

Wait Wait Stats and Data

A look at the history, foundation and data behind the Stats Page

How I Built This

I know, wrong NPR show...

Wait Wait Stats: The Origin Story

- Started listening to Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me! in 2005
- The NPR site search feature was lacking
- It was hard to get summarized information re: panelist and guest appearances
- By late 2006, I had started keeping some notes to help refresh my memory of shows I had listened to

From Paper to Digital

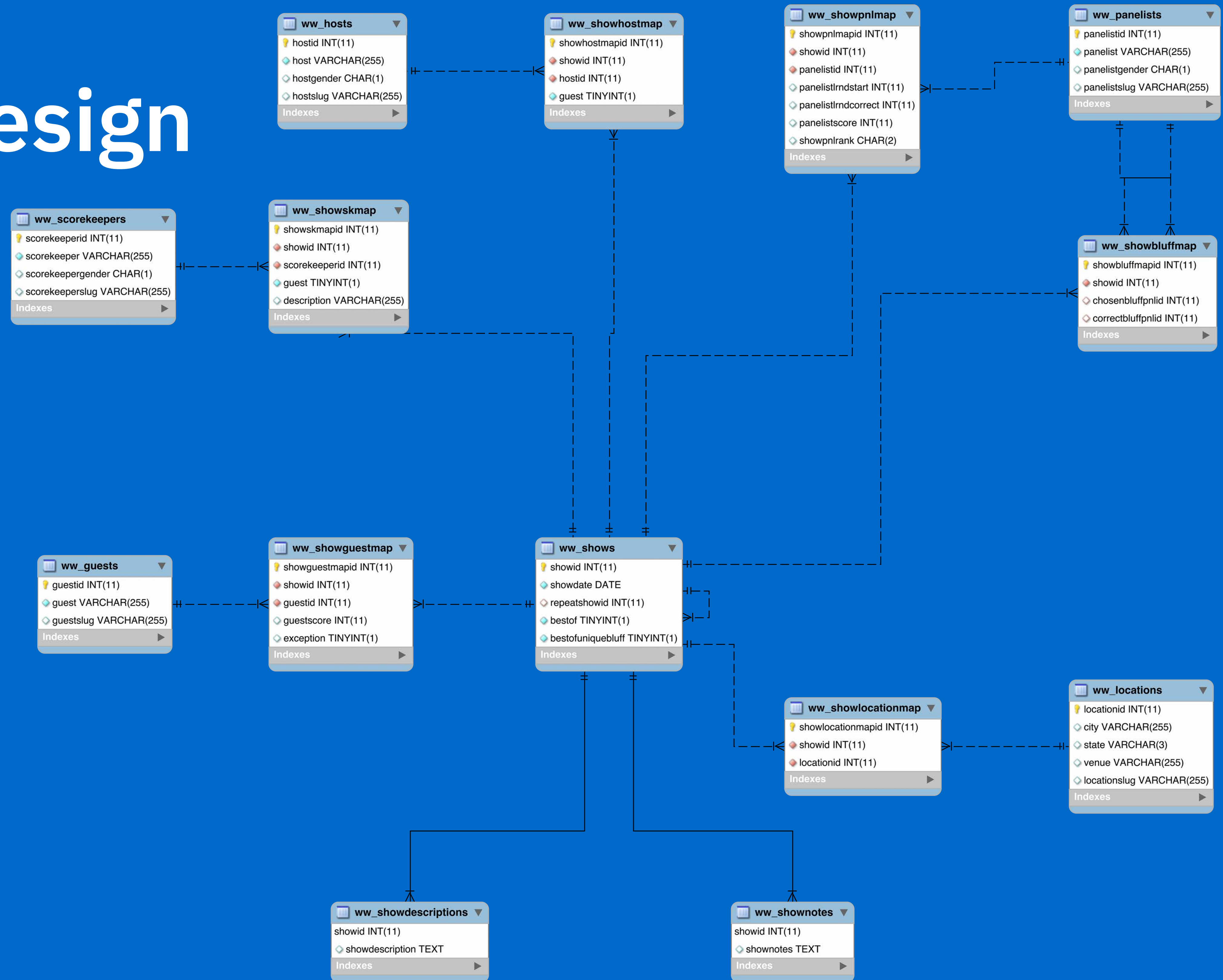
- In 2017, I ended up losing my notes
- Decided to create a site to publish my notes and create a database to store the collected information
- Was more proficient at building and managing web sites than designing database schemas
- Chose PHP and MySQL as the base for the site and database
 - Both were open source and ran on FreeBSD
 - Easy for learn and build things rapidly

