

# Review of various visual cryptography methods to improve security in image transaction

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**Abstract** — Image cryptography plays an important role in data security. Visual cryptography is a method which is used to encrypt information in any format like text, image, led display such that decryption is done by human eye. It does not require any key for decryption so security during image transformation is always desirable but challenging task. Rapid growth in the techniques for doing so is also increasing. Internet has become most commonly used media for communication and hence text, voice, video, Images and many more are transmitted through Internet. These might include Military Secrets, Commercial Secrets and Information of individuals and therefore it has to be transmitted by safer means with enhanced security. In the process of Visual Cryptography a secret image is encrypted into shares which refuse to divulge information about the original secret image. Various researchers are working on improvement of security features in image transaction. In this review paper we are presenting analysis of various visual cryptography methods for and security enhancement techniques during image transactions.

**Keyword** — Image Security, Security, Visual Cryptography, Visual Secret Share

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to rapid development in internet technology, different types of information can be transferred over internet. Hence there is security issues associated with transmitting high value assets like commercial data, user personal information, banking or transaction data, and data related to military. Security of such data transfer must be taken into consideration because hacker can use various methods and steal such high value assets which results in high monetary, social, personal loss. Visual secret sharing (VSS) scheme is an efficient secure method for hiding a secret image by dividing it into share images and any one can decode it easily by the human visual system. The main concept of the original visual secret sharing (VSS) scheme is to encrypt a secret image into  $n$  meaningless share images. It cannot leak any

information of the shared secret by any combination of the  $n$  share images except for all of images [4,5].

Once it is not transformed into Cipher text, human nor can machine properly process it until it is decrypted. This enables the transmission of confidential information over insecure channels without unauthorized disclosure. When data is stored on a computer it is protected by logical and physical access controls. When this same sensitive information is sent over a network, the information is in much more vulnerable state. Naor and Shamir introduced the new concept of Visual Cryptography in 1994 [11], requiring no computation except human Visual System to decrypt. They proposed a basic (2, 2) Visual Cryptography scheme where a secret image is divided into 2 shares, revealing the secret image through Share Stacking. Image that can be considered for Visual Cryptography can be Binary Image, Grayscale Image and Color Image. The scheme given by Nair and Shamir for sharing a secret binary image was by using their own coding table. In this scheme the binary image is divided into two shares, for the white pixel in the secret image, one of the upper two rows of table I is chosen to make share1 and share2. If the pixel of the secret image is black, one of the lower two rows of table I is used to make share1 and 2. This scheme consists of pixel expansion where every pixel from the secret image is expanded to 4 pixels, so when the shares are generated and superimposed together the reconstructed image will be four times the original secret image size because of this pixel expansion. Also the resolution of the reconstructed image will be less than the original secret image as every white pixel is decomposed into two white & two black pixels. Only one secret could be hidden using this technique [6,7,8].

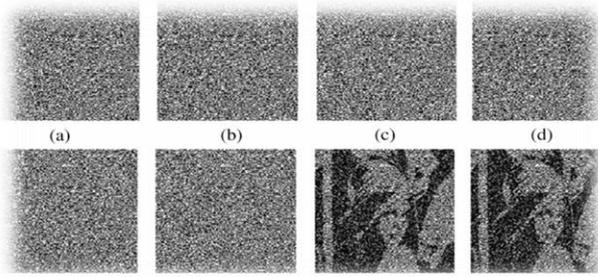


Figure 1.1 Visual Cryptography

## 2. Related work

Arya k.rakhee baiju et al [1] worked on A Novel Visual Cryptographic Scheme for Improved Binary Image Quality.

According to Arya Visual Cryptography is an encryption method which shares secret information into  $n$  shares and decrypted into original image without any cryptographic technique. Existing visual cryptography does not provide good visual quality reconstructed image. Hence author proposed novel visual cryptography method with additional post processing technique which preserves good quality recovered image. Experimental results on this technique clearly shown that recovered image has competitive visual quality compared with input binary image.

Naor & Shamir [4] proposed visual cryptography scheme in 1994. This is the basic scheme of visual cryptography in which the secret image is divided into two shares. The shares generated are meaningless. When the two shares are stacked together, it produces the original secret image. This scheme is only for black & white images. Ateniese, Blundo & Stinson [2,3] proposed extended visual cryptography in 1996. This scheme contains meaningful shares. The (2,2) EVC theme projected during this needed enlargement of one picture element within the original image to four sub pixels which may then be chosen to supply the specified pictures for every share. Up to 1997, Visual cryptography schemes were applied to only black & white images.

