0.9076 | 0.9064 | 0.9030 | 0.8848 | 0.9053 | 0.8956 |
| | Only nearest neighbor interp. | 0.7567 | 0.1108 | 0.7434 | 0.7916 | 0.7461 | 0.4512 |
| | W/o nearest neighbor interp. | 0.9091 | 0.9093 | 0.8894 | 0.8703 | 0.8992 | 0.8898 |
| | Max downscale factor 8 (* / 2) | 0.9091 | 0.9032 | 0.8470 | 0.8498 | 0.8780 | 0.8765 |
| | Max downscale factor 32 (* · 2) | 0.8364 | 0.8608 | 0.9258 | 0.9161 | 0.8811 | 0.8885 |
| | W/o prescaling | 0.8939 | 0.8805 | <u>0.9106</u> | <u>0.9023</u> | 0.9023 | 0.8914 |
| | Foreground 10% (* - 40%) | 0.9333 | <u>0.9232</u> | 0.8864 | 0.8731 | <u>0.9098</u> | <u>0.8981</u> |
| | Foreground 90% (* + 40%) | 0.9212 | 0.9091 | 0.8833 | 0.8641 | 0.9023 | 0.8866 |
| Post-processing | Mean | 0.9167 | 0.9007 | 0.8970 | 0.8787 | 0.9068 | 0.8897 |
| | Foreground 10% (* - 80%) | 0.9167 | 0.9007 | 0.8682 | 0.8576 | 0.8924 | 0.8791 |
| | Foreground 50% (* - 40%) | 0.9242 | 0.9120 | 0.8939 | 0.8810 | 0.9091 | 0.8965 |
| Model | W/o pretraining | 0.8258 | 0.8439 | 0.8955 | 0.8779 | 0.8606 | 0.8609 |
| Loss function | MAE | 0.8924 | 0.8834 | 0.8682 | 0.8675 | 0.8803 | 0.8755 |
| | MSE | 0.8121 | 0.8406 | 0.8606 | 0.8611 | 0.8364 | 0.8509 |
| | MSLE | 0.8500 | 0.8633 | 0.8318 | 0.8314 | 0.8409 | 0.8473 |
| Optimization | W/o gradient accumulation | 0.8712 | 0.8976 | 0.8697 | 0.8702 | 0.8705 | 0.8839 |
| | W/o learning rate decay | 0.9227 | 0.9119 | 0.8924 | 0.8698 | 0.9076 | 0.8908 |
| Ours | Ours (patch size 256) | 0.9258 | 0.9120 | <u>0.9045</u> | 0.8847 | 0.9152 | 0.8984 |

Table 3. Ablation study results (complete). SRCC denotes the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, and PRA denotes the pairwise ranking accuracy. The best score per column is marked in bold, the second- and third-best are underlined. * indicates the value of the parameter in “Ours (patch size 256)”.

Training data set

Refer to the main paper for a discussion about the effects of the training data set.

Adversarial method

Refer to the main paper for a discussion about the effects of not using adversarial augmentations or having too small / large L_2 steps when generating the adversarial noise.

Similar to the step size, clipping the adversarial noise to a given L_∞ ball can be used to control the strength of the adversarial noise, where the noise must be sufficiently strong to make the model robust but not too strong where it changes the perceived sharpness of a training image significantly. Since the adversarial noise is also constrained by the step size, the influence of the L_∞ ball clipping parameter is rather small.

When performing projected gradient descent (PGD) steps in the L_∞ norm rather than the L_2 norm, the best results are obtained when performing 10 PGD steps with $L_\infty = 0.05$. Taking only a single, but 10 times larger, step using the fast gradient sign method (FGSM) leads to only slightly worse results but speeds up the training tremendously. We hypothesize that adversarial augmentations with L_2 steps are more effective than L_∞ steps because it enables the noise to change some pixel regions (*e.g.* edges) more than others (*e.g.* uniformly colored regions). This can also be seen in Figures 6 and 7.

Unmasked

Refer to the main paper for a discussion about the effects of not masking out the background during training and/or inference.

