Digital Image Processing

Image Segmentation:
Thresholding

Contents

So far we have been considering image processing techniques used to transform images for human interpretation

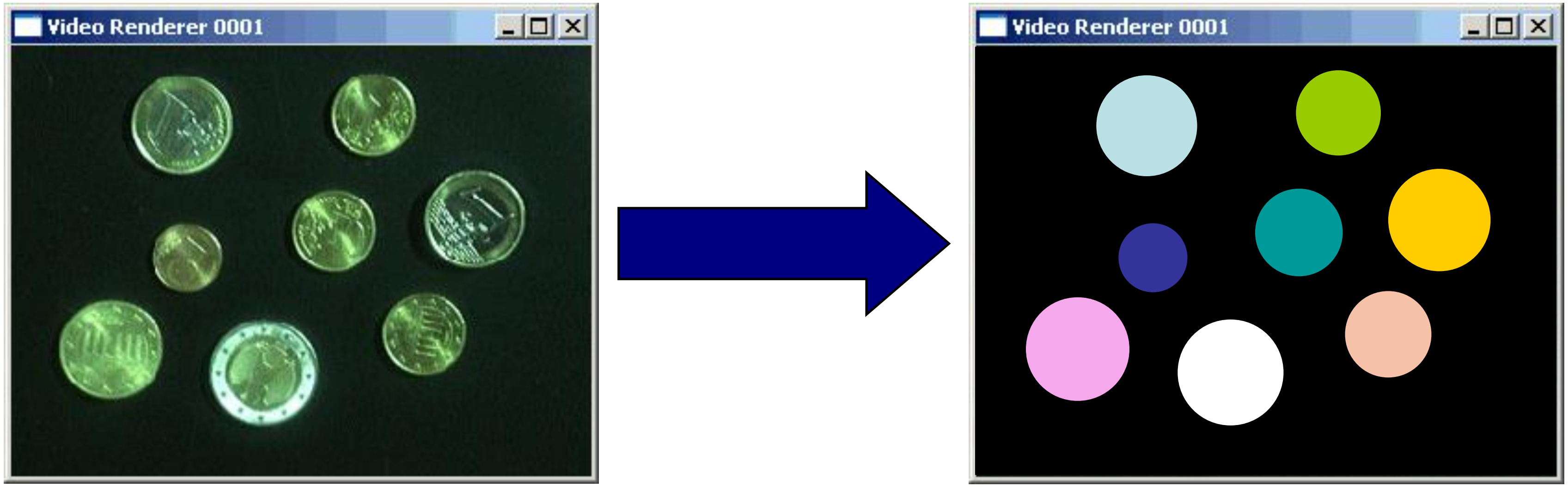
Today we will begin looking at automated image analysis by examining the thorny issue of image segmentation:

- The segmentation problem
- Finding points, lines and edges

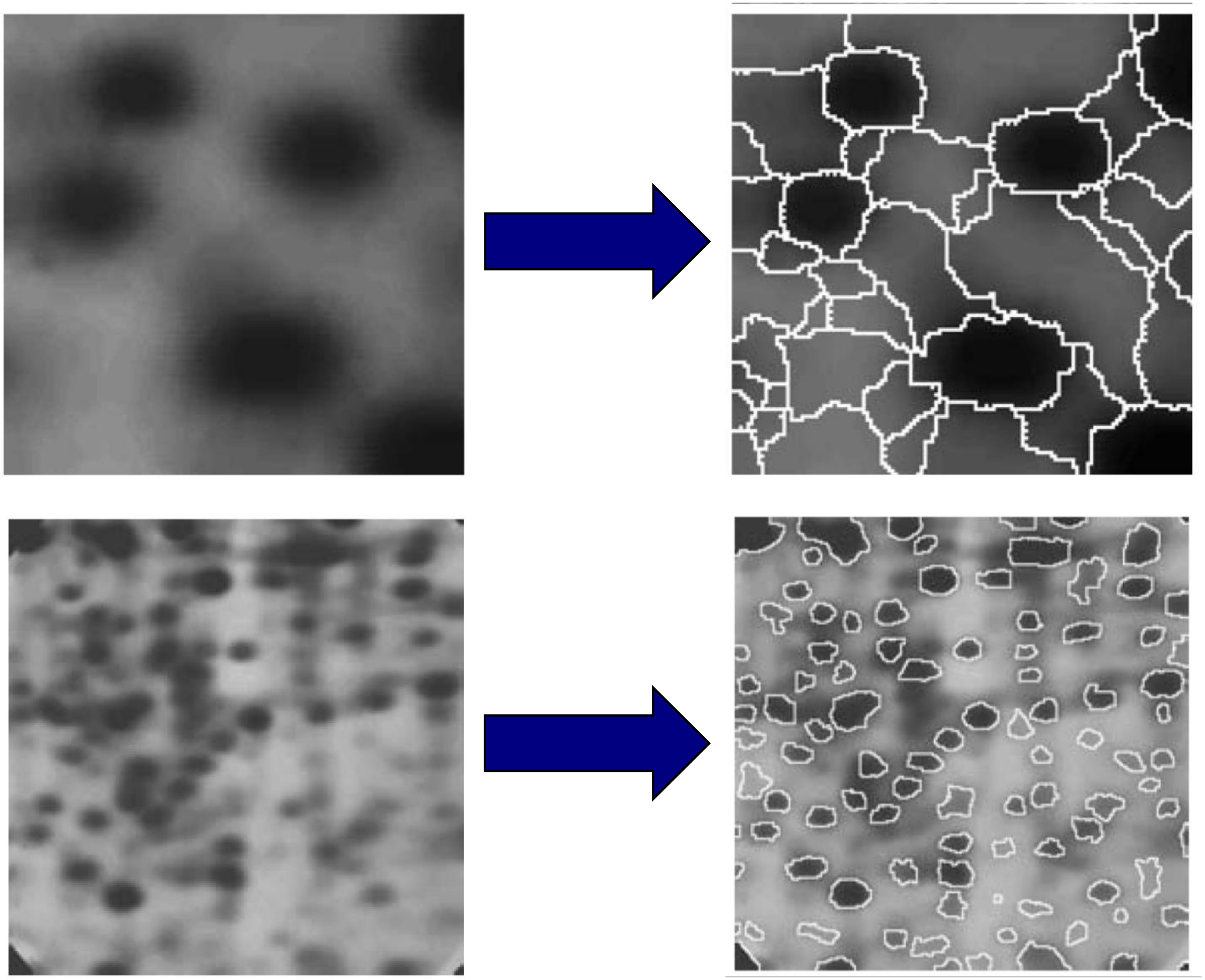
The Segmentation Problem

Segmentation attempts to partition the pixels of an image into groups that strongly correlate with the objects in an image

Typically the first step in any automated computer vision application



Segmentation Examples



Detection Of Discontinuities

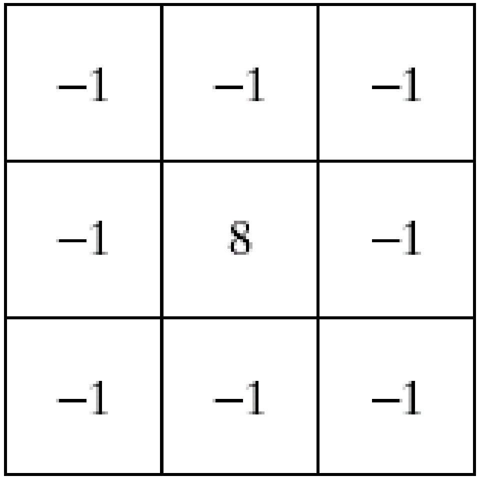
There are three basic types of grey level discontinuities that we tend to look for in digital images:

