

## Secular Trending in Select Search Engines: The Ups & Downs in Results

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper is the outcome of a research conducted on four search engines viz., Google, Bing, Yahoo, and Baidu to evaluate the trending in their results. The objectives were accompanied by collection of series of data using simple keyword "Reprints" in the field of Library and Information Science. 50 days of projected trend was compared from 100 days of data series, collected on daily basis. The evaluation reveal that Bing shows a positive secular trend while Google, Yahoo! and Baidu show a downward or negative secular trend.

**Keywords:** Trending, Reprints, Search engine, Fluctuation.

### I. INTRODUCTION

From navigation to information sources, from encyclopedia to digital libraries, from chunks of information to information explosion, web is used as a primary tool for all purpose in today's digital era. Various reference tools are used to search information on the web including search engines (Madden, 2003; Fallows, 2004) which can differ in working, algorithm and the mechanism for quality indexing (Sullivan, 2005). However the results yielded for a number of queries rank in several thousand or even in millions due to the availability of infinite amount of information. However many studies show that only first few results are browsed by the users or few pages on an average only two pages with a default of 10 results per page, a total of 20 results (Silverstein, Henzinger, Marais & Moricz, 1999; Spink, Ozmutlu, Ozmutlu & Jansen, 2002; Jansen & Spink, 2004; Jansen, Spink & Pedersen, 2005) which determines the success of a search engine therefore result ranking holds utmost importance in this regard. Result ranking was merely based on term frequency and the inverse document frequency in case of classical Information Retrieval system (Baeza-Yates & Ribeiro-Neto, 1999). Various parameters are taken into account in Web search results ranking as number of links pointing to a given web page (Brin & Page, 1998; Google, 2016), the anchor text of the links pointing to the web page, the placement of the search terms in the document (terms occurring in title or header may get a higher weight), the distance between the search terms, popularity of the page (in terms of the number of times it is visited), the text appearing in metatags (Yahoo, 2016), subject specific authority of the web page (Kleinberg, 1999; Teoma, 2005), recently in search index and exactness of the hits (MSN, 2005). There is always an ongoing competition between search engines and Web page authors for users and high ranking respectively, which is why the algorithm ranking are kept a secret by the search engine companies as Google states (Google, 2016), "Due to the nature of our business and our interest in protecting the integrity of our search results, this is the only information we make available to the public about our ranking system". Apart from this search engines keep on updating and upgrading their algorithm so to improve their ranking of results. Nowadays search engine optimization industries are present which design and redesign Web pages in order to enhance their rankings within a specific search engine (e.g., search engine optimization Inc., [www.seoine.com/](http://www.seoine.com/)). Therefore in the crux it can be concluded that the First ten results retrieved for a query have major chances of being visited by the users. In addition to the examination of changes overtime for the top ten results related to a query of the largest search engine, which at the times of first data collection were Google, yahoo and Tacoma (MSN search came out if beta on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 in the midst of data collection for the second round (Payne, 2005). However various transformations between the user's "visceral need" (a fuzzy view of the information problem in user's mind) and the "compromised need" (the way the query is phrased taking into account the limitations of the search tool at hand) (Taylor, 2009). Above all the fluctuation of a result related to a query can only be judged by the user while some researchers claim that it is impractical due to the presence of a large number of documents related to

a query and all of them can't be viewed by the user, hence for checking fluctuation a panel of judges is required (Gordon & Pathak, 1999; TREC, 2014).

### Problem

In the beginning of internet searching was direct and command driven. Systems such as Archie, Gopher, and Veronica were command driven rather graphical user interface. These software's didn't cope with the information explosion. The advent of many types of search engines provided solution for literature search using Boolean operators, Proximity searching, Wild cards, Truncation etc. Many search engines developed new versions and techniques to achieve some kind of sophistication but all have not helped to forward the case of access and searching from scholar's perspective. Besides keeping in view different ways of indexing the internet, search engines operate in different ways and retrieve documents in different orders. Further, it does not sift information from scholar's point of view i.e., it retrieves information on a particular topic from different aspects like marketing, advertisement, news and entertainment mixed with some research papers. The academic community attempts to look purely for scholarly information on his topic of interest to have output/ retrieval best in terms of comprehensiveness and devoid of fluctuations etc.