Preprocessing

Refer to the main paper for a discussion about the effects of using only bicubic or only nearest neighbor interpolation during training. Interestingly, while the experiment using only nearest neighbor interpolation suggests that the domain gap between the blocky nearest neighbor artifacts and real degradations is too large, removing nearest neighbor (and area) interpolation during training also degrades the performance slightly, even more than if only using bicubic interpolation (likely by chance).

There is a trade-off for the maximum downscale factor to create training samples. A larger factor leads to relatively better results on the real images whereas a smaller factor leads to relatively better results on generated images. A downscaling factor of 16 (default setting) leads to the most balanced and best overall performance.

Changing other preprocessing settings such as not prescaling images during training (prescaling should make the model more robust to different face sizes) or changing the foreground percentage threshold degrade the performance but only slightly.

Postprocessing

Using the mean instead of the median to aggregate the patch scores during inference leads to slightly worse performance, likely because the mean is less robust to outliers. Similarly, decreasing the foreground percentage threshold for considering patches during inference decreases the performance as more of the background, which is irrelevant for the face's quality, is considered.

Model

Training a model from scratch rather than using a model pretrained on ImageNet [1] degrades the performance quite significantly and causes the training to take longer to reach a reasonable performance.

Loss function

Other loss functions including the mean absolute error (MAE), mean squared error (MSE), and mean squared logarithmic error (MSLE) all lead to worse performance. Our intuition for the superiority of the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) is that it considers the error relative to the regression target. For example, predicting 0.1 when the actual value is 0.2 should be punished more than predicting 0.7 when the actual value is 0.8.

Optimization

Not using the techniques aimed to stabilize the training, *i.e.* gradient accumulation and learning rate decay, both degrade the performance slightly on average.

4. Training data set

Figure 4 shows two images of each subject from the training data set. Note that the absolute resolution of each image differs, but the figure shows them with equal width.



Figure 1. Examples from the training data set.

5. Visualization of the ranking order of our proposed method and human labels

Figures 2 and 3 show the sort order of our method and the human labels for one evaluation folder containing 10 generated images of the same person. In this context, (a) refers to the blurriest image and (j) to the sharpest image according to our method or human labels. The ranking of the human labels and our proposed method is almost identical. Merely, images (e) and (f) are swapped compared to the human labels, but the scores as well as the perceived blurriness are very similar. Note that the background, the lighting and the color changes are not taken into account for the human ranking order.

Figures 4 and 5 show the sort orders for one evaluation folder containing 10 real images of the same person. Here, similar conclusions can be drawn as for the generated images. The rank order mostly differs for images with almost the same sharpness level ((c)-(e), and (g) and (h)), but the overall tendency is consistent between our method and the human labels.



Figure 2. Example of the sort order for generated images according to our method. (a) refers to the lowest sharpness, (j) to the highest.



Figure 3. Example of the sort order for generated images according to human labels. (a) refers to the lowest sharpness, (j) to the highest. The human label score s has no intuitive meaning, but a larger score implies a sharper image.



Figure 4. Example of the sort order for real images according to our method. (a) refers to the lowest sharpness, (j) to the highest.



Figure 5. Example of the sort order for real images according to human labels. (a) refers to the lowest sharpness, (j) to the highest. The human label score s has no intuitive meaning, but a larger score implies a sharper image.

6. Image enhancement and degradation using strong adversarial noise

As stated in the main paper, the adversarial noise of our proposed model is actually not really adversarial anymore but meaningful instead. Thus, if we apply strong adversarial noise, we can actually change the perceived sharpness of an image by optimizing the noise towards increasing or decreasing the predicted effective resolution. Figures 6 and 7 show the difference between the adversarial noise when performing 10 PGD steps with a step size of $L_\infty = 0.5$ and 10 PGD steps with a step size of $L_2 = 100$. Decreasing the predicted effective resolution leads to realistic results for both methods whereas the L_∞ norm sometimes produces unrealistic patterns when increasing the predicted effective resolution. In contrast, the L_2 norm produces realistic skin and hair patterns that improve the perceived sharpness of the image.

