International Research Journal of Education and Technology

Peer Reviewed Journal, ISSN 2581-7795

SMART DOCUMENT COMPANION - TEXT DATA CLASSIFICATION IN DOCUMENTS USING AI

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Abstract - *In today's digital era, the effective management of heterogeneous documents is a critical challenge for numerous applications. This paper presents the Smart Document Companion—a novel system that integrates robust Optical Character Recognition (OCR) pre-processing, embedding-based few-shot classification, and a transformer-based question answering module. By leveraging advanced image pre-processing techniques and transformer models, our system extracts meaningful textual content from both image and PDF documents, classifies them via semantic similarity to a limited labeled support set, and facilitates interactive query answering directly from the document content. Experimental results demonstrate that our approach achieves competitive accuracy even with minimal training data, offering significant potential for enhancing document management workflows in real-world scenarios.*

***Key Words*: Document Classification, Optical Character Recognition, Transformer Models, Few-shot Learning, Question Answering, Generative AI.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of industries has led to an unprecedented increase in the volume and diversity of documents. Organizations today handle an array of documents including invoices, legal contracts, academic research papers, and various scanned forms. This growing complexity necessitates the development of robust document management systems that can efficiently organize, classify, and retrieve information. Traditional methods that rely on convolutional neural networks (CNNs) for image-based document classification have demonstrated significant promise; however, their effectiveness is often constrained by the need for large-scale annotated datasets and high computational demands. Moreover, conventional approaches to querying document content rely heavily on manual intervention, which can be both labor-intensive and error-prone.

Advances in generative AI and transformer architectures have recently revolutionized natural language processing tasks, enabling the extraction of deep semantic information from text with relatively little supervision. These transformer-based models are capable of converting textual data into high-dimensional embeddings that encapsulate nuanced semantic meanings, even when trained on limited data. This development opens up new possibilities for building document classification systems that require only a few labeled examples per class, significantly reducing the barriers associated with data scarcity.

In response to these challenges, we propose the Smart Document Companion—an integrated system that automates document classification and query answering. The system begins with an enhanced Optical Character Recognition (OCR) pipeline that preprocesses incoming documents through techniques such as grayscale conversion, adaptive thresholding, and noise reduction. For PDF documents, the first page is converted to an image using PyMuPDF, and then processed with Tesseract OCR to extract text. The extracted text is subsequently transformed into semantic embeddings using pre-trained language models. These embeddings form the basis of a few-shot classification framework, where the similarity between the embedding of a new document and a support set of labeled examples is computed using cosine similarity, and the class with the highest average similarity is assigned.

In addition to classification, the Smart Document Companion integrates a transformer-based question answering (QA) module. This QA module uses the extracted document text as context and leverages models such as DistilBERT fine-tuned on the SQuAD dataset to provide precise answers to user queries. By automating both the classification and query answering processes, our system aims to dramatically reduce the time and effort required for document management and to minimize human error.

The contributions of this work are threefold: (1) we develop an enhanced OCR pipeline that significantly improves text extraction quality from both images and PDFs; (2) we introduce an embedding-based few-shot classification framework that enables accurate document categorization with minimal training data; and (3) we integrate an interactive transformer-based QA module that allows for dynamic query answering directly from the

document content. This unified approach not only enhances the accuracy and efficiency of document management but also lays the groundwork for future developments in intelligent document analysis.

2. RELATED WORKS

Recent advancements in document understanding have significantly influenced the development of intelligent document management systems. Traditional approaches based on convolutional neural networks (CNNs) have demonstrated success in visual feature extraction; however, they often require extensive annotated datasets and fail to capture the intricate interplay between textual and layout information inherent in documents.

Xu et al. introduced LayoutLMv2 [1], a multimodal transformer that simultaneously incorporates textual, visual, and layout features. Their model employs a unified pre-training strategy that significantly improves downstream document classification and information extraction tasks. The integration of these multiple modalities has set a new benchmark for document understanding, highlighting the importance of contextual and structural cues in achieving higher accuracy.Following this, DocFormer [2] proposed an end-to-end transformer architecture that effectively models both the semantic content and the spatial arrangement of document elements. By leveraging the transformer's attention mechanism, DocFormer captures complex dependencies between words and layout features, which is particularly beneficial for documents with structured forms and tables. This work illustrates that holistic document representations can lead to robust performance even in scenarios with limited training data.

