

Detecting Sudden Rises in Traffic Demand Based on Route Search Request Logs

Kohei Ota, Reimi Ishimura and Naoki Nozu

NAVITIME JAPAN CO., LTD., Japan

Abstract.

1. Introduction

People often specify a time in the future as a departure or arrival time when they use online route search service (Figure 1). In this study, by using request logs of route search service, we attempted to detect sudden rises in traffic demand which have been difficult in a conventional method with statistical or forecasting models.

2. Data

In this study, we examined the possibility of detecting sudden rises in traffic demand which happened from March 18 to April 14, 2014, using the request logs between stations which were recorded from February 1 to March 17, 2014 with several route search services provided by NAVITIME JAPAN Co., Ltd.

3. Methods

It appears that the more route search requests were run in advance, the earlier forecasting a sudden rise in traffic demand becomes available.

First, we got the statistical increasing trend in the number of advance search requests (Figure 2). An advance search request is defined as a route search request which were run prior to specified departure or arrival time.

Second, we forecasted the growth of the number of the future route search requests which would be run prior to the specified time.

Third, we detected sudden rises. In this study, we defined a sudden rise as a case which per-hour retrieval frequencies by specified station and time-specification method (i.e. a specification of either departure or arrival time) become at twice the basic frequencies in an ordinary day and at least 50 times.

4. Results

During the target period, total 12,268 sudden rises happened. We detected 267 of them at 4 days before the specified time. The major part of them is happened for concerts, sporting events and, because of the season, graduation and entrance ceremonies of schools and the government (Table 1).

The following example is about a concert.

Figure 3 is a heat map, which shows top requested stations as origins or destinations with the route search services between 4 and 5 p.m. on April 13, 2014. Momoiro Clover Z, a Japanese idol group, held a concert on the day at Seibu Dome. Seibu-Kyūjō-mae, the nearest station of there, was the 7th most requested station at that time.

Figure 4 shows a time-based distribution of the number of route search requests of which the destination was Seibu-Kyūjō-mae and arrival date was April 13, 2014. A number of search requests are concentrated before the curtain time of the concert and the opening time of the merchandise booth. At April 9, or 4 days before the concert, the retrieval frequency of the hour before its curtain time had already become at 8 times the cumulated number of the route search requests in an ordinary day. This indicated that we can detect sudden rises in traffic demand by using request logs of route search service.

5. Discussion

We think that detecting sudden rises in traffic demand will improve public transportation services and retail marketing approaches. Especially during events such as 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, for which forecasting traffic demand is quite difficult, our study would contribute to suppress the traffic disruption and maximize its economic effects.

Keywords. Transportation forecasting, Online route search service, Route search request log