World Seaborne Trade in Real Time

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Diego Cerdeiro, Andras Komaromi,
Yang Liu, Mamoon Saeed

The views expressed here are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the view of the Executive Board, or IMF management.
THE PROBLEM

3 months
Lag of main trade volume indicator

Data lags

< 15%
Trade covered by trade finance (and not volumes)

Coverage
2 to 10 seconds
Frequency of radio messages sent by ships

Message combined with vessel information (e.g. container ship, 15 meters into the water, speed and position)
THE SOLUTION
Transforming raw messages into policy-relevant indicators

Spot the port

Rotterdam

Trader or passerby?

Average speed

Length of stay
e tc.

Classifier trained with U.S. data

Trader

Passerby

Volume? Import/Export?

How deep is the ship into the water?

Benchmarking

CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis

Jodi
RESULTS

- Macroeconomic nowcasting
- Event studies
- Sectoral analyses

Example: World exports
ESTIMATES AVAILABLE ONLINE

• Visualize metric tons estimates: https://comtrade.un.org/data/monitor

• Query interface for metric tons estimates: https://comtrade.un.org/data/ais