

NO KIDDING: THE SEARCH FOR THE WORLD'S FUNNIEST JOKE

Final Script – January 22, 2003

01:00:00

Man in V-neck American tourist in Spain and he goes into this restaurant. And he's in this restaurant trying decide what to have to eat

01:00:07

Costumed woman And the gay man has a patch on his penis

01:00:10

Man with kangaroo They go ahead with the operation, and sure enough, it's a great success

01:00:14

Man in white shirt And the old guy says, "Oh, now I know where I put my hearing aid."

01:00:26

Richard Wiseman So last week it was so cold I saw a lawyer with his hands in his own pockets.

01:00:32

And the man says, "Well I can't make Tuesdays."

01:00:42

Boy in black "Boy that's some piece of cheese!"

01:00:47

Man in blue Now the trouble starts, now the trouble starts.

01:01:21

Richard Wiseman I wanted to come up with an experiment that would... get the whole world taking part. And the more I thought about it, the more I thought the one topic which science for the most part has left alone yet that the public find very engaging is about humor and laughter and jokes.

01:01:38

I teamed up with the British Association for the Advancement of Science and we decided to conduct a huge experiment. In fact, one of the largest psychology experiments ever carried out. It was called

Laugh Lab and involved people logging onto an Internet site to either tell us their favourite joke or rate the funniness of jokes that had been submitted by others.

01:01:58 The initial response from the public was absolutely amazing. Within the first day we had over a thousand jokes. We had millions of people attempting to get onto the site. It became one of the most popular sites on the Internet.

Richard Wiseman Did you hear about the man who drowned in a bowl of muesli? He was pulled under by a strong currant.

Richard Wiseman (VO:) I teamed up with Canadian film director John Zaritsky and his crew, and we set off on a round-the-world tour to field test the Laughlab findings.

01:02:17 The doctor goes, "Nine, eight, seven, six,"

01:02:23
White-haired man A guy goes to the doctor he said, "I've got some bad news and some good news." "What's the bad news?" "You've got an incurable disease." "Well what's the good news?" "They're going to name it after you."

01:37:49
Blonde in wig This blonde, she walks up to the counter and she says, "Can I have a burger and fries please?" And the lady looks at her and she says, "This is a library." And she says, "Oh I'm sorry, (whispering) can I have a burger and fries please?"

01:34:39
Man in grey Two drunks are sitting in a car. The one in the driver's seat asks his friend, "Can you see if the indicator is working?" His friend looks and says, "It's working....not working...working..."

01:34:58
Richard Wiseman So why do we find jokes like these funny? Well I think the answer is because they make us feel superior to other people and this isn't a new idea. In fact about two thousand years ago, Plato proposed the superiority theory of humour. To him, jokes were funny because we're laughing at somebody else's misfortune.

01:35:45

Man in red vest

So this guy applies for a visa to get into Australia and the guy on the counter says, "Look I'm going to ask you a few questions before I issue you this visa." He says, "Yeah that's fine." "Look have you had any previous convictions?" And the African says, "Look do you still need those to get into Australia?"

01:36:02

Woman in black

An Aussie farmer's doing a coach tour of New Zealand and he's on the bus and he sees this Kiwi farmer being rather intimate with a sheep.

01:36:10

Boy in cap

So he gets out of his car and he goes across to him and says, "Mate in Australia we shear our sheep." And the New Zealander goes, "I'm not sharing this sheep with anyone."

Cut in Int: 42:12 – 43:02

01:36:21

Richard Wiseman

Plato thought that it was morally wrong to laugh at jokes like these. But for 2000 years his advice has been completely ignored and in Laugh Lab we had lots of superiority jokes. In fact it seems no nation, no authority figure, no religion can escape being the butt of someone's joke.

01:36:39

See what you think of this one. It's a little bit longer. A truck driver is going along and he sees a priest hitch-hiking so he thinks he'll do him a good turn and he pulls over and he gets the priest to come up into his truck and sit in the passenger seat. And he's driving along with the priest and he sees a lawyer and he's walking along the pavement.

01:36:55

And so the truck driver sort of swerves to hit the lawyer. This is what it says in the joke, obviously nothing personal, so he drives; he swerves to hit the lawyer. Then he remembers there's a priest next to him so he swerves to go back again. And even though he misses the lawyer, he hears a kind of dull thud.