Figures 8 and 9 show further examples of the L_2 norm for decreasing or increasing the predicted effective resolution of an input image. Notably, the effect on skin and hair structures appears very promising. This demonstrates that our proposed self-supervised training procedure enables the model to learn features that are especially useful for face images. An interesting future direction would be to further investigate how the features and gradient of the network can be used for downstream tasks. Furthermore, the robustness obtained from the adversarial augmentations during training paves the way towards exploring the use of no-reference image quality assessment methods as loss functions during training to improve the output quality of generative models.

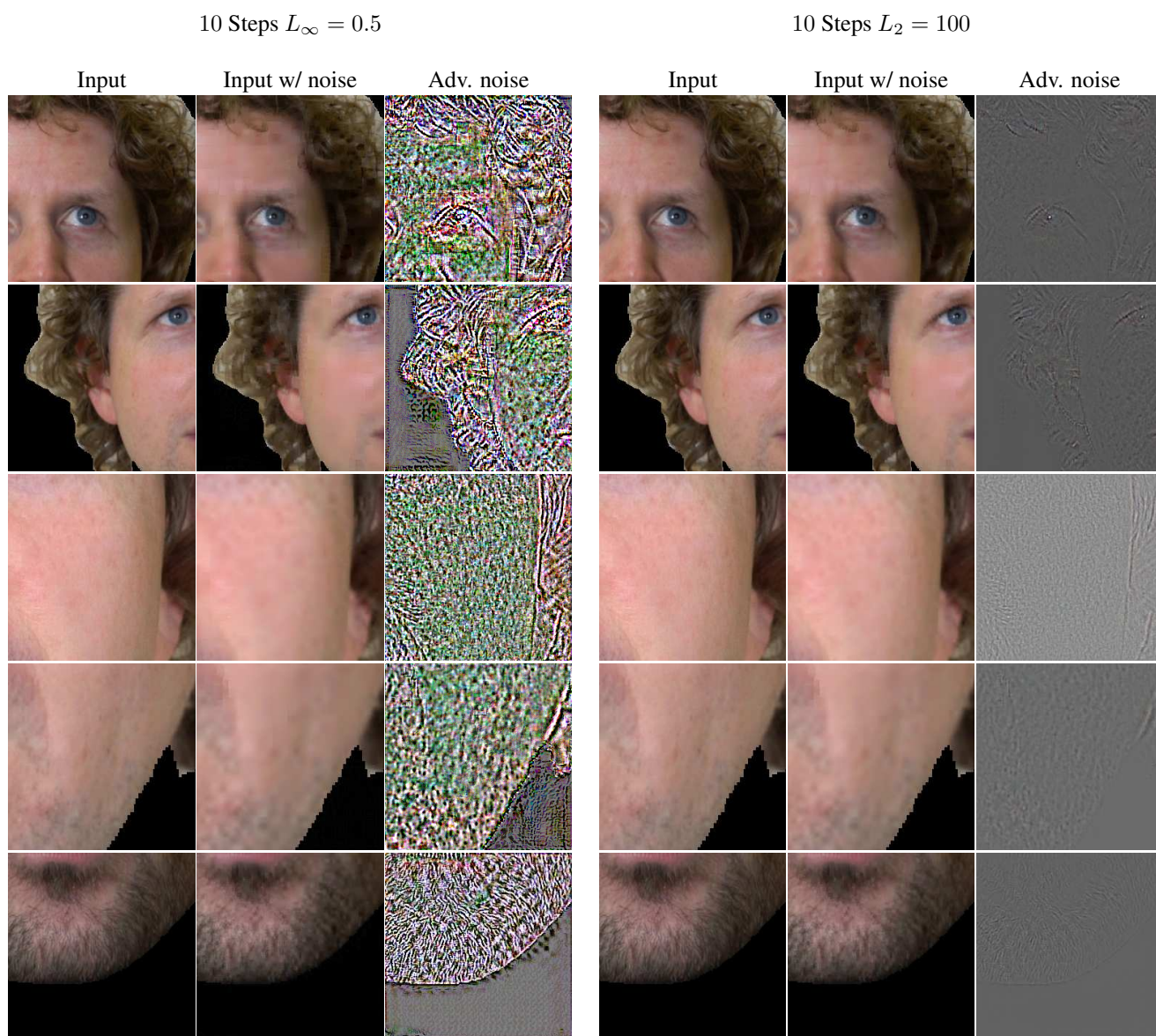


Figure 6. Examples of images where the adversarial noise leads to blurrier results. Comparison L_∞ vs. L_2 norm.