Verheul & Tilborg [3, 4], proposed first colored visual cryptography scheme. But this scheme produces meaningless share. Wu and Chen [4] in 1998, were the first researchers to present the visual cryptography schemes to share two secret images in two shares Hsu et al [5] proposed another scheme in 2004. The scheme hides two secret images in two share images with arbitrary rotating angles. Verheul

and Van Tilborg [6] proposed a scheme for colored secret images can be shared; the concept of arcs was used to construct a colored visual cryptography scheme S J Shyu et al [7] were first researchers to advise the multiple secrets sharing in visual cryptography. This scheme encodes a set of  $n \geq 2$  secrets into two circle shares. The  $n$  secrets can be obtained one by one by stacking the first share and the rotated second shares with  $n$  different rotation angles. To encode unlimited shapes of image and to remove the limitation of transparencies to be circular.

## 3. VISUAL CRYPTOGRAPHY METHODS

### 3.1. Visual Cryptographic Schemes for Black and White Images / Binary Images

a) **Binary Images:** Wu and Chen [4, 9] in 1998, were the first researchers to present the visual cryptography schemes to share two secret images in two shares. In this scheme two secret binary images were considered which were hidden into two random shares, namely share A and share B. In retrieving phase the first secret image can be revealed by stacking the two shares, denoted by  $A \otimes B$ , and the second secret can be revealed by first rotating share A by angle  $\Theta$  anticlockwise. The rotation angle  $\Theta$  was designed to be  $90^\circ$ .

b) Previous efforts in visual cryptography were restricted to binary images which is insufficient in real time applications. It is proposed visual cryptography for gray level images by dithering techniques. Instead of using gray sub pixels directly to constructed shares, a dithering technique is used to convert gray level images into approximate binary images. Then existing visual cryptography schemes for binary images are applied to accomplish the work of creating shares. The effect of this scheme is still satisfactory in the aspects of increase in relative size and decoded image quality, even when the number of gray levels in the original image still reaches 256 [16,18].

### 3.2. Visual Cryptography Schemes for color images -

a) **For Single Secret Sharing-** Till 1997 visual cryptography schemes were applied to only black and white images. Verheul and Van Tilborg [3] developed Colored visual cryptography scheme. Colored images with  $r$  colors, the pixel expansion  $m$  is  $r \times 3$ . These

schemes share generated were meaningless. This is very popular in use, Colored secret images can be shared using this method; the concept of arcs was used to construct a colored visual cryptography scheme [11, 13]. As color images are extremely famous, in c-colorful visual cryptography scheme one pixel is transformed into  $m$  sub pixels, and each sub pixel is divided into  $c$  color regions. In each sub pixel, there is exactly one color region colored, and all the other color regions are black. Cryptography scheme color of one pixel depends on the interrelations between the stacked sub pixels.

- b) The first approach to realize color VCS is to print the colors in the secret image on the shares directly similar to basic model. It uses larger pixel expansion which reduces the quality of the decoded color image [10].
- c) The second approach converts a color image into black and white images on the three color channels (red, green, blue or equivalently cyan, magenta, yellow), respectively, and then apply the black and white VCS to each of the color channels. This results in decrease of pixel expansion but reduces the quality of the image due to halftone process.

**3.3 Visual cryptography for general access structures:** In  $(k,n)$  Basic model any “ $k$ ” shares will decode representation is extended to general access structures by G. Ateniese, C. Blundo, A. De Santis, and D. R. Stinson [6], where an access structure is a specification of all qualified and forbidden subsets of “ $n$ ” shares. Any subset of “ $k$ ” or more qualified shares can decrypt the secret image but no information can be obtained by stacking lesser number of qualified shares or by stacking disqualified shares. The secret image which reduces security level. To defeat this concern the fundamental

**3.4 Halftone Visual Cryptography:** The meaningful shares generated in extended visual cryptography proposed by Mizuho nakajima and yasushi yamaguchi [7] was of poor quality which again increases the suspicion of data encryption. Zhi Zhou, Gonzalo R. Arce, and Giovanni Di Crescenzo proposed halftone visual cryptography which increases the quality of the consequential shares.