In the realm of OCR, traditional engines such as Tesseract have long been used for text extraction; however, recent transformer-based approaches have demonstrated marked improvements. The TrOCR model [3] exemplifies this progress by utilizing transformer architectures pre-trained on large text corpora to achieve superior OCR accuracy. Although our system currently enhances Tesseract through advanced pre- processing, TrOCR provides valuable insights into future directions for achieving even higher-quality text extraction.

Graph-based methods have also emerged as a promising direction for document analysis. GraphDoc [4] employs graph neural networks to capture the relationships between various textual and layout components within a document. By modeling documents as graphs, this approach is able to extract and leverage structural information that traditional methods might overlook, offering a more nuanced understanding of complex document layouts.

While some recent studies, such as Donut [5], propose OCR- free document understanding by directly processing raw images with transformers, our approach opts for a hybrid method. We combine enhanced OCR-based text extraction with embedding-based classification and transformer-based query answering. This decision is motivated by the current maturity of OCR technologies and the need for clear, textual context to support interactive question answering.

For document-based question answering, the DocVQA dataset [6] has laid the groundwork by establishing benchmarks and challenges for extracting answers from document images. The techniques developed for DocVQA emphasize the necessity of integrating both visual and textual cues to accurately address user queries—a challenge that our system addresses by using the extracted plain text as context for a transformer-based QA module.

Additionally, the unified multimodal pre-training approach proposed by Li et al. [7] further reinforces the importance of combining text, layout, and visual features to build comprehensive document representations. Although our current system leverages only the text modality for classification and query answering, the insights from unified multimodal frameworks suggest promising future enhancements that could integrate visual and structural features for even greater accuracy.

In summary, these studies underscore the evolution from traditional CNN-based methods to more sophisticated transformer and graph-based approaches for document understanding. They provide the theoretical and empirical foundations that have guided our design decisions. By integrating enhanced OCR pre-processing, semantic embedding-based classification, and transformer-based interactive query answering, our Smart Document Companion represents a significant step toward more intelligent, efficient, and accessible document management systems.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGIES

3.1 Data Collection and Pre- processing

Our dataset comprises a wide variety of scanned documents obtained from multiple sources. These documents, which include invoices, academic papers, and scanned forms, are available in both image and PDF formats. For efficient processing and reliable classification, the dataset is organized into class- specific directories; each folder represents a distinct document type. Given the significant variability in document quality—such as differences in lighting, resolution, and noise—the pre- processing stage plays a critical role. Initially, each document image is converted to grayscale, reducing the complexity of the color space and emphasizing textual regions. This is followed by adaptive thresholding, which dynamically determines the optimal threshold for

binarizing the image, thus enhancing the contrast between the text and its background. Noise reduction techniques, including median blurring, are then applied to suppress unwanted artifacts while preserving essential text details. For PDF documents, the first page is rendered as an image using PyMuPDF, ensuring that the subsequent pre-processing steps can be uniformly applied across both image and PDF formats. This comprehensive pre-processing pipeline is designed to maximize the quality of the extracted text, thereby improving the downstream tasks of embedding generation and classification.

3.2 OCR and Text Extraction

Once pre-processing is complete, the system employs Tesseract OCR to extract textual information from the processed images. Tesseract, an open-source OCR engine, is configured with custom settings to handle the binarized and noise-reduced images effectively. For image documents, Tesseract directly converts the enhanced image into a string of plain text. In the case of PDFs, the first page—previously converted into an image by PyMuPDF—is similarly processed by Tesseract. The extracted text is crucial for the subsequent stages: it is not only used to compute semantic embeddings for classification but also stored as a reference context for the query answering module. Although experimental evaluations indicate that our enhanced OCR pipeline significantly improves text extraction accuracy, challenges remain, particularly when documents are of extremely low quality or contain unconventional layouts. Nevertheless, these OCR-derived texts form the backbone of our system by providing the raw content necessary for semantic analysis.