The Database

- Design started with the key elements that data would be entered into the database:
 - Scorekeeper
 - Panelist
 - Guest
 - Show
 - Location
 - Host
- Mapping tables would be used to store appearance and scoring information

Database Design

- Diagram for the current version, 4, of the Stats Page database
- Earlier versions made extensive use to views and was dropped in version 4



The Site

- Design was intentionally sparse and lightweight
- Site was a single page with basic guest and panelist information for each show
- ⓘ Started hosting the site a Compaq iPaq desktop, running FreeBSD, over a DSL connection



Source: Wikimedia Commons
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPAQ_\(desktop_computer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPAQ_(desktop_computer))

- # Versions 1 and 2
- Version 1 went live in late July 2007
 - Version 2 added more detailed panelist statistics and a links to the show on NPR’s website
 - By summer of 2008, the site had caught the attention of the show producers and the show host (Peter Sagal)

NPR's Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!: Show Details and Statistics

Introduction

With a *slight* obsession over a radio program called, "[Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!](#)" (also known as: WWDTM), I have started collecting various information regarding the radio program and storing the information in a database.

Content

This page is broken into two sections, one that details each of the program's show statistics and one that details the statistics for each panelist.

- [Show Statistics](#)
 - [2004](#)
 - [2005](#)
 - [2006](#)
 - [2007](#)
 - [Show Statistics Footnotes](#)
- [Panelist Statistics](#)
 - [Panelist Statistics Footnotes](#)

Show Statistics

The following tables contain various details for each of the shows entered into the database. Instead of collecting every minute detail of each show, show descriptions only contain high-level details and do not include information about the panelist rounds or the Lightning Fill-in-the-Blank round. The "Are You an NPR Geek?" is also known as the NPR Geek Game.

Number of shows in database: 497

2004

Show Air Date (Show Rating)	Host	Scorekeeper	Panelists	Guests
2004-01-03	Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about historical facts that were supposed to be set in stone, Not My Job about poet Martin Tupper, Who's Carl This Time? Round II, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: what historical figure will be found to have been wrong about all along?			
	Peter Sagal	Carl Kasell	Charlie Pierce (11) Mo Rocca (10) Roxanne Roberts (10)	Ira Glass (2)
2004-01-10	Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about machines becoming too smart, Not My Job about changes in the game called life, Who's Carl This Time? Round II, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: what will be discovered about Britney Spears' wedding and annulment?			
	Peter Sagal	Carl Kasell	Adam Felber (20) Paula Poundstone (15) Roy Blount, Jr. (15)	Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil (2)
2004-01-17	Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about products and services for the lonely, Not My Job about the nation's chief law enforcement officer, Listener Mailbag, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: what will the Mars rover find on Mars?			
	Peter Sagal	Carl Kasell	Roy Blount, Jr. (16) P.J. O'Rourke (15) Sue Ellicott (11)	Patrick Smith (1)
2004-01-24	Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about things people do but shouldn't, Not My Job about running a company into the ground, Who's Carl This Time? Round II, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: how will Howard Dean make people forget about his "scream"?			
	Peter Sagal	Carl Kasell	Adam Felber (18) Roxanne Roberts (17) Charlie Pierce (14)	Gideon Yago (2)
2004-01-31	Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about innovative criminal defenses, Not My Job about Ann Miller, Who's Carl This Time? Round II, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: what will be the most talked about Super Bowl ad?			
	Peter Sagal	Carl Kasell	Charlie Pierce (20) Roy Blount, Jr. (15) Paula Poundstone (13)	Denise McCluggage (1)

