History of PHP Web Programming

PHP development began in 1994 when the Danish/Greenlandic/Canadian programmer Rasmus Lerdorf initially created a set of Perl scripts he called “Personal Home Page Tools” to maintain his personal homepage. The scripts performed tasks such as displaying his résumé and recording his web-page traffic. Lerdorf initially announced the release of PHP on the ***comp.infosystems.www.authoring.cgi*** Usenet discussion group on June 8, 1995.

He rewrote these scripts as Common Gateway Interface (CGI) binaries in C, extending them to add the ability to work with Web forms and to communicate with databases and called this implementation “**Personal Home Page/Forms Interpreter**” or **PHP/FI**. PHP/FI could be used to build simple, dynamic Web applications. Lerdorf released PHP/FI as “**Personal Home Page Tools (PHP Tools) version 1.0**” publicly on June 8, 1995, to accelerate bug location and improve the code. This release already had the basic functionality that PHP has today. This included Perl-like variables, form handling, and the ability to embed HTML. The syntax was similar to Perl but was more limited and simpler, although less consistent. A development team began to form and, after months of work and beta testing, officially released PHP/FI 2 in November 1997.

Zeev Suraski and Andi Gutmans, two Israeli developers at the Technion IIT, rewrote the parser in 1997 and formed the base of PHP 3, changing the language's name to the recursive initialism *PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor*. Afterward, public testing of PHP 3 began, and the official launch came in June 1998. Suraski and Gutmans then started a new rewrite of PHP's core, producing the Zend Engine in 1999. They also founded Zend Technologies in Ramat Gan, Israel.

On May 22, 2000, PHP 4, powered by the Zend Engine 1.0, was released. As of August 2008 this branch is up to version 4.4.9. PHP 4 is no longer under development nor will any security updates be released.

On July 13, 2004, PHP 5 was released, powered by the new Zend Engine II. PHP 5 included new features such as improved support for object-oriented programming, the PHP Data Objects (PDO) extension (which defines a lightweight and consistent interface for accessing databases), and numerous performance enhancements. In 2008 PHP 5 became the only stable version under development. Late static binding had been missing from PHP and was added in version 5.3.

A new major version has been under development alongside PHP 5 for several years. This version was originally planned to be released as PHP 6 as a result of its significant changes, which included plans for full Unicode support. However, Unicode support took developers much longer to implement than originally thought, and the decision was made in March 2010 to move the project to a branch, with features still under development moved to trunk.

Changes in the new code include the removal of `register_globals`, magic quotes, and safe mode. The reason for the removals was that `register_globals` had opened security holes by intentionally allowing runtime data injection, and the use of magic quotes had an unpredictable nature. Instead, to escape characters, magic quotes may be replaced with the `addslashes()` function, or more appropriately an escape mechanism specific to the database vendor itself like `mysql_real_escape_string()` for MySQL. Functions that will be removed in future versions and have been deprecated in PHP 5.3 will produce a warning if used.

Many high-profile open-source projects ceased to support PHP 4 in new code as of February 5, 2008, because of the GoPHP5 initiative, provided by a consortium of PHP developers promoting the transition from PHP 4 to PHP 5.

Since version 5.4, PHP has native support for Unicode or multibyte strings, allowing strings as well as class-, method-, and function-names to contain non-ASCII characters.

PHP interpreters are available on both 32-bit and 64-bit operating systems, but on Microsoft Windows the only official distribution is a 32-bit implementation, requiring Windows 32-bit compatibility mode while using Internet Information Services (IIS) on a 64-bit Windows platform. Experimental 64-bit versions of PHP 5.3.0 were briefly available for MS Windows, but have since been removed.