- Points
- Lines
- Edges

We typically find discontinuities using masks and correlation

Point Detection

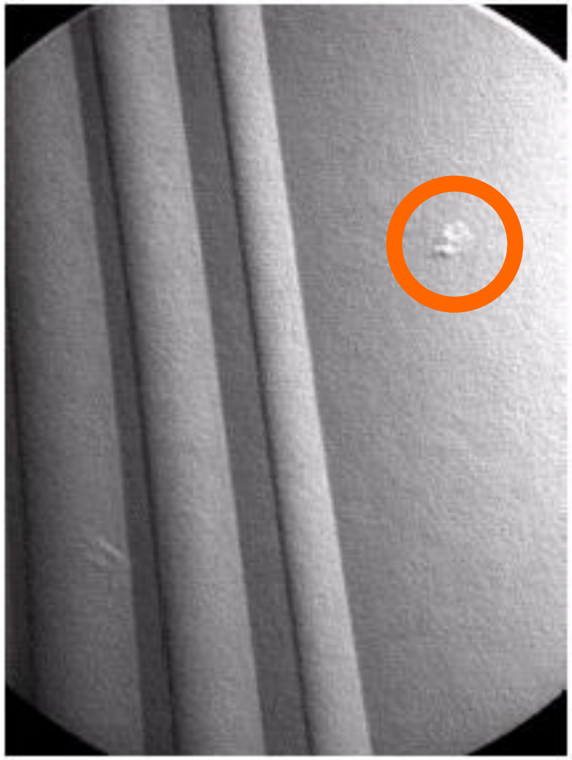
Point detection can be achieved simply using the mask below:



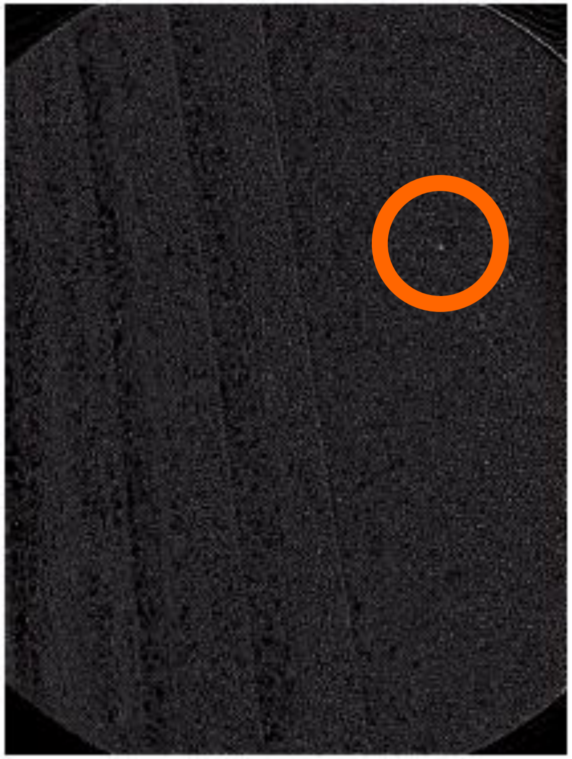
–1	–1	–1
–1	8	–1
–1	–1	–1

Points are detected at those pixels in the subsequent filtered image that are above a set threshold

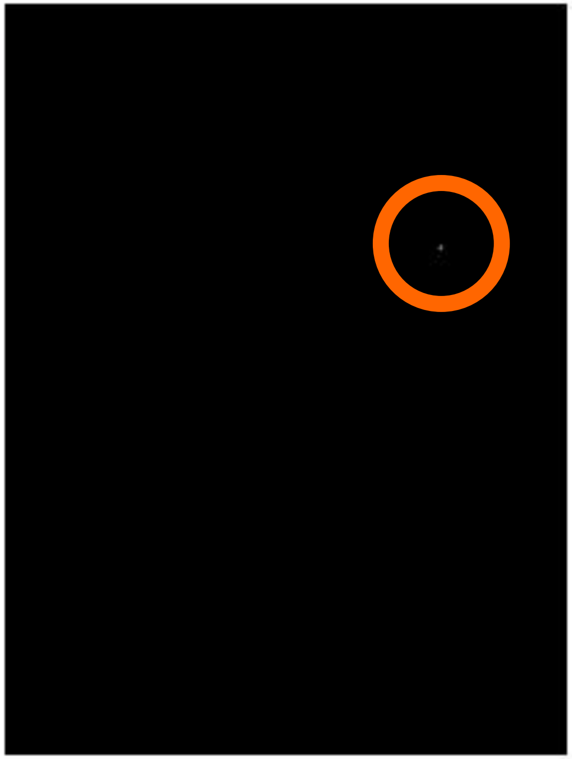
Point Detection (cont…)



X-ray image of a turbine blade



Result of point detection

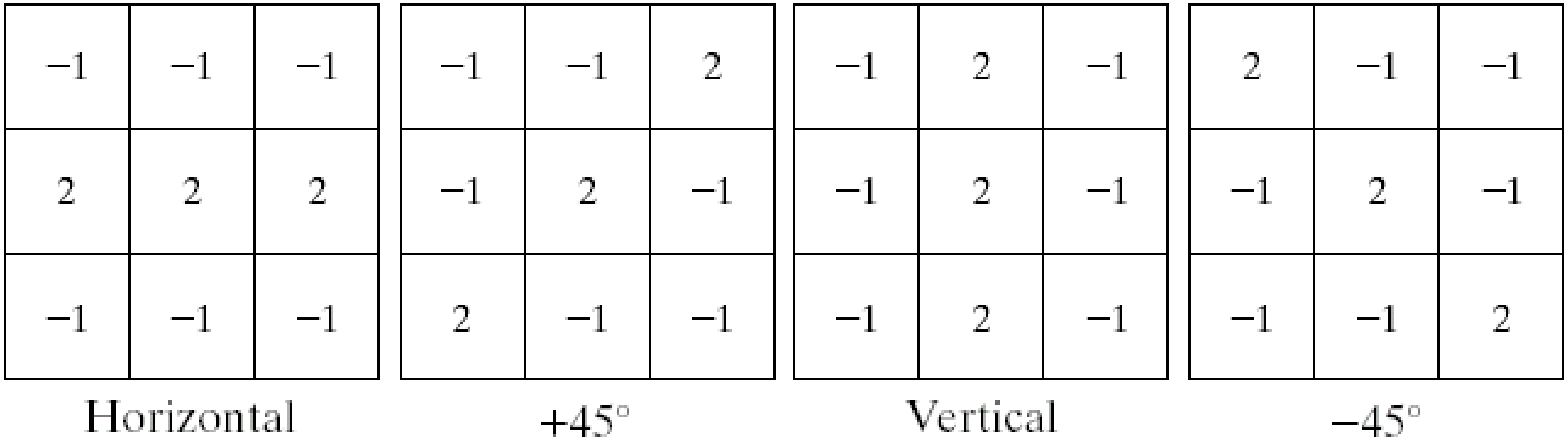


Result of thresholding

Line Detection

The next level of complexity is to try to detect lines

The masks below will extract lines that are one pixel thick and running in a particular direction



