The American Time Use Survey (ATUS)

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What is the ATUS?

- A continuous survey about how, where, and with whom Americans use their time
- Also collects info about respondents’:
  - Demographics
  - Labor force status, occupation, earnings
  - Household composition
  - School enrollment status
Why are time use data produced?

- To measure the time people spend doing unpaid household production
- To better understand work patterns: where, when, and how long individuals work
- To learn about quality of life in the United States, beyond income and earnings
Tracking our economy with ATUS data

- **Time use during recessions** by Mark Aguiar, Erik Hurst, and Loukas Karabarbounis, NBER working paper, July 2011.


Tracking our economy with ATUS data

- **Unemployment, market work, and household production** by Michael Burda and Daniel Hamermesh, Economic Letters, May 2010.

ATUS basics

- Nationally-representative survey of persons age 15 and over
- 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.)
- [ ] 30. Other nonrelative
- [ ] 40. Non-household child
- [ ] 27. Foster child
- [ ] 28. Housemate/roommate
- [ ] 29. Roomer/boarder

#### 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</th>
<th>Birth Day</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
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<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></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></td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>45</td>
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<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></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>
<td></td>
</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
Interview, part III

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
14. Don't know/Can't remember
15. Refusal/ None of your business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>ID</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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:00AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12:00PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00PM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing meals and snacks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1:00PM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Playing with kids</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3:01PM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:01PM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grooming</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3:01PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:01PM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eating and drinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2:21PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's home</td>
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### Interview, part III

<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>□ 5.</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ 58. Other non-HH adults 18 and older</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</th>
<th>ID</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>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>
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<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></td>
<td></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>
<td>Respondent's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:05AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yelling at Harry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8:50AM</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview, part III

Where were you while you were yelling at Harry?

PLACE

1. Respondent's home or yard
2. Respondent's workplace
3. Someone else's home
4. Restaurant/Bar
5. Place of worship
6. Grocery store
7. Other store/Mall
8. School
9. Outdoors away from home
10. Library
11. Other place (specify)

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

12. Car, truck, or motorcycle (driver)
13. Car, truck, or motorcycle (passenger)
14. Walking
15. Bus
16. Subway/Train
17. Bicycle
18. Boat/Ferry
19. Taxi/Limousine Service
20. Airplane
21. Other (specify)

BLS
Additional questions

- **On secondary childcare**
  - Identify activities in which the respondent also had a child under age 13 in his or her care
  - For example, “Fixing dinner while keeping an eye on my daughter”

- **On 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
Activity coding: 3-levels of activity detail

- 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
ATUS estimates

- Are representative of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutional 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
Time use on an average work day for employed persons ages 25 to 54 with children

- Working and related activities (8.2 hours)
- Sleeping (7.7 hours)
- Leisure and sports (2.8 hours)
- Household activities (1.2 hours)
- Eating and drinking (1.1 hours)
- Caring for others (1.2 hours)
- Other (1.8 hours)

Total: 24.0 hours

NOTE: Data include employed persons on days they worked, ages 25 to 54, who lived in households with children under 18. Data include non-holiday weekdays and are annual averages for 2010.
Weekday time use of married women living with young children, by employment status

NOTE: Data include all married women, ages 25 to 54, with a child under 6 present in the household. Data include non-holiday weekdays and are annual averages for 2010.

Percent of employed persons who did selected activities on workdays by hour of the day

NOTE: Data include individuals, age 15 and over, who were employed full-time on days they worked. Data are an average for 2010. Source: American Time Use Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics
ATUS modules

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

- ATUS has had 3 modules:
  - Eating & Health module, sponsored by the USDA and National Institutes of Health (2006-08)
  - Well-being module, sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (2010)
  - Leave module, sponsored by the DOL Women’s Bureau (2011)