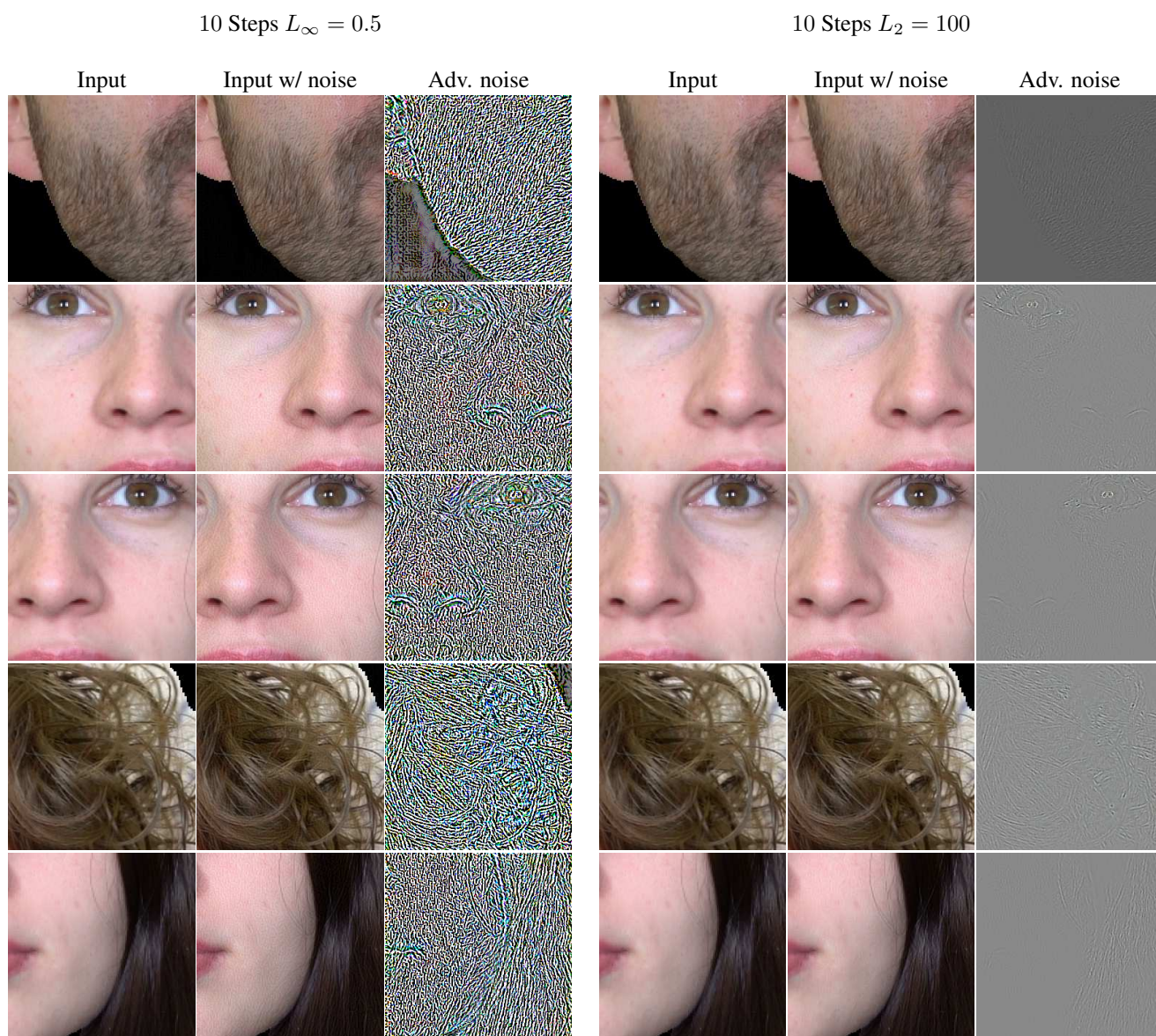


Figure 7. Examples of images where the adversarial noise leads to sharper results. Comparison L_∞ vs. L_2 norm.

