



DALL-E 3 - "A selection of strudel pastries with different fillings, including apple, sour cherry, and poppy seed"

# Sustainable Open-Source Ecosystems: What We've Learned So Far and the Road Ahead

Bogdan Vasilescu  
SIESTA Summer School, September 4, 2024



# About me

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STRUDEL research group

## Societal Computing

Software and Societal Systems Department

Program

Prospective Students

About SC

Research

### Integrate and Innovate

Empower change as a tech-driven leader, shaping a more equitable world through our interdisciplinary PhD program in Societal Computing.

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### Shaping the Digital Future

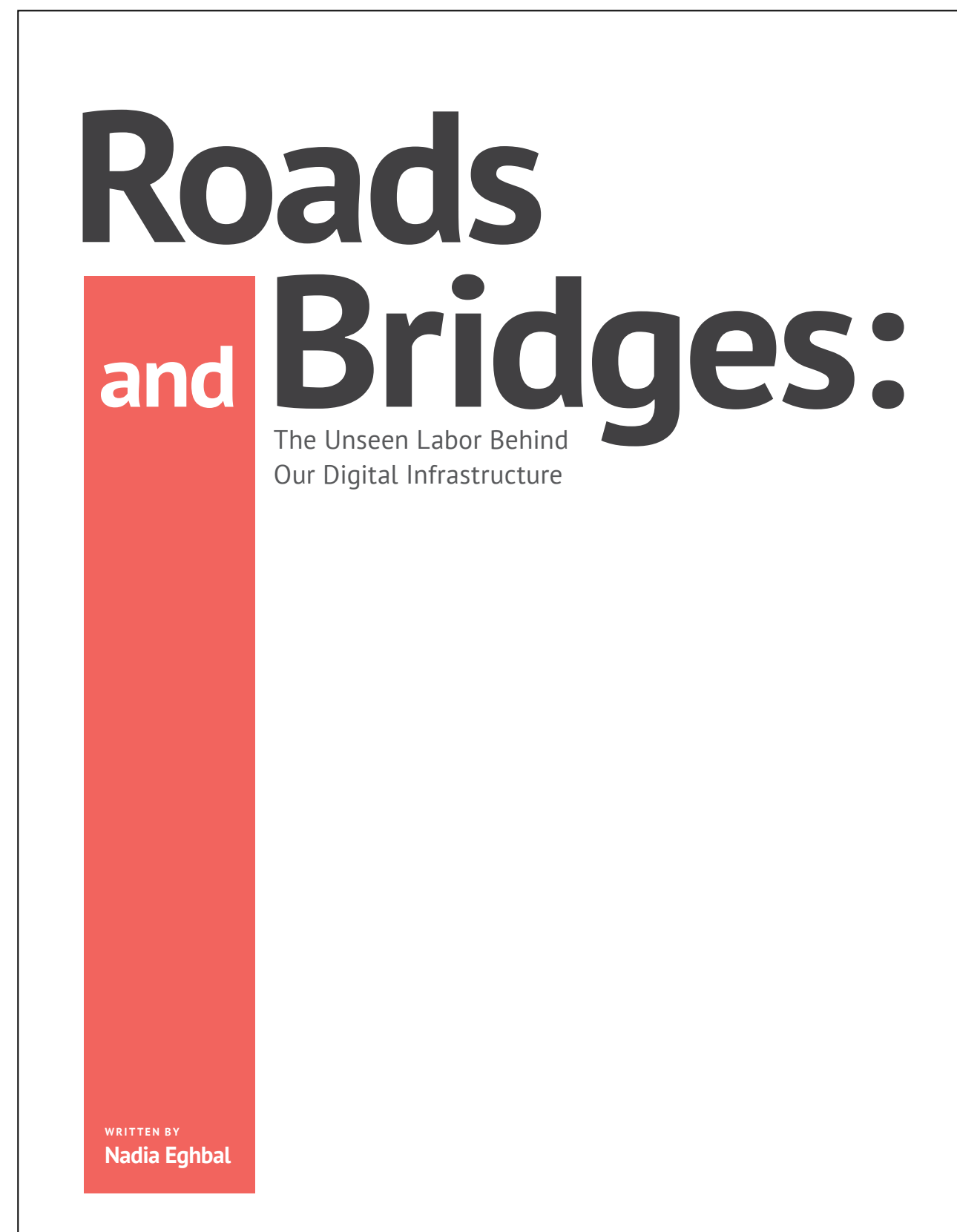
Welcome to the Societal Computing Program at Carnegie Mellon University, where we tackle the complex challenges at the intersection of computation, society, and policy. With a multi-disciplinary approach, our PhD program prepares tomorrow's leaders to design technologies addressing societal needs and guide their implementation. Explore our cutting-edge research, innovative curriculum, and join us in shaping the

### Our Program

Our PhD program in the integrated, innovative discipline of Societal Computing provides the techniques, theories, and research methods to address societal issues and create technologies that impact society.

# Open source software has become digital infrastructure

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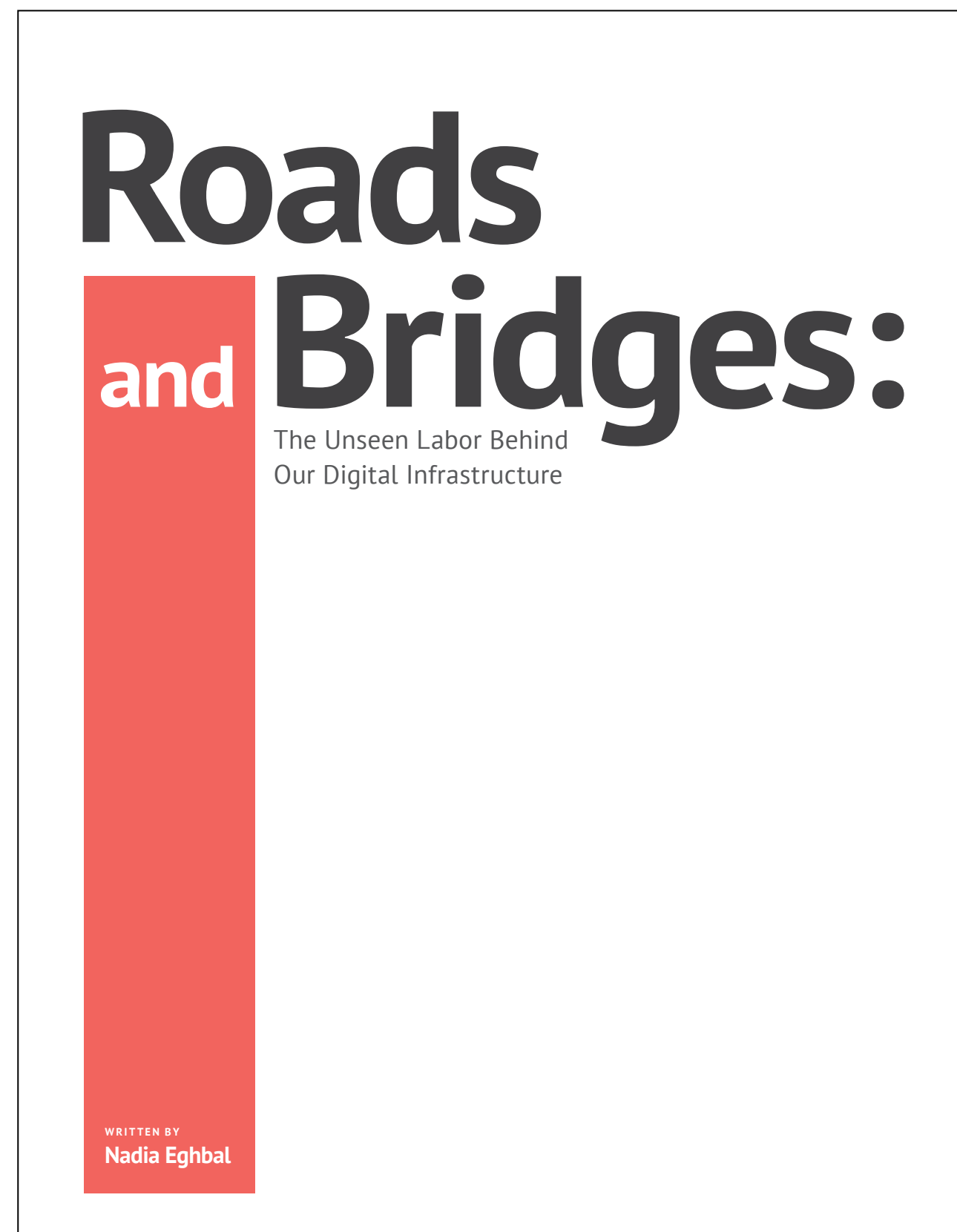