Version 3

- Single-page was replaced with pages for each show, host, scorekeeper, panelist and guest
- Site still used PHP and MySQL
- Silex was a micro-framework used for URL routing and MVC (model-view-controller) support
- New features included:
 - Listing of all appearances on individual host, scorekeeper, panelist and guest pages
 - Preliminary Bluff the Listener data and statistics

[Home](#)
[Help](#)
[Search](#)
[About](#)

[Blog](#)
[Contact Me](#)
[Infographic](#)

[Panelists](#)
[Guests](#)
[Hosts](#)
[Scorekeepers](#)

[All Shows](#)

[2016](#)
[2015](#)
[2014](#)
[2013](#)
[2012](#)
[2011](#)
[2010](#)
[2009](#)
[2008](#)
[2007](#)
[2006](#)
[2005](#)
[2004](#)
[2003](#)
[2002](#)
[2001](#)
[2000](#)
[1999](#)
[1998](#)

[Tweet](#)

Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me! Stats and Show Details

Show Information

For more information about the information displayed for a show, please read the [Show Information](#) section of the [Help](#) page.

[< Back to 2006](#)

Sort: **Oldest First** | [Newest First](#)

[2006-08-05](#)

Best Of
[NPR >](#)

Chicago, IL (Chicago Public Radio Studio)	Peter Sagal →	Carl Kasell, SE →
Roy Blount, Jr. → Kyrie O'Connor → Paula Poundstone → Adam Felber → Roxanne Roberts → Tom Bodett → Mo Rocca →	Chosen: <i>(N/A)</i> Correct: <i>(N/A)</i>	Barack Obama: 2 → Tom Hanks: 2 → Terry Gross: 2 → Ken Jennings: 3 →
Best of Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me! featuring several Not My Job favorites.		
<i>(N/A)</i>		

[2006-08-12](#)

[NPR >](#)

Chicago, IL (Chase Auditorium)	Luke Burbank →	Carl Kasell, SE →
Charlie Pierce: 18 → Sue Ellicott: 13 → Aamer Haleem: 7 →	Chosen: <i>(N/A)</i> Correct: <i>(N/A)</i>	Tommy Chong: 1 →
Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about Mel Gibson, Not My Job about M. Night Shamalayan, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: what changes will Raul Castro make as he takes over for Fidel Castro?		
Tradition of audience chanting "Luuuuuuke" begins, with Aamer explaining that the audience was not boo-ing Luke; Aamer comically crossed the line about large women carrying trays of food when discussing that a study showed that hungry men tended to favor more "curvaceous" women and Sue mentioned that hungry men should go after people carrying trays of food; Carl used the word "fart" in one of the Listener Limericks.		
One of the panelist questions was about a Chorizo sausage mascot called "El Picante", who was let go after one game to be "re-seasoned" but could be interpreted as it having a "temporary work visa", Charlie jokingly said that it was really fast, but Luke made a slight about it being able to swim; which lead to the audience "boo-ing" Luke, but Luke commenting that all he could hear was "Luke".		

[2006-08-19](#)

[NPR >](#)

Chicago, IL (Chase Auditorium)	Luke Burbank →	Carl Kasell, SE →
Paula Poundstone: 11 → Tom Bodett: 10 → Roy Blount, Jr.: 10 →	Chosen: <i>(N/A)</i> Correct: <i>(N/A)</i>	Soledad O'Brien: 2 →
Who's Carl This Time?, Bluff the Listener about corporate overlords, Not My Job about Mrs. Duke Cunningham, Who's Carl This Time? Round II, Panelist Predictions: what new object will be called a planet?		
Continuation of audience chanting "Luuuuuuke", in which Paula retorts Luke's comment of "...explaining that's people saying my name, not boo-ing" with "It's good that you think that... he's got an indomitable spirit, doesn't he? Little fella."; Paula stumbles on a question regarding NPR by not knowing who "Stamberg" is; the panelists and a listener ended up turning the beginning of Who's Carl This Time? Round II into "Beauty Chat" with more chanting of "Luuuuuuke".		