−1	−1	−1
2	2	2
−1	−1	−1

Horizontal

−1	−1	2
−1	2	−1
2	−1	−1

+45°

−1	2	−1
−1	2	−1
−1	2	−1

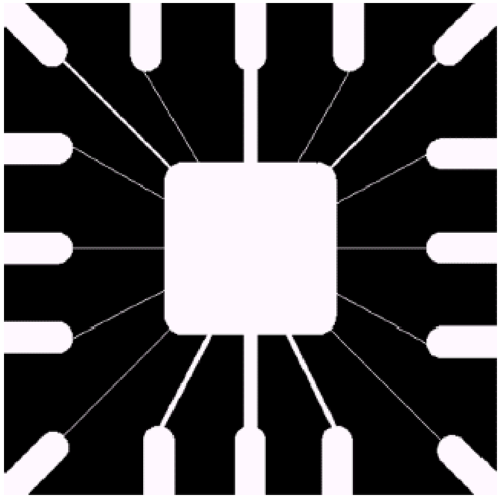
Vertical

2	−1	−1
−1	2	−1
−1	−1	2

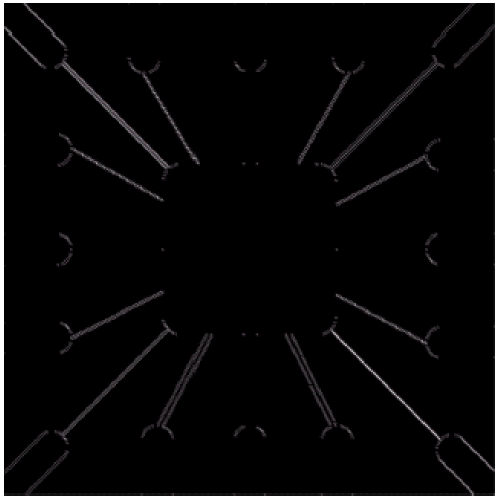
−45°

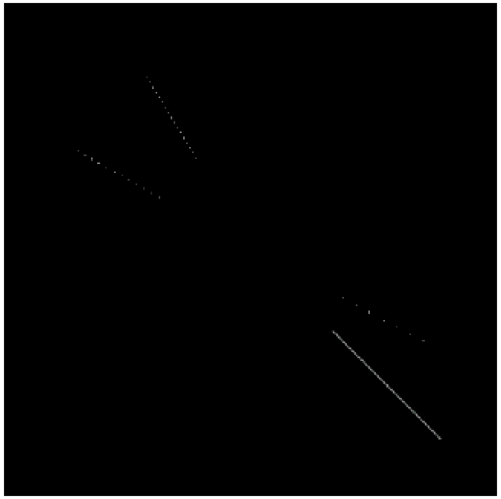
Line Detection (cont…)

Binary image of a wire bond mask



After processing with -45° line detector

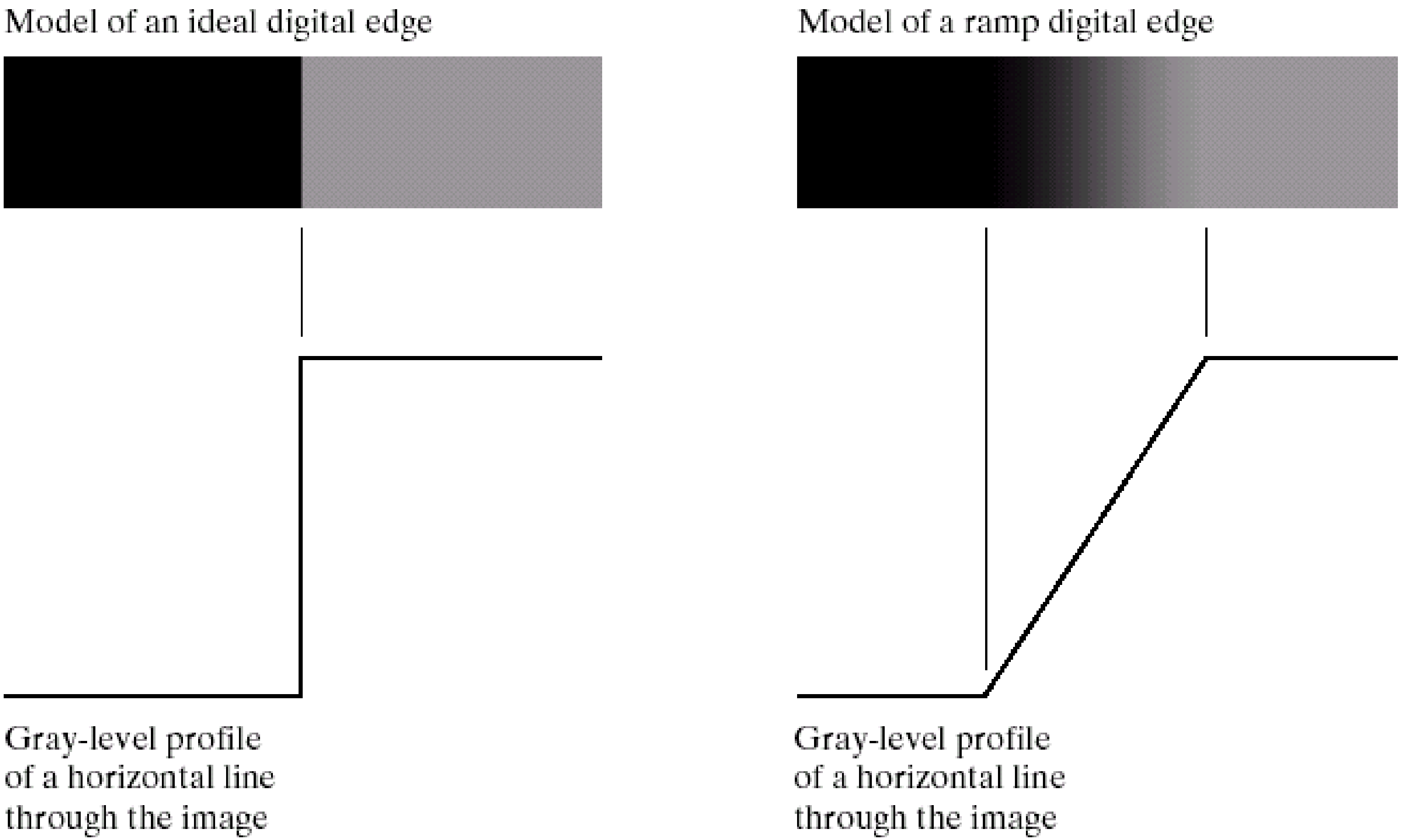




Result of thresholding filtering result

Edge Detection

An edge is a set of connected pixels that lie on the boundary between two regions



