

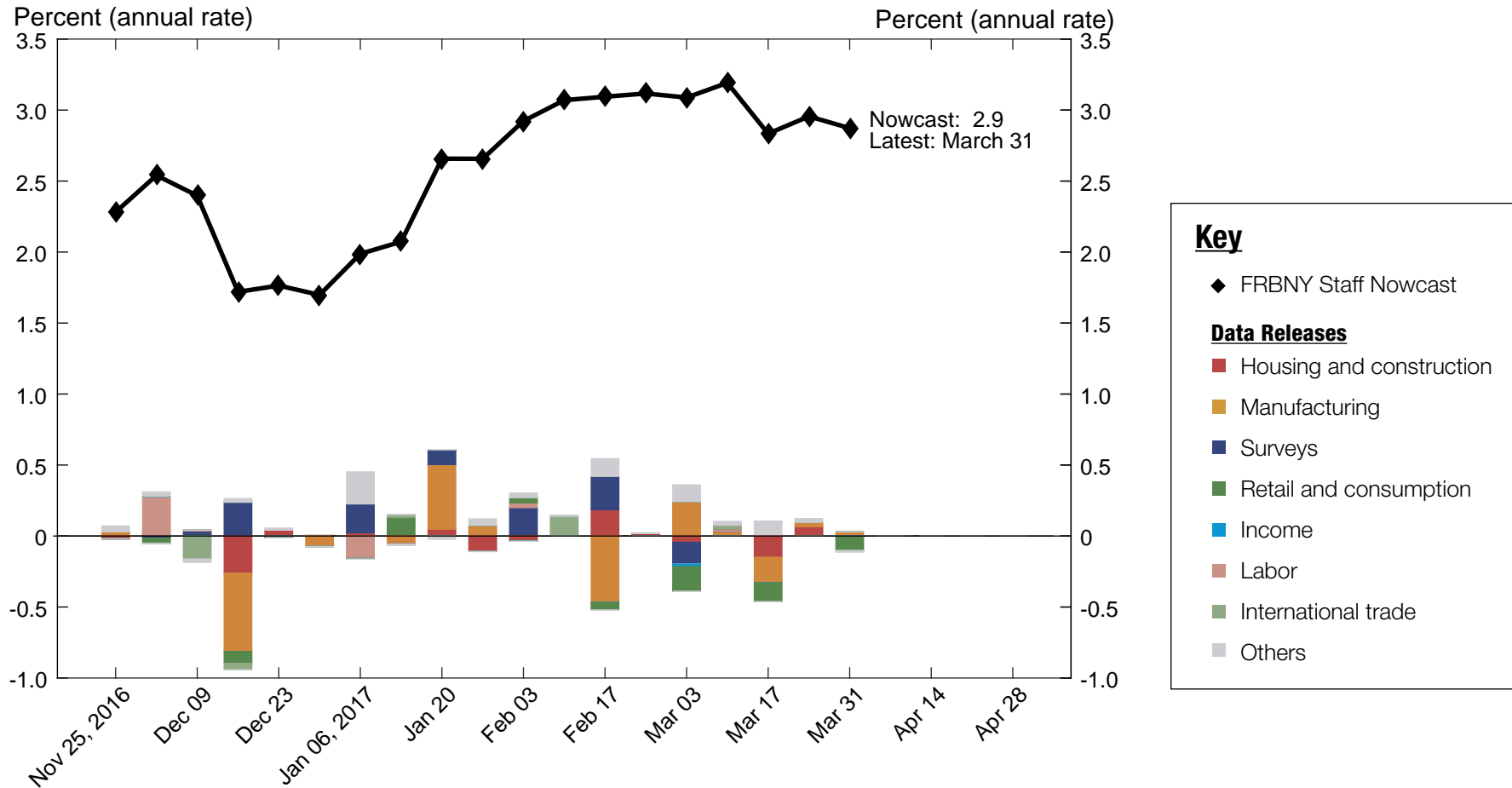
NOWCASTING REPORT

Updated: March 31, 2017

- The FRBNY Staff Nowcast stands at 2.9% for 2017:Q1 and 2.6% for 2017:Q2.
- Negative news from consumption data reduced the nowcast by about one-tenth of a percentage point for both quarters.

The FRBNY Staff Nowcast is not an official forecast of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, its president, the Federal Reserve System, or the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC).

1 | 2017:Q1 GDP Growth



Source: Authors' calculations.
Note: Colored bars reflect the impact of each data release on the nowcast.