Everybody uses open source:

- Fortune 500 companies
- Major software companies
- Startups
- Government
- ...



# Like any infrastructure, it needs regular upkeep and maintenance

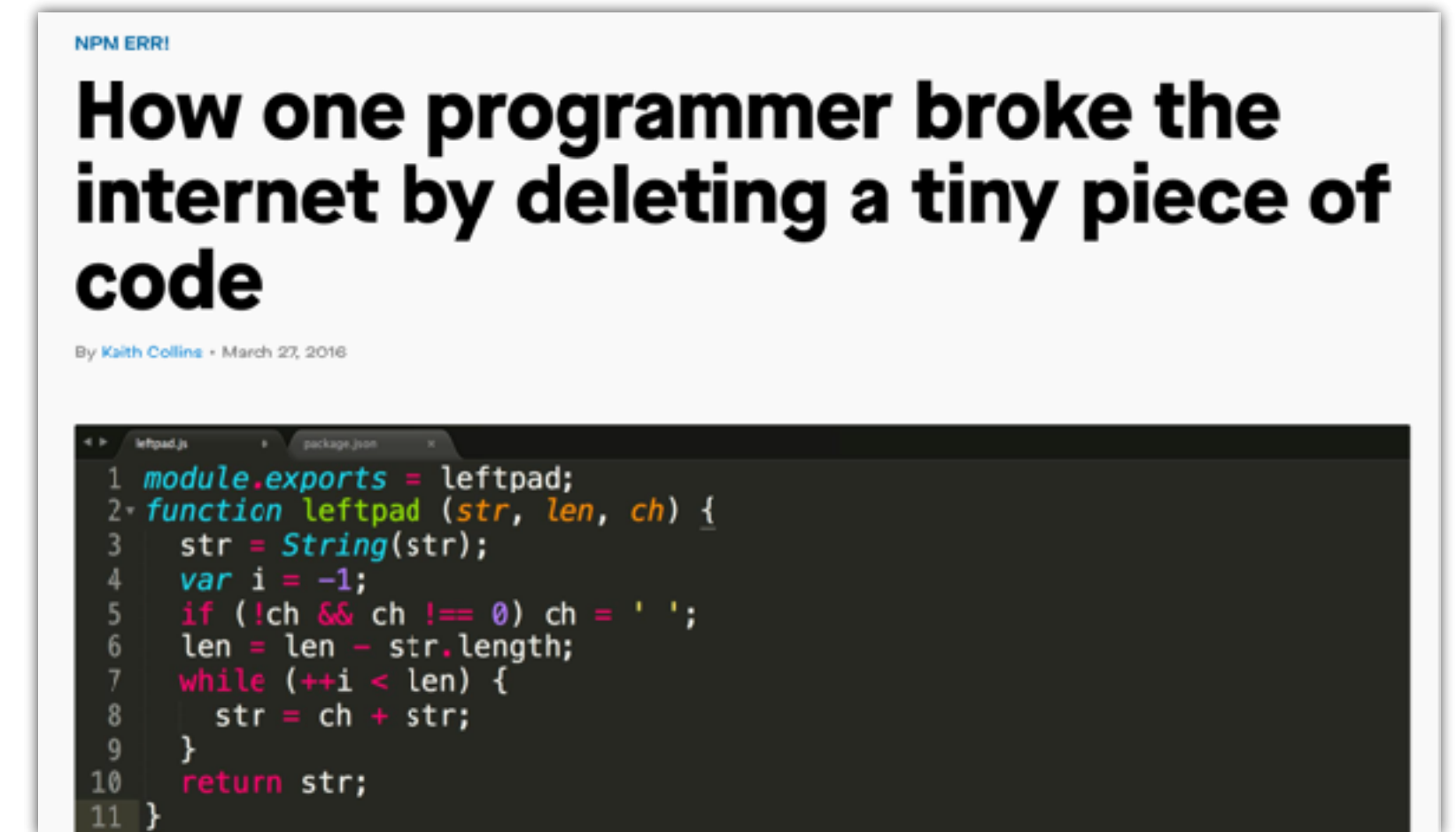


Everybody uses open source:

- Fortune 500 companies
- Major software companies
- Startups
- Government
- ...

If undermaintained:

- Brittle supply chains
- Risks for downstream users
- Slows down innovation
- ...



<https://qz.com/646467/how-one-programmer-broke-the-internet-by-deleting-a-tiny-piece-of-code/>





Sustaining  
open source  
is hard



# Ever more open source software is being created (and reused)

Explosion of production in the past 10 years



**github**  
SOCIAL CODING

400+ million repositories  
100+ million users  
(February 2024)



**Bitbucket**

10+ million users  
(April 2019)



**GitLab** @gitlab

Follow

GitHub imports to GitLab are still going up!  
#movingtoGitLab see [about.gitlab.com/2018/06/05/git...](https://about.gitlab.com/2018/06/05/git...) for an update.



Date	Imports
2018-05-26	0
2018-05-27	0
2018-05-28	204
2018-05-29	711
2018-05-30	509
2018-05-31	574
2018-06-01	1490
2018-06-02	1915
2018-06-03	1097
2018-06-04	46910
2018-06-05	93100

4:31 PM - 5 Jun 2018



# The social platforms have won

Profile pages for users and projects

Rich inferences about people's expertise and level of commitment

Impacts collaboration, but also recruiting and hiring

- (Dabbish et al. 2012), (Marlow et al. 2013), (Marlow and Dabbish 2013)

The screenshot shows a GitHub profile for 'npm, inc'. The profile includes a profile picture of a cat holding a sign that says 'CV'. The page is divided into several sections: 'Contributions', 'Repositories', and 'Public activity'. The 'Popular repositories' section lists 'breakfast-repo' (208 stars), 'x86-kernel' (48 stars), 'Jsconf-2015-deck' (32 stars), and 'ratpack' (32 stars). The 'Repositories contributed to' section lists 'npm/docs' (44 stars), 'mozilla/publish.webmaker.org' (2 stars), 'npm/marky-markdown' (104 stars), 'artisan-tattoo/assistant-frontend' (5 stars), and 'npm/npm-camp' (1 star). The 'Public contributions' section features a heatmap showing activity from February to January. Below the heatmap, it shows 'Contributions in the last year: 1,886 total (Jan 24, 2016 - Jan 24, 2018)', 'Longest streak: 37 days (October 7 - November 12)', and 'Current streak: 7 days (January 18 - January 24)'. The 'Organizations' section shows logos for npm, Inc., and other organizations.

