Google News Initiative

Lesson 4

# Google Trends:

## Understanding the data.

How to interpret Trends results.

**Course 1: Training Center Fundamentals**

This course teaches skills every journalist needs for reporting in the digital age. You will learn a broad range of practical tools that you can use immediately.

# Lesson Overview

## Sourcing Google Trends data.

Google Trends analyzes a percentage of Google web searches to determine how many searches were done over a certain period of time.

For example, if you're doing a story about immigration in the EU, search the term immigration and choose Greece and Past 12 months in the dropdown menus below the search bar. Trends analyzes a percentage of all searches for immigration within those parameters.


**3** Reading the Interest Over Time graph.

**4** Finding the most searched topic in every region or country.

**5** Rising data.

**6** Reading the Related searches chart.

**8** Data that is excluded.

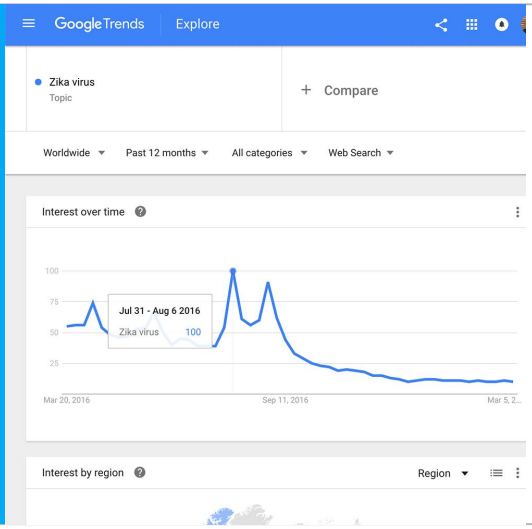

For more lessons, visit:

newsinitiative.withgoogle.com/training/course/fundamentals

Card 1

# Reading the Interest Over Time graph.

When you search for a term on Trends, you'll see a graph showing the term's popularity over time in (nearly) real time. Hovering your mouse over the graph reveals a number, which reflects how many searches have been done for the particular term relative to the total number of searches done on Google.



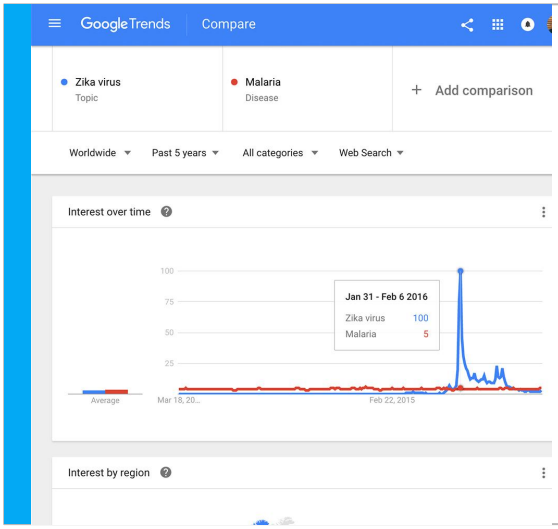

Numbers on the graph don't represent absolute search volume numbers, because the data is normalized and presented on a scale from 0–100, where each point on the graph is divided by the highest point, or 100. The numbers next to the search terms at the top of the graph are summaries, or totals.

A line trending downward means that a search term's relative popularity is decreasing—not necessarily that the total number of searches for that term is decreasing, but that its popularity compared to other searches is shrinking.

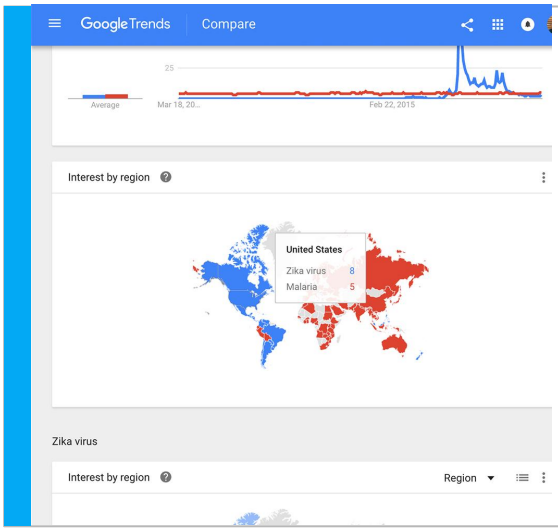
Card 2

# Finding the most searched topic in every region or country.

When you search for multiple terms on Trends, you'll see a comparative map showing which term or topic is most searched in each region.




Interest over time comparison. Let's compare the search terms "zika virus" and "malaria." You'll find that over time, malaria experiences a steady query rate while zika was barely searched for until a huge spike in January 2016.

