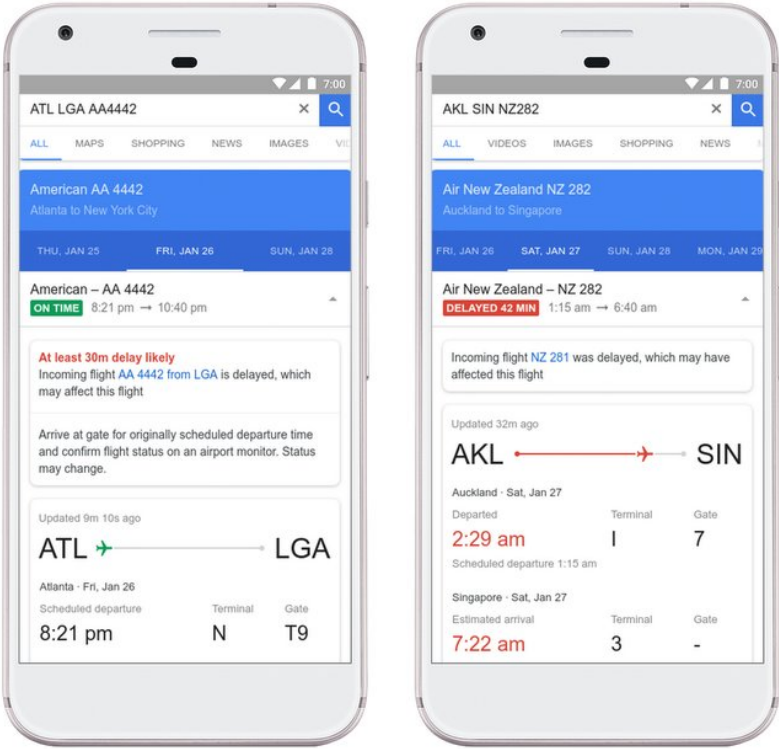


Machine learning algorithms go to work on Google Flights' delay predictions

February 1 2018, by Nancy Owano



Credit: Google

Google's penchant for giving us answers, in its new era of AI, is a gift that keeps on giving. A new item in Google's gift bag: extra trimmings on Google Flights.

What is [Google Flights](#)? It's an online [flight](#) booking search service; the

model is straightforward, an online service designed to make it easy to get going on airline tickets.

You can get help with predictions on the potential of your flight being delayed and more details on cheaper flights thanks to services announced by Google. As for flight delays, Google will also share reasons for the delays along with predictions.

SlashGear's Brittany Roston said [delay](#) notices had already been included in Google Flights but "the new ability adds a prediction element so that travelers can be alerted to potential delays before the airline has [announced](#) them."

In a posting dated Wednesday, "Get help with cheaper flights and potential flight delays this winter," authors Anket Mathur and Grace Danciu, who each have the title of "Flights Product Manager," announced prediction delay help available from Google Flights plus a feature "to help you feel [confident](#) about finding the cheapest fare."

So what? Aren't there enough efficient sites posting prices? Isn't this just a me-too show of numbers? Google looks into the other kinds of data that will tell you, though, if you are getting your money's worth if paying Basic Economy.

The authors noted considerations that factor in, "like overhead bin space, ability to select your seat, and baggage fees— are they or are they not included in the fare? Commented Jon Fingas in *Engadget*: "This won't make that ultra-basic [flight](#) any more pleasant, but it could help you decide whether or not the savings are really worth the extra hassle."

Google Flights will show the restrictions associated with these fares –as mentioned, such as using overhead space or the ability to choose a seat, and the fare's additional baggage fees. It's initially doing so for

American, Delta and United flights worldwide.

Sarah Perez in *TechCrunch*: "These changes come only a month after Google Flights added price tracking and deals to Google Flights as well as hotel search features for web [searchers](#)."

How does Google know the information: Three words (also predictable): machine learning algorithms.

Google said these can predict "some delays even when this information isn't available from airlines yet—and delays are only flagged when we're at least 80% confident in the prediction."

The machine learning algorithms use historical flight status data to help make the [prediction](#), Roston said.

So, you search for your flight ("American 4442") or the airline and flight route ("Air New Zealand Auckland to Singapore"), and the details will show up in your search results, said the two authors.

No news is worse than gloomy news when trying to travel. That is where the services have an edge. James Vincent in *The Verge* commented: "[Delays](#) and basic flight information your airline should be telling you: it's not fun, but at least it's helpful."

More information: [blog.google/topics/travel/get- ... light-delays-winter/](https://blog.google/topics/travel/get-...-light-delays-winter/)

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Citation: Machine learning algorithms go to work on Google Flights' delay predictions (2018, February 1) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2018-02-machine->

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