The American Time Use Survey

Overview

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Office of Productivity and Technology
UN Expert Group Meeting
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What is the ATUS?

- A continuously-collected survey of how, where, and with whom Americans spend time
  - Activities: paid work, household work, child care, sleeping, eating, leisure and sports
  - Location: home, work, outdoors, store
  - Who with: family, friends, coworkers
What is the ATUS?

- ATUS also collects:
  - Demographic information
  - Labor force status, industry, occupation, earnings
  - Household composition
  - School enrollment status
ATUS Basics

- Nationally-representative survey of persons age 15 and over
- Respondents are selected to be interviewed about a specific day of the week (eg. Monday)
- Up to 8 contact attempts
- A 20-minute computer-assisted interview conducted by telephone
- A Bureau of Labor Statistics survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau
People are selected from households that recently completed the monthly labor force survey—the Current Population Survey (CPS)

2 to 5 months after the CPS survey, selected individuals are interviewed for the ATUS survey
Interview, part I

Info about household composition

- Who lives in the household?
  - Age and sex of each person
  - Each person’s relationship to the respondent

- Does the respondent have any children who do not live in the household?
Interview, part I

**How is Harry Potter related to you?**

- 20. Spouse (husband/wife)
- 21. Unmarried partner
- 22. Child/stepchild
- 23. Grandchild
- 24. Parent (mother or father)
- 25. Brother/sister
- 26. Other related person (aunt, cousin, nephew, mother-in-law, etc.)
- 27. Foster child
- 28. Housemate/roommate
- 29. Roomer/boards
- 30. Other nonrelative
- 40. Non-household child

**Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stat</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Mem</th>
<th>Ure</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Rel</th>
<th>Birth Month Day</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Petunia</td>
<td>Dursley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>Dursley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dudley</td>
<td>Dursley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Potter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview, part II

- **Labor force info**
  - Respondent’s employment status, usual work hours, earnings, industry, occupation
  - Spouse’s employment status, usual work hours

- **School enrollment status**
  - College or high school
  - Full-time or part-time student
Interview, part III

- 24-hour time diary about “yesterday”
  - Respondent’s main activities
  - Who?
  - Where?
  - Childcare as a secondary activity
  - Eldercare
So let's begin. Yesterday, Monday, at 4:00 AM, what were you doing?

- Use the slash key (/) for recording separate/simultaneous activities.
- Do not use precodes for secondary activities.

1. Sleeping
2. Grooming (self)
3. Watching TV
4. Working at main job
5. Working at other job
6. Preparing meals or snacks
7. Eating and drinking
8. Cleaning kitchen
9. Laundry
10. Grocery shopping
11. Attending religious service
12. Paying household bills
13. Caring for animals and pets
30. Don't know/Can't remember
31. Refusal/ None of your business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
<th>Mins</th>
<th>Stop</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Who_2</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Where specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[1]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>4:00AM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12:00PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing meals and snacks</td>
<td>12:00PM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1:00PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Playing with kids</td>
<td>1:00PM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1:01PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[4]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grooming</td>
<td>1:01PM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3:01PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[5]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eating and drinking</td>
<td>3:01PM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5:01PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Interview, part III

**Who was in the room with you? / Who accompanied you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On HH Roster</th>
<th>NonHH Family</th>
<th>Other NonHH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0. Alone</td>
<td>51. Parents</td>
<td>54. Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vernon Dursley</td>
<td>52. Other non-HH family members &lt; 18</td>
<td>55. Co-workers, colleagues, clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dudley Dursley</td>
<td>53. Other non-HH family members 18 and older (incl. Parents-in-law)</td>
<td>56. Neighbors, acquaintances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Harry Potter</td>
<td></td>
<td>57. Other non-HH children &lt; 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58. Other non-HH adults 18 and older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. All household members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) 4:00AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7:00AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 7:00AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grooming / listening to the radio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7:30AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 7:30AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing meals and snacks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8:05AM</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 8:05AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yelling at Harry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>8:50AM</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview, part III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>MODE OF TRANSPORTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Respondent's home or yard</td>
<td>12. Car, truck, or motorcycle (driver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Respondent's workplace</td>
<td>13. Car, truck, or motorcycle (passenger)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Restaurant/Bar</td>
<td>15. Bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Place of worship</td>
<td>16. Subway/Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Grocery store</td>
<td>17. Bicycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other store/Mall</td>
<td>18. Boat/Ferry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. School</td>
<td>19. Taxi/Limousine Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Outdoors away from home</td>
<td>20. Airplane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Library</td>
<td>21. Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other place (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grooming / listening to the radio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7:30AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing meals and snacks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8:05AM</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:05AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yelling at Harry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8:50AM</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary questions