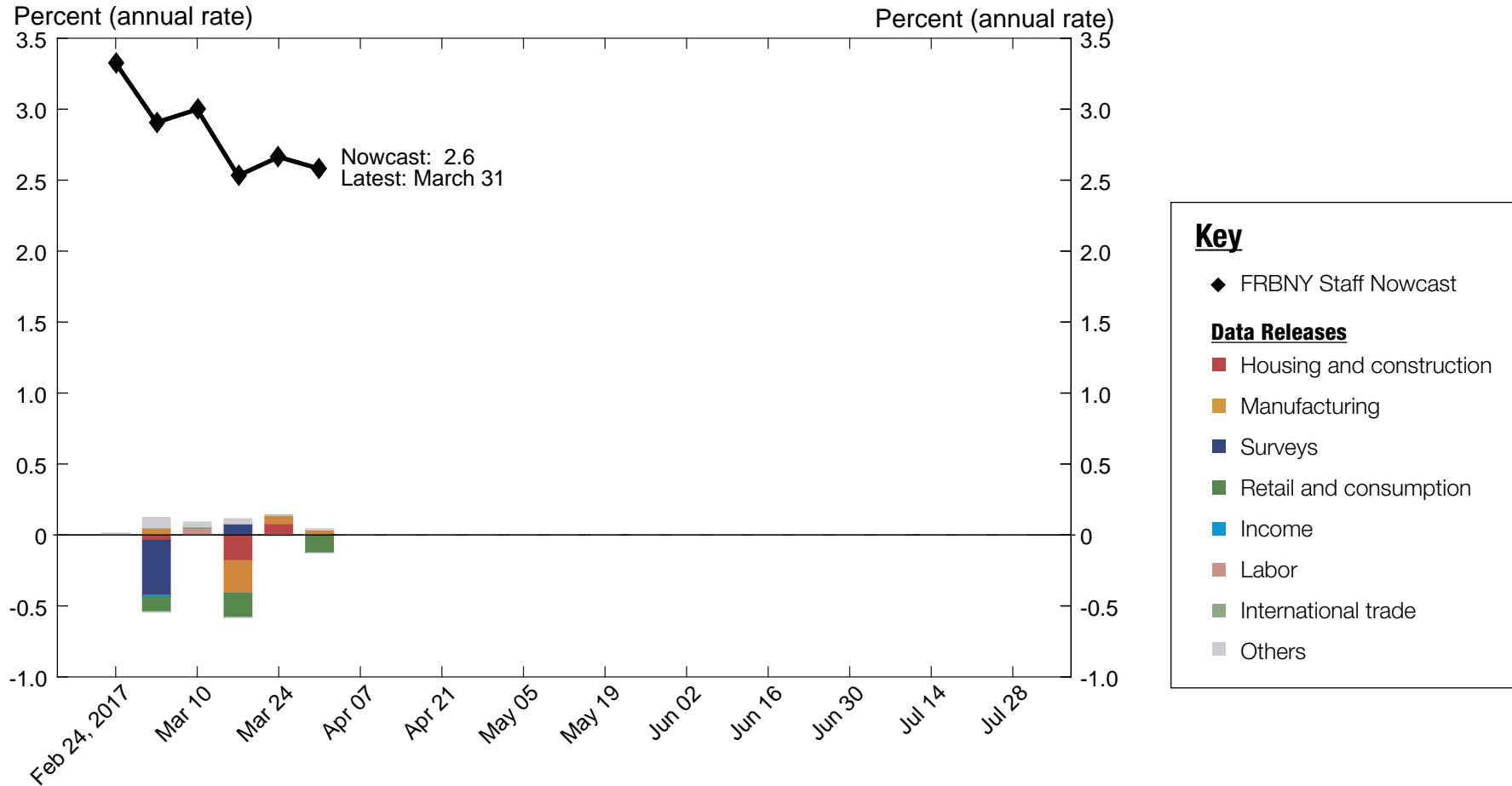
1.1 | Nowcast Detail

Update	Release Date	Data Series	Reference Period	Units	Forecast	Actual	Weight	Impact	Nowcast GDP Growth
Mar 03	10:00 AM Mar 06	Inventories: Total business	Jan	MoM % chg.	0.436	0.275	-0.192	0.031	3.09
	8:30 AM Mar 07	Exports: Goods and services	Jan	MoM % chg.	0.956	0.565	0.068	-0.026	
	8:30 AM Mar 07	Imports: Goods and services	Jan	MoM % chg.	1.07	2.26	0.049	0.058	
	8:05 AM Mar 08	ADP nonfarm private payroll employment	Feb	Level chg. (thousands)	268.5	299.0	0.575*	0.018	
	8:30 AM Mar 09	Import price index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.691	0.245	0.017	-0.007	
	8:30 AM Mar 09	Export price index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.316	0.329	0.035	0.000	
	8:30 AM Mar 10	All employees: Total nonfarm	Feb	Level chg. (thousands)	242.4	235.0	0.250*	-0.002	
	8:30 AM Mar 10	Civilian unemployment rate	Feb	Ppt. chg.	-0.072	-0.100	-0.186	0.005	
			Data revisions					0.027	
	Mar 10	8:30 AM Mar 14	PPI: Final demand	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.270	0.268	0.028	
8:30 AM Mar 15		Retail sales and food services	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.673	0.080	0.225	-0.133	
8:30 AM Mar 15		Empire State Mfg. Survey: General business conditions	Mar	Index	19.8	16.4	0.003	-0.011	
8:40 AM Mar 15		CPI-U: All items	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.394	0.122	0.054	-0.015	
8:40 AM Mar 15		CPI-U: All items less food and energy	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.203	0.206	0.070	0.000	
8:30 AM Mar 16		Housing starts	Feb	MoM % chg.	3.38	2.96	0.020	-0.008	
8:30 AM Mar 16		Building permits	Feb	Level chg. (thousands)	-11.4	-80.0	0.002	-0.140	
8:30 AM Mar 16		Philly Fed Mfg. business outlook: Current activity	Mar	Index	25.2	32.8	0.002	0.017	
10:00 AM Mar 16		JOLTS: Job openings: Total	Jan	Level chg. (thousands)	73.9	87.0	0.036*	0.000	
9:20 AM Mar 17		Industrial production index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.399	0.007	0.223	-0.087	
9:20 AM Mar 17		Capacity utilization	Feb	Ppt. chg.	0.253	-0.076	0.283	-0.093	
			Data revisions					0.112	
Mar 17		10:00 AM Mar 23	New single family houses sold	Feb	MoM % chg.	-1.60	6.09	0.008	0.065
	8:30 AM Mar 24	Manufacturers' new orders: Durable goods	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.327	1.67	0.016	0.021	
	8:30 AM Mar 24	Manufacturers' shipments: Durable goods	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.928	0.265	0.079	-0.052	
	8:30 AM Mar 24	Mfrs.' unfilled orders: All manufacturing industries	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.516	-0.020	-0.015	0.008	
	8:30 AM Mar 24	Manufacturers' inventories: Durable goods	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.481	0.220	-0.210	0.055	
			Data revisions					0.025	