01:37:13

And so he turns to the priest and says, "I'm really sorry about that I nearly hit the lawyer." And the priest says, "Don't worry, I got him with the door." What do you think?

01:37:23
Lawyer I think it's good. It's one I haven't heard before for a start.

01:37:25
Richard Wiseman Oh right, okay, that's something. Do you hear quite a lot of lawyer jokes then?

01:37:31
Lawyer Yes, I'm, three or four a day.

01:08:00
Richard Wiseman We wanted to know if there were real differences between the nationalities. And so in Laugh Lab what we were able to do is rank order countries in terms of how funny the people from those countries found the jokes. The results were surprising.

(Top Ten Country List)

01:08:29 We decided to investigate why Canadians didn't find the jokes at all funny. We wondered whether in fact Canadians have got a wonderful sense of humour but we just happen to attract all of those with a lousy sense of humour.

01:08:42 Why is the number eight afraid of the number seven?

01:08:43
Group 'Cause seven ate nine.

01:08:46
Richard Wiseman Is there anyone who didn't know that joke?

01:08:49
Group No.

01:08:50
Richard Wiseman No-one. Okay. Brilliant. Okay is it a good joke Josh before we start?

01:08:53

Josh

Yeah, I already tested with my other teachers and they thought it was really cool.

01:08:56

Richard Wiseman

They thought it was a good joke. Okay, right, here we go, Josh's joke. Go ahead Josh.

01:09:02

Josh

Okay so it's the end of the year and the teachers are collecting presents. The daughter who's mother owns a bakery hands a box to the teacher. The teacher shakes it once, twice, and guesses, "Is it cookies?"

01:09:11

And the student says, "Yes it is. How did you guess? And then she says, "Just a lucky guess." And then a son who's Dad owns a candy store comes and hands the teacher a box. The teacher shakes the box and guesses, "Is it candy?" And he said, "Yes, how did you know?" And she says, "Just a lucky guess."

01:09:25

And then the son who's Dad owns a juice store comes and brings a box. The teacher notices the box is leaking through one corner and she catches a drop on her hand and tries it. And she goes, "Hmm is it apple juice?" And he's like, "No." She tries a few drops and says, "Is it orange juice?" And he says, "No," his grin getting very large. And she's like, "Fine, I give up. What is it?" And he's like, "It's a puppy!"

01:09:52

Richard Wiseman

Josh, that's a very rude joke.

01:09:58

Our data showed that children and seniors have quite a different sense of humour. What they share is a liking for rude jokes.

01:10:06

Woman in blue hat

There was a young fellow from Leeds, who swallowed a packet of seeds. And the blades of grass that grewed out of his ass covered his balls with weeds.

01:10:19

Woman in glasses

This was a married couple and the husband was an avid golfer. And in the mornings he says, "Well my tee time's eight o'clock, I'm in an awful hurry to get out of here." And the wife said, "Before you go do you think you can fix that drippy tap in the kitchen?" He says, "Do you see 'plumber' on top of my forehead?" He says, "I'll fix it when I come back."

01:10:38

She says, "Well before you go then, can you fix that light over the table in the kitchen?" He says, "Do you 'electrician' on my forehead?" She says, "No." "Well," he says, "I'll fix it all when I come back." So he came back in the afternoon after playing golf and everything's all fixed. He said, "I suppose you had a handyman here?"

01:10:56

She says, "Well as a matter of fact a man came to the door and he said he would do anything for sex or cookies?" He said, "Well I suppose you made him a dozen cookies." She says, "Do you see 'Betty Crocker' on my forehead?"

01:11:13

The Canadians that I met seemed to have a pretty good sense of humour. And so I thought it would be a good idea to ask some local comics why they thought the Canadians weren't finding the Laugh Lab jokes funny.

01:11:24

Brent Butt

If I understand this, it's Canadians have found the jokes the least funny, right?

01:11:27

Richard Wiseman

That's right.

01:11:28

Brent Butt

So I think what it is is Canadians are the hardest to please, right? We're, our sense of humour is so above the global bar, that's why it's good to become, that's why stand-up comics from Canada notoriously do well when they head other places; it's because we're swinging a heavy bat here in Canada, we're, this is a tough room to play.