Model of an ideal digital edge

Model of a ramp digital edge

Gray-level profile of a horizontal line through the image

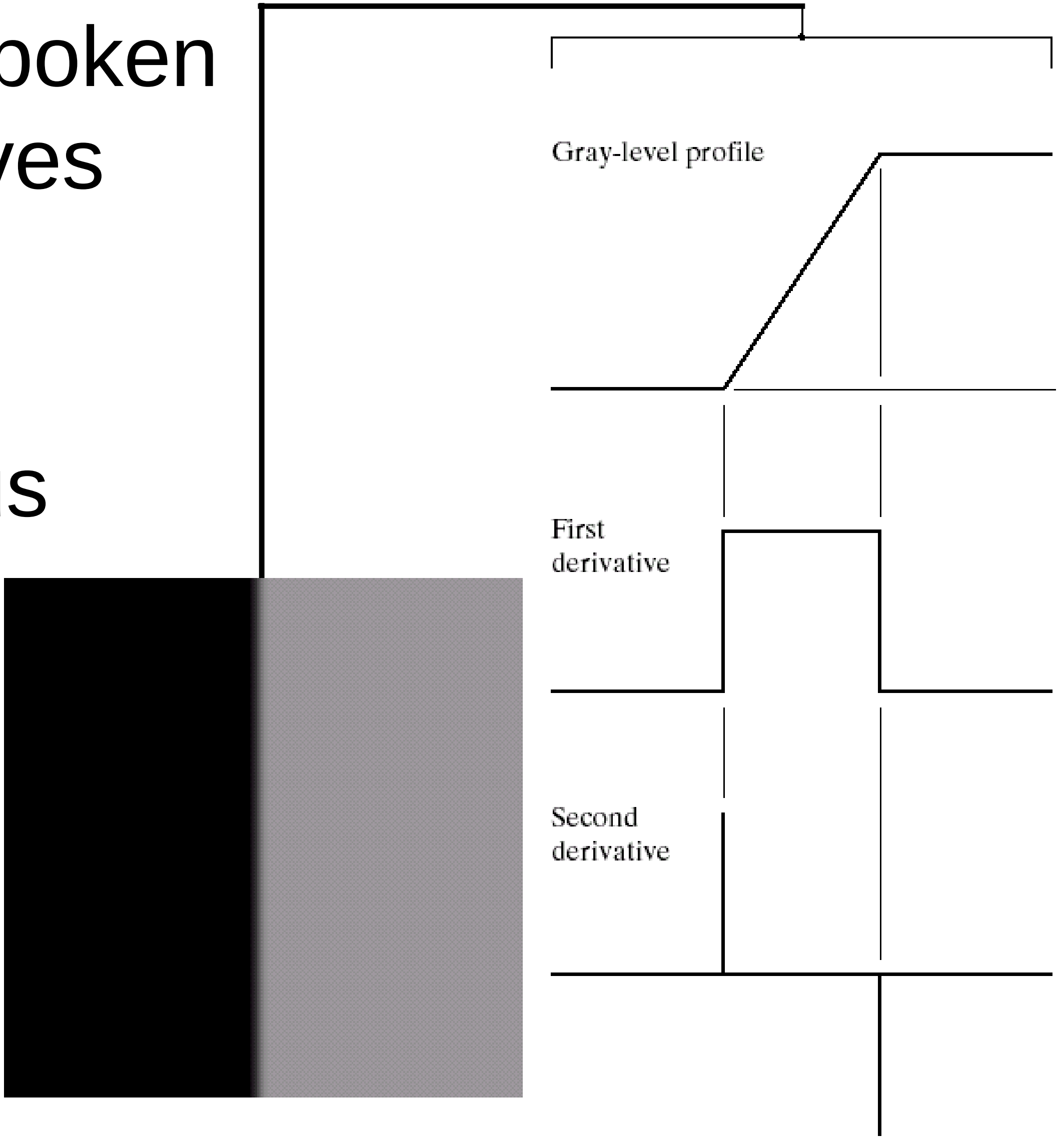
Gray-level profile of a horizontal line through the image

Edges & Derivatives

We have already spoken about how derivatives are used to find discontinuities

1st derivative tells us where an edge is

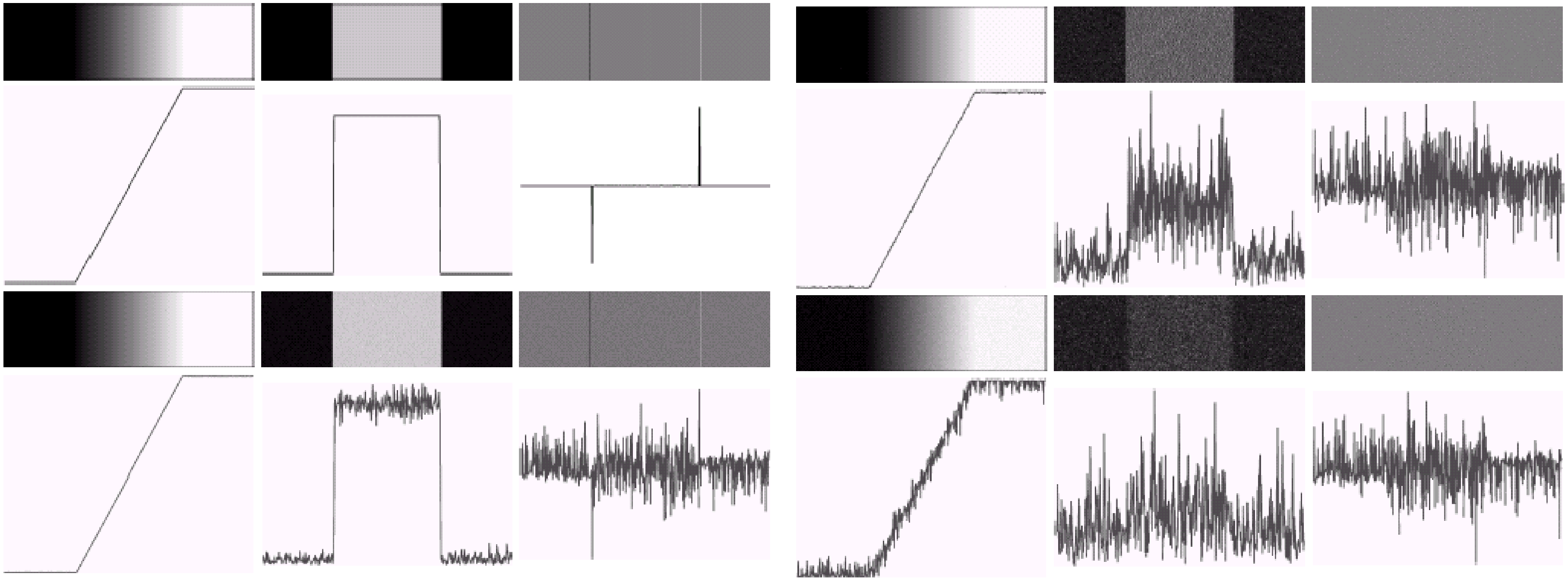
2nd derivative can be used to show edge direction