Version 4

- Goodbye PHP. Hello Python 🙋
- Foundation of the site would be a new shared library
- Site built on Flask micro-framework and Jinja templating
- Materialize used for front-end for a modern and mobile-first design
- Site is served using uwsgi and nginx

Wait Wait Stats Page

[Home](#) > [Shows](#) > [2021](#) > [February](#) > [13](#)

Show Details

2021-02-13

NPR →DB ID: 1204

Location

Home/Remote Studios →

Host

Peter Sagal →

Scorekeeper

"Another pun about my name? Inexcusa-Bill!"
Bill Kurtis →

Panelists

First: Paula Poundstone → 18 (2 / 8)
Second: Alonzo Bodden → 13 (3 / 5)
Third: Tom Bodett → 11 (3 / 4)

Guests

Abby Phillip → 2

Bluff

Chosen: Alonzo Bodden →Correct: Alonzo Bodden →

Description

Who's Bill This Time?, Bluff the Listener about Ancient Rome, Not My Job about politics in the animal kingdom, Listener Limerick Challenge, Panelist Predictions: what surprising gift will someone receive for Valentine's Day?

Notes

As social distancing continues, the show is recorded with each person from a remote/home studio.

After Paula Poundstone answered her 8th Lightning Fill-in-the-Blank question and while Peter Sagal explained the story behind it, there was some cute cat meowing sounds being made.

Tom Bodett initially answered his 6th Lightning question with "Parler" then changed it to "TikTok". Peter accepted the corrected answer.

[About](#)[Site History](#)[API Docs](#)[Blog](#)[Graphs](#)[Reports](#)

Accessing the Data

API FTW!

Wait Wait Stats API

- Over the years, fans had requested stats data
 - One person used the data to create an interactive infographic
 - Quite a few use it to learn data tools like PowerBI and Tableau
- API service was the first to use the new libwwdtm shared library
- The API service is built using Flask and is served using uwsgi and nginx

API Design

- API service returns JSON using the JSend specification
 - Successful requests return HTTP status code 200 and response body contains a data object with the requested data
 - Unsuccessful requests return HTTP status code 400 or 404 and response body includes a message in a data object
 - Requests resulting in an application error return HTTP status code 500 and response body includes an error message
- The API is open to the public
- Documentation and examples available at: <https://api.wwdt.me/docs>

Stats API Docs

List Shows with Details ▾

Show examples in:

cURL

Python

Retrieve a show

Returns a show object containing the database ID, date and whether the show is a best of show and/or a repeat show.

GET https://api.wwdt.me/v1.0/shows/{show_id}

Example Request

\$ curl https://api.wwdt.me/v1.0/shows/{show_id}

Example Response

```
{
  "status": "success",
  "data": {
    "show": {
      "id": 47,
      "date": "2006-08-19",
      "best_of": false,
      "repeat_show": false
    }
  }
}
```

Retrieve a show by year, month and day

Returns a show object containing the database ID, date and whether the show is a best of show and/or a repeat show.

The year value must be a four-digit year.

GET https://api.wwdt.me/v1.0/shows/date/{year}/{month}/{day}

Example Request

\$ curl https://api.wwdt.me/v1.0/shows/date/{year}/{month}/{day}

Example Response

```
{
  "status": "success",
  "data": {
    "show": {
      "id": 1083,
      "date": "2018-10-27",

```

Additional Resources

Links to Wait Wait Stats Web Apps

- Stats Page
 - <https://stats.wwdt.me>
- Reports
 - <https://reports.wwdt.me>
- Graphs
 - <https://graphs.wwdt.me>
- Blog
 - <https://blog.wwdt.me>

Source Code

- Projects are available at GitHub under Apache License 2.0
 - api.wwdt.me
 - <https://github.com/questionlp/api.wwdt.me>
 - libwwdtm
 - <https://github.com/questionlp/libwwdtm>
 - graphs.wwdt.me
 - <https://github.com/questionlp/graphs.wwdt.me>
 - reports.wwdt.me
 - <https://github.com/questionlp/reports.wwdt.me>
 - stats.wwdt.me
 - <https://github.com/questionlp/stats.wwdt.me>
 - wwdtm_database
 - https://github.com/questionlp/wwdtm_database

Staying Connected

- Twitter
 - @questionlp
- E-mail
 - lpham@wwdt.me
- GitHub
 - <https://github.com/questionlp>

</presentation>