01:11:50
Richard Wiseman I'm not quite certain what to make of it because I mean a lot of the jokes on the website are not very good. I mean, they're really sort of poor puns and so on, so in some sense you could say, "Well if you don't find these things funny, you've got a great sense of humour." And also what's really interesting is that people I see leading a league table as it were of humour, is the Germans, which you know, traditionally aren't seen as the funniest people in the world. So that's one possibility.

01:12:11
Man in red & white Leading it how, meaning that they...

01:12:13
Richard Wiseman They find them hilarious.

01:12:15
Man in red & white They find the jokes funny.

01:12:17
Richard Wiseman They find them hilarious.

01:12:19
Man in red & white But correct me if I'm mistaken but what you just said is, if you don't laugh at this crap you have an elevated sense of humour. If you're laughing at this crap you're a bit of a dolt.

01:12:30
Richard Wiseman That's one way of looking at it.

01:12:32
Man in red & white What you're saying is, the Germans are laughing at everything.

01:12:35
Richard Wiseman That's one possibility. You could look at it that way.

01:13:04 I went to Berlin to experience German humour first hand and arrived in the middle of the city's annual Love Parade. My guide is Marcus von Wollank who I'm told is a respected writer on the cultural life of Berlin.

01:13:22
Richard Wiseman How many people are here roughly?

01:13:24
Marcus von Wollank Maybe one point five million ____.

01:13:27
Richard Wiseman One and a half million people?

01:13:29
Marcus von Wollank Yeah, one and a half million fun people.

01:13:41
Dark-haired girl It's better to have a dove in bed than a blind man on the roof!

01:13:43
Marcus von Wollank She's tell like a dove on the bed is better than a blind girl on the sky.

01:13:50
Richard Wiseman It's a very bad joke.

01:13:52
Marcus von Wollank Yeah, it's a bad joke.

01:14:01
Girl in black & white A dove in bed is better than a blind man on the roof!

01:14:05
Richard Wiseman Great! Yeah! Thank you.

01:14:08
Marcus von Wollank That was a popular, but that's a popular joke, right?

01:14:12

Richard Wiseman What was the joke?

01:14:14

Marcus von Wollank A dove in the bed is better than a blind man in a house.

01:14:18

Richard Wiseman Very good, that's a funny joke.

01:14:50

Richard Wiseman Away from the party crowd at the love parade normal Berliners started to make some sense. Well sort of.

01:15:42

Woman by the bear Two men are walking in the woods and they see a bear approaching them very fast. So the one guy, he takes off his hiking shoes and he puts on his running shoes. So the other guy laughs and he says,

01:14:57

Man in glasses Yeah. I tell the joke about the two lorry drivers and they had a crash against a bridge. And the partner of the driver said, "I told to you the bridge is only four meters and our lorry is four meter forty." And the driver said, "Did you see any police? Did you see the police anywhere?" Do you know what I mean? You can't understand? Shall I repeat it?

01:15:23

Richard Wiseman Yeah, try it again.

01:15:27

Man in glasses Which part you didn't understand?

01:15:29

Richard Wiseman The funny part.

01:16:29

Woman by the bear Two guys are walking in the woods and they see a bear approaching them very fast. So the one guy, he takes off his hiking shoes and he

puts on his running shoes. And the other guy laughs and he says, "What are you doing that for? You can't outrun the bear." So the other guy says, "It doesn't matter, I just need to outrun you."

01:16:53

Man by car

Came the man to a bar and he said to that man behind, "Ten beers, ten brandies before the trouble starts." Drinks ten brandies, needs about thirty minutes then he says, "Ten beers, ten brandies before the trouble starts." Needs forty-five minutes, then the man says, "Please, I order one more again, ten beers, ten brandies before the trouble starts." Says the man, "What about the money, man?" "There the trouble starts, there the trouble starts!"

Super: Toronto, Canada

Richard:

I've been to Vancouver and heard a lot of pretty good jokes, and I was anxious to see how the rest of the country would do.

Jay Ingram:

For the past week and a half Daily Planet's been running the Great Canadian laughter experiment, looking for the best joke in Canada, looking to see whether Canadians in different parts of the country laugh at the same jokes or different ones.

Joining us now to help us crunch the numbers and tell us what they all mean is Dr. Richard Wiseman, psychologist at the University of Hertfordshire. He developed the original Laughlab project, which looked for the world's funniest joke. Hi Richard.

Richard:

Hi there.

Jay:

Here's the winner.

Breslin:

It's a radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland.

The Canadians say "Please divert your course 15 degrees south to avoid a collision."