Derivatives & Noise

Derivative based edge detectors are extremely sensitive to noise

We need to keep this in mind



Common Edge Detectors

Given a 3*3 region of an image the following edge detection filters can be used

z_1	z_2	z_3
z_4	z_5	z_6
z_7	z_8	z_9

−1	−1	−1
0	0	0
1	1	1

−1	0	1
−1	0	1
−1	0	1

Prewitt

−1	0
0	1

0	−1
1	0

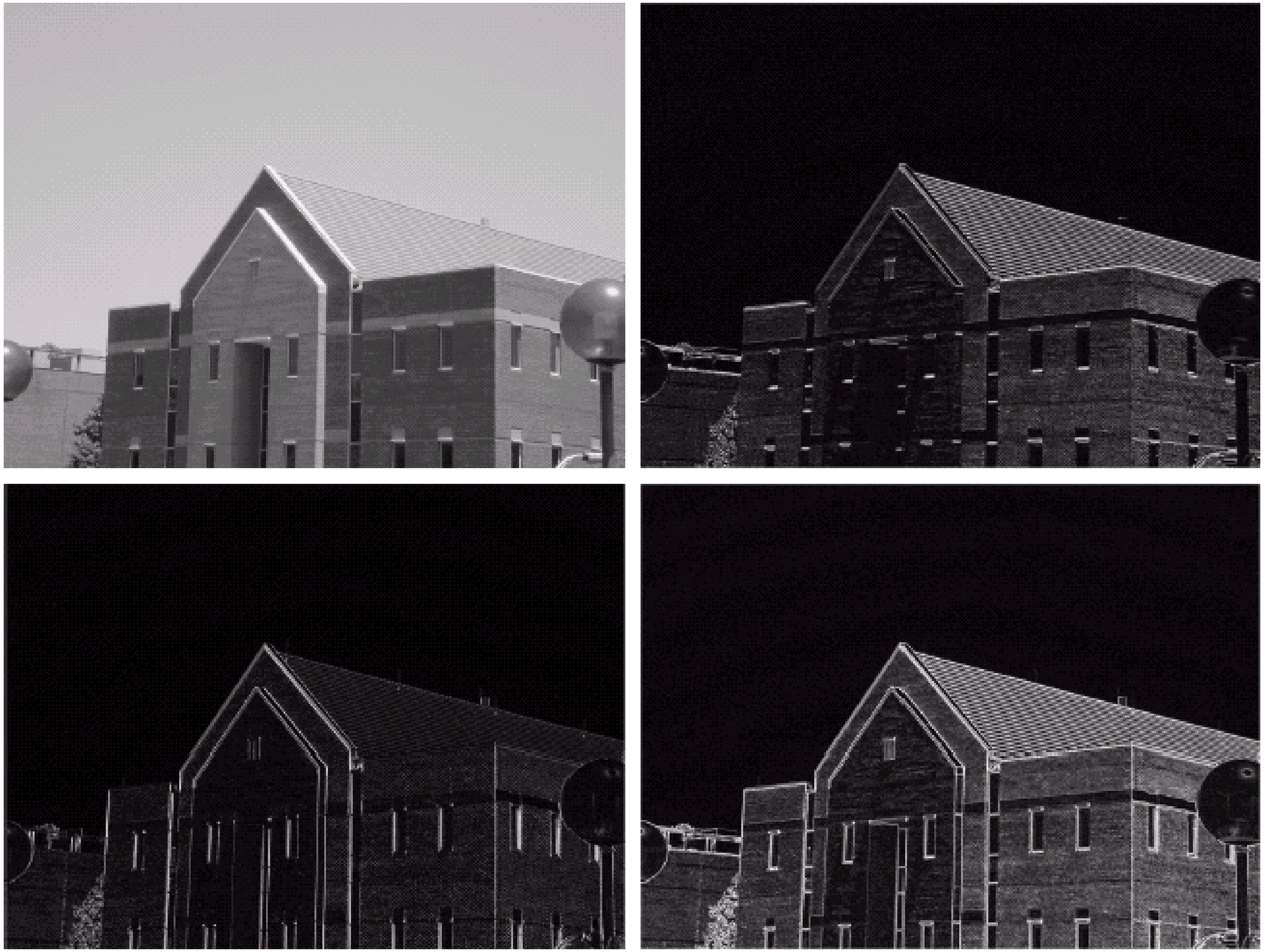
Roberts

−1	−2	−1
0	0	0
1	2	1

−1	0	1
−2	0	2
−1	0	1

Sobel

Edge Detection Example



