[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Good article](/wiki/Template:Good_article) [Template:Infobox programming language](/wiki/Template:Infobox_programming_language)

**PHP** is a [server-side scripting](/wiki/Server-side_scripting) language designed for [web development](/wiki/Web_development) but also used as a [general-purpose programming language](/wiki/General-purpose_programming_language). Originally created by [Rasmus Lerdorf](/wiki/Rasmus_Lerdorf) in 1994,[[1]](#cite_note-1) the PHP [reference implementation](/wiki/Reference_implementation) is now produced by The PHP Group.[[2]](#cite_note-2) PHP originally stood for *Personal Home Page*,[[1]](#cite_note-1) but it now stands for the [recursive](/wiki/Recursive_acronym) [backronym](/wiki/Backronym) *PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor*.[[3]](#cite_note-3) PHP code may be embedded into [HTML](/wiki/HTML) code, or it can be used in combination with various [web template systems](/wiki/Web_template_system), [web content management systems](/wiki/Web_content_management_system) and [web frameworks](/wiki/Web_framework). PHP code is usually processed by a PHP [interpreter](/wiki/Interpreter_(computing)) implemented as a [module](/wiki/Plugin_(computing)) in the web server or as a [Common Gateway Interface](/wiki/Common_Gateway_Interface) (CGI) executable. The web server combines the results of the interpreted and executed PHP code, which may be any type of data, including images, with the generated web page. PHP code may also be executed with a [command-line interface](/wiki/Command-line_interface) (CLI) and can be used to implement [standalone](/wiki/Computer_software) [graphical applications](/wiki/Graphical_user_interface).[[4]](#cite_note-4) The standard PHP interpreter, powered by the [Zend Engine](/wiki/Zend_Engine), is [free software](/wiki/Free_software) released under the [PHP License](/wiki/PHP_License). PHP has been widely ported and can be deployed on most web servers on almost every [operating system](/wiki/Operating_system) and [platform](/wiki/Computing_platform), free of charge.[[5]](#cite_note-5) The PHP language evolved without a written [formal specification](/wiki/Formal_specification) or standard until 2014, leaving the canonical PHP interpreter as a [*de facto*](/wiki/De_facto) standard. Since 2014 work has gone on to create a formal PHP specification.[[6]](#cite_note-6) During the 2010s there have been increased efforts towards standardisation and code sharing in PHP applications by projects such as [PHP-FIG](http://www.php-fig.org/) in the form of [PSR-initiatives](http://www.php-fig.org/psr/) as well as [Composer dependency manager](/wiki/Composer_(software)) and the [Packagist repository](https://packagist.org/).

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### Early history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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PHP development began in 1995 when [Rasmus Lerdorf](/wiki/Rasmus_Lerdorf) wrote several [Common Gateway Interface](/wiki/Common_Gateway_Interface) (CGI) programs in C,[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) which he used to maintain his [personal homepage](/wiki/Personal_homepage). He extended them to work with [web forms](/wiki/Web_form) and to communicate with [databases](/wiki/Database), and called this implementation "Personal Home Page/Forms Interpreter" or PHP/FI.

PHP/FI could be used to build simple, dynamic [web applications](/wiki/Web_application). To accelerate [bug](/wiki/Software_bug) reporting and improve the code, Lerdorf initially announced the release of PHP/FI as "Personal Home Page Tools (PHP Tools) version 1.0" on the [Usenet](/wiki/Usenet) discussion group *comp.infosystems.www.authoring.cgi* on June 8, 1995.[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11) This release already had the basic functionality that PHP has [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of). This included [Perl-like variables](/wiki/Local_variable#Local_variables_in_Perl), form handling, and the ability to embed HTML. The [syntax](/wiki/Syntax) resembled that of Perl but was simpler, more limited and less consistent.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Early PHP was not intended to be a new programming language, and grew organically, with Lerdorf noting in retrospect: "I don’t know how to stop it, there was never any intent to write a programming language […] I have absolutely no idea how to write a programming language, I just kept adding the next logical step on the way."<ref name=itconversations>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web), cited at [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> A development team began to form and, after months of work and [beta](/wiki/Beta_development_stage) testing, officially released PHP/FI 2 in November 1997.