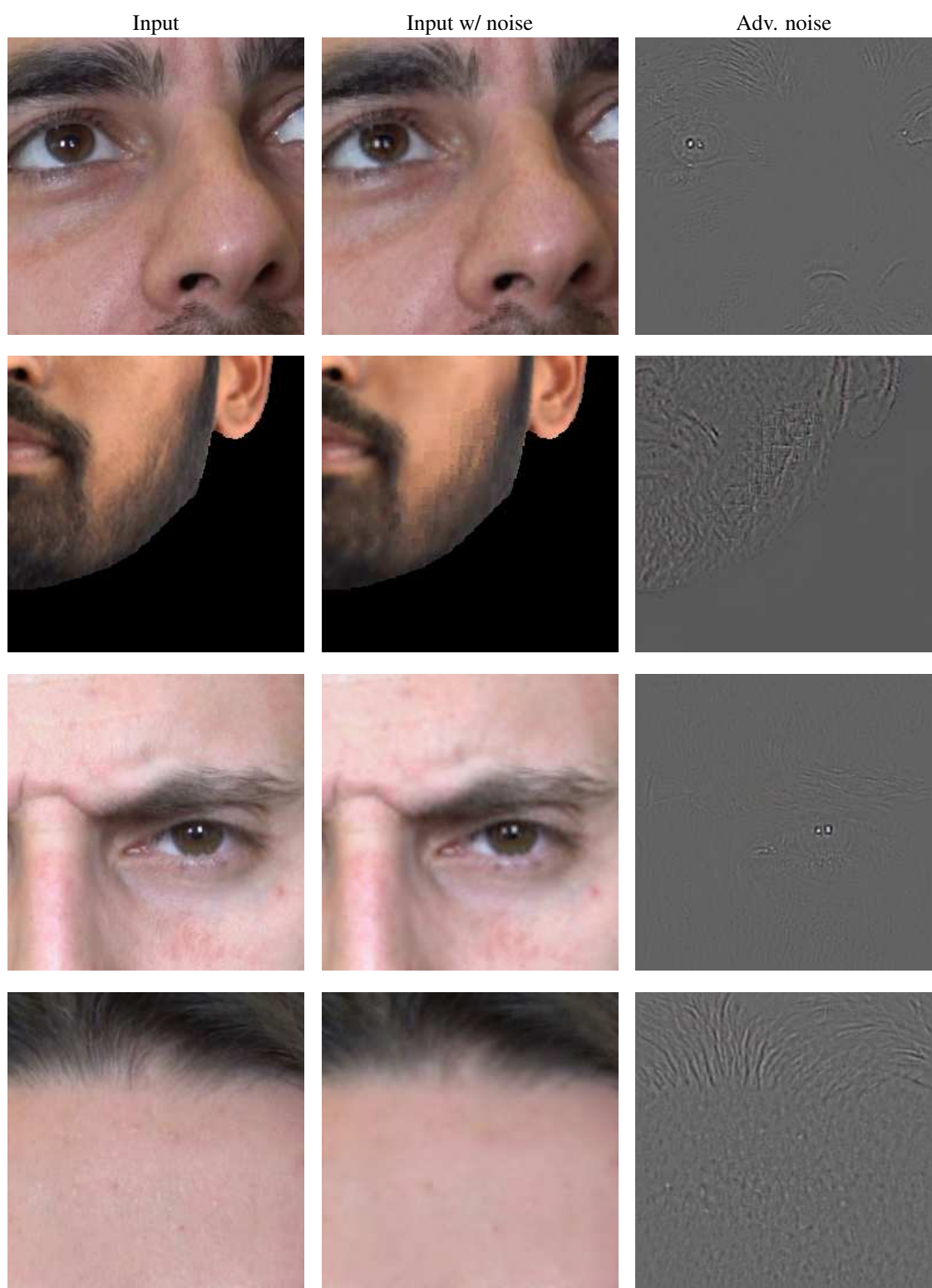


Figure 8. Additional examples of images where L_2 adversarial noise leads to blurrier results.

