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# The Dollar Value of a Day

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# The Dollar Value of a Day

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Time Diary Analysis

2006 Dollar Valuation

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## Dollar value in a day

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### Introduction

People can obtain dollar value in a day when they give their time to someone else in an employment situation. In exchange for time and work effort, the employer pays a wage. Multiplying hours of employment by the hourly wage rate earned, we can quantify the dollar value from a day's work. Although dollars do not exchange in the home in the same manner as in employment, when persons perform household work, their activities have important economic benefits as each household member's life is likely improved with the total services performed in the household. If for some reason work and services performed in the household requires replacement or supplementation, a market exists where persons can hire those willing to perform various household work tasks as a job. In addition to providing household work, people use their time at home to give emotional and physical support to their household members creating additional economic value in the home. They also use time to maintain or enjoy their own selves. Certainly, eating, resting, and leisure are valuable activities.

In this report, we calculate a market estimate of the value attained with time use or the cost needed to support or replace time use. Relying on pooled 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 time-diary data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) *American Time Use Survey* (ATUS) and a wage survey produced by the BLS, we calculate the value created in a day as measured by the price of hiring persons whose marketplace work relates to the time use of people during the course of a day. Multiplying time use hours in an activity by a relevant hourly market price of hiring workers within that activity creates a replacement value or a cost to produce or supplement the use of time.

Time-diary surveys record activities by the amount of time spent in the activities. Depending upon the day, persons might be working 8 hours outside the home at a job and also working 4 hours at home doing cooking, cleaning, or other household chores for the benefit of themselves and family members. It makes good sense that all of the hours of work in the day have an economic dollar value. Multiplying the hourly wage in employment by 8 hours and the hourly wage of perhaps a maid times 4 hours, we can arrive at the dollar value of the 12 hours of work performed by the

person in that day. For the remaining 12 hours in the day, dollars may or may not be relevant to decisions regarding time use; and, when dollars are relevant, that time use might not ever need to be valued, replaced, or supplemented.

The value of time when viewed as the output created from time ranges from measurable to invaluable—some time use has a market price while other time use does not. The time spent reading a book to a child can be considered priceless by parents (and children); however, a direct and measurable economic value of the activity is the market cost to hire someone to read a story to a child. When we sleep, we provide value for our household in the form of our availability for protection, care or comfort—how many wives sleep less comfortably when their husbands are away from home on business? What is the value to the timid when the bravest household member checks-out noises in the night or the care that is available for the sick? Obviously, guards and nurses perform protection and care services for sleeping persons and their wage rate would be a reasonable place to begin to price such service activity, if required.

The replacement valuation analysis is extendable to every activity performed in a day and it is most relevant when time is lost or a service is required during a specific time allocation or activity. An injury may require that someone needs help eating, dressing, bathing, or having his or her sleep or any other daily activity monitored. How much would it cost to hire assistance or monitoring during this time? In many situations, dollar values of time represent or relate to value generated or received with the usage of time. However, realistically not all valuations of time are appropriate, so the application by the user of the data in this report for a specific valuation must be evaluated within the context of its purpose. For example, most dollar valuations of time using the replacement valuation method are only relevant when an activity is lost or assistance is required for activity completion.

It is beyond the reach of economic analysis to determine the actual value of every usage of time to one person. As such, the dollar value in a day presented in this report is the 'market shadow value' to a day. The estimates of value presented in this report relate to the cost to employ someone to work in the confines of activities that a person might perform in a day without regard to how individuals might value specific time

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use. The dollar value in the day is the sum across activities of the multiplication of hours and assigned value based upon hourly wage rates. The market cost of hiring someone to shadow time usage does not presume that the hourly cost represents precisely the value in performing or replacing a specific person's activities, only its market cost equivalence within the categories of time use. Returning to the story-reading example, the value to the child of his or her own parent reading to them and spending time with them would likely exceed that of a stranger.

### Group value

Societal value reveals itself from the time-use behavior of groups of people. As such, we often describe societies by what they do with their time and many studies have followed the detailed activities of individual societal members for a length of time. Two problems often occur in that research: (1) the length of time surveyed is often too short to provide insight to all of one person's life activities, and (2) the number of subjects in the studies is relatively few.