[Template:Anchor](/wiki/Template:Anchor) The fact that PHP was not originally designed but instead was developed organically has led to inconsistent naming of functions and inconsistent ordering of their parameters.[[12]](#cite_note-12) In some cases, the function names were chosen to match the lower-level libraries which PHP was "wrapping",[[13]](#cite_note-13) while in some very early versions of PHP the length of the function names was used internally as a [hash function](/wiki/Hash_function), so names were chosen to improve the distribution of hash values.[[14]](#cite_note-14)

### PHP 3 and 4[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|This is an example of custom php code on a computer screen.](/wiki/File:Custom-software-developement-php-net.JPG) [Zeev Suraski](/wiki/Zeev_Suraski) and [Andi Gutmans](/wiki/Andi_Gutmans) rewrote the [parser](/wiki/Parser) in 1997 and formed the base of PHP 3, changing the language's name to the [recursive acronym](/wiki/Recursive_acronym) *PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor*.[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[15]](#cite_note-15) Afterwards, public testing of PHP 3 began, and the official launch came in June 1998. Suraski and Gutmans then started a new [rewrite](/wiki/Rewrite_(programming)) of PHP's core, producing the [Zend Engine](/wiki/Zend_Engine) in 1999.[[16]](#cite_note-16) They also founded [Zend Technologies](/wiki/Zend_Technologies) in [Ramat Gan](/wiki/Ramat_Gan), Israel.[[2]](#cite_note-2) On May 22, 2000, PHP 4, powered by the Zend Engine 1.0, was released.[[2]](#cite_note-2) As of August 2008 this branch reached version 4.4.9. PHP 4 is no longer under development nor will any security updates be released.[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18)

### PHP 5[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

On July 14, 2004, PHP 5 was released, powered by the new Zend Engine II.[[2]](#cite_note-2) PHP 5 included new features such as improved support for [object-oriented programming](/wiki/Object-oriented_programming), the PHP Data Objects (PDO) extension (which defines a lightweight and consistent interface for accessing databases), and numerous performance enhancements.[[19]](#cite_note-19) In 2008 PHP 5 became the only stable version under development. [Late static binding](/wiki/Late_static_binding) had been missing from PHP and was added in version 5.3.[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21) Many high-profile open-source projects ceased to support PHP 4 in new code as of February 5, 2008, because of the GoPHP5 initiative,[[22]](#cite_note-22) provided by a consortium of PHP developers promoting the transition from PHP 4 to PHP 5.[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24) Over time, PHP interpreters became available on most existing [32-bit](/wiki/32-bit) and [64-bit](/wiki/64-bit) operating systems, either by building them from the PHP source code, or by using pre-built binaries.[[25]](#cite_note-25) For the PHP versions 5.3 and 5.4, the only available [Microsoft Windows](/wiki/Microsoft_Windows) binary distributions were 32-bit [x86](/wiki/X86) builds,[[26]](#cite_note-26)[[27]](#cite_note-27) requiring Windows 32-bit compatibility mode while using [Internet Information Services](/wiki/Internet_Information_Services) (IIS) on a 64-bit Windows platform. PHP version 5.5 made the 64-bit [x86-64](/wiki/X86-64) builds available for Microsoft Windows.[[28]](#cite_note-28)

### {{Anchor|PHP6-UNICODE}}PHP 6 and Unicode[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

PHP received mixed reviews due to lacking native [Unicode](/wiki/Unicode) support at the core language level.[[29]](#cite_note-29)[[30]](#cite_note-30) In 2005, a project headed by Andrei Zmievski was initiated to bring native Unicode support throughout PHP, by embedding the [International Components for Unicode](/wiki/International_Components_for_Unicode) (ICU) library, and representing text strings as [UTF-16](/wiki/UTF-16) internally.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Since this would cause major changes both to the internals of the language and to user code, it was planned to release this as version 6.0 of the language, along with other major features then in development.[[32]](#cite_note-32) However, a shortage of developers who understood the necessary changes, and performance problems arising from conversion to and from UTF-16, which is rarely used in a web context, led to delays in the project.[[33]](#cite_note-33) As a result, a PHP 5.3 release was created in 2009, with many non-Unicode features back-ported from PHP 6, notably namespaces. In March 2010, the project in its current form was officially abandoned, and a PHP 5.4 release was prepared containing most remaining non-Unicode features from PHP 6, such as traits and closure re-binding.[[34]](#cite_note-34) Initial hopes were that a new plan would be formed for Unicode integration, but as of 2014 none have been adopted.

### {{Anchor|NG|ZE3|PHP7}}PHP 7[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

During 2014 and 2015, a new major PHP version was developed, which was numbered PHP 7. The numbering of this version involved some debate.[[35]](#cite_note-35)