Are we seeing the end of the labubu craze?

At this point, everyone has heard of the creepy-cute Nordic toy.

Designed by artist Kasing Lung, Labubu is a fuzzy collectible toy with a toothy grin inspired by Nordic mythology. It's been seen everywhere, on the biggest celebrities like Kim Kardashian, and even in partnerships with big box retailers like Aldi. The virality of the labubu is due in part to its "blind box" nature, where it's a gamble to see who you get once you open the package.

But have people cooled their obsession for this collectible? Well, let's find out.

First, I opened up Google Colab (yay for free GPU!) and installed the Pytrends library, which will help us tap into the Google Trends search history.

```
[2]  !pip install pytrends
```

Then I imported the TrendReq module and initialized the API.

```
[3]  from pytrends.request import TrendReq
```

```
[4]  pytrends = TrendReq(hl='en-US', tz=360)
```

I defined the keyword list based on what we're interested in searching.

```
[5]  kw_list = ["labubu"]
```

Now, we use the build_payload function to prepare the request with our defined keyword list and specific timeframe, which in this case, I'm limiting to the past year.

```
[12]  pytrends.build_payload(kw_list, cat=0, timeframe='today 12-m', geo='', gprop='')
```

Next I used the interest_over_time function to return Google's search history data and save it to a dataframe.

```
[13]  data = pytrends.interest_over_time()
```

By importing the pyplot module from the matplotlib library, I can visualize the dataframe.

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

data[kw_list].plot(figsize=(10,5), title='Labubu Interest Over Time')
plt.ylabel('Interest')
plt.xlabel('Time')
plt.show()
```
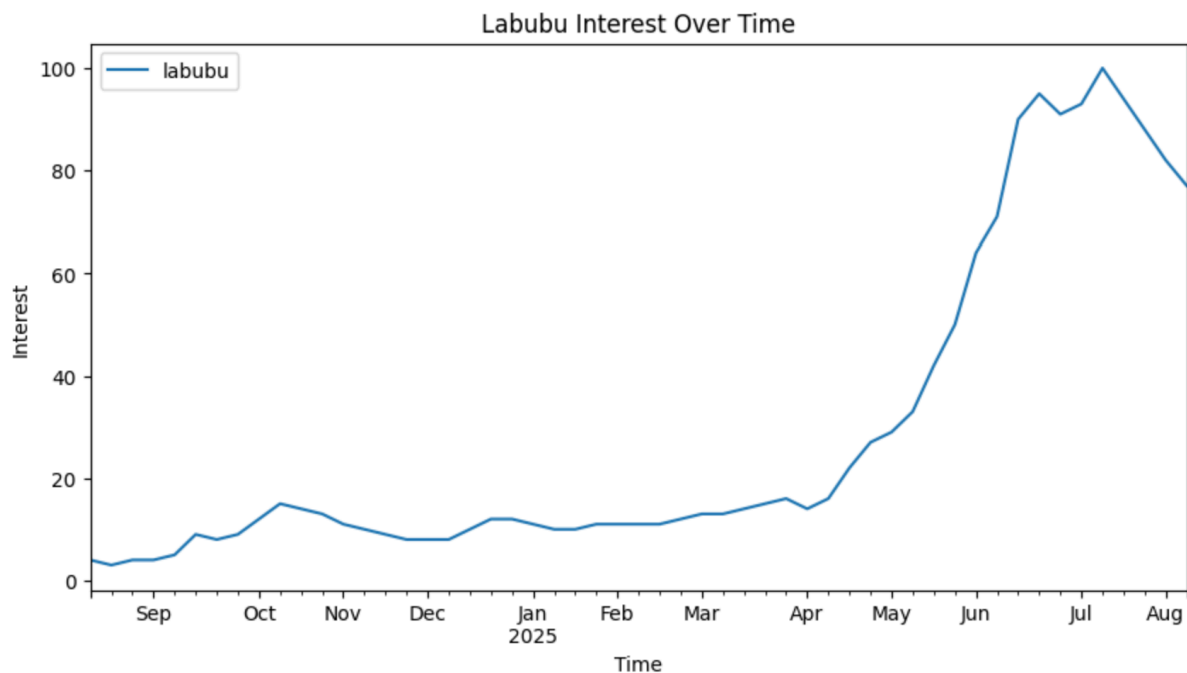
Here we can see "Interest" on the y-axis and "Time" on the x-axis. It's important to note that the values on the y-axis do not indicate exact search volume, rather, they are on a relative scale, meaning that 100 is the peak of all search history data for this timeframe, while 0 indicates there is insufficient data.

The line graph shows a steady incline from September 2024 to April 2025, but then there is a major jump from May 2025 onwards, culminating at a peak from June to July 2025. Although it's only the middle of August, we can already see a drop. Could we see an even steeper decline in the following months? It's more than likely that we have already reached the peak of labubu popularity and that we should see a steady decline in the following months.

Let's take a closer look at the peak period of interest so far.

We can initialize another pytrends dataframe for the previous 3 months.