#### 4. CHALLENGES IN VISUAL CRYPTOGRAPHY METHODS-

As protecting template in the database securely is one of the Challenges in any biometric system. Here visual cryptography technique is applied to iris authentication system. In this system there are two modules: Enrollment module and Authentication module. For accessing any secure resource by authenticated users this system can be used.

4.1 Enrollment The administrator will collect the eye image of the eligible users those are having access to secure resource. The enrolled eye image is required to be processed so characteristic iris features can be extracted for this purpose algorithms are developed from.

Three steps that are: segmentation, normalization, and feature extraction are performed as conferred below:

- **Segmentation-** is performed to extract the iris from the eye image. By employing circular Hough transform boundary of iris is searched. By fitting two lines using the linear Hough Transform eyelids are detected and eyelash is separated by threshold technique.
- **Normalization** of iris region is carried out using Daugman’s rubber sheet model. This model remaps each pixel within the iris region to a pair of polar coordinates. The center of the pupil is considered as the reference point and the radial vectors circle through the iris region.
- **Feature extraction** is done by convolving the normalized iris pattern into one dimensional Log- Gabor wavelets. The resulting phase information for both the real and the imaginary response is quantized, generating a bitwise template which is of  $20 \times 480$  sizes. In the existing system generated template is stored in the database.

4.2 **Authentication** For authentication user will provide share in the form of ID card. System finds the corresponding share from database. By stacking two shares first Iris template image is created. And from this image iris feature template is generated. The new eye image supplied by user will be processed with three steps: segmentation, normalization and feature extraction which generates iris feature template. Then these two feature templates are matched using hamming distance.

## 5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF VARIOUS VISUAL CRYPTOGRAPHY METHODS

Table 1 shows Comparative analyses of various Visual Cryptography methods. This analysis shows comparisons of various images such as binary, grey scale and colored images.

Author	Year	No. of Secret Images	Type of Image	Types of Shares Generated	Description	Reference No.
Naor & Shamir	1994	1	Binary	Meaningless	Use coding table to generate the shares.	[1]
Ateneise, Blundo & Stinson	1996	1	Binary	Meaningful	Extended visual cryptography scheme	[2]
E. F. Verheul and van Tilborg	1997	1	Colored	Meaningless	Colored secret images can be shared; the concept of arcs was used to construct a colored visual cryptography scheme	[3]
Wu and Chen	1998	2	Binary	Random	This visual cryptography scheme is to share two secret images in two shares, with rotation angle restriction	[4]
Hsu et al	2004	2	Binary	Meaningless	Arbitrary angle rotation to create the second secret.	[5]
Tzung-Her Chen, Kai-Hsiang Tsao, and Kuo-Chen Wei	2008	n=2	Binary, Gray, Color	Meaningless	turn more secret images into the same share images	[6]
Daoshun Wang	2009	n=1	binary, grayscale, color	Meaningful	Extended visual cryptography schemes using matrix extension algorithm	[7]
Siddharth Malik, Anjali Sardana, Jaya	2012	1	Colored	Random	The proposed technique is implemented with the SDS algorithm and involves three steps that are Seizing, Division and Shuffling	[8]
Hirdeh Kumar, Awwalshah Srivastava	2014	1	Colored	Meaningful	based on secret image sharing and key safeguarding technique, an effective and generalized scheme of color image hiding is proposed by means of numerical computations	[9]

Figure 1 Comparative analyses of various Visual Cryptography methods

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

Cryptography is well known and widely used tech. That manipulates much information in order to cipher or hide their existence. This tech. Have many applications in computer science and other related fields; they are used to protect email messages, credit card information, corporate data etc. This paper discusses the introduction of different types of Visual Cryptography schemes. It compares the image quality and security using various visual cryptography schemes. In order to hide the secrecy we go for expansion and increasing of the number of shares, but this affects the resolution .therefore an optimum number of shares are required to hide the secrecy at the same time security is also an important issue. Hence research in VC is towards maintaining the contrast at the same time maintaining the security. In future work we will present an efficient security scheme for visual

cryptography for grey scale images. This study helps us to understand various aspects of visual cryptography.

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