**Google Trends Guide**

Google Trends Teacher Reference

Google Trends is a publicly available tool from Google that allows a user to enter search terms and see a visual representation of that searches’ change in volume (how often people are searching for that term). Google Trends data goes back to 2004, and the data returned after a keyword is entered consists of the following components.

**Categories**

Google Trends takes any search term entered and fits it to a set of predetermined categories based on the potential search results of the search term. A category is based on a market or industry such as sports, medicine, and entertainment. A search term will very often break down into several categories. If this is the case, a percentage value will be added to each category listing indicating the proportion of search results that relate to that category. These search term percentages may not add up to 100% as only categories with over a 5-10% relevance to your search terms are shown. Categories are also divided into subcategories. Clicking on a category will display the subcategories.

**Interest over time**

Displayed as a graph, interest over time is the primary metric that Google Trends tracks. Interest over time is calculated by taking the number of searches for a certain term relative to the total volume of searches via Google. This means that the number of searches for your selected term may not change, but its share of the total search volume may increase or decrease. In this way, the results for a particular search term are normalized to account for variable such as increasing computer usage, increased use of Google services, and other outside variables. If there is not enough search volume for Google to calculate interest over time, those portions of the graph will display 0. This does not mean that interest has completely vanished, but it is lower that the level needed for Google Trends to display relevant data.

**News Headlines**

Incorporated into the graph are lettered points for relevant news headlines. These headlines are displayed when Google Trends detects a peak in interest for a search term. Using the timeframe of the interest peak, Google Trends randomly locates sample news articles that contained the search term. In this way, Google Trends does not necessarily display the most popular news articles, but takes a “snapshot” of what was published in the news during the time of the spike in interest for a particular term. If interest over time is very low, there may not be enough data to display related news headlines.

**Regional Interest**

Regional interest in a search term is displayed both as a list and a geographical color map. Regional interest is calculated by the number of searches done for the selected term and normalizing it against the total number of Google searches originating from that particular region. In this way, a small country can show a higher level of interest than a larger country.

**Top Searches**

Top searches are determined by examining search terms that users entered before or after entering the selected search term. For example, if enough users search for “Concussion” and immediately then for “Concussion Symptoms” these terms will appear in the top searches for each other. This is an automatic system so some search terms that are not relevant to your chosen term may appear.

**Rising Searches**

Rising searches are related search terms that have shown a significant increase within a specified time period when compared to the previous time period. The default time range (2004-Present) considers a search a rising search when its popularity increases when compared to initial 2004 levels.

**Comparing Search Terms**

Google Trends allows users to compare multiple search terms. When viewing multiple search terms the interest over time graph is scaled to the highest rated term.