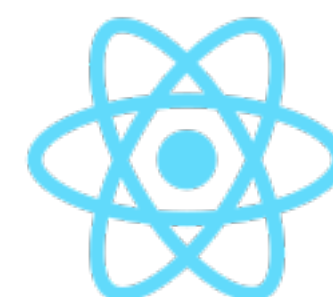
The screenshot shows the GitHub repository page for 'caolan / async'. The repository has 721 watches, 23,937 stars, and 2,203 forks. It includes a navigation bar with 'Code', 'Issues 21', 'Pull requests 6', 'Projects 0', 'Wiki', and 'Insights'. The repository description is 'Async utilities for node and the browser' with a link to 'http://caolan.github.io/async/'. Below the description, there are tags for 'javascript', 'async', and 'callbacks'. The repository statistics show 1,629 commits, 11 branches, 72 releases, 206 contributors, and MIT license. The README.md file is displayed, featuring the 'async' logo and a blue bar. The README text states: 'Async is a utility module which provides straight-forward, powerful functions for working with asynchronous JavaScript. Although originally designed for use with Node.js and installable via npm install --save async, it can also be used directly in the browser.' Below the text, there are several status bars: 'build passing', 'npm v2.5.0', 'coverage 95%', 'gitter join chat', 'examples 26348', 'jsdelivr 407k hits/month'.



# There is increasing commercialization and professionalization

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- Historically
  - ▶ Community-based projects (Python, RubyGems, Twisted)
- More recently, lots of commercial involvement
  - ▶ Companies (Go - Google, React - Facebook, Swift - Apple)
  - ▶ Startups (Docker, npm, Meteor)



- 23% of respondents to 2017 GitHub survey: job duties include contributing to open source

<http://opensource-survey.org/2017/>



# Expectations toward the quality, reliability, and security of open source infrastructure are high

Equifax (market cap \$14 billion) built products on top of open-source infrastructure, including Apache Struts

Equifax did not make any contributions to open source projects

A flaw in Apache Struts contributed to the breach (CVE-2017-5638)

Equifax publicly blamed (with national news coverage) Apache Struts for the breach

## Equifax confirms Apache Struts security flaw it failed to patch is to blame for hack

The company said the March vulnerability was exploited by hackers.

By Zack Whittaker | September 14, 2017 -- 01:27 GMT (18:27 PDT) | Topic: Security



<https://www.zdnet.com/article/equifax-confirms-apache-struts-flaw-it-failed-to-patch-was-to-blame-for-data-breach/>



# High level of demands & stress

Easy to report issues / submit PRs

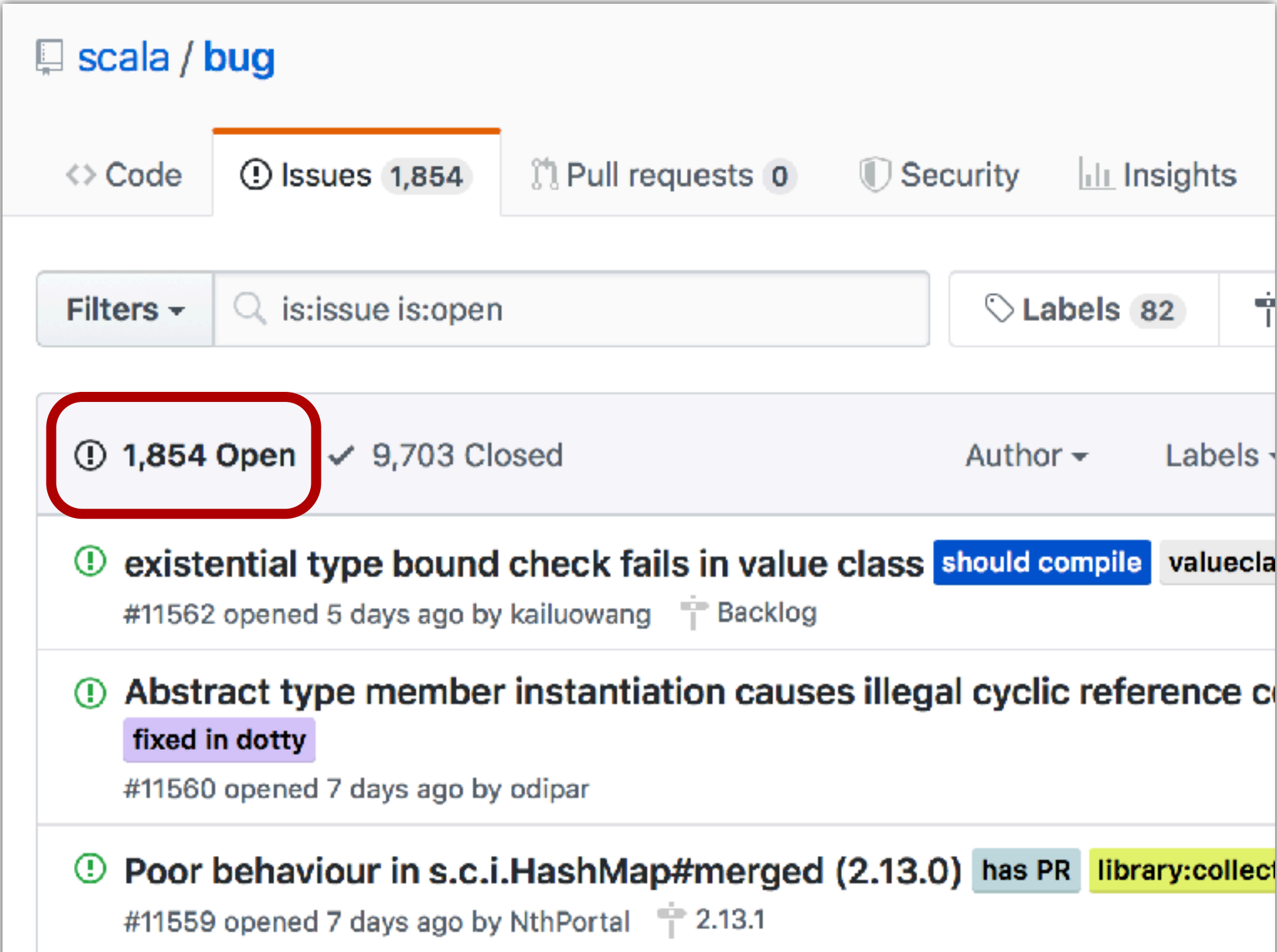
- Growing volume of requests

Social pressure to respond quickly

- Otherwise, off-putting to newcomers (Steinmacher et al. 2015)

Entitled, unreasonable users:

- *“I have been waiting 2 years for Angular to track the ‘progress’ event and it still can’t get it right?!?!”*
- *“Thank you for your ever useless explanations.”*



The screenshot shows the GitHub Issues page for the Scala project. The page title is "scala / bug". The navigation bar includes "Code", "Issues 1,854", "Pull requests 0", "Security", and "Insights". The "Issues" tab is selected. Below the navigation bar, there are filters and a search bar containing "is:issue is:open". The "Labels" section shows 82 labels. The main content area displays a summary of issues: "1,854 Open" (highlighted with a red box) and "9,703 Closed". Below this, three issue cards are visible:

- Issue #11562: "existential type bound check fails in value class" with labels "should compile" and "valuecla". It was opened 5 days ago by kailuowang and has a "Backlog" label.
- Issue #11560: "Abstract type member instantiation causes illegal cyclic reference c" with label "fixed in dotty". It was opened 7 days ago by odipar.
- Issue #11559: "Poor behaviour in s.c.i.HashMap#merged (2.13.0)" with labels "has PR" and "library:collect". It was opened 7 days ago by NthPortal and is related to version 2.13.1.