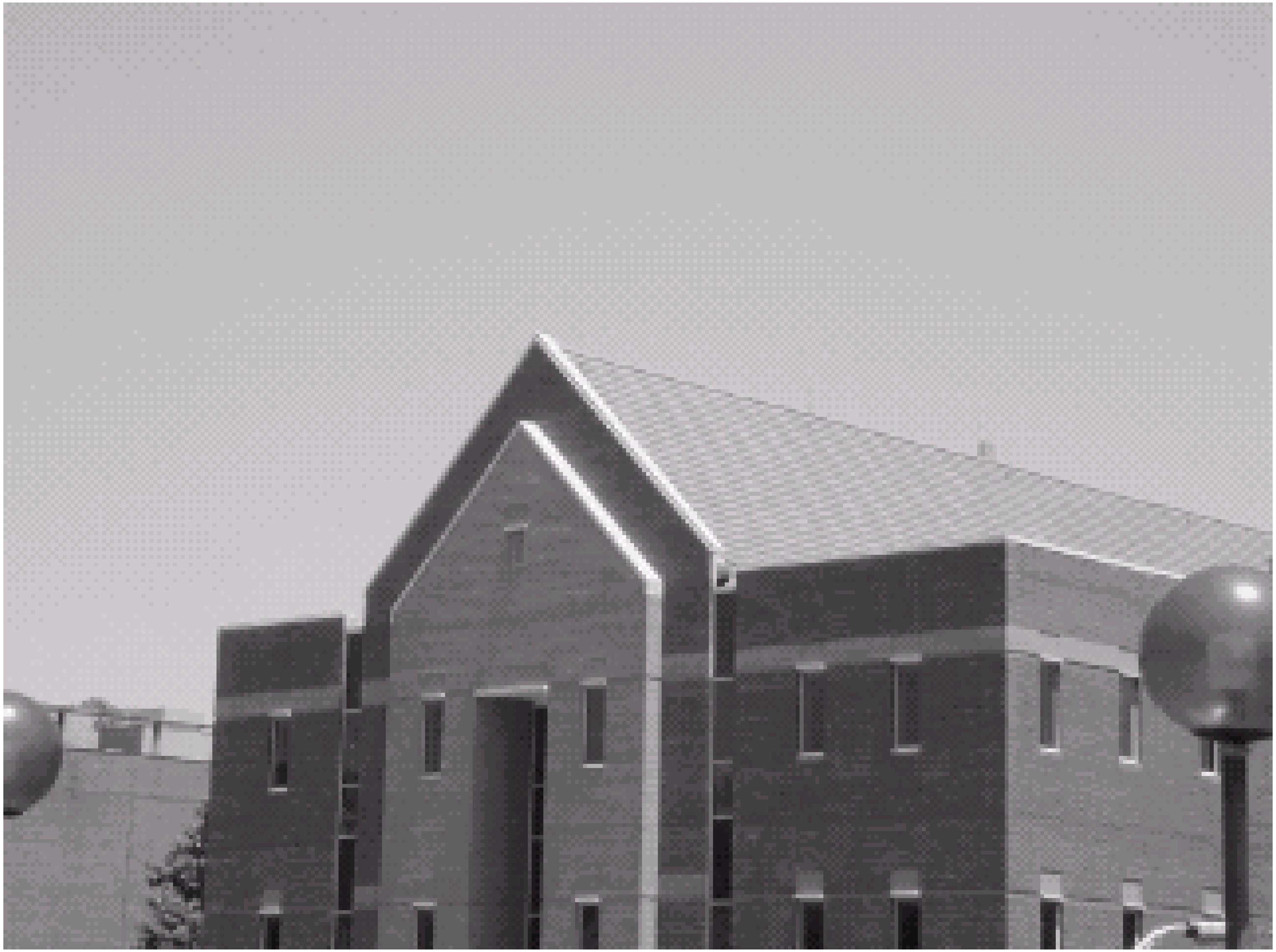
Original Image

Horizontal Gradient Component

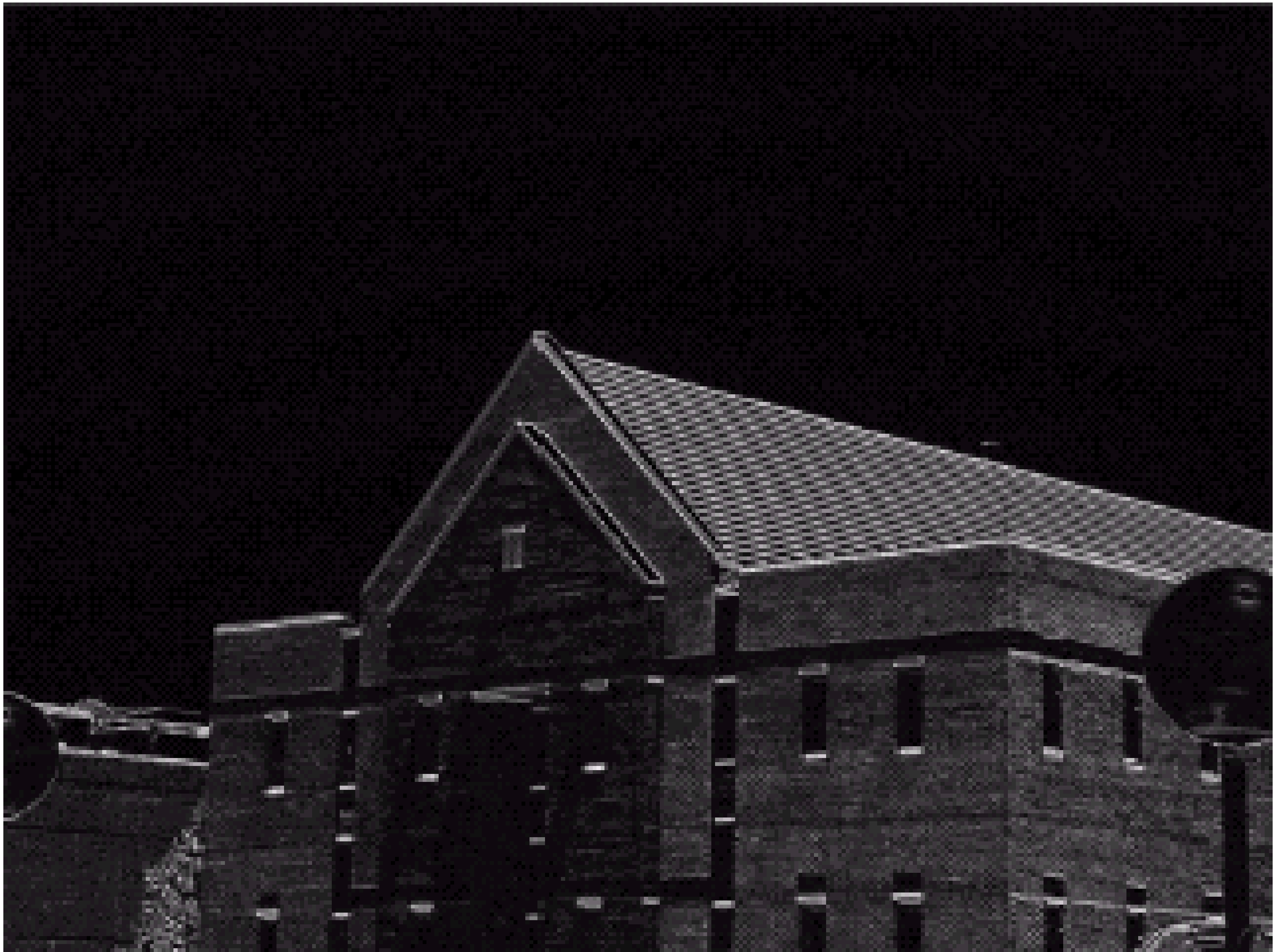
Vertical Gradient Component

Combined Edge Image

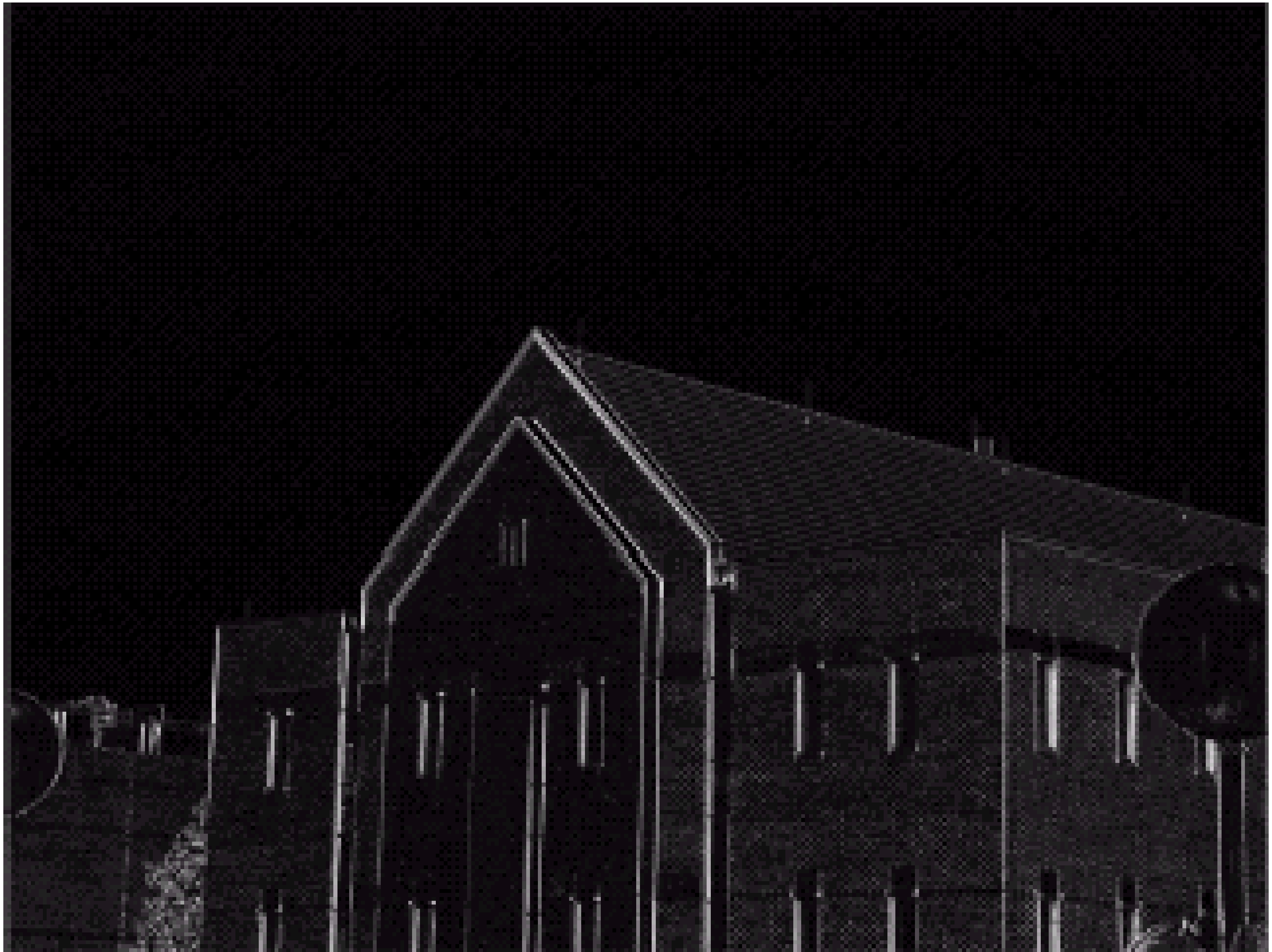
Edge Detection Example



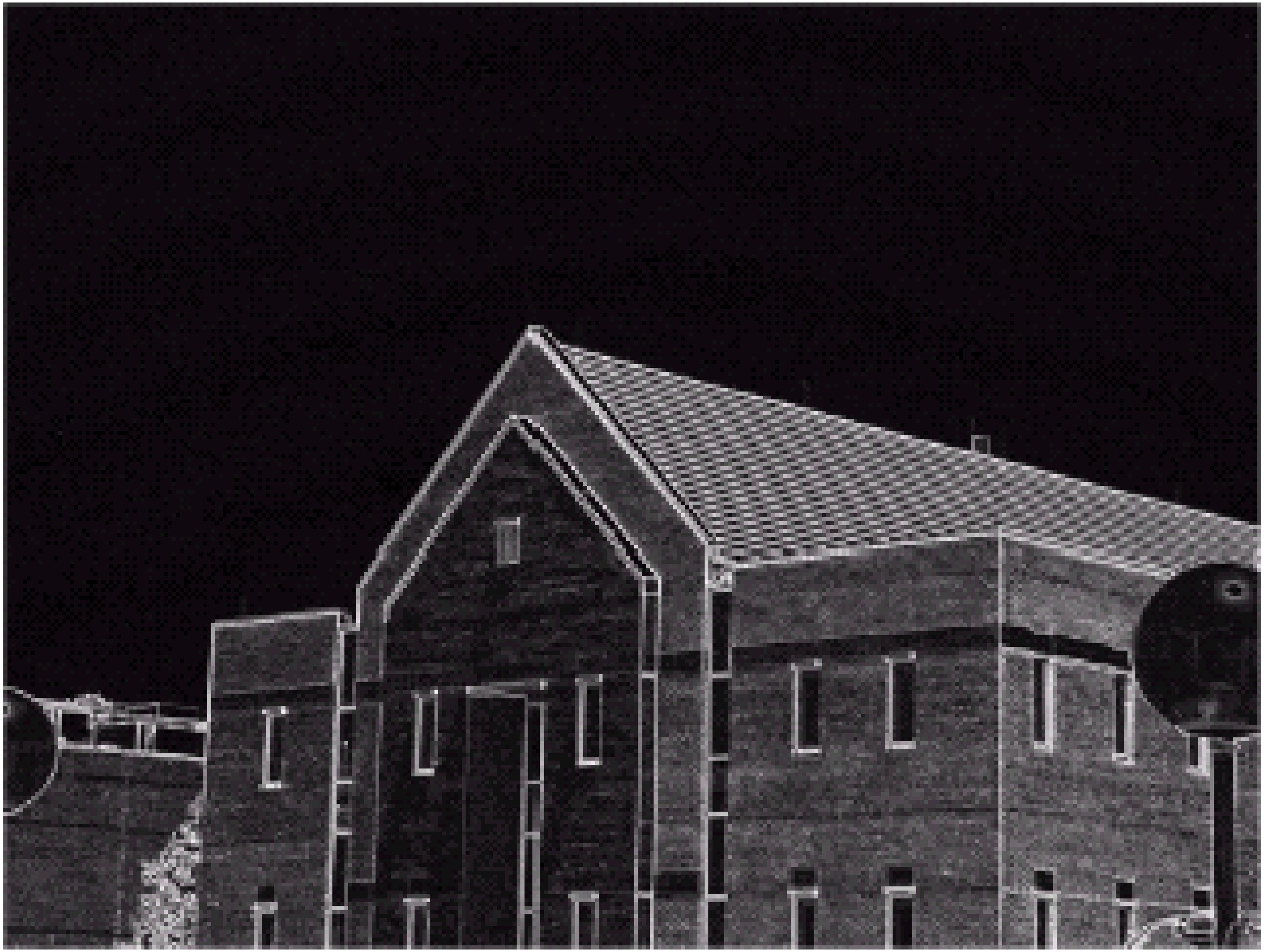
Edge Detection Example



Edge Detection Example



Edge Detection Example



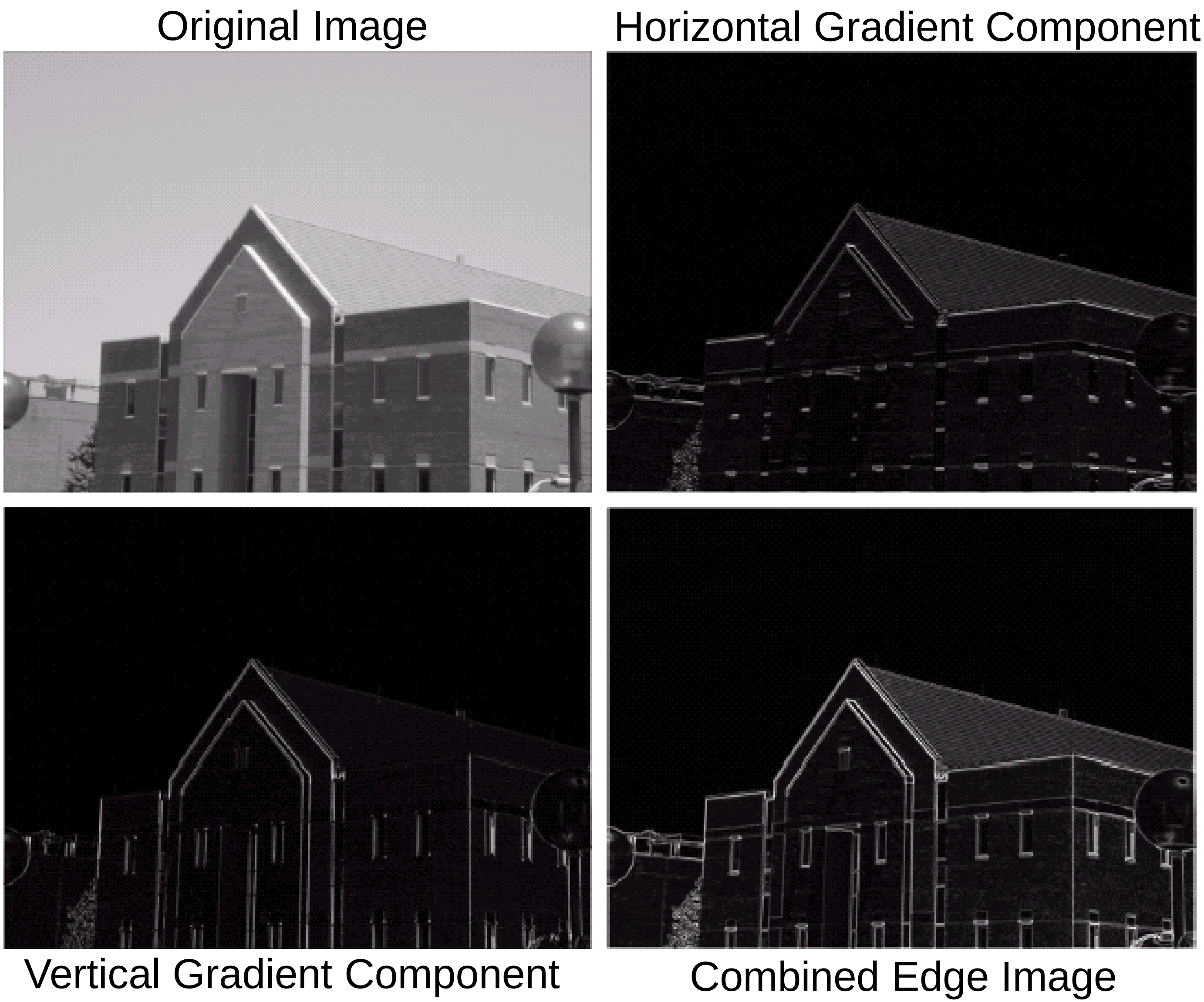
Edge Detection Problems