The present investigation attempts to evaluate the performance of the select search engines in terms of result fluctuation captured in two phases to check the consistency of search engines.

### Objectives

- To select search engines.
- To select search term for the study.
- To collect data for 100 days.
- To compare trending by forecasting of time series analysis.

## II. METHOD

There are tons of search engines currently working on the internet to find needle in a haystack, as finding information is like "needle" and web is like "haystack". The International Standard Organisation (ISO) has certified 230 search engines (Promote3.com, 2016). These search engines are of various types like general search engine, robotic search engine, Meta search engine, directories and specialized search engines. Most users prefer robotic search engines as they allow the users to compose their own queries rather than simply follow pre specified search paths or hierarchy as in case of directories. Moreover, robotic search engines locate data in a similar way i.e., by the use of crawlers or worms. This distinguishing feature differentiates them from web directories like Yahoo! Where collections of links to retrieve URL's are created and maintained by subject experts or by means of some automated indexing process. However some of these services also include a robot driven search engine facility. But this is not their primary purposes. This due to this feature Yahoo! Was included for the study.

Meta search engine e.g., Dogpile etc don't have their own database. These access the database of many robotic search engines simultaneously. Thus these were excluded for the study.

Still hundreds of robotic general search engines navigate the web, in order to limit the scope of study after preliminary study, following criteria was laid down for selection of general search engines:-

- a) Availability of automated indexing
- b) Global coverage to data.
- c) Quick response time.
- d) Availability of result counter.

Following two general search engines were selected for the study for meeting all the criteria and being comprehensive in nature.

- a) Google.
- b) Baidu.

Since the study relates to the field of Library and Information Science but there is no specialized search engine in the subject so another specialized search engine which relates to the subject area i.e., Bing was taken for study. Thus the search engines undertaken for evaluation of study are:-

- a) Google (General)
- b) Bing (Specific)
- c) Yahoo! (Directory)
- d) Baidu (Country Specific General Search engine)

### III. SELECTION OF TERMS

Selection of terms is not directly possible in development and multidimensional field like Library and Information Science. Therefore, classification schemes like DDC (18<sup>th</sup>) and DDC (22<sup>nd</sup>) were consulted to understand Broad/Narrow structure of Library and Information Science. It helped to get five terms/Fields i.e.,

- a) Information System.
- b) Digital Library.
- c) Library Automation.
- d) Library Services.
- e) Librarianship.

These terms were then browsed in “LC list of subject Headings” which provided many other related terms (RT) and Narrow terms (NT). Further NT and RT attached to each other preferred or standard terms were also browsed which retrieve a large number of Library and Information Science terms. At first instance 140 Library and Information Science related terms were identified.

Some terms occurred more than once and duplication removed. It reduced the number to 100. Later terms were divided into three broad groups under:

- a) Application.
- b) Transformation.
- c) Inter-relation.

“Application” denotes utility of Library and Information science in various fields and about 50 terms came under this group. “Transformation” refers to a method of developing or manufacturing library services into practical market and 30 terms fall under this group. “Inter-relation” means transformation/dependence of one subject onto another and 20 terms came under this group.

Further each category is sub-divided into groups.

“Application” into four i.e., “Reference service”, “Informatics”, “Information Retrieval” & “Information Sources”. “Transformation” into two i.e., “Digitization” & “Consortia”. “Inter-relation” into two i.e., “Library Network” & “Information System”.

The terms in each group were arranged alphabetically and each term was given a tag. Later 19% of the terms were selected from each group using “Systematic Sampling” (i.e., first item selected randomly and next item after specific intervals). It further reduced the number to 19. Finally the selected terms were classified into three groups under “Simple”, “Compound” & “Complex Terms” (**Table:-1.0**). This was done in order to investigate how search engines control and handle simple and phrased terms.

“Simple Terms” containing a single word were submitted to the search engine in the natural form i.e., without punctuating marks. “Compound Terms” consisting of two words were submitted to the search engines in the form of phrases as suggested by respective search engines and “Complex Terms” composed of more than two words or phrases, were sent to the search engine with suitable Boolean operator “AND” & “OR” between the terms to perform special searches. From the Simple terms the 7<sup>th</sup> Keyword “*Reprints*” was taken for the study as the other keywords are already taken for other studies.