In this report, we analyze the time spent by 60,674 persons in one day of their life from 2003 to 2006—a large number of persons but a short amount of time per person. The person-days are evenly scattered across the days-of-the-week of two years; they represent persons over the age of 14 in the entire United States.<sup>1</sup> The time spent by each member of the group of 60,674 persons reflects the value society received from the usage of these  $60,674 \times 1,440$  minutes of time. The day's life conditions and resulting individual time allocations determined the amount of time spent by each person on each activity during the survey day. Our data set is comprised of 87,370,560 minutes of time. For each minute of time, the BLS ATUS survey codes the primary activity performed by the individual, the location of the person at that time, and who the person was with during that time. As a group, our valuation relates to time spent recorded by who, what, how long, where, and who with considerations. We condensed the average time allocations into 27 detailed activity groupings which then are accumulated into 5 major activity groupings.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the ATUS data set, refer to the section of this report on survey methodology.

### Individual value

Most individuals value what other persons in the society do with their time because they often do similar activities within their own available time. On a specific survey day, one person might have mowed his grass and another might have gone to the movies. With that pattern of time use between two people, we do not have to conclude that the grass mower never goes to the movies or the movie watcher never mows grass. When we are confident of a well-stratified survey group, we can generally derive individual value by looking at the totality of time spent by the group by specific activity. If we divide the total time spent by the group in each activity by the number of members in the group, we construct an average activity day for the group. We then present individual replacement value of the time use during the average activity day.

The dollar value in a day is representative of value, not the determinant of value. Some people value an activity while others do not and some people are better at performing some activities than others. The dollar value in a day from an individual perspective is important when that person loses the ability to perform an activity or loses the use or benefit of someone else's time. By using the representative value approach, the often non-dollar exchanged time allocations become very important. For example, if an injury prevents an individual from performing their housework, what dollar amount will be required to hire someone to perform the average hours of housework that his or her peers perform?

The dollar value in a day does not address whether or not a person would ever want or need to hire someone to perform or assist with any or all of their activities. It also does not represent all of the opportunity costs in the performance of activities nor the individual-to-individual productivity obtained with time use. *The Dollar Value of a Day* is a dollars and cents pricing of economic value using actual observed average behavior and actual market-based wages paid to those willing to give up their own time to perform an activity for someone else. It would be impossible for a living person to lose all of the value of their time. Likewise, it would be impossible for someone to have access to all of the value of someone else's time. Therefore, we do not expect that our impersonal valuation of individual activity would necessarily be equal to the personal dollar value of an entire day.

The dollar value in a day can only address the primary usage of each minute in a day. When a moth-

er is primarily cooking a meal, she may also be supervising her children. When a mother is lost, the child loses the direct provision of a meal and the supervision and care that took place while the mother was cooking. Such situations provide examples of why all uses of time must be measured and valued. If a person is primarily doing one activity, they might also be doing another activity simultaneously. A father and son could each be primarily enjoying their own leisure at a ballgame, but the father also provides supervision and guidance to his child during the time spent at the game. It is impossible to determine a dollar value for each component of value provided with each minute of the day; therefore, *The Dollar Value of a Day* provides a valuation only of one, primary activity per minute. However, we do provide the capability of examining “who with” and “where” questions during primary activities by providing estimates of time spent a secondary child care (which we later discuss), time spent with family members, and time spent at home.

### ***Dollar Value of a Day methodology***

*The Dollar Value of a Day* provides one possible valuation of time. Our valuation is constrained by the decisions made by the time-diary data collectors regarding the categorization of time into various activities and the sampling methodology of the survey. The time diary data used in this report are the only such data provided by a federal statistical collection agency and the ATUS is the largest time-survey ever undertaken in the United States.

In assigning dollar values, we use a United States Department of Labor survey that provides their largest survey of wages by occupation by geographical area. Although the dollar valuations are presented in the summary tables based on average wages in all of the United States, we present a wage adjustment factor to isolate state and metropolitan area wage variations. The wages used to determine value are averages and do not reflect the skills or efficiencies that individuals may possess in performing specific activities.

Recognizing the cost to hire individuals includes more than an hourly wage; we add an amount to each wage rate to account for legally required employment taxes or benefits paid by private industry employers of part-time workers. We do not address other voluntarily paid benefits or any income taxes paid by employed workers. We also do not address the costs of searching for prospective ‘employees’ or monitoring their output. We do not expect everyone to agree with

every aspect of the hourly values we selected for each activity and other legitimate measures exist in the time valuation literature. The dollar values presented here should be regarded simply as one possible reasonable and reliable valuation. Sufficient information is presented regarding the hours of time use by category for anyone to calculate his or her own dollar value of a day.