```
[54] pytrends.build_payload(kw_list, timeframe='today 3-m')
```

And then analyze by region to see where the interest came from.

```
[55] data_by_region = pytrends.interest_by_region()
```

Let's sort in descending order based on the top 20 regions.

```
[60] top_regions = data_by_region.sort_values(by=kw_list, ascending=False).head(20)
```

```
[13] print("Top 20 Regions Interested in Labubu")
     print(top_regions[kw_list])
```

```
Top 20 Regions Interested in Labubu
                        labubu
geoName
Poland                     100
Slovakia                    96
Czechia                     87
United Arab Emirates        82
Hong Kong                   81
Lithuania                   80
Romania                     75
Cyprus                      74
Hungary                     74
Australia                   72
Netherlands                 70
United States               68
Estonia                     68
Sweden                      66
United Kingdom              65
Latvia                      62
Croatia                     61
Bosnia & Herzegovina        61
Lebanon                     58
Serbia                      55
```

Here we find something surprising; the United States is not at the top of the list. It has about 68% of the search intensity as the top contender, Poland. Another point of interest is that Hong Kong ranks fifth, with 81% search intensity, but its neighbor and the place where labubus originated from, China, is unranked. This actually makes sense when you consider the fact that users are blocked from using Google due to the "Great Firewall of China".

Let's zoom into one specific region, the United States.