S. No	Simple terms	Compound Terms	Complex Terms
1	Catchwork	Bibliometric Classification	Digital Library Open Source Software
2	Citation	Citation Analysis	Health Information System
3	Dublincore	Comparative Librarianship	Library Information System
4	Indexing	Digital Preservation	Library Information Network
5	Manuscript	Electronic Repositories	Multimedia Information Retrieval
6	Plagiarism	Library Automation	
7	Reprints	Semantic web	

**Table 1.0:** Keywords

#### The Ups and Downs (Fluctuation)

When a keyword is entered in a search engine, the result displayed will differ from the same keyword which is entered with a time gap, as the documents on web are consistently been altered in terms of quantitative and qualitative procedures. These quantitative and qualitative changes are expressed as fluctuations. The quantitative changes are expressed as “Result Fluctuations” and the qualitative changes are expressed as “Document” and “Indexing Fluctuations”. A fluctuation may show decrease or increase in number of documents. However, growth in size of the database is a continuous and usual routine of the search engines. Thus increase and decrease is taken into account here.

A “Result Fluctuation” appears when a search engine show increase/decrease in total number of results for a query that is searched at two different intervals of time. In other words the total number of results retrieved for a query in second observation may be less as retrieved in the first observation. Thus result fluctuation appears when there is increase/decrease in the number of results for a query tested over time i.e., the number of results in succeeding observation may be more or less than the results of the preceding observation.

**Secular Trending in Search Engine**

The Trending is an estimate of a future event achieved by systematically combining and casting forward in predetermined way from the data about the past. It is simply a statement about the future prediction. Trending are possible only when a history of data exists. The study collected 100 days of data samples from four search engine out of seven as result-counter was available with Google, Bing, Yahoo and Baidu. The data collection was carried on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 and ended on 18<sup>th</sup> of August, 2016 collecting 100 samples for keyword “Reprints” in four search engines **Table:-1.1**.

For forecasting process few points were taken into consideration as:

- 1) Fluctuation of search results and sustainability
- 2) 100 days of data sampling were taken into consideration (**Table:- 1.1**).
- 3) As the data is seasonal, Trend Projection Method was taken into consideration.
- 4) Total results were taken from result search counter of search engine.
- 5) A forecast of 50 days was generated (**Table:-1.2**).
- 6) The results were evaluated on a scattered graph with regression line