Americans: “Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees north to avoid a collision.”

The Canadians: “Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees south to avoid a collision.”

The Americans: “This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic fleet. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north. I say again, that’s one five degrees north, or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.”

The Canadians say “This is the lighthouse. Your call.”

Richard: What you have here is a joke in which Canadians are looking better than Americans. This is the basic superiority theory of humour. Why do we laugh when somebody trips over, or they get a custard pie in the face? Because they look stupid – and how much funnier it is if it’s a group that we don’t feel particularly warm towards and clearly there’s a bit of American / Canadian animosity coming out there. What’s fascinating is it’s very similar to the top joke that we had in Laughlab: The joke about the Americans spending millions – Nasa spending millions – to find a pen that writes in zero gravity and of course the Russians solving the problem by using a pencil.

Cullen: When we’re comparing us to Americans I think... we have an objective point of view about American culture that they can’t have because they’re existing in the middle of it...

Breslin: And Canadians are the ultimate outsiders in North American society. Traditionally comedy comes from the margins and in the U.S. that was always Jews, blacks, gays, women; but in the context of North America, Canadians are kind of analogous to those groups looking at American culture, being close enough to it to comment on it, but not part of it morally so they don’t feel morally complicit in it... so they can make their comments on it.

Jay: Now Richard, just switching to regional differences within the country – when the numbers are crunched, how does it look to you?

Richard: Well, again, absolutely fascinating picture. When we did this in Britain, when we looked at the regions in Britain, we had very different joke preferences emerging with Scotland and Wales and so on. We simply don't have that in Canada.

Heidi Foss: I find there's more of an urban and rural sensibility as opposed to regional – cause I do much better in an urban setting...

Breslin: What's happened is geography has been eclipsed by issues of say class, income, and age rather than geography itself in terms of what people appreciate in humour; so that if you're 40 and you've had a bit of schooling you're probably going to like the same kind of jokes as the person across the other end of the country from you who has the same kind of schooling, the same income.

01:02:32

Man in glasses: So these old guys get together and decide to get a birthday present for their friend who's an old widower. He's been alone for quite a few years. And they pool their money together and they get a hooker; they send the hooker over to the old guy's place. She knocks on the door; he answers the door. And she says, "I'm here to give you super sex." And old guy thinks for a minute and says, "I'll take the soup please."

COMMERCIAL BREAK

01:03:01

Richard Wiseman At Laugh Lab, what we were able to do was actually to see how people from different countries liked different types of jokes. Early on it became fairly clear that the Americans actually preferred jokes involving superiority, jokes in which somebody essentially looked

fairly stupid. And the British preferred wordplays, you know the simple word puns.

01:03:23

So we thought it would be fun to really sort of road test the finding, to take the British jokes over to America and see how they played.

01:03:37

Richard Wiseman

Hi there, how you doing? I've got some jokes here and we're just going to tell you the jokes we just need a genuine reaction whether you find it funny, whether you think they stink, whatever, okay? So here's Joke #1. There's a guy who goes to the doctor and he has like a check-up, and he says to the doctor, "How bad is it?" And the doctor says, "Ten." And he goes, "What, am I going to live ten months or ten weeks?"

01:03:55

And the doctor goes, "Nine, eight, seven, six." It's not a funny joke. Right, okay. Thank you for that honest reaction. When I said be honest...

01:04:07

Bald man

I can't understand what you're saying.

01:04:08

Richard Wiseman

That would be part of the problem.

01:04:09

Bald man

That's it

01:04:10

Richard Wiseman

That's great. Okay. Right. Here we go, I'm sorry about that. I'll take it slower; I'll take it slower. Okay. A woman, have we got that?

01:04:25

I wondered if it was just a Hollywood Boulevard problem and so I decided to try out the pier at Santa Monica.

01:04:33

Right, a termite walks into a cocktail lounge and asks the barman, "Is the bar tender here?" Bar tender. No, that's really not good is it?

01:04:43

Man in shades Hmm that was horrible! That was the worst yet, yeah.

01:04:49 The British jokes weren't going down at all well with the average American. And so I was really nervous when I went to try out the material at an L.A. comedy club.

01:04:59
Woman in red A woman goes into the male pharmacist and she says, "Do you have that Viagra drug?" And the pharmacist says, "Yes." And the woman says, "Can you get it over the counter?" And he says, "Well only if I take two of them. Now we didn't write these jokes; these are jokes that were submitted, okay? All right. From people on the Internet who have nothing to do but to be on the Internet. You know the type. They're home right now, okay.