Mar 24	8:30 AM Mar 28	Merchant wholesalers: Inventories: Total	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.694	0.387	-0.099	0.030	2.96
	8:30 AM Mar 30	Real gross domestic income	Q4	QoQ % chg. AR	2.38	0.995	0.014	-0.019	
	8:30 AM Mar 31	PCE less food and energy: Chain price index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.179	0.191	0.153	0.002	
	8:30 AM Mar 31	PCE: Chain price index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.294	0.130	0.073	-0.012	
	8:30 AM Mar 31	Real disposable personal income	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.278	0.180	0.028	-0.003	
	8:50 AM Mar 31	Real personal consumption expenditures	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.354	-0.074	0.231	-0.099	
			Data revisions					0.018	
Mar 31								2.87	

Source: Authors' calculations.

Notes: MoM % chg. indicates month over month percentage change. QoQ % chg. indicates quarter over quarter percentage change. The weights with the asterisk are multiplied by 1,000 for legibility.

2 | 2017:Q2 GDP Growth



Source: Authors' calculations.

Notes: Colored bars reflect the relative impact of each data release on the nowcast.

2.1 | Nowcast Detail

Update	Release Date	Data Series	Reference Period	Units	Forecast	Actual	Weight	Impact	Nowcast GDP Growth
Mar 03	10:00 AM Mar 06	Inventories: Total business	Jan	MoM % chg.	0.436	0.275	-0.006	0.001	2.91
	8:30 AM Mar 07	Exports: Goods and services	Jan	MoM % chg.	0.956	0.565	0.046	-0.018	
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	8:30 AM Mar 10	Civilian unemployment rate	Feb	Ppt. chg.	-0.072	-0.100	-0.256	0.007	
			Data revisions					0.034	
	Mar 10	8:30 AM Mar 14	PPI: Final demand	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.270	0.268	0.045	
8:30 AM Mar 15		Retail sales and food services	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.673	0.080	0.283	-0.168	
8:30 AM Mar 15		Empire State Mfg. Survey: General business conditions	Mar	Index	19.8	16.4	0.019	-0.066	
8:40 AM Mar 15		CPI-U: All items	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.394	0.122	0.096	-0.026	
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8:30 AM Mar 16		Building permits	Feb	Level chg. (thousands)	-11.4	-80.0	0.003	-0.171	
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	8:30 AM Mar 30	Real gross domestic income	Q4	QoQ % chg. AR	2.38	0.995	-0.000	0.000	
	8:30 AM Mar 31	PCE less food and energy: Chain price index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.179	0.191	0.257	0.003	
	8:30 AM Mar 31	PCE: Chain price index	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.294	0.130	0.139	-0.023	
	8:30 AM Mar 31	Real disposable personal income	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.278	0.180	0.034	-0.003	
	8:50 AM Mar 31	Real personal consumption expenditures	Feb	MoM % chg.	0.354	-0.074	0.288	-0.123	
			Data revisions					0.028	
Mar 31								2.58	

Source: Authors' calculations.