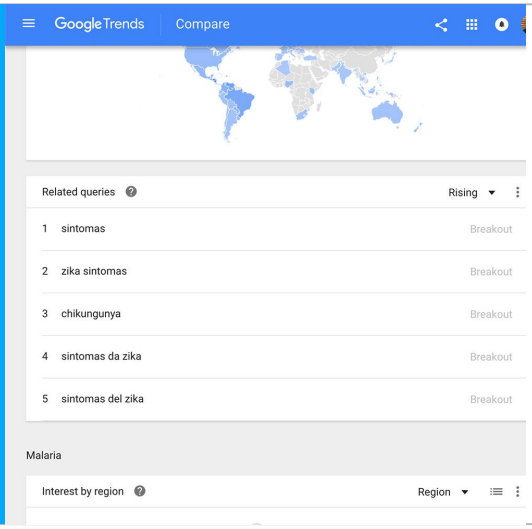



Interest by region comparison. Looking at search interest by region shows that Zika virus was more searched in the U.S. and Brazil but malaria was a more popular search topic in India and Southeast Asia.

Card 3

# Rising data.

At the bottom of your results page is the Related Searches chart, which can be used to determine the top and rising terms associated to any topic or trending story. On the chart, the Rising tab represents terms that were searched for with the term you entered (or overall, if no search term was entered) which had the most significant growth in volume in the requested time period. For each rising search term, you'll see a percentage of the term's growth compared to the previous time period. If you see "Breakout" instead of a percentage, it means that the search term grew by more than 5000%.

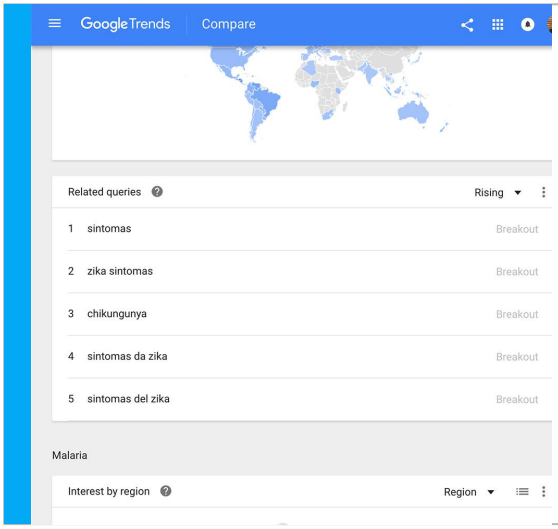



The percentages are based on the percent increase in search interest for the selected time frame. If we're looking at the last 7 days, the benchmark for the rise in searches for the term "zika virus" would be 7 days prior; if it was the last 30 days, the benchmark would be for the 30 days prior. The only exception is when viewing the full history (2004–Present), when the percentages are benchmarked at 2004.