01:05:33
Richard Wiseman Right okay. I don't know whether you'll get this one or not but I presume I have a language thing but here we go. There's a guy who goes to the doctor and he's got a lettuce, a piece of a lettuce just sticking out of his, we'd say backside, what would you say?

01:05:37
Male Voice Bum.

01:05:38
Richard Wiseman Your bum

01:05:40
Woman in red Your butt.

01:05:50
Richard Wiseman Butt

01:05:52
Woman in red Your crack, your crack.

01:05:53

Richard Wiseman Your crack.

01:05:58
Richard Wiseman Right okay. The guy's at the doctor, he's got just a little bit of lettuce sticking out of his ass and the doctor has a look and the guy goes to the doctor, "How bad is it?" And the doctor says, "Well I don't know how to tell you this but that's just the tip of the iceberg."

01:06:19
Woman in red Yeah, you Brits are dirty.

01:06:24
Richard Wiseman If British humor didn't work in the United States, I wondered whether jokes from a completely different culture could appeal to us. Well it seems that no matter where you go, you keep running into the same types of jokes.

01:06:36
Boy in white They wanted to put three guys to the test. An American, a Frenchman and a peasant from Upper Egypt. So they prepared three rooms full of farts. The American jumped out of his room at once. The Frenchman fainted after five minutes. After a week they checked on the peasant. When they opened his room, the peasant said, "Is anything wrong?"

01:06:57
Boy in blue Why did the camel cross the desert? To get to the other side.

01:07:08
Man in plaid A couple had been married for 15 years. When the woman died, everybody was sad, but her husband was happy. When he was asked why he was happy, he answered, "This is the first time in 15 years that I know where my wife is going."

01:07:26
Boy in black A peasant from Upper Egypt sees the pyramids for the first time and says, "Boy, that's some piece of cheese!"

01:07:35
Man in tie You know after the American military complained against Afghanistan. So the Mullah Omar, the leader of Taliban, he said to Bin-Laden, he give him a sign like that and asked him, "Are we winning the war?" He said, "No, Goddamn, only me and you still alive." See you later man.

01:17:47
Richard Wiseman Eventually half a million people from seventy different countries visited our site. And Laugh Lab was able to collect information on their sex, their nationality and their age.

18:25
 From the very beginning it was clear that men and women liked different types of jokes.

01:18:35
Blonde woman A white horse came into a typically British pub

01:18:39
Richard Wiseman Yeah

01:18:40
Blonde woman And the landlord says to him, "Do you know there's a whiskey named after you?" And he says, "What, Eric?"

01:18:46
Richard Wiseman Hey, ha, ha ha

01:18:47
 Women tend to prefer word plays, sophisticated linguistic word plays.

01:18:52
 And again that probably relates to what's going on with the brain. We, we know that women are more linguistically skilled than men.

01:18:58
Woman with ponytail Did you hear about the old butcher that sat in the meat grinder? He got a little behind in his orders.

01:19:06

Woman in green He said to Betty, "When you die on your headstone I'm having, "Here lies one of the most beautiful women ever God put breath into." So she said, "Oh that's nice Frank. You know what I'm going to put on yours? Here lies Frank Spencer, stiff at last."

01:19:26
Richard Wiseman Men and women love to tell jokes about each other but in the battle of the sexes, it was obvious that men proved to be far more aggressive than women.

01:19:32
Man in cap A guy's driving in his car and he gets pulled over by a policeman and the policeman comes in and says, "Do you realize that your wife and kids fell out of the car?" And he goes, "Oh thank God. I thought I was going deaf."

01:19:46
Woman in blue Okay so there's this guy; he has six children. He's very proud of the fact and he's taken to calling his wife "mother of six" much to her dismay. One evening they're out at a party and he yells across the room, "Okay, Mother of six, it's time to go!" And she replies, "Coming Father of four."

01:20:05
Man in glasses A woman walks into a bar with a duck under her arm. Sits the duck down on a stool, sits down. Waiter comes over and says, "That's the worst looking pig I've ever seen." The woman says, "That's not a pig, that's a duck." The waiter says, "Yeah I know I was talking to the duck."

