

## Calling Recessions in Real Time

James D. Hamilton  
University of California, San Diego

### ABSTRACT

This paper surveys efforts to automate the dating of business cycle turning points. Among the challenges discussed are the conceptual meaning of a change in the phase of the business cycle, differences between real-time data releases and subsequent data revisions, and changes over time in key economic and predictive relationships. These concerns warrant putting a high priority on simplicity and robustness. The real-time track records of several alternative approaches are compared.