# Science is needed for evidence-based recommendations

Lots of change  
Lots of challenges

Little evidence or theory

## Anecdotal evidence reliable? One man says “yes”.

**A STUDY CONDUCTED YESTERDAY** by a man on himself concluded that self-reported anecdotal evidence is, in fact, both reliable and relevant.

The landmark study, conducted by Mark Mattingly of Virginia Beach in his apartment, concluded with 100% accuracy that data collected from personal experience can disprove other data conducted by reputable scientific institutions, thereby proving once and for all that “statistics can’t be trusted”.

In a press release Mr. Mattingly took aim at his detractors saying that “...this study shows what I’ve been telling people on the internet for years: all your fancy evidence and statistics don’t mean nothing in the real world.”

A frequenter of internet forums, comment sections, and social media, Mr. Mattingly recounts that he was inspired to undertake the study when someone reportedly kept insisting that he provide evidence for his claims. “I think everyone’s entitled to an opinion, and that my opinion is worth just as much as anyone else’s” Mr. Mattingly said.

Academic types have criticised the study, and papers who are publishing it, saying that it lacks everything and makes no sense. When shown the study, Emeritus Professor James Albrecht of Carnegie Mellon University looked all confused and hopeless before making pining, guttural sounds.



*Mr. Mattingly in his apartment looking all smug.*

Mr. Mattingly has responded saying that this is just the first of many studies he intends to conduct, and that a meta-analysis of people who have opinions and anecdotal experiences independent of controls, methodological rigor, blinding and peer review are soon to be published, adding further weight to his initial findings.



A great opportunity for research!



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... because (almost) everything being archived and public makes it possible to study the problem empirically

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“The collection of public Git repositories as a whole [...] exceeds 1.5PB” (Ma et al, 2021)



# Today: Let's look at three concrete examples

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Dealing with abandoned upstream dependencies



Estimating a project's effective labor pool



Estimating causal effects of promotional activities



# A Closer Look at Abandonment

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C. Miller, C. Kästner, and B. Vasilescu. "We feel like we're winging it:" A study on navigating open-source dependency abandonment. In International Conference on the Foundations of Software Engineering (FSE), page 1281–1293. ACM, 2023.

C. Miller, M. Jahanshahi, A. Mockus, B. Vasilescu, and C. Kästner. Understanding the Response to Open-Source Dependency Abandonment in the npm Ecosystem. In International Conference on Software Engineering (ICSE). IEEE, 2025.







Most prior research has focused on keeping projects “alive” and maintained.

- Attracting and onboarding new contributors
- Reducing barriers to entry
- Improving the culture
- Improving funding models
- ...





# Maintainers often leave projects for reasons we can't / shouldn't prevent

- Switching jobs (voluntarily)
- Starting a family
- Losing interest

...

Research should also focus on helping open-source maintainers with sunsetting, and helping open-source users with the effects of that.



# How big is the problem? What do people do to prepare / deal with it?

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Interviews with maintainers of Javascript, Python, and PHP projects with abandoned upstream dependencies.

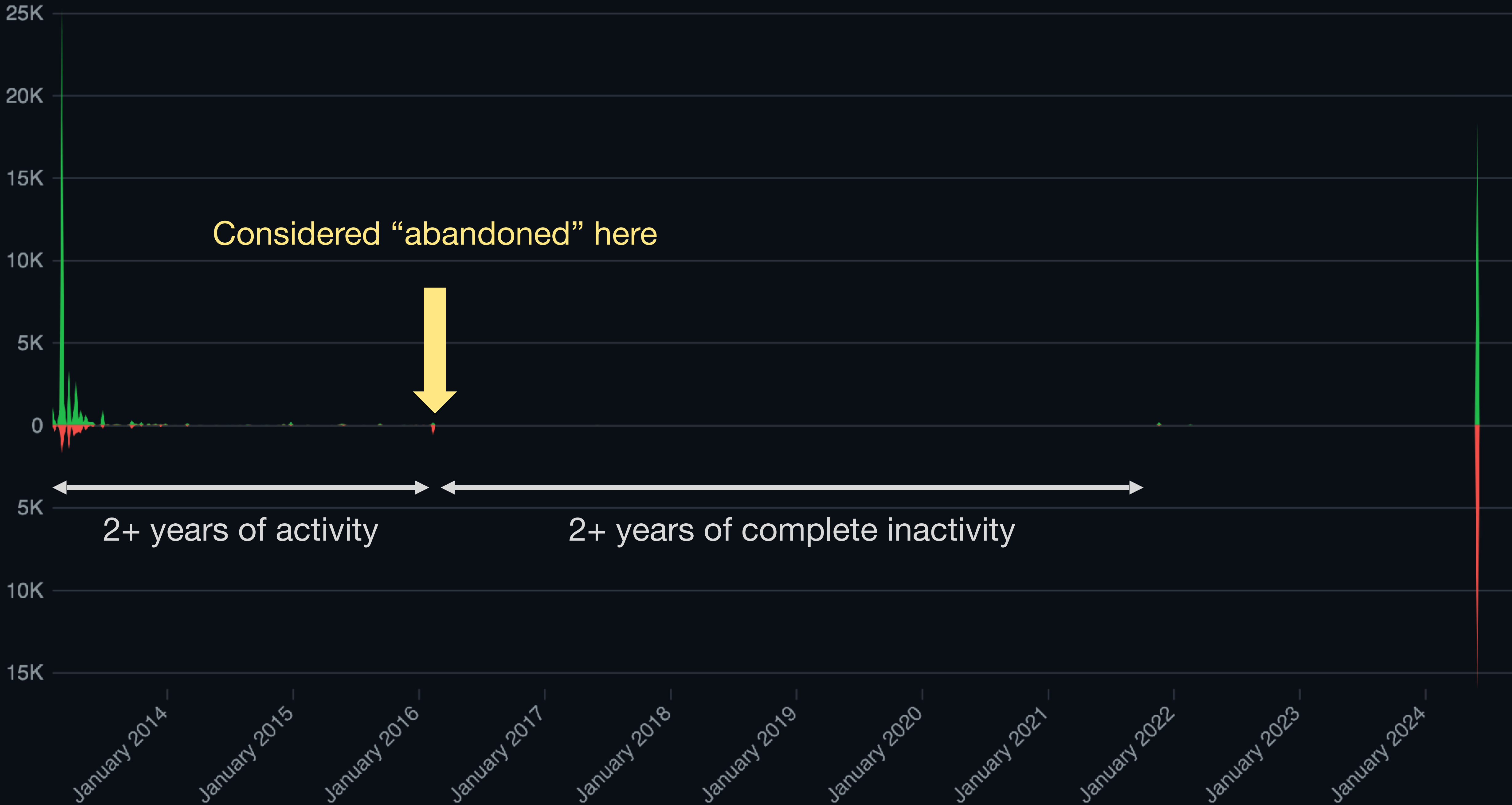
A large-scale quantitative study of abandoned npm packages.

