Often, problems arise in edge detection in that there are is too much detail

For example, the brickwork in the previous example

One way to overcome this is to smooth images prior to edge detection

Edge Detection Example With Smoothing



Original Image

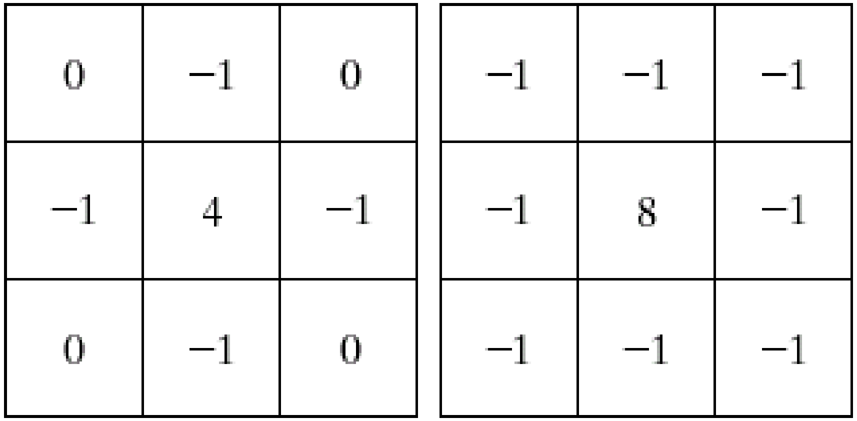
Horizontal Gradient Component

Vertical Gradient Component

Combined Edge Image

Laplacian Edge Detection

We encountered the 2nd-order derivative based Laplacian filter already.