PHP Release History

Major version	Minor version	Release date	Notes
1	1.0.0	1995-06-08	Officially called “Personal Home Page Tools (PHP Tools)”. This is the first use of the name "PHP".
2	2.0.0	1997-11-01	Considered by its creator as the “fastest and simplest tool” for creating dynamic Web pages.
3	3.0.0	1998-06-06	Development moves from one person to multiple developers. Zeev Suraski and Andi Gutmans rewrite the base for this version.
	3.0.18	2000-10-20	The latest release for PHP 3.0.x. Unsupported Historical Releases
4	4.0.0	2000-05-22	Added more advanced two-stage parse/execute tag-parsing system called the Zend engine.
	4.1.0	2001-12-10	Introduced ‘superglobals’ (`$_GET`, `$_POST`, `$_SESSION`, etc.)
	4.2.0	2002-04-22	Disabled register_globals by default. Data received over the network is not inserted directly into the global namespace anymore, closing possible security holes in applications.
	4.3.0	2002-12-27	Introduced the command-line interface (CLI), to supplement the CGI.
	4.4.0	2005-07-11	Added man pages for phpize and php-config scripts.
	4.4.9	2008-08-07	Security enhancements and bug fixes. The last release of the PHP 4.4 series.
5	5.0.0	2004-07-13	Zend Engine II with a new object model.
	5.1.0	2005-11-24	Performance improvements with introduction of compiler variables in re-engineered PHP Engine. Added PHP Data Objects (PDO) as a consistent interface for accessing databases.

	5.2.0	2006-11-02	Enabled the filter extension by default. Native JSON support.
	5.2.16	2010-12-16	End-of-life for 5.2 series
	5.2.17	2011-01-06	Fix of critical vulnerability connected to floating point.
	5.3.0	2009-06-30	Namespace support; late static bindings, Jump label (limited goto), Native closures, Native PHP archives (phar), garbage collection for circular references, improved Windows support, sqlite3, mysqlnd as a replacement for libmysql as underlying library for the extensions that work with MySQL, fileinfo as a replacement for mime_magic for better MIME support, the Internationalization extension, and deprecation of ereg extension.
	5.3.1	2009-11-19	Over 100 bug fixes, some of which were security fixes.
	5.3.2	2010-03-04	Includes a large number of bug fixes.
	5.3.3	2010-07-22	Mainly bug and security fixes; FPM SAPI.
	5.3.4	2010-12-10	Mainly bug and security fixes; improvements to FPM SAPI.
	5.3.5	2011-01-06	Fix of critical vulnerability connected to floating point.
	5.3.6	2011-03-10	Over 60 bug fixes that were reported in the previous version.
	5.3.7	2011-08-18	This release focuses on improving the stability of the PHP 5.3.x branch with over 90 bug fixes, some of which are security related.
	5.3.8	2011-08-23	This release fixes two issues introduced in the PHP 5.3.7 release.
	5.3.9	2012-01-10	This release focuses on improving the stability of the PHP 5.3.x branch with over 90 bug fixes, some of which are security related.
	5.3.10	2012-02-02	Fixed arbitrary remote code execution vulnerability reported by Stefan Esser, CVE-2012-0830.
	5.3.13	2012-05-08	Fixed the vulnerability in CGI-based setups
	5.4.0	2012-03-01	Trait Support, short array syntax support. Removed items: register_globals, `safe_mode`, `allow_call_time_pass_reference`, `session_register()`, `session_unregister()` and `session_is_registered()`. Built-in web server. Several improvements to existing features, performance and reduced memory requirements.
	5.4.1	2012-04-26	Number of bug fixes and security enhancements.
	5.4.2	2012-05-03	Security patch to fix PHP-CGI query string parameter vulnerability.
	5.4.3	2012-05-08	Fix vulnerability in CGI-based setups and also the buffer overflow vulnerability for `apache_request_headers()`
6	6.0.0	No date set	The development of PHP 6 has been delayed because the developers have decided the current approach to handling of instance unicode is not a good one, and are considering alternate ways in the next version of PHP. The updates that were intended for PHP 6 were added to PHP 5.3.0 (namespace support, late static bindings, lambda functions, closures, goto) and 5.4.0 (traits, closure rebinding) instead.