# Part 1: Interviews

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# Timeline from the perspective of a consumer

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pre-adoption  
considerations

dependency  
adoption

time



# Timeline from the perspective of a consumer

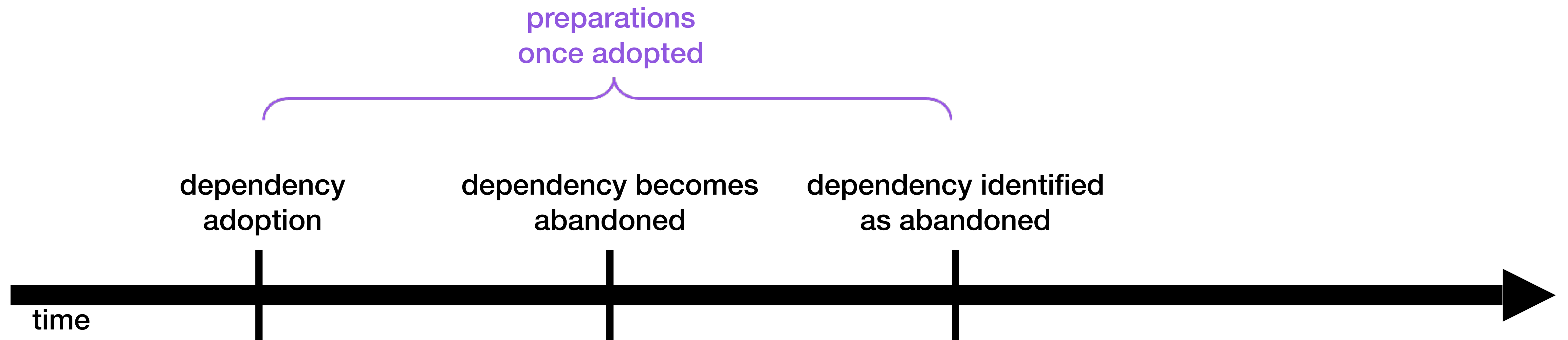
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# Timeline from the perspective of a consumer

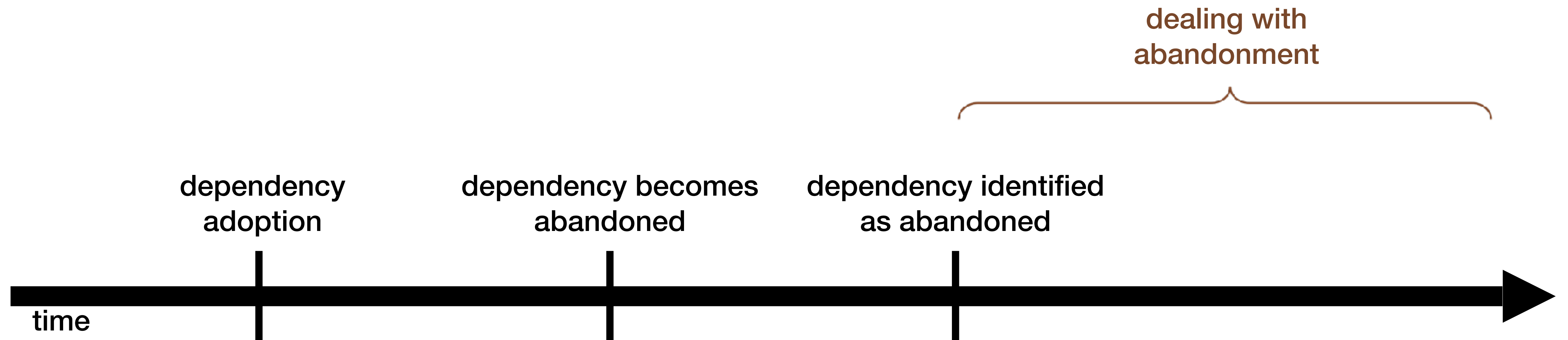
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# Timeline from the perspective of a consumer

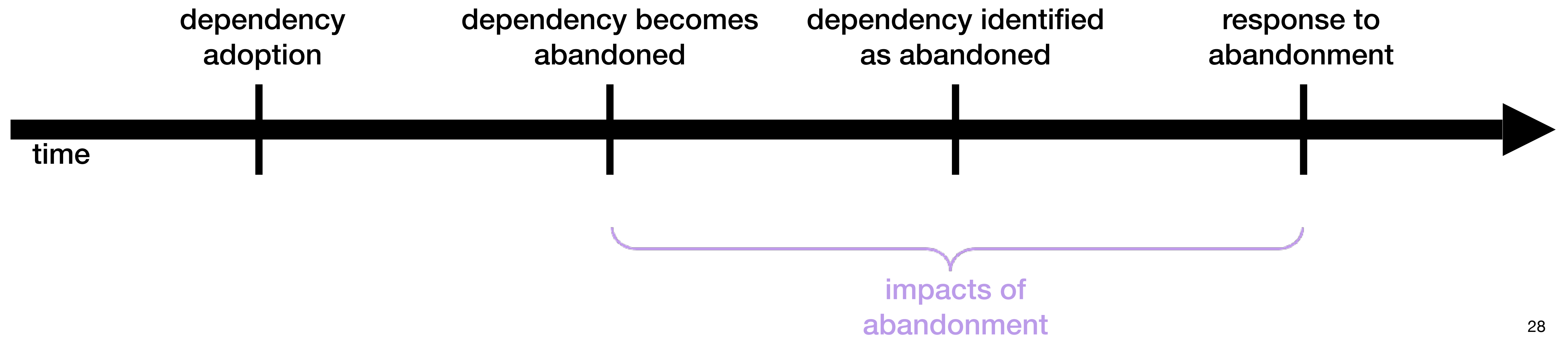
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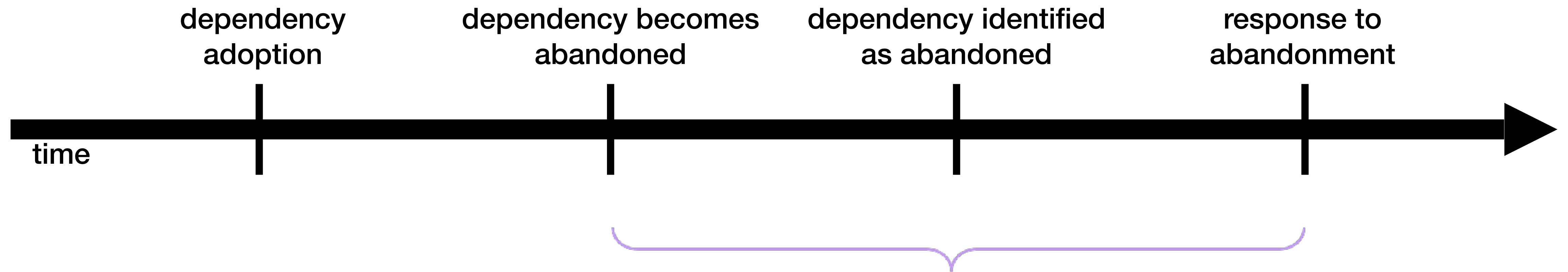
# Timeline from the perspective of a consumer