Providing time use estimates for many demographic traits is desirable, however, any analysis is dependent upon survey sample size. Time-diary studies are expensive to complete and as such, sample sizes are relatively small when compared to other large, regular surveys like the BLS/Census’ *Current Population Survey*. Although we use data from the largest time-diary study ever completed in the U.S., we face data limitations in several demographic classifications. In their release of results from the ATUS, the BLS redacts estimates for U.S. population groups with less than 800,000 persons; accordingly, in this report we do not show results for U.S. population groups less than 800,000 persons in 2003-2006 average population. Obviously, the significance of the results from small subgroups near 800,000 in population size should be evaluated by evidence of consistency with other similarly related subgroups with larger sample subgroup sizes.

We present two groups of results. The first group is limited to age and gender and the second group adds the household characteristics of marital status, presence of children, and labor force status. Because of differing obligations, we expect that the structural use of time varies amongst persons within these demographic traits. In making demographic classifications, we were sensitive to maximizing detail while maintaining sample size in the subgroups presented.

The presentation of the results is limited to the average allocation of a day by demographic trait. For example, we present the average amount of time devoted to cooking and cleaning by married males with children. Discovery of time usage is limited to the particular demographics of the subject. Other empirical analyses of time-diary data often include regression analysis to show the effects of the varying categories within the demographic traits on the time allocations. For example, the dependent variable would be time spent cooking and cleaning and the independent variables might include single or married dummy variables and a variable for the number of children, and other relevant traits. The coefficients from the regressions would be used to build the average hours of

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cooking and cleaning by single males with children. In this report we do not perform statistical regression analysis. We do so primarily for two reasons:

- (1) We are interested in the average allocation of time use by a particular group instead of variations of time use within the entire population. We are not trying to explain intra-sample differences within a day. If one group of persons perform more (less) of a particular subset of activities, they would have to perform less (more) of the remaining activities. In this study, we are not interested in trying to explain these mixtures of time across demographic groups.
- (2) Since each person is represented in the sample by only one day, regression analysis pointing to micro-level characteristics might not accurately represent all anticipated time allocations.

Although regression analysis of time allocation is not within the scope of this study, its use is appropriate within other contexts. Since, in this report, we focus on the value generated by specific groups of persons, regression analysis was not relevant.

### ***Contents of this report***

This report contains explanatory text and descriptive tables. Following this section, we discuss common survey methods used to measure use of time. We then present the important methodologies of the ATUS. Documentation of *The Dollar Value of a Day* consolidation and valuation follows. The results of this study, in tabular form, are in the table section. When required, each table has an explanatory note.

An appendix contains the computer programming (SAS<sup>®</sup> Version 9.1) that was used to convert the microdata as published by the BLS to the tables 1 to 90 in this report.

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**Table 1. Married males that work full-time, youngest child under age 13**

