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# Reverse Engineering of Deceptions on Machine- and Human-Centric Attacks

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# Reverse Engineering of Deceptions on Machine- and Human-Centric Attacks

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### ABSTRACT

This work presents a comprehensive exploration of Reverse Engineering of Deceptions (RED) in the field of adversarial machine learning. It delves into the intricacies of machineand human-centric attacks, providing a holistic understanding of how adversarial strategies can be reverse-engineered to safeguard AI systems. For machine-centric attacks, we cover reverse engineering methods for pixel-level perturbations, adversarial saliency maps, and victim model information in adversarial examples. In the realm of human-centric attacks, the focus shifts to generative model information inference and manipulation localization from generated images. Through this work, we offer a forward-looking perspective on the challenges and opportunities associated with RED. In addition, we provide foundational and practical insights in the realms of AI security and trustworthy computer vision.

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# 1

# Introduction

In the domain of trustworthy computer vision (CV) and adversarial machine learning (ML), the emergence of Reverse Engineering of Deceptions (**RED**) marks a pivotal evolution. This monograph is poised to grant readers a profound understanding of RED, a novel and dynamic field at the intersection of AI security and CV (DARPA, 2021). The existing body of research in the field has exhaustively explored machinecentric deceptions, such as adversarial attacks aimed at misleading ML models (Goodfellow et al., 2014b; Madry et al., 2017), and humancentric deceptions, particularly the utilization of generative models to fool human decision-making (Creswell et al., 2018; Dhariwal and Nichol, 2021). In the above context, RED introduces an innovative adversarial learning paradigm with the ambitious goal of deciphering and cataloging the intricacies of attacks targeted at both machines and humans.

The concept of RED is not merely an academic exercise; it is a crucial response to the increasing sophistication of adversarial tactics in CV. This burgeoning field seeks to automate the process of recovering and indexing attack 'fingerprints' embedded in adversarial instances. The core question that RED endeavors to answer is: Given an attack, whether machine-centric or human-centric, can we reverse-engineer the adversary's underlying knowledge and the specifics of their attack toolchains? This question extends beyond the realm of traditional adversarial detection and defense techniques, delving into the deeper layers of adversary intentions, methodologies, and the nuances of model generation.

**RED for 'machine-centric' attacks.** Recent years have witnessed a rapid expansion in RED research. As for adversarial attacks designed to fool discriminative models, *i.e.*, machine-centric attacks, RED aims not only to defend against these attacks but also to infer the adversary's knowledge, including their identity, objectives, and the details of the attack perturbations. Recent works in this area, such as those by Nicholson and Emanuele (2023), Wang et al. (2023), Maini et al. (2021), Zhou and Patel (2022), Guo et al. (2023c), and Moayeri and Feizi (2021), have focused on reverse-engineering the type of attack generation methods and the associated hyperparameters, like perturbation radius and step number. There is also a growing interest in estimating or attributing adversarial perturbations used in constructing adversarial images (Gong et al., 2022; Goebel et al., 2021; Souri et al., 2021; Thaker et al., 2022), an endeavor closely related to adversarial purification techniques (Srinivasan et al., 2021; Shi et al., 2021; Yoon et al., 2021; Nie et al., 2022) which aim to mitigate the impact of such attacks on model predictions. We note that RED is distinct from research focused on reverse engineering model hyperparameters in a black-box setting (Oh et al., 2019; Wang and Gong, 2018), which typically involves estimating model attributes from the model's prediction logits. By contrast, in the realm of RED against adversarial attacks, the victim model attribute is unknown, and the only available information is the dataset of attack instances.

**RED for 'human-centric' attacks.** Generative Models (GMs) nowadays generate visually compelling images. However, they also introduce the risk of *human-centric attacks*, leading to the inadvertent spread of misinformation and threats to the trustworthiness of social media. To counteract these negative impacts, two recent research directions aim to reverse engineering deception — model parsing of generative models and

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manipulation localization. Firstly, model parsing (Asnani et al., 2023b; Guo et al., 2023a) involves extracting GM hyperparameters used in creating falsified images. Unlike previous model parsing works (Tramèr et al., 2016; Oh et al., 2019; Hua et al., 2018; Batina et al., 2019), which often required additional prior knowledge to predict training information or model hyperparameters, Asnani et al. (2023b) employs a clustering-based approach to estimate mean and standard deviation across different GMs. In contrast, Guo et al. (2023a) introduces a novel framework based on Graph Convolution Networks to learn dependencies among these 37 hyperparameters. Secondly, manipulation localization is a well-established computer vision research topic that identifies tampered regions to deduce crucial information about deception. Existing work has predominantly focused on manipulation in either the image editing (Wu et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2018; Mayer and Stamm, 2018; Chen et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2020) or digital domain (Dang et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2022). In contrast, we introduce two manipulation localization algorithms (Asnani et al., 2023a; Guo et al., 2023b) in this work, which are capable of handling both domains simultaneously.

**Objective and impact of this tutorial.** We aim to present an allencompassing exploration of RED, from its algorithmic underpinnings to its burgeoning applications, complemented by practical implementations. Delving into various formulations of RED, this monograph will unravel both the challenges and opportunities inherent in this field. The significance of RED becomes particularly salient in high-stakes applications, such as biometrics, autonomous driving, and healthcare, where the defense against and diagnosis of attacks are paramount. The implications of RED could extend beyond the boundaries of academic research, impacting the real-world deployment of machine intelligence.

Furthermore, the pressing need for security and trustworthiness in future CV models underscores the importance of our work. As the popularity of adversarial ML surges, it becomes increasingly crucial to ensure that research progress aligns with the demand for robust and reliable AI systems. By investigating how one can reverse-engineer threat models from adversarial instances, such as adversarial examples

and images synthesized by generative models, our monograph offers new perspectives and insights.

**Organization.** The remainder of this monograph is structured as follows: Sections 2 and 3 will offer insights into the RED in machine-centric adversarial images and their potential implications for model parsing of adversarial attacks (*i.e.*, inferring details of a victim model used for attack generation). Sections 4 and 5 will delve into the RED in the human-centric attack, focusing on two research topics: model parsing of generative models and manipulation localization. Model parsing of generative models involves predicting hyperparameters used in the generative model, given the generated image. In parallel, manipulated region, and this segmented mask serves to reverse engineer crucial information about the malicious manipulation method. Finally, in Section 6, we will explore the broader impact of RED on other pertinent domains and offer our concluding remarks.

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