01:20:20
Richard Wiseman So that sort of joke is clearly fairly offensive. But what's really interesting is it illustrates what Sigmund Freud thought was the purpose behind humor. It's a joke, which allows us to release pent up aggression in a socially acceptable way. And to him, that's the whole point. Humour allows us to cope with life's anxieties. Anxieties about sex, about marriage, about mortality.

01:20:41

Man in white The old man that went to the doctor and he said, "Doctor, I've got something wrong with my ears, could you have a look? So the doctor looked and he said, "Guess what? I found a suppository in one of your ears." And the old guy says, "Oh, now I know where I put my hearing aid."

01:21:05
Lawyer And elderly Jewish professor is married to a much younger woman, she's twenty years his junior. They're having real problems with their sex life and so they go to a radical sex therapist. The therapist says, "I have a treatment, it's very successful."

01:21:19 "Find a very muscular, good-looking young stud, someone you don't know, get him to stand in the room with you as you're making love, get him to take all his clothes off and stand there naked, fanning you as you're making love. Try and make sure that his genitals are fairly near your wife's face so that she can see him and introduce the element of fantasy. Sounds radical but it works."

01:21:42 The old man does that and he finds a very muscular young man; he stands there in the bedroom; he strips naked; and as they're making love he's fanning them both as instructed. At the end of it the old man turns to his wife and said, "Well did you notice any improvement?" She said, "Frankly, nothing, I still felt nothing."

01:22:04 They went back to the therapist and the therapist said, "Right. Don't worry, there's a way 'round this. It's going to have to get more radical still. Get the stud back in, reverse roles. Get him to make love to your wife, you stand there naked with a towel, believe me that's going to work."

01:22:22 They do that, the old man is naked and fanning his wife as the young stud is making love to her. It's an amazing event. The stud makes love to her for about three hours; the lady is screaming the house down and the old man's never seen her so animated. At the end of it, the wife said, "That's just the best sex I've ever had. I didn't know sex could be like that."

01:22:50 The old man turns to the stud and says, "See, that's how to wave a towel."

COMMERCIAL BREAK

01:23:58 One of the key aspects of the experiment is looking at how our sense of humour changes over age. And certainly you see massive differences in the age groups. Younger children tend to prefer the very simple word plays. So what's a frog's favorite drink? Croakacola.

01:24:14
Red haired girl Why was the Egyptian boy scared? Because his Daddy was a mummy.

01:24:20
Boy in blue Why do we close the 'fridge door? Because it's open!

01:24:25
Girl with Dad What do you call a burglar? What do you call two burglars?

01:24:29
Richard Wiseman I don't know

01:24:31
Girl with Dad A pair of knickers.

01:24:34
Boy with pack What should you do if you find a bra on the road? Leave it alone it might be a booby-trap.

01:24:40
Brown-haired girl What's grey?

01:24:41
Richard Wiseman What?

01:24:42
Brown-haired girl A melted penguin

01:24:45	Boy in blue	Knock, knock.
01:24:46	Richard Wiseman	Who's there?
01:24:47	Boy in blue	Annette
01:24:48	Richard Wiseman	Annette who?
01:24:49	Boy in blue	Annette curtain.
01:24:51	Girl in navy	Knock knock
01:24:52	Richard Wiseman	Who's there?
01:24:53	Girl in navy	Denise
01:24:54	Richard Wiseman	Denise who?
01:24:55	Girl in navy	Denise knickers belong to you?
01:24:56	Girl in red & white	Knock knock
01:24:57	Richard Wiseman	Who's there?

01:24:58	Girl in red & white	Althea
01:24:59	Richard Wiseman	Althea who?
01:25:00	Girl in red & white	Althea later.
01:25:02	Boy in yellow	Knock knock. Who's there? Banana. Knock knock. Who's there? Orange you happy I didn't say 'banana'?
01:25:10	Woman in black	Knock knock
01:25:11	Richard Wiseman	Who's there?
01:25:12	Woman in black	Interrupting cow
01:25:13	Richard Wiseman	Interrupting cow who?
01:25:14	Woman in black	Mooooo!
01:25:15	Man in shades	There's a convention for Knock Knock jokes. The super computer, the Knock Knock computer will be there. Knock Knock experts will be there. It's a family affair. The hall's full of people. They start the convention. Does anybody have any Knock Knock jokes? A drunk stands up, "Yeah, I've got one. "Knock Knock." "Agate" "Agate who?" "Agate (beep)" Everyone's shocked and offended.