Notes: MoM % chg. indicates month over month percentage change. QoQ % chg. indicates quarter over quarter percentage change. The weights with the asterisk are multiplied by 1,000 for legibility.

Nowcasting Report Q&A

1. What is the ultimate goal of the exercise?

Our model produces a “nowcast” of GDP growth, incorporating a wide range of macroeconomic data as it becomes available. With this approach, we aim to read the real-time flow of information and evaluate its effects on current economic conditions. The platform provides a model-based counterpart to the more routine analysis at the bank, which has traditionally been based on expert knowledge.

2. What is the modeling strategy?

The platform employs Kalman-filtering techniques and a dynamic factor model. The approach has a number of desirable features. It is based on:

- a reliable big data framework that captures in a parsimonious way the salient features of macroeconomic data dynamics;
- a design that digests the data as “news,” mimicking the way markets work.

3. What are the input data? What has been driving the data selection?

We include all the market-moving indicators—the same data that are also constantly monitored by market participants and commentators.

4. Why should we trust the model?

Extensive back-testing of the model, research, and practical experience have shown that the platform is able to approximate best practices in macroeconomic forecasts. The model produces forecasts that are as accurate as, and strongly correlated with, predictions based on best judgment.

The methodology has been tested for accuracy in many countries, including large developed economies (the Euro area, Italy, France,

Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada), small open economies (Australia, Ireland, Belgium, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, and Scotland), fast-growing economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and developing economies (Mexico, Indonesia, and Argentina).

5. How should we read the output of the model?

- The model produces forecasts for all variables taking into account their dynamic interactions.
- Since it is a fully specified dynamic model, the platform provides an intuitive reading of the incoming data as “news.”
- The difference between two consecutive forecasts (that is, the forecast revision) is the weighted average of the news during the week.
- News is defined as the difference between released data and model predictions. The weights account for the information content as well as the timeliness of the data releases.
- The contribution of new data to the forecast revision is reported in the two charts with colored bars. To make the charts easier to read, we grouped variables in a few broad categories. Detailed information about the composition of the groupings is provided in the accompanying tables.

References

- *Banbura, M., D. Giannone, M. Modugno, and L. Reichlin.* 2013. “Nowcasting and the Real-Time Data Flow.” In G. Elliott and A. Timmermann, eds., *Handbook of Economic Forecasting*, Vol. 2. Amsterdam: Elsevier-North Holland.
- *Giannone, D., L. Reichlin, and D. Small.* 2008. “Nowcasting: The Real-Time Informational Content of Macroeconomic Data.” *Journal of Monetary Economics* 55, no.4 (May): 665-76.

Nowcasting Report FAQs

1. For how long do you report a quarter?

We start reporting the nowcast of GDP growth for a reference quarter about one month before the quarter begins; we stop updating it about one month after the quarter closes.

Precise dates are related to the Commerce Department's schedule for the release of official GDP estimates. For example, we began reporting 2016:Q1 on November 20, 2015, just after the government released the second GDP estimate for 2015:Q3. We stopped updating the nowcast for 2016:Q1 on April 28, 2016, with the release of the advance GDP estimate for the reference quarter. We continued reporting 2016:Q1 until the second GDP estimate for the quarter became available. At that point, we started computing the nowcasts for 2016:Q3.

2. What are the major conceptual differences between the FRBNY Staff Nowcast and the Atlanta Fed's Nowcast?

The FRBNY Staff Nowcast and the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow are both based on statistical filtering techniques applied to a dynamic factor model. These techniques are very common in big data analytics since they effectively summarize the information contained in large data sets through a small

number of common factors. The general framework for macroeconomic nowcasting has been developed in the academic literature over the past ten years, as discussed in the Q&A included in this report. The FRBNY Staff Nowcast is a straightforward application of the most advanced techniques developed in this academic literature. GDPNow adapts these techniques to mimic the methods used by the BEA to estimate real GDP growth, as well explained by GDPNow's own FAQs.

Because GDPNow and the FRBNY Staff Nowcast are different models, they can generate different forecasts of real GDP growth. Our policy is not to comment on or interpret any differences between the forecasts of these two models.

3. Is the “annual rate” the y/y growth rate?

No. We track the annualized quarterly (“q/q”) growth rate of GDP, not the four quarters (“y/y”) growth rate.

Authors

FRBNY Time-Series Analysis Team