Time Use Category	Weekly Hours	Hourly Value	Dollar Value of a Day	Weekly Waking Hours			Participation Rate	Standard Error Percent
				Secondary Child Care	With Family	At Home		
Inside Housework	1.54	\$10.54	\$2.32	0.96	0.94	1.50	18.5%	3.0%
Food Cooking & Clean-up	1.98	10.13	2.87	1.41	1.30	1.91	39.0	1.4
Pets, Home & Vehicles	4.20	12.37	7.42	2.23	1.69	3.87	29.0	1.8
Household Management	0.87	15.53	1.93	0.42	0.43	0.66	20.4	2.9
Shopping	2.25	11.84	3.81	1.18	1.66	0.05	37.2	2.0
Obtaining Services	0.09	13.60	0.17	0.03	0.03	0.03	2.3	10.1
Travel for Household Activity	1.96	12.20	3.42	0.81	1.14	0.01	41.0	1.5
<b>Household Production</b>	<b>12.89</b>	<b>11.91</b>	<b>21.93</b>	<b>7.03</b>	<b>7.18</b>	<b>8.03</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Household Children	6.52	11.30	10.52	n/a	6.39	5.37	58.8	1.3
Household Adults	0.19	11.51	0.31	0.08	0.15	0.10	5.7	9.6
Non-Household Members	0.52	11.68	0.87	0.15	0.32	0.06	8.2	6.7
Travel for Household Members	0.92	13.45	1.76	0.03	0.63	0.01	24.9	1.9
Travel for Non-Household Members	0.33	13.45	0.63	0.09	0.16	0.00	7.6	3.9
<b>Caring and Helping</b>	<b>8.47</b>	<b>11.64</b>	<b>14.09</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>7.65</b>	<b>5.55</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Eating & Drinking	8.00	11.76	13.44	3.97	5.15	4.42	96.6	0.6
Personal Health Care	0.46	11.19	0.73	0.13	0.18	0.21	4.2	7.6
Grooming	3.88	11.33	6.29	1.29	n/a	n/a	80.9	0.8
Sleeping	56.29	12.08	97.14	n/a	n/a	n/a	99.9	0.5
Private, Personal, or N/A	1.12	12.66	2.03	0.41	0.37	0.33	16.2	2.9
<b>Personal Time</b>	<b>69.76</b>	<b>12.01</b>	<b>119.64</b>	<b>5.81</b>	<b>5.70</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Socializing	4.62	12.52	8.26	2.76	3.85	2.15	39.4	1.9
Passive Leisure	17.98	11.17	28.69	9.28	12.13	16.78	87.9	0.8
Active Leisure	2.12	11.17	3.38	0.69	0.93	0.32	16.3	2.7
Attendance Leisure	0.92	11.17	1.47	0.53	0.75	0.03	5.1	2.9
Religious Activities	0.72	14.87	1.52	0.48	0.61	0.05	6.8	3.2
Volunteering	0.95	14.87	2.02	0.44	0.51	0.11	6.7	3.3
Travel Related to Leisure	2.52	12.20	4.39	1.15	1.56	0.02	49.8	1.5
<b>Leisure</b>	<b>29.82</b>	<b>11.67</b>	<b>49.73</b>	<b>15.33</b>	<b>20.33</b>	<b>19.47</b>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Working at Job	42.77	27.15	165.87	1.11	0.00	2.52	73.3	0.7
Educational Activities	0.25	14.87	0.53	0.08	0.04	0.15	1.0	6.8
Commuting to Work or School	4.04	12.20	7.03	0.09	0.25	0.02	64.7	1.2
<b>Work and Education</b>	<b>47.06</b>	<b>25.80</b>	<b>173.44</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>168.00</b>	<b>15.78</b>	<b>378.82</b>	<b>29.79</b>	<b>41.15</b>	<b>40.69</b>		
Size of U.S. Population in 2003-2006	21,249,892			Average Age		38.5		
ATUS Respondents in 2003-2006	6,471			5th Percentile Age		26		
Sunday Respondents	1,691			95th Percentile Age		52		
Weekday Respondents	3,117			Household Size		4.2		
Saturday Respondents	1,663			Number of Adults		2.1		
				Number of Children under Age 18		2.1		
<b>Definitions</b>								
Weekly Hours: Weekly average time in hours where the activity category describes the main activity that was being performed by the respondent. Weekly hours are calculated by summing average Sunday hours plus five times average weekday hours plus average Saturday hours.								
Hourly Value: See tables 91-117.								
Dollar Value of a Day: Weekly hours times hourly value divided by seven.								
Secondary Child Care: While performing a primary activity, at wake children under age 13 were in the respondent's care.								
With Family: At least one family member was in the room or accompanied the respondent.								
At Home: The respondent was inside or outside his or her own home.								
Participation Rate: Percent of population reporting at least one daily episode of the activity.								
Standard Error Percent: Standard error of the mean reported as a percent of the episode mean in the activity.								
Note: 'Who' and 'Where' coding only during waking hours and not coded for sleeping, grooming, some personal activities, and limited coding while working at job.								

**Table 91. Inside Housework: Activities and Valuation**

**ATUS Codes and Tier 1/2/3 Categories Used in this DVD Time Use Grouping**

- 020101 Household Activities—Interior cleaning—Interior cleaning
- 020102 Household Activities—Laundry—Laundry
- 020103 Household Activities—Sewing, repairing, and maintaining textiles—Sewing, repairing, and maintaining textiles
- 020104 Household Activities—Storing interior household items, including food—Storing interior household items, including food
- 020199 Household Activities—Housework, n.e.c.—Housework, n.e.c.