**Table 1.1:-** Time series data for forecasting of Select Search engines for the keyword “Reprints”

Days (t)	Google			Bing			Yahoo!			Baidu		
	Result (Y <sub>t</sub> )	Multiplication of Days and Results (tY <sub>t</sub> )	Square of Days (t) <sup>2</sup>	Result (Y <sub>t</sub> )	Multiplication of Days and Results (tY <sub>t</sub> )	Square of Days (t) <sup>2</sup>	Result (Y <sub>t</sub> )	Multiplication of Days and Results (tY <sub>t</sub> )	Square of Days (t) <sup>2</sup>	Result (Y <sub>t</sub> )	Multiplication of Days and Results (tY <sub>t</sub> )	Square of Days (t) <sup>2</sup>
1	46000000	46000000	1	12300000	12300000	1	32700000	32700000	1	9240000	9240000	1
2	46100000	92200000	4	12400000	24800000	4	32700000	65400000	4	9290000	18580000	4
3	46100000	138300000	9	12400000	37200000	9	32700000	98100000	9	9290000	27870000	9
4	46100000	184400000	16	12300000	49200000	16	32700000	130800000	16	9290000	37160000	16
5	46100000	230500000	25	12300000	61500000	25	32600000	163000000	25	9290000	46450000	25
6	46200000	277200000	36	11900000	71400000	36	32700000	196200000	36	9380000	56280000	36
7	46300000	324100000	49	11900000	83300000	49	32700000	228900000	49	8880000	62160000	49
8	46300000	370400000	64	11900000	95200000	64	32700000	261600000	64	9390000	75120000	64
9	46200000	415800000	81	12100000	108900000	81	32700000	294300000	81	9390000	84510000	81
10	46200000	462000000	100	12000000	120000000	100	32600000	326000000	100	9550000	95500000	100
11	46100000	507100000	121	12000000	132000000	121	32600000	358600000	121	9550000	105050000	121
12	46200000	554400000	144	12000000	144000000	144	32600000	391200000	144	9620000	115440000	144
13	46300000	601900000	169	12000000	156000000	169	32600000	423800000	169	9620000	125060000	169
14	46300000	648200000	196	12100000	169400000	196	32600000	456400000	196	9620000	134680000	196
15	46100000	691500000	225	12100000	181500000	225	32500000	487500000	225	9730000	145950000	225
16	46000000	736000000	256	12200000	195200000	256	32300000	516800000	256	9480000	151680000	256
17	46000000	782000000	289	12200000	207400000	289	32300000	549100000	289	9480000	161160000	289
18	45800000	824400000	324	12100000	217800000	324	32300000	581400000	324	9480000	170640000	324
19	45900000	872100000	361	12000000	228000000	361	32300000	613700000	361	9480000	180120000	361
20	46000000	920000000	400	12200000	244000000	400	32300000	646000000	400	9480000	189600000	400
21	45900000	963900000	441	12100000	254100000	441	32300000	678300000	441	9400000	197400000	441
22	45700000	1005400000	484	12100000	266200000	484	32200000	708400000	484	9400000	206800000	484
23	46300000	1064900000	529	12000000	276000000	529	32600000	749800000	529	9620000	221260000	529
24	46300000	1111200000	576	12100000	290400000	576	32600000	782400000	576	9620000	230880000	576
25	45800000	1145000000	625	12200000	305000000	625	32300000	807500000	625	9200000	230000000	625
26	45800000	1190800000	676	12400000	322400000	676	32300000	839800000	676	9110000	236860000	676
27	46000000	1242000000	729	12400000	334800000	729	32300000	872100000	729	9110000	245970000	729
28	45800000	1282400000	784	12500000	350000000	784	32200000	901600000	784	8940000	250320000	784
29	45700000	1325300000	841	12700000	368300000	841	32100000	930900000	841	8940000	259260000	841
30	45800000	1374000000	900	12700000	381000000	900	32100000	963000000	900	8740000	262200000	900
31	45800000	1419800000	961	12500000	387500000	961	32200000	998200000	961	8740000	270940000	961
32	45800000	1465600000	1024	12400000	396800000	1024	32300000	1033600000	1024	9110000	291520000	1024



#### IV. TYPES OF TREND PROJECTIONS

Trending describes the ups and downs of a fluctuation in a time-series forecasting where a trend line meets to a series of historical data points and then projects the line into the future for medium- to long range forecasts. The research has described the trend component with a line visually to a set of points on a graph. The graph, however, is subject to slightly different interpretations. There are three types of trend projection viz.,

- 1) Positive Secular Trend or Upward Secular Trend:- it describes the data into a upward or raising trend line.
- 2) Negative Secular Trend or Downward Secular Trend:- it describes the data into lowering trend line
- 3) Neutral Secular Trend or Straight Secular Trend:- no changes the data is consistent.

For the study 400 samples were taken into account to generate 200 results of projected data which are described in graphs.

The formula derived for the study is:-

$$t_t = b_0 + b_1 t$$

$b_0$  and  $b_1$  can be derived as:

$$b_0 = \bar{y} - b_1 \bar{t}$$

$$b_1 = \frac{n \sum t y_t - \sum t \sum y_t}{n \sum t^2 - (\sum t)^2}$$

Where

$t$  = days

$y_t$  = Result of the search query

The projected result **Table 1.2**, shows a vast fluctuation both in terms of positive Secular trend and negative secular trend. The estimate is given by a trending line.

**Table 1.2:-** Projected data using trend projection method for 50 days for the keyword “Reprints”

Days	Google	Bing	Yahoo!	Baidu
1	47631576	13179273	26491273	9148103
2	47668421	13205283	26326105	9143263
3	47708061	13234241	26156840	9139284
4	47748600	13264270	25983343	9135201
5	47790065	13293117	25805472	9131012
6	47832482	13322850	25620718	9126712
7	47878303	13343807	25433425	9124480
8	47927916	13364534	25241290	9109972
9	47979187	13384991	25044149	9107096
10	48029582	13410350	24841831	9104354
11	48081467	13433312	24631493	9106027
12	48132175	13456218	24415296	9108373
13	48186955	13479038	24193027	9113393
14	48246240	13501741	23964463	9119419
15	48307585	13527199	23729371	9126524
16	48365141	13552808	23484535	9138051
17	48421218	13581581	23226261	9143623
18	48478547	13610821	22959611	9150045
19	48530857	13637379	22684229	9157378
20	48586963	13660830	22399740	9165685
21	48647282	13690536	22105752	9175038
22	48705592	13717322	21801848	9182842
23	48758086	13744134	21484197	9191536
24	48831502	13767485	21169157	9208784
25	48907450	13793911	20843987	9227927
26	48968166	13823813	20497528	9234082
27	49029593	13861254	20138819	9237411
28	49099106	13899782	19767289	9240840
29	49162620	13943196	19378580	9237985
30	49223006	13995850	18971560	9234505
31	49287494	14051062	18548902	9222592
32	49352589	14101102	18113763	9209059