0	−1	0
−1	4	−1
0	−1	0

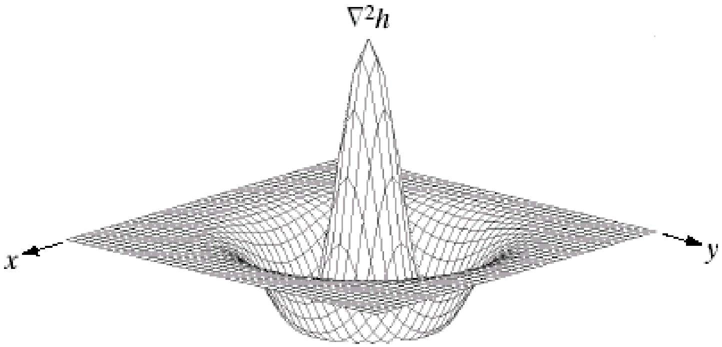
−1	−1	−1
−1	8	−1
−1	−1	−1

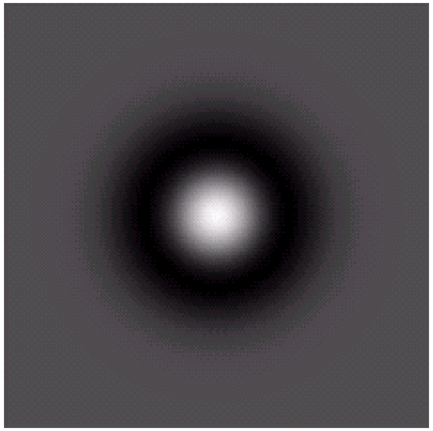
The Laplacian is typically not used by itself as it is too sensitive to noise.

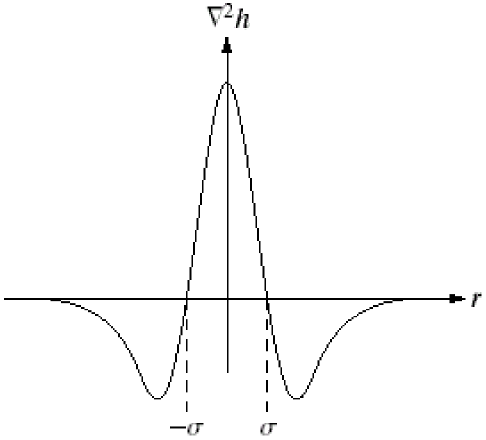
The Laplacian is combined with a smoothing Gaussian filter.

Laplacian Of Gaussian

The Laplacian of Gaussian (or Mexican hat) filter uses the Gaussian for noise removal and the Laplacian for edge detection

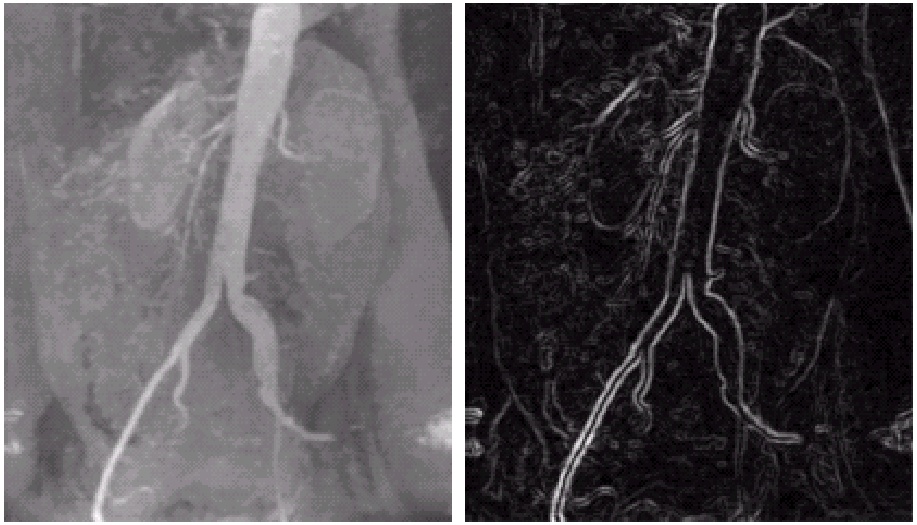


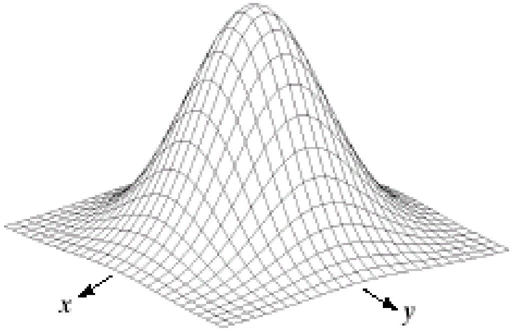




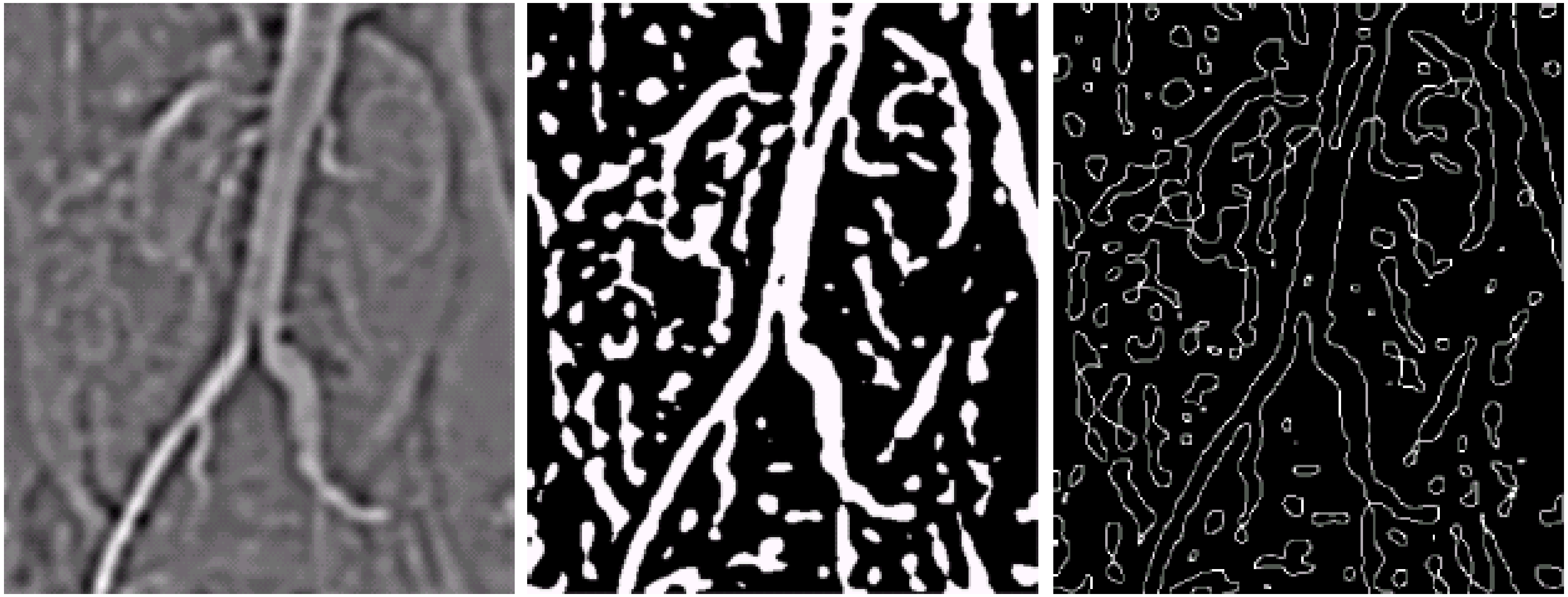
0	0	–1	0	0
0	–1	–2	–1	0
–1	–2	16	–2	–1
0	–1	–2	–1	0
0	0	–1	0	0

Laplacian Of Gaussian Example





−1	−1	−1
−1	8	−1
−1	−1	−1



Summary

In this lecture we have begun looking at segmentation, and in particular edge detection

Edge detection is massively important as it is in many cases the first step to object recognition