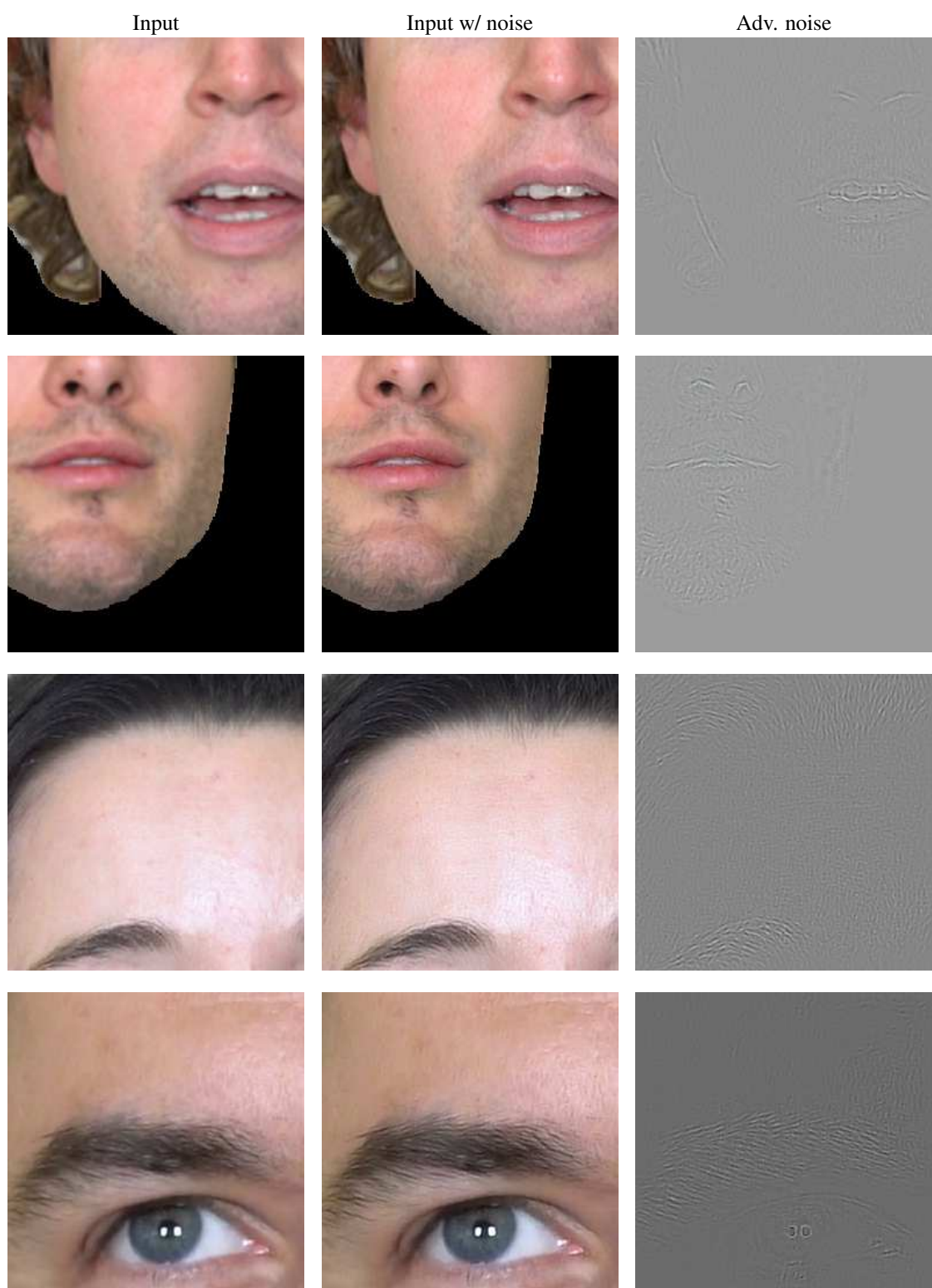


Figure 9. Additional examples of images where L_2 adversarial noise leads to sharper results.

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