---



# Impacts of abandonment are debated

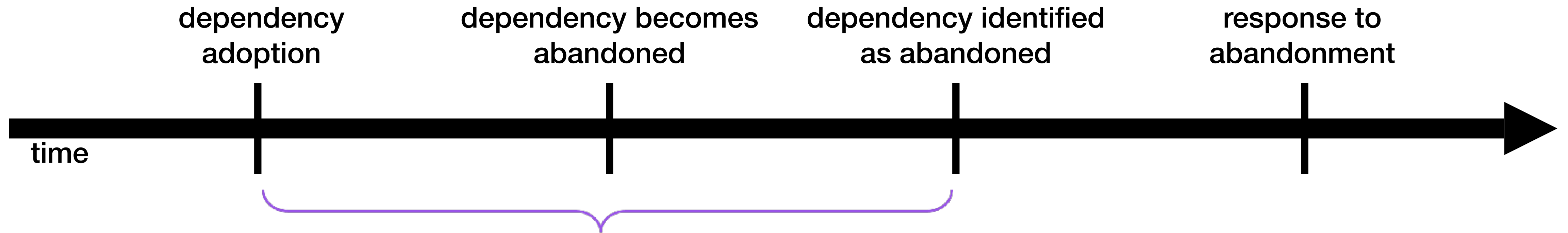
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- Some concrete, e.g., language incompatibilities (Python 2 to 3), missing needed features
- Many more anticipated, e.g., future updates, security concerns
- Some expect no meaningful impact



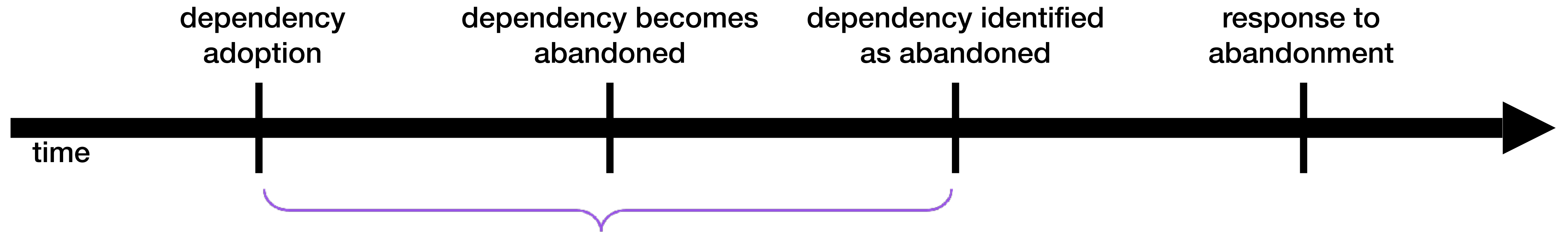
# Preparations post-adoption seem rare



E.g., building abstraction layers, minimizing dependencies, monitoring

The screenshot shows a code editor with a diff view of a package.json file. The left pane shows a file tree with folders like ".storybook", "packages", "design-system/src/component...", "docs/src/components/content", "ds-healthcare-gov", and "ds-medicare-gov". The right pane shows a diff of "packages/ds-medicare-gov/package.json". The diff shows changes between two versions of the file. A purple circle highlights the "devDependencies" section, which lists various development dependencies like "@types/wetpack", "@typescript-eslint/eslint-plugin", "@typescript-eslint/parser", "eslint-config-prettier", "eslint-config-react", "eslint-plugin-compat", "eslint-plugin-jsx-a11y", "eslint-plugin-prettier", "eslint-plugin-react", and "eslint-plugin-react-hooks".

# Preparations post-adoption seem rare



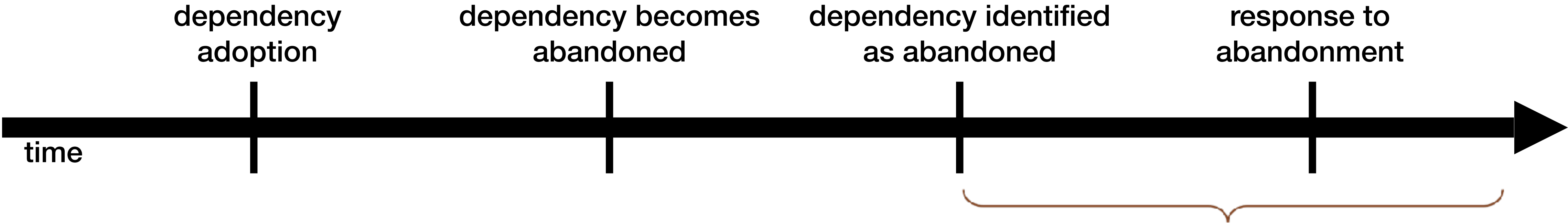
Not all interviewees considered prep worth the effort

*We are basically employing the strategy of  
**‘if it works it works, if it  
breaks then I’ll fix the issues.’***

