

# Global $CO_2$ Emissions in 1997

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*In this report we assess data from the Mona Loa observatory to model and predict atmospheric  $CO_2$  concentrations. Assuming all forces that currently influence atmospheric carbon remain unchanged, our model predicts a grim future for the global climate.*

## I. Introduction

This report aims to elucidate trends in the atmospheric  $CO_2$  concentration, a question that has received considerable attention in the recent year. At this time the data seem to show trend of increasing levels year over year, raising concerns in the scientific community.

It is therefore imperative that we determine if there is enough evidence that this recent rise is the result of a larger trend or could be explained by natural variation. If this trend is confirmed then it could pave the way to future research on ways to measure and address the adverse effects and causes of this rise in  $CO_2$ . This report will look into the existence of this larger trend of rising  $CO_2$  levels and, if it exists, will also report on the magnitude of the rise as well as project future  $CO_2$  levels.

This raise is alarming because  $CO_2$  contributes to the “greenhouse effect”, where certain gasses collect in the Earth’s atmosphere and trap heat from leaving the Earth. As  $CO_2$  levels increase we expect the Earth’s temperature to increase leading to heat waves, drought and rising sea levels. Current 90% confidence estimate place  $CO_2$  level at 425-785 ppm for 1.5 °C increase in average Earth temperature as compared to pre-industrial levels.

## II. Atmospheric $CO_2$ Measurement and Data

The data we will be using for this analysis is the  $CO_2$  measurements from a laboratory at Mauna Loa, Hawaii. This site has been collecting  $CO_2$  longer than any other site in the world. It is also unique in that it is representative of air for the entire Northern Hemisphere as it is not affected by nearby vegetation as the site is surrounded by lava flows. All in all, the Mauna Loa data is the gold standard of atmospheric carbon measurements because of the amount *and* quality

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of the data collected.

This site measures the concentration of  $CO_2$  by funneling air through a cold chamber (to eliminate the effect of humidity) and then measuring how much infrared radiation is absorbed by the  $CO_2$  in the chamber. Because  $CO_2$  naturally absorbs infrared radiation, and thus the degree of absorption is proportional to  $[CO_2]$ . The researchers at the Mauna Loa site take great care to continually calibrate their equipment multiple times a day. In addition, the researchers are careful to account for any outside factors that may effect measurements such as the diurnal wind flow patterns present on Mauna Loa. Altogether, we can be confident that the data recorded at Mauna Loa is representative of global  $CO_2$  concentrations.

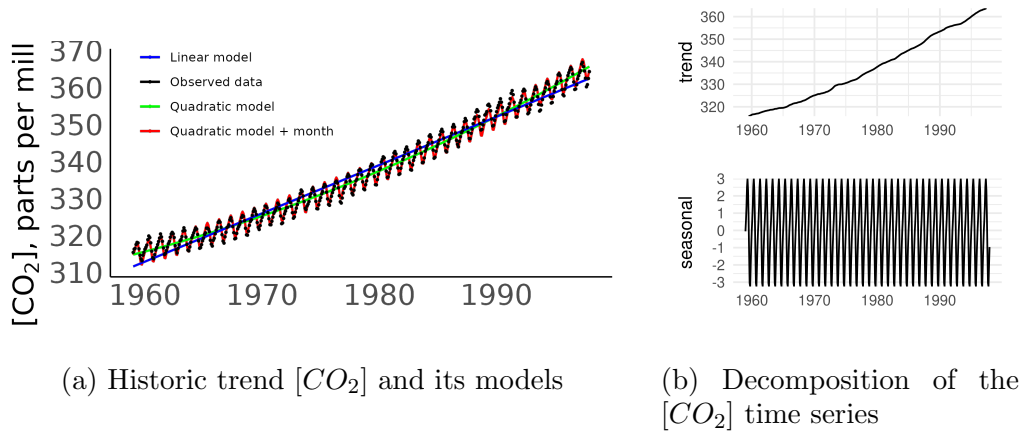


Figure 1. : Monthly mean  $[CO_2]$  and its models

### III. Exploratory analysis of historical trends in atmospheric $CO_2$

Description how, where and why the data is generated

Investigate the trend, seasonal and irregular elements. Trends both in levels and growth rates should be discussed

Atmospheric carbon is plotted in Figure 1a, and shows some worrying trends. Just look at how wobbly that line is. How is it possible that we are not living in a simulation, when the lines that plots monthly average  $CO_2$  looks like this?