*Activity Examples within each ATUS Activity Code as Published by the BLS*

020101—Interior cleaning—changing sheets; cleaning bathrooms; cleaning bathtub; cleaning bedroom; cleaning carpets; cleaning cupboards; cleaning floors; cleaning inside of windows; cleaning out closet; cleaning out drawers; cleaning the house; cleaning toilet; dusting; emptying ashtray; emptying trash cans; making the bed; mopping floors; picking up clothes; picking up toys; polishing furniture; recycling; scrubbing; shampooing carpet; sorting newspapers for recycling; sweeping; sweeping floors; taking out the trash; tidying up; vacuuming; washing floor; washing walls
020102—Laundry—adding fabric softener; bringing in washing/laundry; checking wash; doing laundry; folding clean laundry; folding clothes; handwashing clothing; hanging clothes; hanging clothes on clothesline; ironing; putting clean laundry away; putting laundry in washer/dryer; putting out clean towels; putting towels in bathroom; removing lint from dryer; sorting laundry; spot treating clothes; taking clothes off the line; taking clothes out of washer; treating stains; washing curtains
020103—Sewing, repairing, & maintaining textiles—altering clothing; cleaning shoes/sneakers; crocheting; crocheting quilt; hemming garments; knitting/crocheting blankets; knitting/crocheting sweaters, clothing; polishing shoes; repairing curtains; repairing/caring for clothes/hats/shoes; sewing a new dress/clothing; sewing curtains/other household items; sewing hem; sewing on buttons
020104—Storing interior household items, inc. food—boxing things up for storage; carrying in the groceries; moving stuff to attic/basement; putting away Christmas decorations; putting away decorations; putting away holiday items; putting away the groceries; putting shopping away; storing food; storing the groceries; unloading groceries/shopping

SOC Occupation Used to Value Activity	SOC	Employment (5/2006)	Mean wage (5/2006)	Weight	Weighted Wage
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	37-2012	900,040	\$8.99	0.605	\$5.43
Locker room, coatroom, and dressing room attendants	39-3093	18,770	\$9.50	0.013	\$0.12
Baggage porters and bellhops	39-6011	48,450	\$10.37	0.033	\$0.34
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	51-6011	217,580	\$9.08	0.146	\$1.33
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	51-6021	75,150	\$8.88	0.050	\$0.45
Sewing machine operators	51-6031	219,080	\$9.78	0.147	\$1.44
Sewers, hand	51-6051	9,750	\$10.43	0.007	\$0.07
		1,488,820	\$9.58		<b>\$9.17</b>
Service Occupation Legally Required Benefits			14.8%		14.8%
Hourly Mean Wage with Legally Required Benefits			\$11.00		<b>\$10.54</b>

**Table 92. Food Cooking & Clean-up: Activities and Valuation**

**ATUS Codes and Tier 1/2/3 Categories Used in this DVD Time Use Grouping**

- 020201 Household Activities—Food and drink preparation—Food and drink preparation
- 020202 Household Activities—Food presentation—Food presentation
- 020203 Household Activities—Kitchen and food clean-up—Kitchen and food clean-up
- 020299 Household Activities—Food and drink prep, presentation, and clean-up, n.e.c.—Food and drink prep, presentation, and clean-up, n.e.c.

*Activity Examples within each ATUS Activity Code as Published by the BLS*

020201—Food and drink preparation—baking a cake; baking biscuits; baking Christmas cookies; baking/cooking/broiling/boiling; boiling water; bottling fruit; breast-pumping; brewing beer or wine; butchering meat; canning food; carving meat; chopping/slicing vegetables; cooking dinner; cooking meals; defrosting; dehydrating food; drying food; getting a drink; heating food up; making a gingerbread house; making baby food; making coffee/tea; making jam; mixing drinks; mixing/heating up baby formula; packing food/lunches/picnics; peeling potatoes; pouring water in glass; preparing food for company/guests; preparing food for other household members; preparing salad; preserving food; putting icing on cake; putting roast in oven; salting meat; smoking fish; thawing frozen food
020202—Food presentation—filling salt/pepper/sugar; garnishing food; passing out drinks; polishing silver; putting out condiments; serving a meal; serving hors d'oeuvres; setting the table
020203—Kitchen and food clean-up—cleaning barbecue grill; cleaning freezer; cleaning high chair; cleaning kitchen cupboard; cleaning microwave oven; cleaning oven; cleaning refrigerator; cleaning stove; cleaning up after a meal; cleaning up plates and food; cleaning up the kitchen only; clearing the table; defrosting freezer; emptying dishwasher; loading the dishwasher; mopping the kitchen floor; putting dishes away; putting leftovers away; rinsing dishes; throwing away leftovers; washing pots and pans; washing/drying dishes; wiping table