3.3 Embedding-Based Few-Shot Classification

Following text extraction, the plain text is transformed into high-dimensional semantic embeddings using a pre-trained language model. These embeddings capture the underlying semantic structure of the text, enabling the system to represent the content in a numerical vector space. Our approach adopts a few-shot learning paradigm: a support set is constructed from a limited number of labeled examples (typically between 2 and 5 samples per class). For a new document, its embedding is computed using the same pre-trained model and then compared to the embeddings in the support set using cosine similarity. The class associated with the support set that has the highest average similarity is selected as the predicted label. This method leverages the rich semantic information encapsulated by pre-trained models, allowing effective classification even when the available training data is sparse. The use of cosine similarity as a distance metric provides a transparent and interpretable way to assess the relevance of a new document to each class, although its performance is inherently dependent on the quality of the extracted text and the representational power of the embeddings.

3.4 Query Answering Module

The system's query answering capability is designed to facilitate interactive document analysis. After the OCR process, the extracted plain text is stored in a session variable, ensuring that it remains accessible for subsequent operations. When a user submits a query regarding the content of the document, the system uses this stored text as the default context for a transformer-based question answering (QA) pipeline. Specifically, the QA module leverages a model such as DistilBERT fine-tuned on the SQuAD dataset, which has been optimized to retrieve precise answers from provided contexts. Upon receiving a query, the QA pipeline processes both the query and the context, then extracts and returns an answer directly from the document's text. This interactive module not only provides immediate responses to user inquiries but also enhances the overall usability of the system by enabling dynamic, context-driven exploration of document contents.

3.5 System Integration

The entire methodology is integrated into a cohesive, user-friendly web application developed using Flask. The modular architecture of the application ensures that each component—OCR, embedding generation, classification, and QA—can be independently updated or replaced, providing flexibility for future enhancements. The web interface allows users to upload documents through a dedicated form, view the classification results along with the extracted plain text, and interact with the QA module by submitting queries. The backend handles all processing, from initial pre-processing and OCR extraction to semantic embedding computation and similarity-based classification, while also managing session data to support the query answering functionality. This integration results in a streamlined pipeline that effectively bridges the gap between raw document input and intelligent, interactive analysis, addressing the limitations of traditional document management systems

4. MODEL ARCHITECTURE

The Smart Document Companion is designed as an integrated, modular system that processes raw documents and delivers intelligent classification and query answering. The architecture is composed of several distinct yet interlinked modules, each responsible for a specific task.

These modules operate in a sequential pipeline—from document pre-processing and OCR text extraction to semantic embedding, few-shot classification, and interactive query answering.

4.1 Overall System Design

At the highest level, the system accepts documents in both image and PDF formats. Upon upload, the document undergoes rigorous pre-processing to enhance text clarity before it is passed to an OCR engine. The extracted plain text is then transformed into semantic embeddings using pre-trained language models. These embeddings are compared against a support set of labeled examples using cosine similarity to determine the document's class. Simultaneously, the extracted text is stored as context for the query answering module, which uses a transformer-based QA pipeline to respond to user queries. This multi-stage architecture allows the system to efficiently handle documents with minimal training data while providing real-time interactive analysis.

4.2 Key Modules

1.Pre-processing Module: This module is responsible for standardizing the quality of the input document. For images, techniques such as grayscale conversion, adaptive thresholding, and noise reduction (e.g., median blurring) are applied. For PDFs, the first page is rendered into an image using PyMuPDF, and identical pre-processing steps are executed. This standardization minimizes variations due to lighting, noise, or skew, ensuring that subsequent OCR is more reliable.

2.OCR and Text Extraction Module: After pre-processing, Tesseract OCR extracts the textual content from the enhanced image. This step converts visual information into a machine-readable plain text format. The extracted text serves a dual role: it forms the basis for semantic embedding generation for classification and is retained as context for the query answering component.

3.Embedding-Based Few-Shot Classification Module: The system employs a pre-trained language model to convert the extracted text into high-dimensional semantic embeddings. A support set is constructed from a limited number of labeled samples (typically 2–5 per class). The classification of a new document is performed by computing the cosine similarity between its embedding and those in the support set, with the highest average similarity determining the predicted label. This few-shot approach leverages rich semantic representations, thereby enabling effective classification even in data-sparse scenarios.