- 01:25:40 They stop the meeting, they decide, "We've got to change the rules." So an expert decides that anyone who has a joke, we'll get half of it, make sure it's clean, we'll put it through the Knock Knock computer to make sure there's no filth in it and then we'll start up again. So they explained this to the crowd and they say, "Now does anybody have a Knock Knock joke?"
- 01:25:59 Same drunk stands up. He goes, "Knock Knock." "Who's there?" "Caterpillar." "Stop." They run 'caterpillar' through the computer, all the experts check it out, it's clean, there's nothing dirty about 'caterpillar'. They commence the meeting again and the drunk goes, "Knock Knock." They go, "Who's there?" He says, "Caterpillar." "Caterpillar who?" "Ah, get (beep)"
- 01:26:27
Richard Wiseman When we think about jokes actually it's very, very complex. The set up line normally takes us in one direction then the punch line means that we have to completely reorder how we, we've seen the world and then suddenly we, we get the joke.
- 01:26:42 The brain scan was designed to find out what was going on in people's brains when they were reading the type of material that we had on the Laugh Lab site. We saw two main areas of activation. The major area was towards the front of the brain; what's called the pre-frontal cortex; and that's all to do with resolving ambiguities. And that's essential to understanding a joke.
- 01:27:03 So if we have a joke like two fish in a tank, one turns to the other and says, "Can you drive this?" That's funny because tank has two meanings and we realize that. If people have damage to that area of the brain, they're seen to lose their ability to resolve those types of ambiguities and actually lose their sense of humour.
- 01:27:22 Now what's really interesting about these studies is that it's showing that our brains are wired for humour. So when we look at these brain scans, we're looking at a brain that has evolved to find life funny. Without a brain scanner, how do you tell whether somebody actually finds a joke

funny? Well it's all to do with their facial expression. In a genuine smile the muscles around the side of the face pull up the lips into a smile.

01:27:47

But far more importantly muscles around the side of the eyes pull the cheek up causing a crinkling of the skin around the edge of the eyes. Now a fake smile is nothing like this there's movement of the lips but none of that important crinkling. Not only that, fake smiles tend to last much longer than genuine smiles and disappear more rapidly.

01:28:10

In Japanese cultures, smiles are discouraged. And so some foreign corporations have their Japanese employees take lessons in smiling.

01:28:20

Teacher

We Japanese like smiles, but when we are asked to make a smile, many people are not good at smiling. Because older people say that we shouldn't show our teeth or they cover their mouth with their hand. Don't you agree?

01:28:39

Then the question is, how do you make a smile? First, lift up the ends of your lips silently. OK? Secondly, let's move your face. For example, let's say the word like "Lucky" or "Whiskey"! OK? Now pull your lips up without using your hand. Ready? One! "One!" By using these chopsticks you can remember the shape of your lips when you smile. While keeping your lips lifted, pull out the chopsticks smoothly. Did you look at the shape of our lips in the mirror?

01:29:24

When you feel uncomfortable, you have wrinkles between your eyebrows. When you're happy, your eyebrows lift up. Make a smile. And the biggest smile! Good, very good! Make a serious face. Make a smile. Look at me! Smile! And the biggest smile! Good! Everybody clap!

01:30:05

Richard Wiseman

A country where people took classes in smiling didn't seem to be a promising place to find the world's funniest joke. A lot of people in Tokyo seemed too busy and too serious to tell jokes so we decided to try

a couple of elderly Geisha girls whose profession, after all, is entertaining people.

01:30:26

Woman in white

Talk between a man and a woman often becomes erotic, especially when they're drinking sake.

01:30:42

Woman in navy

But even for that kind of talk, you need timing.

01:30:47

Woman in white

A client said to me, "I am a telegraph pole." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I erect outside the house, not at home." After thinking for a few minutes, I laughed. We sometimes have very witty customers and that makes working easier.

01:31:09

Woman in navy

Some people wouldn't understand his story.

01:31:12

Woman in white

...and ask, "Why is he a telegraph pole?" Some would point out that telegraph lines are underground nowadays.

01:31:22

Richard Wiseman

The Geisha girls were amusing but I was completely mystified when a Japanese shopkeeper started telling us his jokes.

01:31:28

Man in apron

There are ten ants, and thank you!

01:31:34

Richard Wiseman

It's a joke?