- **Activities done for pay or profit**
  - Job-related activities
  - Other activities done for pay

- **Secondary childcare**
  - Identify activities in which the respondent also had a child under age 13 in his or her care (For example, “Cooking dinner while taking care of my daughter”)

- **Eldercare**
  - To identify respondents who provide eldercare
  - To identify diary activities that were eldercare
17 Major activity categories of the ATUS lexicon

- Personal Care
- Household activities
- Caring for and helping household members
- Caring for and helping nonhousehold members
- Work and work-related activities
- Education
- Consumer purchases
- Professional and personal care services
- Household services
17 Major activity categories of the ATUS lexicon

- Government services and civic obligations
- Eating and drinking
- Socializing, relaxing, and leisure
- Sports, exercise, and recreation
- Religious and spiritual activities
- Volunteer activities
- Telephone calls
- Traveling
3-Tier detailed activity codes

- 02 Household activities
  - 01 Housework
    - 01 Interior cleaning
    - 02 Laundry
    - 03 Sewing, repairing, & maintaining textiles
    - 04 Storing interior hh items, including food
    - 99 Housework, n.e.c.
  - 02 Food & drink prep., presentation, & clean-up
    - 01 Food & drink preparation
    - 02 Food presentation
    - 03 Kitchen & food clean-up
3-Tier detailed activity codes

- 12 – Socializing, Relaxing, and Leisure
- 120303 – Television and movies

- 05 – Work and Work-Related Activities
- 050101 – Work, main job
- 050102 – Work, other jobs
- 050401 – Job search activities
Response rate have been falling

- Response rates have been falling in all US household surveys

- Potential reasons
  - Increase in the number of people who have only a cell phone
  - Caller ID
  - Decreased willingness to participate in surveys
  - Survey fatigue – ATUS respondents participated in the CPS for up to 8 months
Results - Available data

Data files

- Data from almost 190,000 interviews collected from 2003-2017
- Released annually
- All data and documentation can be downloaded for free from the ATUS website: [www.bls.gov/tus](http://www.bls.gov/tus)
ATUS estimates

- Are representative of the U.S. civilian non-institutional population or sub-groups of this population, such as:
  - Employed individuals
  - Women, Men
  - Parents
  - By age group
Types of ATUS estimates

- Average hours spent doing activities
- Number and percent of individuals engaging in activities on an average day
- Time of day when individuals do activities
ATUS modules

- 5-minutes of questions asked at the end of the ATUS

- ATUS has had 3 modules:
  - Eating & Health module, sponsored by the US Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health (2006-08, 2014)
  - Well-being module, sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (2010, 2012-13)
  - Leave module, sponsored by the DOL Women’s Bureau (2011, 2017-2018)
Accessing ATUS data

- **BLS Website**
  - Data from almost 190,000 interviews collected from 2003 to 2017
  - Released annually (2017 data will be released on 28 June, 2018)
  - All data and documentation can be downloaded for **free** from the ATUS website: [www.bls.gov/tus](http://www.bls.gov/tus)

- **ATUS-X Minnesota Population Center**
American Time Use Survey Data Extract Builder

ATUS-X is a project dedicated to making it easy for researchers to use data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS). The ATUS is an ongoing time diary study that is funded by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and fielded by the U.S. Census Bureau. The goals of the ATUS-X project are:

- To collect and preserve ATUS data and documentation
- To harmonize the data from different years of data collection
- To make it easy to create data files containing the ATUS variables a user needs

Time is our scarcest resource... use it wisely!

- [https://www.atusdata.org/atus/](https://www.atusdata.org/atus/)
- Supported by the MN Population Center, MD Population Research Center
- Sponsored by NIH, NICHD; USDA, ERS
Weekday time use of married women living with young children, by employment status

NOTE: All married women, 25 to 54, with a child under 6 present in the household. Data include non-holiday weekdays and are annual averages for 2015.
Percent of population who did household activities on an average day

NOTE: All noninstitutionalized persons age 15 and over, and all days of the week. Annual averages for 2015. Travel related to these activities is not included in these estimates.
Percent of employed persons who did selected activities on workdays by hour of the day

NOTE: Full-time employed persons, 15+, on days they worked. Data are an average for 2011-15.
Interactive charts

Interactive charts can be found at: https://www.bls.gov/tus/charts.htm
Future plans

- Research on using web collection to improve response rates
Contact Information

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