4.Query Answering Module: The interactive query component is built on a transformer-based question answering (QA) model. The module uses the previously extracted plain text as the default context to answer user queries. When a query is submitted, the QA pipeline—fine-tuned on datasets such as SQuAD—analyzes the query against the context and generates a relevant answer. This integration allows users to interactively explore document content and retrieve specific information without manual search.

5.User Interface and Integration Module: The entire workflow is unified within a Flask-based web application that provides a seamless user experience. The interface supports document uploads, displays classification results along with the extracted text, and facilitates query submissions. The modular design allows each component to be updated independently, ensuring that the system can evolve with advances in OCR, embedding models, and QA techniques.

4.3 Data Flow and Processing Pipeline

Once a document is uploaded, it is first routed through the pre-processing module to standardize its quality. The pre-processed image is then fed to the OCR module, which extracts the plain text. This text is simultaneously used to generate semantic embeddings for classification and stored as context for query answering. In the classification module, the new document's embedding is compared to a support set using cosine similarity; the class with the highest similarity is selected as the predicted label. Finally, the query module uses the stored text context to generate answers in response to user queries. This end-to-end pipeline ensures that the entire process—from document ingestion to interactive querying—is performed efficiently and accurately.

The overall system architecture comprises the following three main modules:

4.3.1 Document Processing Pipeline:

- **Input:** Document (Image/PDF)
- **Pre-processing:** Grayscale conversion, adaptive thresholding, noise reduction
- **OCR Engine:** Tesseract (for images) and PyMuPDF conversion (for PDFs)
- **Text Extraction:** Producing plain text

4.3.2 Embedding-Based Classification:

- **Embedding Generation:** Convert extracted text into semantic embeddings
- **Support Set Creation:** Store embeddings with class labels
- **Similarity Computation:** Classify new documents based on cosine similarity

4.3.3 Query Answering Module:

- **Context:** Use extracted document text
- **QA Pipeline:** Transformer-based model generates answers from context
- **Output:** Display answer to user queries

4.4 Summary of Key Components

Module	Function	Technologies/Techniques
Pre-processing	Enhances document quality through grayscale conversion, adaptive thresholding, and noise reduction for both images and PDFs.	OpenCV, PyMuPDF (for PDF conversion), adaptive thresholding, median blurring
OCR and Text Extraction	Converts pre-processed images to plain text using OCR.	Tesseract OCR
Embedding-Based Classification	Transforms extracted text into semantic embeddings and classifies documents using few-shot learning with cosine similarity.	Pre-trained language models, cosine similarity, support set construction
Query Answering	Allows interactive document querying by employing a transformer-based QA pipeline that uses the extracted text as context.	Transformer QA (e.g., DistilBERT fine-tuned on SQuAD), Hugging Face Transformers
User Interface & Integration	Provides a cohesive web interface that manages document uploads, displays results, and processes queries.	Flask, session management, modular system integration

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The system was evaluated on a dataset comprising documents from multiple categories. The dataset was partitioned into training, validation, and test sets using an 80:10:10 split. Key performance metrics—such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score—were used to assess the classification module, while the QA module was evaluated based on response relevance and correctness.

Our embedding-based classification model achieved an overall accuracy ranging from 90% to 95% in a few-shot setting. The QA module, leveraging the transformer-based pipeline, produced coherent answers that were directly derived from the extracted document text. Despite these promising results, certain challenges were observed. In cases where the document quality was low, the OCR output was suboptimal, leading to decreased embedding quality and lower classification performance. Similarly, the QA responses were directly impacted by the quality of the extracted text.

The experimental results indicate that our system is capable of performing effective document classification and query answering with minimal training data. The integration of advanced pre-processing techniques improves OCR accuracy, which is critical for the success of downstream tasks. However, our study also reveals that there is room for improvement—particularly in handling degraded documents. Future work may explore alternative OCR systems (such as transformer-based approaches) and the integration of visual features to complement the textual embeddings.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper presents the Smart Document Companion—a novel system that combines generative AI techniques for document classification and query answering. By integrating enhanced OCR, semantic embedding-based few-shot classification, and a transformer-based QA module, our system addresses the challenges of traditional document processing methods. Experimental results validate the system's potential, even with limited training data, and highlight its applicability in real-world document management scenarios. Future research will focus on improving OCR robustness, incorporating multimodal data fusion, and fine-tuning QA models for domain-specific applications.

7. REFERENCES

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