01:31:36

Man in apron

It's a joke. It's a very famous joke in Japan, yeah.

01:31:42

Richard Wiseman Our interpreter explained the Japanese loved puns. Unfortunately, they obviously lost a lot in translation.

01:31:48

Girl with scarf A person has an appendix and removes it. If he doesn't have an appendix, there is nothing you can do about it.

01:32:00

Richard Wiseman And even when we encountered some English speaking Japanese their love for puns in any language at all proved unrelenting.

01:32:08

Man in glasses Where were the first French fries made?

01:32:10

Richard Wiseman I don't know

01:32:12

Man in glasses You don't know? In Greece.

01:32:18

Man in grey shirt You know, six is afraid of seven, you know why? Because seven ate nine. Ate nine, ate nine, ate nine.

01:32:35

Woman in suit Did you notice that in Japan dogs can wag his tail only vertically because he realizes that there is no more space for us to wag it horizontally.

01:32:46

Richard Wiseman There were two dogs in a garden and one turns to the other and says, "Woof." And the other one says, "I was going to say that!"

10:32:54

Richard Wiseman Now that joke allowed us to conduct a kind of a mini Laugh Lab experiment. We resubmitted the joke again and again into the database but each time used a different animal noise.

01:33:05

Richard Wiseman

So there are two cats in a garden and one turns to the other and

01:33:11

...one turns to the other and says, "Moo." And the other one says, "I was going to say that."

01:33:15

Once people had rated the jokes lots and lots of times we were able to look back and find out which is the world's funniest animal. And here are the results.

Top Ten Animals List

01:33:44

Richard Wiseman
(With duck)

And so it's official ducks are the world's funniest animal. Now maybe it's their beaks or their odd shape or their webbed feet. It doesn't really matter; the implications are clear. If you're going to tell a joke with an animal make it a duck.

01:33:57

Oriental woman

A duck walks into a drugstore and asks the cashier if he has any beer. The man says, "No we don't sell beer here this is a drugstore." The duck leaves and goes home. The next day the duck comes back and asked the cashier again. The man says, "I told you yesterday this is a drugstore, we don't sell beer here. And if you ask me again, I'm going to nail your feet to the floor."

01:34:19

The duck leaves and goes home. The next day the duck comes back again. He asks the man, "Do you have any nails?" The man says, "No." So the duck says, "Do you have any beer?"

COMMERCIAL BREAK

01:38:08

Richard Wiseman

Looking back on the project, it's been a fairly amazing year. We actually had forty thousand jokes submitted and I've read the vast majority of them. If I never see another joke, I'll be a happy man.

01:38:21 But more importantly, millions of people came to the website. They took part in an experiment, which has found out really interesting lessons about psychology and the science of humour. We still have one final question left. What was the world's funniest joke? Now people shouldn't get too excited about this because in a sense, it's a joke, which appeals to most people.

01:38:47 It makes most people go, "Oh yeah, that's okay, that's an okay joke." But these are not going to make a lot of people laugh a great deal. But one thing we've learned is that humour is very idiosyncratic, and so there are groups of people that will always find other jokes much, much funnier. This is the joke that appeals, to a moderate extent, to most people.

01:39:09 There are two hunters going hunting and they're walking through the woods and suddenly one of them kind of clutches his throat, just falls to the ground. So the other hunter panics and he picks up his mobile phone and dials emergency services. He says, "My friend's just lying there motionless." And the woman says, "Okay, calm down, the first thing to do is make certain your friend's actually dead." So she hears this pause and a gunshot. The guy comes back on the line and says, "Okay I've done that, now what?"

01:39:40
Older woman No I didn't see that one coming.

01:39:44
Man in black Very good. Yeah, that's good.

01:39:45
Man in green That's a good one.

01:39:59
Man in car I didn't get that one. Am I being slow?

01:40:03
Man in shades Oh,...Oh, nasty!

01:40:13
Woman in black So he killed his friend?

01:40L17
Japanese man Ohhh! Ahh!

01:40:34
Hairdresser Oh, that's a good one!

01:40:38
Blonde wig So that's the leading joke? Really? How many? Thirty thousand.
That's the leading joke.

01:40:43
Blonde in black And that's it?

01:40:44
Blonde wig Yeah

01:40:45
Blonde in black And where's, what country is that from?

01:40:53
Egyptian man Yeah! It's funny!