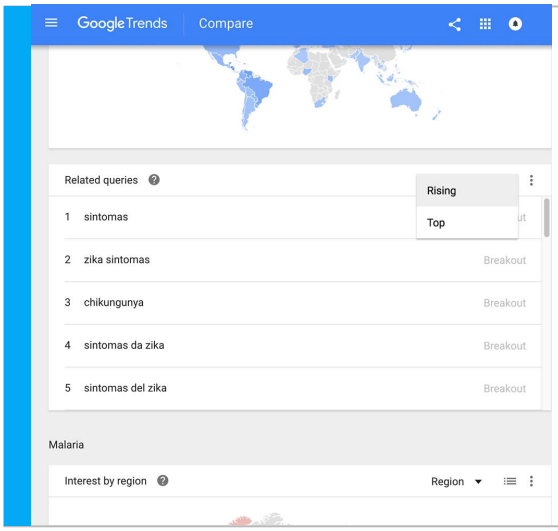
Card 4

# Reading the Related searches chart.

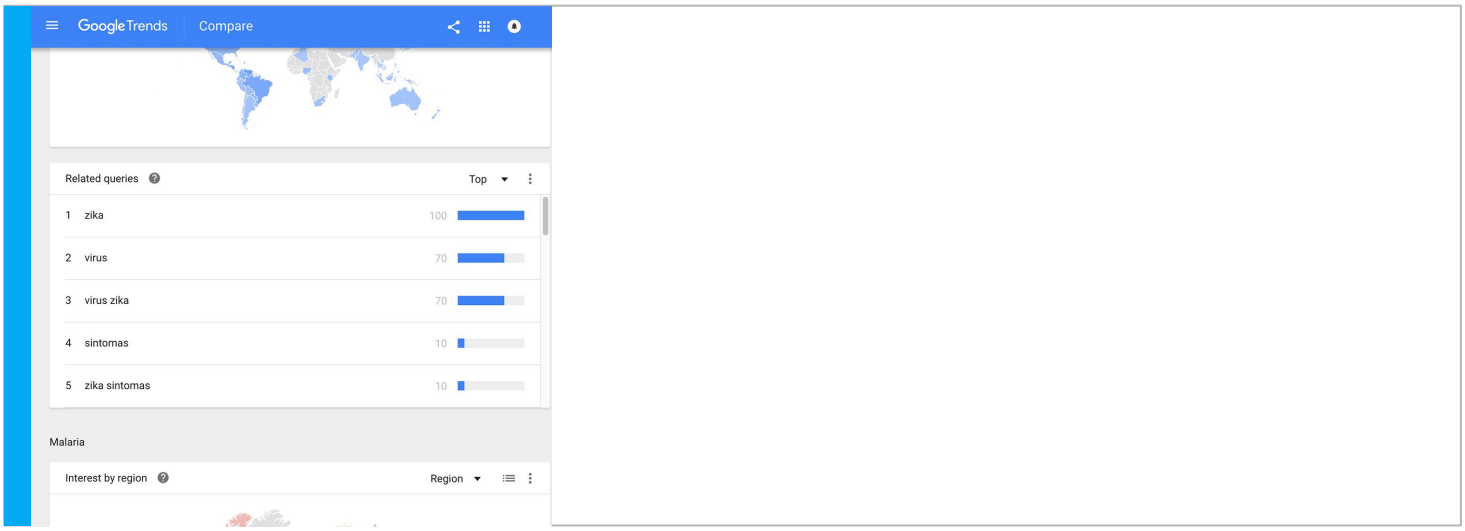
Click the dropdown to see Top terms.




This table shows terms that are most frequently searched with the term you entered, in the same search session, with the same chosen category, country or region.




If you didn't choose a search term (and just chose a category or region), overall searches are displayed.


Google Trends
Compare
Related queries
Top
1 zika 100
2 virus 70
3 virus zika 70
4 sintomas 10
5 zika sintomas 10
Malaria
Interest by region
Region

Card 5

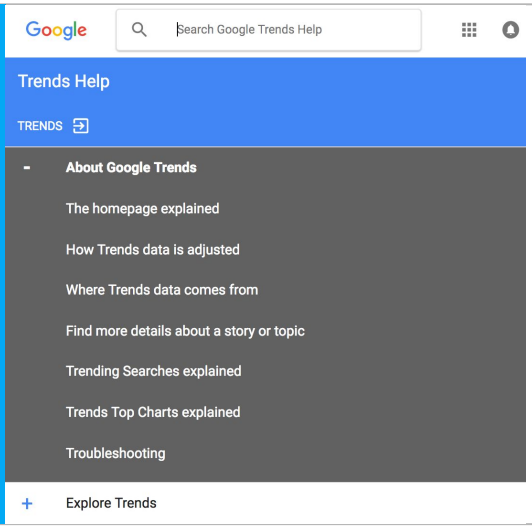
# Data that is excluded.

Trends excludes certain data from your searches:

— Searches made by very few people: Trends only analyzes data for popular terms, so search terms with low volume appear as 0 for a given time period.

— Duplicate Searches: Trends eliminates repeated searches from the same user over a short period of time for better overall accuracy.

— Special characters: Trends filters out queries with apostrophes and other special characters.

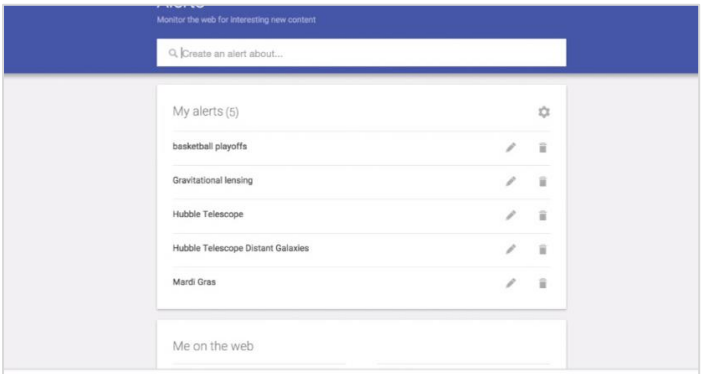



To learn more about the data used in Google Trends, visit the Help Center at [trends.google.com](trends.google.com)

# Congratulations!

## You completed “Google Trends: Understanding the data.”

If you want to learn more tools that will help you research, report and distribute your stories, go to the  Training Center website for the next lesson in the Fundamentals Course:




5 min estimated time

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