33	49418253	14149098	17665824	9208585
34	49492568	14198692	17200696	9207938
35	49560058	14254076	16713391	9200099
36	49644763	14311679	16198268	9185396
37	49723346	14371617	15670196	9168933
38	49803400	14434015	15116210	9150576
39	49889307	14499003	14543325	9125379
40	49972799	14566723	13946409	9097434
41	50062328	14641810	13324147	9066531
42	50158492	14715911	12666046	9037445
43	50248117	14793257	11987853	9005514
44	50339444	14874032	11275079	8970522
45	50451403	14963159	10544314	8943111
46	50567310	15061462	9776366	8895233
47	50697057	15160133	8983284	8864121
48	50822468	15268695	8144636	8808989
49	50962462	15383127	7276919	8770592
50	51123597	15508839	6369014	8710628

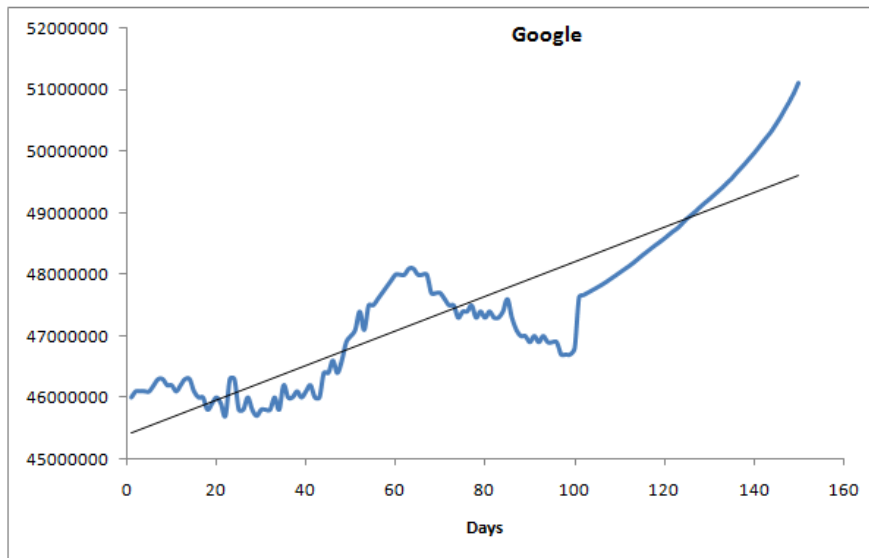


Fig 1.3:- Negative Secular Trend of Google for the keyword “Reprints”

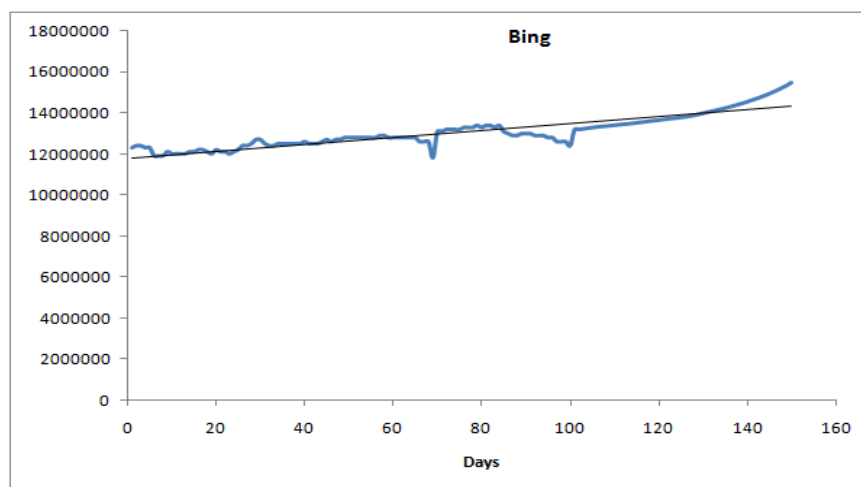


Fig 1.4:- Negative Secular Trend of Bing for the keyword “Reprints”

