

Referee for: Replicating “Predicting the Present with Google Trends.” by Hyunyoung Choi and Hal Varian, *The Economic Record*, Vol. 88, Special Issue, June, 2012, 2.9.

Overall, I think this note was thoughtful and well-done, and I recommend publication. However, I have a few suggestions below that the authors/editor may want to consider for the final version.

- I think there is too much space devoted to the question of why the paper was chosen. Too much on citations of this paper vs. others in the genre. Also, I suspect the reason why this paper has received more citations is because Hal Varian was on the paper, and he is quite famous. This is more likely than his google affiliation. (Also, may be an accurate signal of the paper’s quality, although I haven’t read the papers in question.)
- There are some issues with grammar and punctuation. *E.g.*, “(2010)’s conclude”.
- The formatting in the table could and should be improved. More importantly, the table should include many more notes so that a reader can understand it without reference to the text.
Which is the key variable/search terms?
 - There is no need for 6 significant figures in the table! Must shrink to 3 digits max.
 - The table should include t-scores.
 - I would drop the vertical lines in the table.
 - Can we see the in-sample and out-of-sample forecast accuracy (perhaps, mean squared errors) for each of the models?
 - In the notes, explain that “suvs” is searches for “Trucks and SUVs”, and change the title to that from suvs.
 - Suppress the intercept.
 - Put “Trucks and SUVs” and insurance first, as they are the relevant search terms.
- You should explain more about what Choi and Varian do and what you do before you insert the table.
- Is a possible reason why the US Sales series differs from Varians that the US government revised the series at some point?
- Another replication possibility is to try other search terms for the same topic. One could even ask the initial authors how many terms they tried before settling on that particular one.