Labubu Interest by State
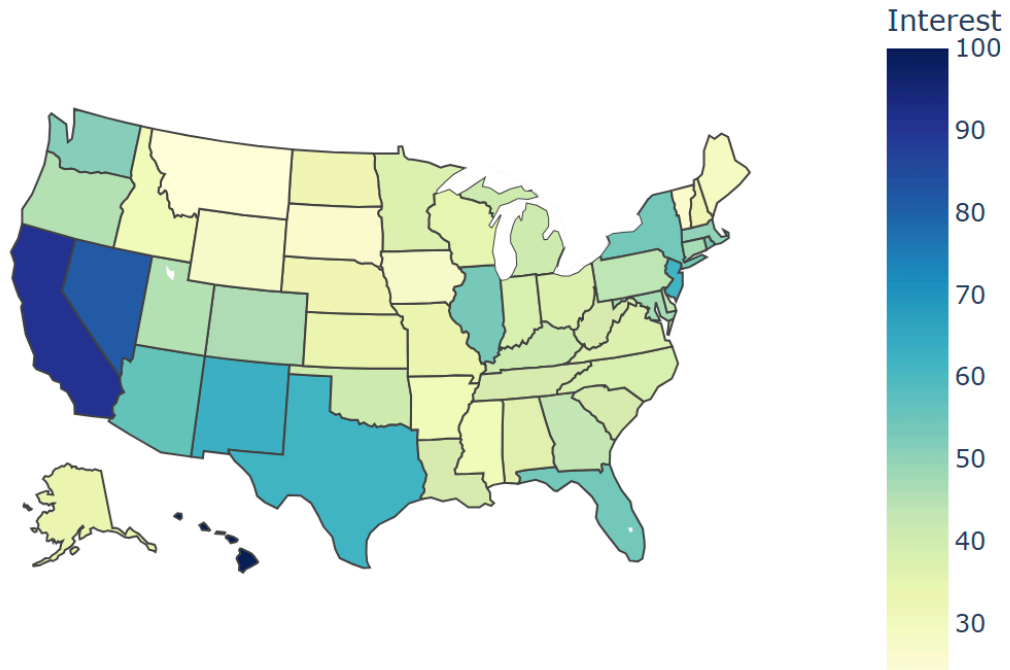
This choropleth map shows that the main source of interest is coming from Hawaii, followed by California, and Nevada, with some notable mentions in New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, New York, and Florida.

This was another surprising insight for me, because with the flood of labubu content I've seen on social media, I expected New York to be high up on this list. However, it makes sense when you think about the fact that both Hawaii and California have the highest percentages of Asian-Americans (more than half for HI and around 17% for CA; https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/asian-population) and this in turn relates to a quicker tap into the overseas Asian markets (going back to how labubu is owned by Popmart, a chinese company).

What's unsurprising is the likelihood of the labubu trend dying out after just a 3 month period of peak popularity. This mirrors the rapid trend cycles in our modern hyper-consumeristic world where one day it's the labubu and the day before it was the sonny angel. Speaking of Sonny Angels, I was interested in seeing how long this collectible toy enjoyed its popularity.

Sonny Angel Interest Over Time
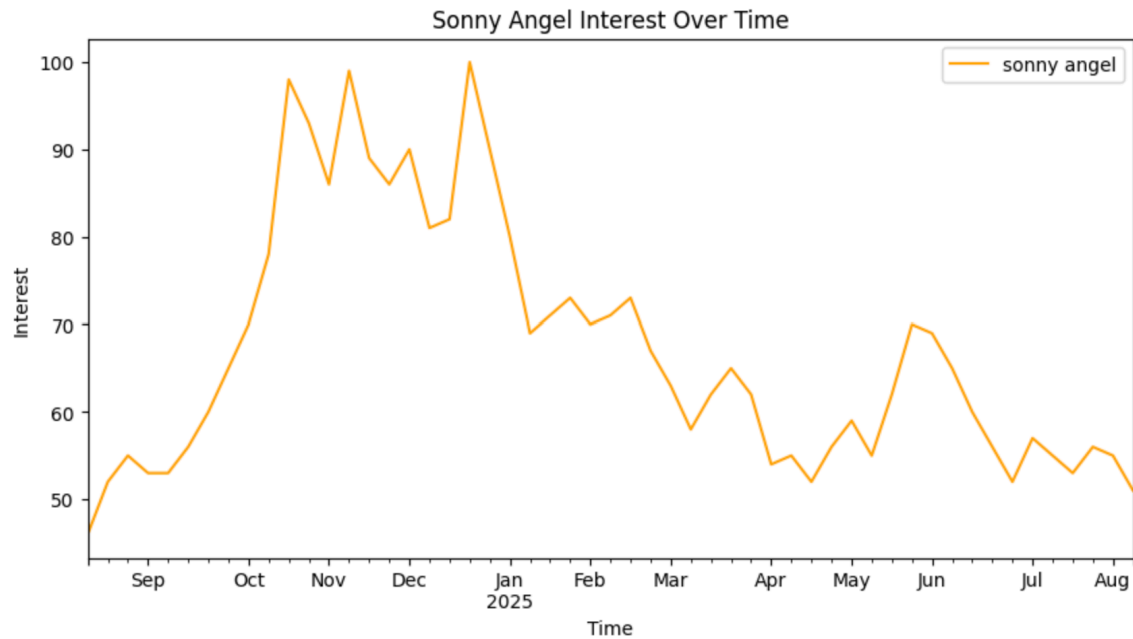
Although this line graph shows more volatility than the labubu, we can still see that the most interest occurred from October 2024 to late December 2024. That indicates a 3 month period of peak popularity. So perhaps this does point to the longevity of viral products nowadays, and that we should only expect a 3 month honeymoon phase before the love dies out.