*- PID10*



# The most common way to deal with abandonment is to switch to an alternative dependency

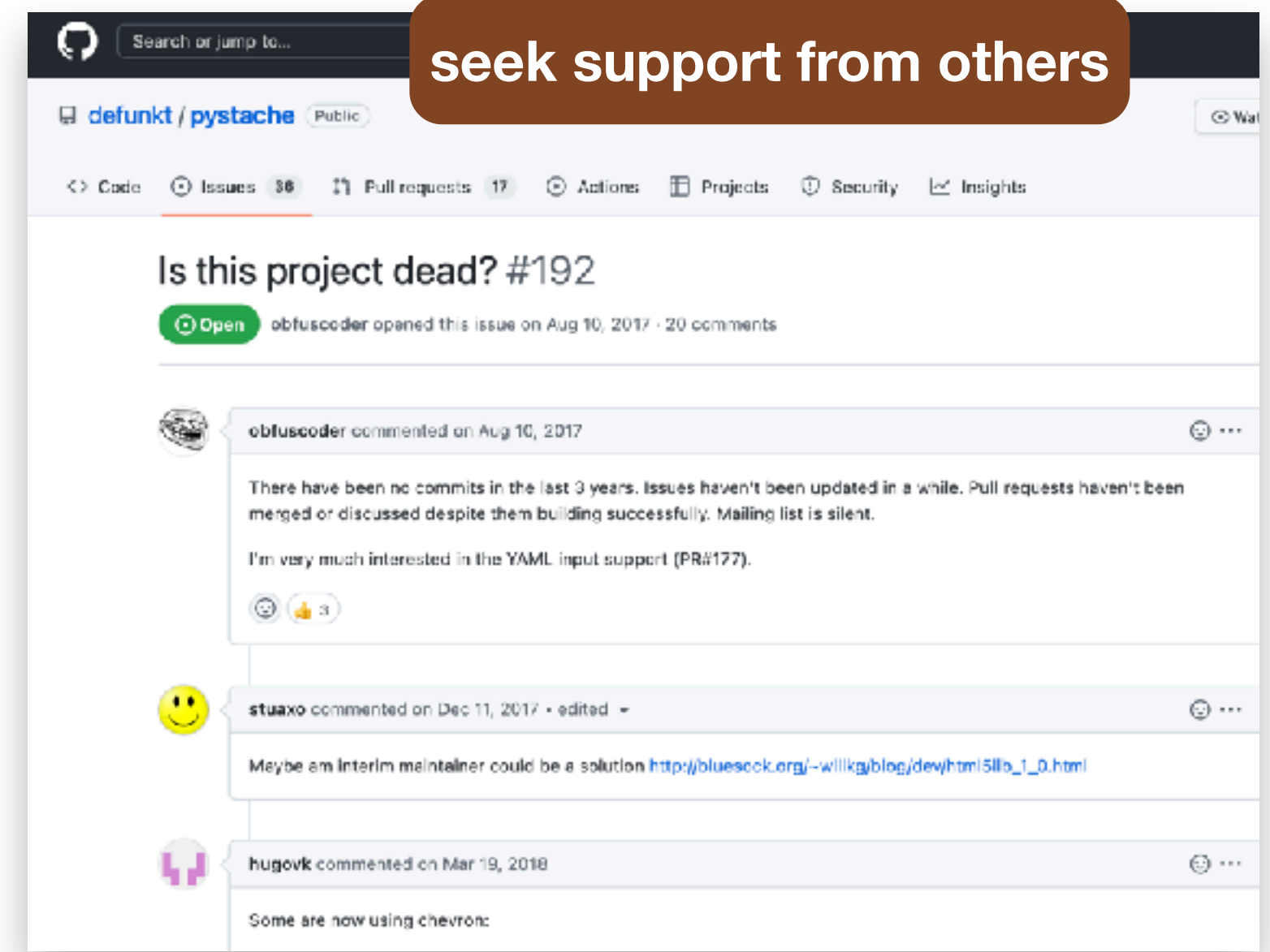
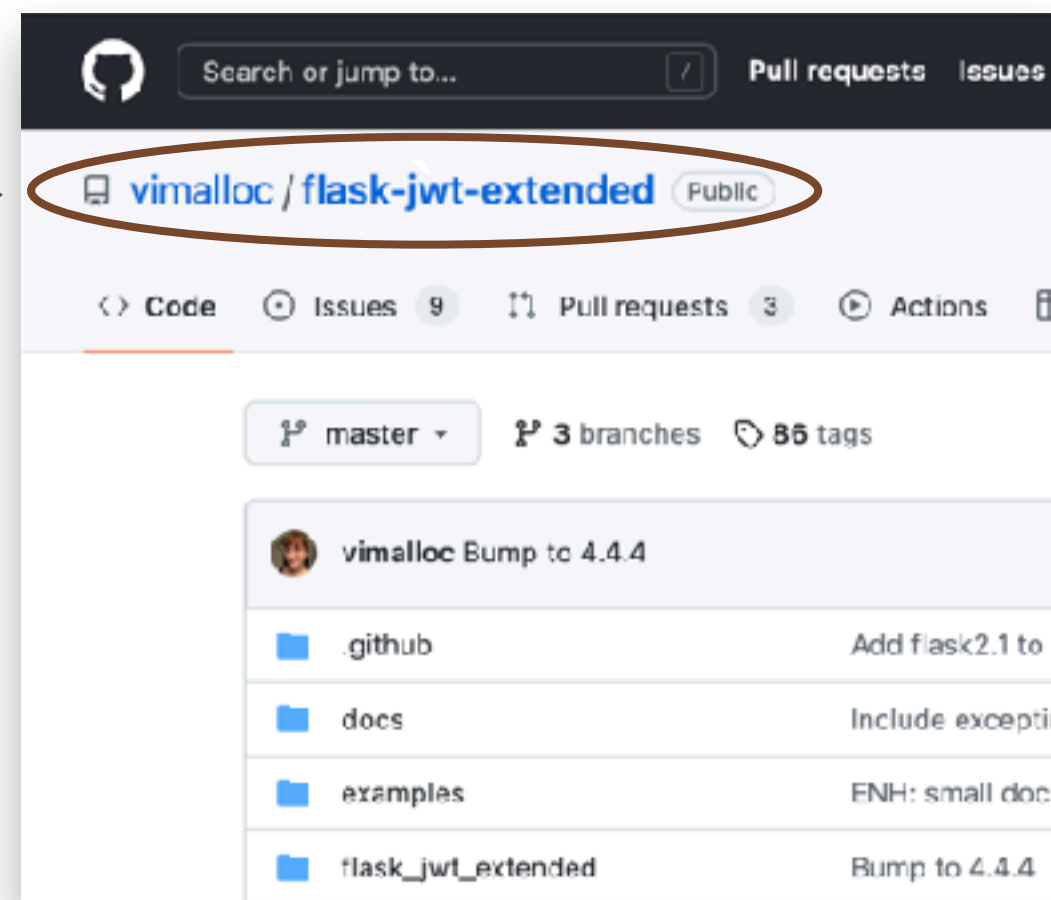
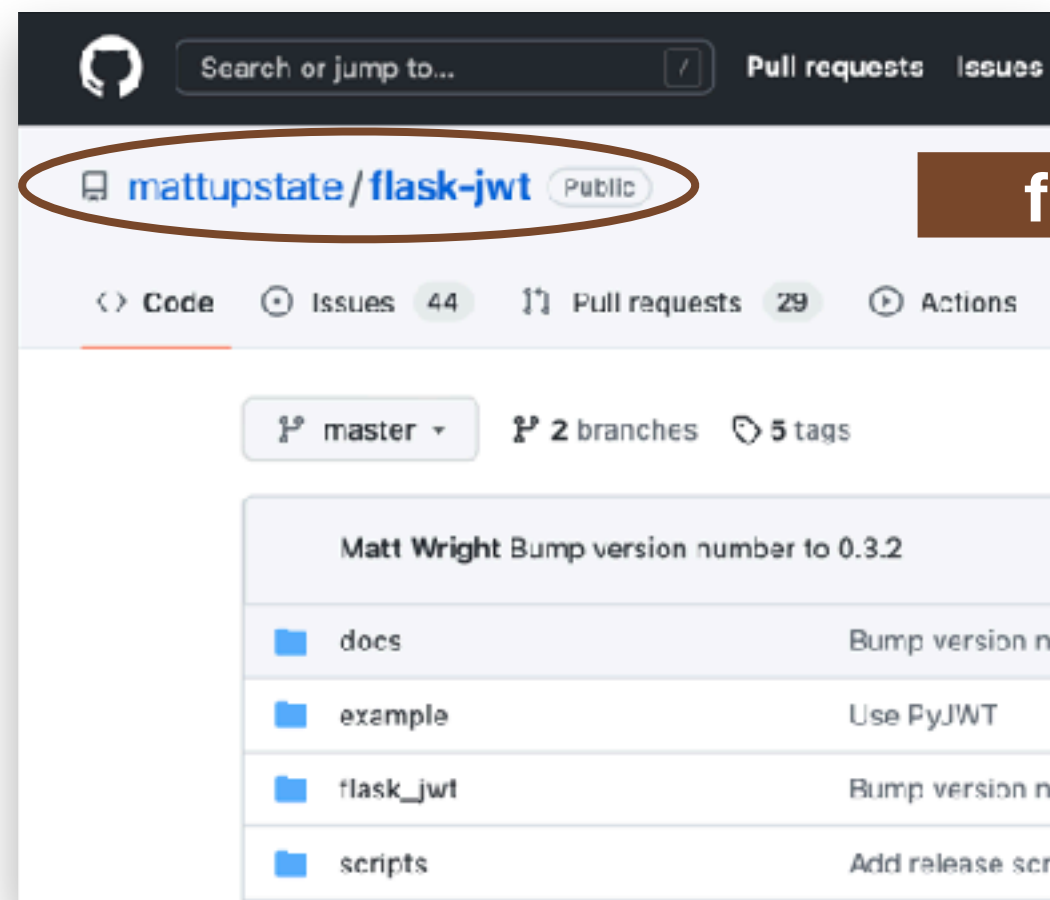


Another common solution was to fork or vendor code

```
jobs/integration/test_aws_iam.py
```

7	from .utils import juju_run	7	from .utils import juju_run
8	from subprocess import check_output	8	from subprocess import check_output
9	from shlex import split	9	from shlex import split
10	- from configobj import ConfigObj	10	+ from configparser import ConfigParser
11	from cilib.run import capture	11	from cilib.run import capture
12	import os	12	import os
13		13	

# Dealing with abandonment typically required trial-and-error



```
jobs/integration/test_aws_iam.py
@@ -7,7 +7,7 @@
7  from .utils import juju_run
8  from subprocess import check_output
9  from shlex import split
10 - from configobj import ConfigObj
11  from cilib.run import capture
12  import os
13

7  from .utils import juju_run
8  + from subprocess import check_output
9  from shlex import split
10 + from configparser import ConfigParser
11  from cilib.run import capture
12  import os
13
```



# Common theme: Interviewees benefitted from the actions of others

This repository has been archived by the owner on Oct 29, 2018. It is now read-only.