### IV. Models and Forecasts

While these plots might be compelling, it is often challenging to learn the exact nature of a time series process from only these overview, "time vs. outcome" style of plots. In this section, we present evaluate two classes models to assess which time series model is most appropriate to use.

## A. Linear and Polynomial models

$$(1) \quad \text{CO}_2 = \phi_0 + \phi_1 t + \phi_2 t^2 + \epsilon_{eit}$$

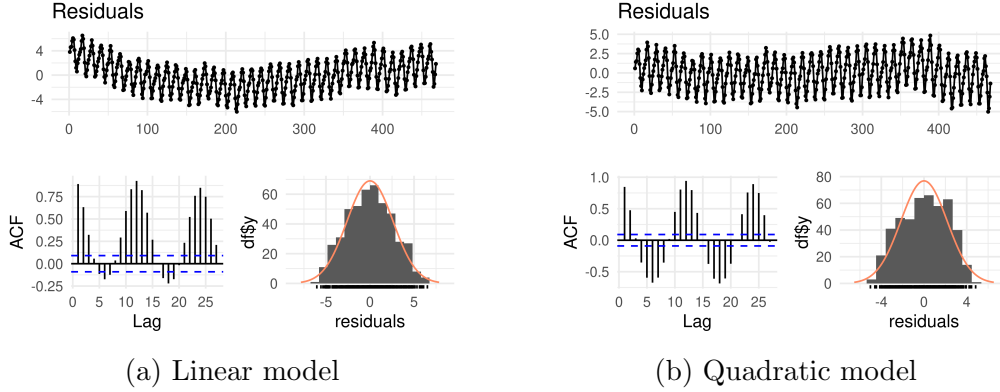


Figure 2. : Diagnostic plots for residuals of polynomial models

Equation 1 is a general form of a polynomial model, where  $\text{CO}_2$  concentration is modeled as a polynomial function of time and a random error.

We first estimate the linear model, which is a variant of Equation 1 with  $\phi_2 = 0$ . While the residuals for this model appear to follow a normal distribution (Figure 2a), it is clear that a purely linear model does a poor job at modeling the seasonality of the data. There is also still clearly a trend in the remaining residuals which a linear model fails to capture. Overall, the a linear model does capture some of the trend but would not be sufficient to eliminate it entirely.

In attempt to remedy these issues we model with month variable estimated a quadratic model, which is a variant of Equation 1 with all  $\phi_i \neq 0$ . This model fares slightly better than a linear model. It captures inherent non-linearity of the trend (Figure 1a), but fails to capture seasonality. Diagnostic plots for this model ( Figure 2b) show that residuals are not normally distributed and ACF plot shows strong osculations.

There is not much evidence to support that a logarithmic transformation is necessary. Figure 1b shows that the seasonality factor is not multiplicative and

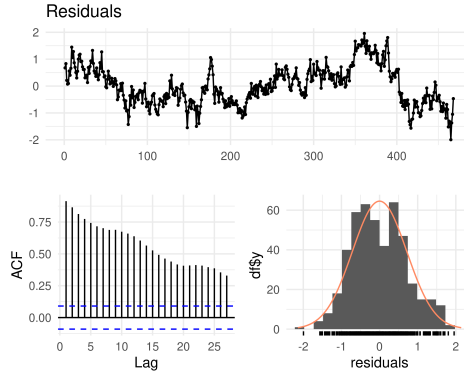


Figure 3. : Diagnostic plots for quadratic

the overall trend does not appear to be exponential.

To address the issue of seasonality, we estimated a quadratic model augmented with the variable for the month. Figure 1a show that the use of monthly dummy variables is a marked improvement over the linear and quadratic models, although it does not entirely capture the seasonality the data. Nevertheless, Figure 3 reveal that residuals of this model, although close to normally distributed, are far from white noise. Gradually decaying ACF plot indicates substantial AR component in the residual series.

Figure 4 (green trace) demonstrates predictive capabilities of the model. While the 95% predictive interval does appear somewhat small for a forecast so far into the future, the predicted values reliably follow the pattern of the historical data.