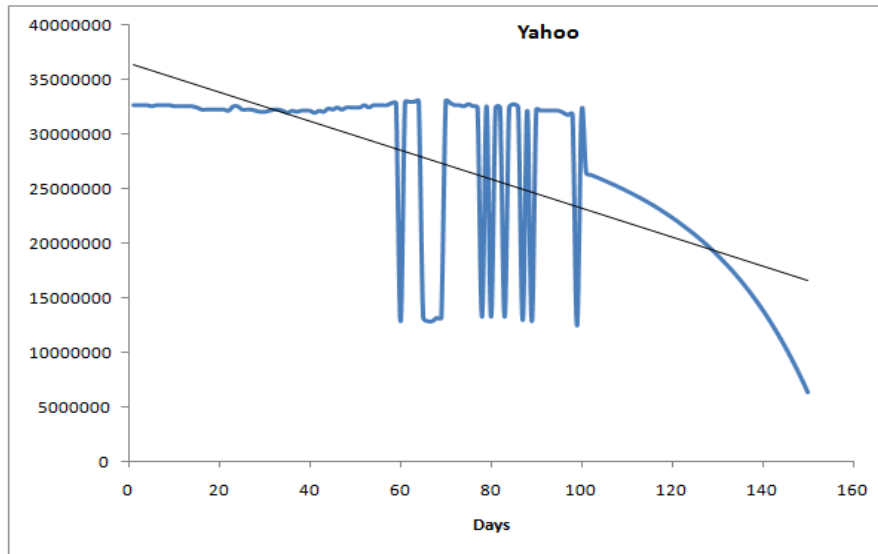


Fig 1.5:- Straight Secular Trend of Yahoo! for the keyword “Reprints”

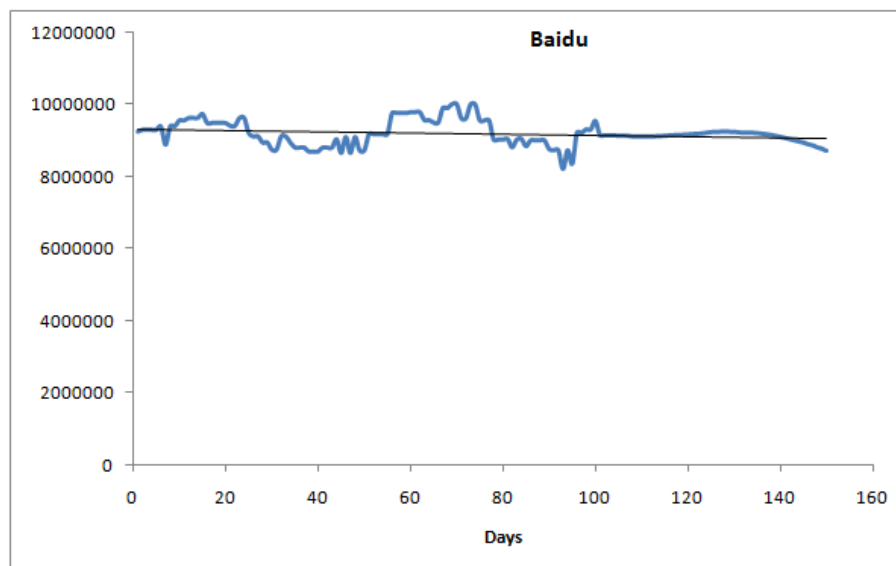


Fig 1.6:- Positive Secular Trend of Baidu for the keyword “Reprints”

## V. CONCLUSION

The trending of the search engines reveal that Google shows negative secular trend while Yahoo! also shows negative secular trend. Bing Shows an upward or positive trend, Baidu on the other hand also shows a negative secular trend. The data forecasted show a consistent growth in the database of Bing in terms of result fluctuation. Google, Yahoo! and Baidu drops down showing down secular trending resulting in loss in database.

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