### B. ARIMA times series model

Given presence of strong trends and seasonality, we start with de-seasoning of the data by differencing with lag 12. Using this data we conduct a grid search of the ARIMA model parameters, using BIC criterion to select the best model. The search yields ARIMA(1.1.1) as the preferred model for de-seasoned data. Using this model as a starting point, we fit a few SARIMA models to the original time series before de-seasoning. At this point we only varied parameters in the range PDQ(0.0.0) to PDQ(2.2.2) and selected the model with the least BIC

```
## Series: deseasoned
## Model: ARIMA(1,1,1) w/ drift
##
## Coefficients:
##          ar1      ma1  constant
##          0.254  -0.595    0.0014
## s.e.   0.127   0.108    0.0071
##
## sigma^2 estimated as 0.1381:  log likelihood=-193
## AIC=395   AICc=395   BIC=411

## 'log Lik.' 181 (df=4)

## 'log Lik.' 216 (df=4)

##
## Call:
## arima(x = co2_ts$value, order = c(1, 2, 1), seasonal = list(order = c(0, 1,
##          1), period = 12))
##
## Coefficients:
##          ar1      ma1     sma1
##          -0.291  -1.000  -0.865
```

```
## s.e.    0.047    0.009    0.027
##
## sigma^2 estimated as 0.0852:  log likelihood = -98.8,  aic = 206
##
## Training set error measures:
##              ME  RMSE  MAE      MPE  MAPE  MASE   ACF1
## Training set -0.00153 0.289 0.231 -0.000367 0.0684 0.213 -0.0406

frcst_best <- forecast(best_arima, h=frcst_length)
```

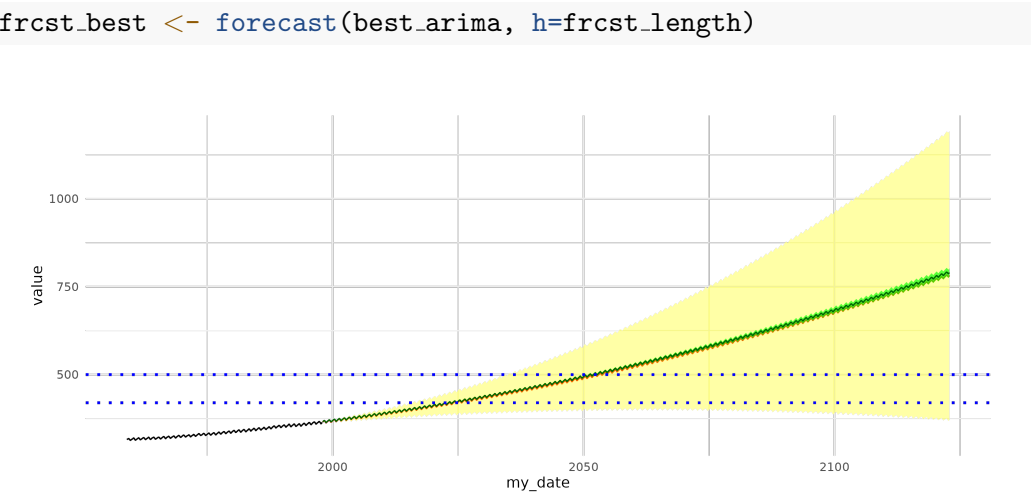


Figure 4. : Forecast for future CO2 concentration

*Note:* Unrealistically narrow prediction interval for polynomial model

C. Forecast atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> growth

WHEN CO2 IS EXPECTED TO HIT 420PPM AND 500PPM

PPM	For the first time	Expected	Last time
420	2015-05-01	2023-04-01	NA
500	2034-05-01	2052-04-01	NA

EXPECTED CO2 LEVELS IN THE YEAR 2100

Best Case Scenario	Expected	Worst Case Scenario
390.7	676.3	961.8

## V. Conclusions

In this report we assessed data from the Mona Loa observatory to model and predict atmospheric  $CO_2$  concentrations. Our modeling takes into account only observed  $CO_2$  data, with no attempt to bring into consideration other relevant information. Therefore the forecast from our modeling is only valid assuming all forces that currently influence atmospheric carbon remain unchanged. Given this reasonable assumption, our model predicts a grim future for the global climate.

## REFERENCES

### APPENDIX: MODEL ROBUSTNESS

While the most plausible model that we estimate is reported in the main, "Modeling" section, in this appendix to the article we examine alternative models. Here, our intent is to provide a skeptic that does not accept our assessment of this model as an ARIMA of order (1,2,3) an understanding of model forecasts under alternative scenarios.