GravityLabs / **goose** Public archive

Watch 92 Fork 331 Star 1.5k

Code Issues 48 Pull requests 15 Actions Projects Wiki Security Insights

## Is this project still maintained? #86

Open Quantisan opened this issue on Feb 26, 2014 · 1 comment

**Quantisan** commented on Feb 26, 2014

last commit was a year ago, 9 pull requests open from months ago

**jasonab** commented on Feb 26, 2014

No, I don't believe so. There's a python fork at <https://github.com/grangier/python-goose>, as well as some direct forks (including mine with a few bugfixes: <https://github.com/jasonab/goose>)

Write Preview

This repository has been archived.

Assignees  
No one assigned

Labels  
None yet

Projects  
None yet

Milestone  
No milestone

Development  
No branches or pull requests

Notifications Customize

Subscribe

You're not receiving notifications from this thread.

2 participants

master 4 branches 32 tags Go to file Code

### Migration Discussion

- Quantisan** commented on Feb 26, 2014  
last commit was a year ago, 9 pull requests open from months ago
- jasonab** commented on Feb 26, 2014  
No, I don't believe so. There's a python fork at <https://github.com/grangier/python-goose>, as well as some direct forks (including mine with a few bugfixes: <https://github.com/jasonab/goose>)

Add a comment

Write Preview H B I

Add your comment here...

Comment

Tom Commit Release 2.1.29\_2.10: 462f04a on Dec 1, 2015 197 commits

misc/PSD	adding new unit tests	13 years ago
src	Commit Release 2.1.29_2.10:	8 years ago
.gitignore	Check in Release 2.1.22_2.10, which was a port of 2.1.22 to Scala ...	8 years ago
LICENSE	adding apache2.0 licensing to files and added a LICENSE file	12 years ago
NOTICE	adding apache2.0 licensing to files and added a LICENSE file	12 years ago
README.md	Fix markdown formatting for bullet points in Readme.	12 years ago
pom.xml	Commit Release 2.1.29_2.10:	8 years ago

README.md

### About

Html Content / Article Extractor in Scala - open sourced from Gravity Labs

- [gravity.com](http://gravity.com)
- Readme
- Apache-2.0 license
- Activity
- 1.5k stars
- 93 watching
- 360 forks
- Report repository

### Releases

32 tags

### Packages

No packages published

### Contributors 6



### Languages



Possible solution to support creation of community-oriented solutions?



# Part 1 Summary:

---

*Every time a project becomes abandoned, or we think it might be abandoned, **we feel like we're winging it.***

*We feel like we're dealing with it for the first time*

*- PID4*

# Part 2: Repository Mining

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# 28,100 npm packages out of 1M+ in 2020 had at least one month with 10,000+ downloads

---

## About

 [Readme](#)

 [MIT license](#)

 [Activity](#)

 [11.4k stars](#)

 [371 watching](#)

 [3.5k forks](#)

[Report repository](#)

## Releases 8

 [1.2.0](#) Latest  
on Jun 8

[+ 7 releases](#)

## Packages

No packages published

## Used by 48.7k

 [+ 48,712](#)

## Contributors 53



28,100 npm packages out of 1M+ in 2020  
had at least one month with 10,000+ downloads

**15%** (4,108)  
became abandoned

Observation window: Jan 2015 to Dec 2020

## About

 [Readme](#)

 [MIT license](#)

 [Activity](#)

 [11.4k stars](#)

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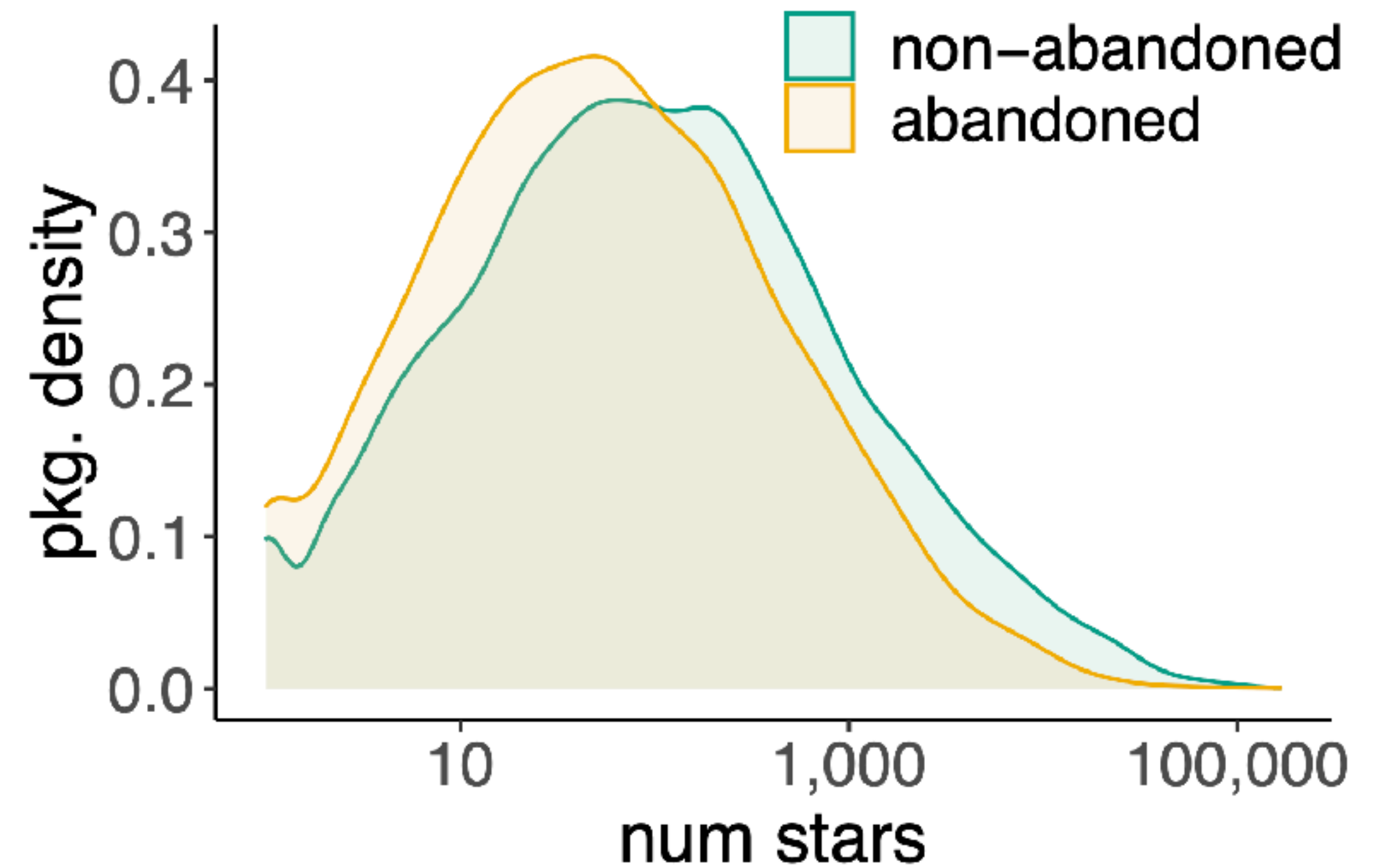
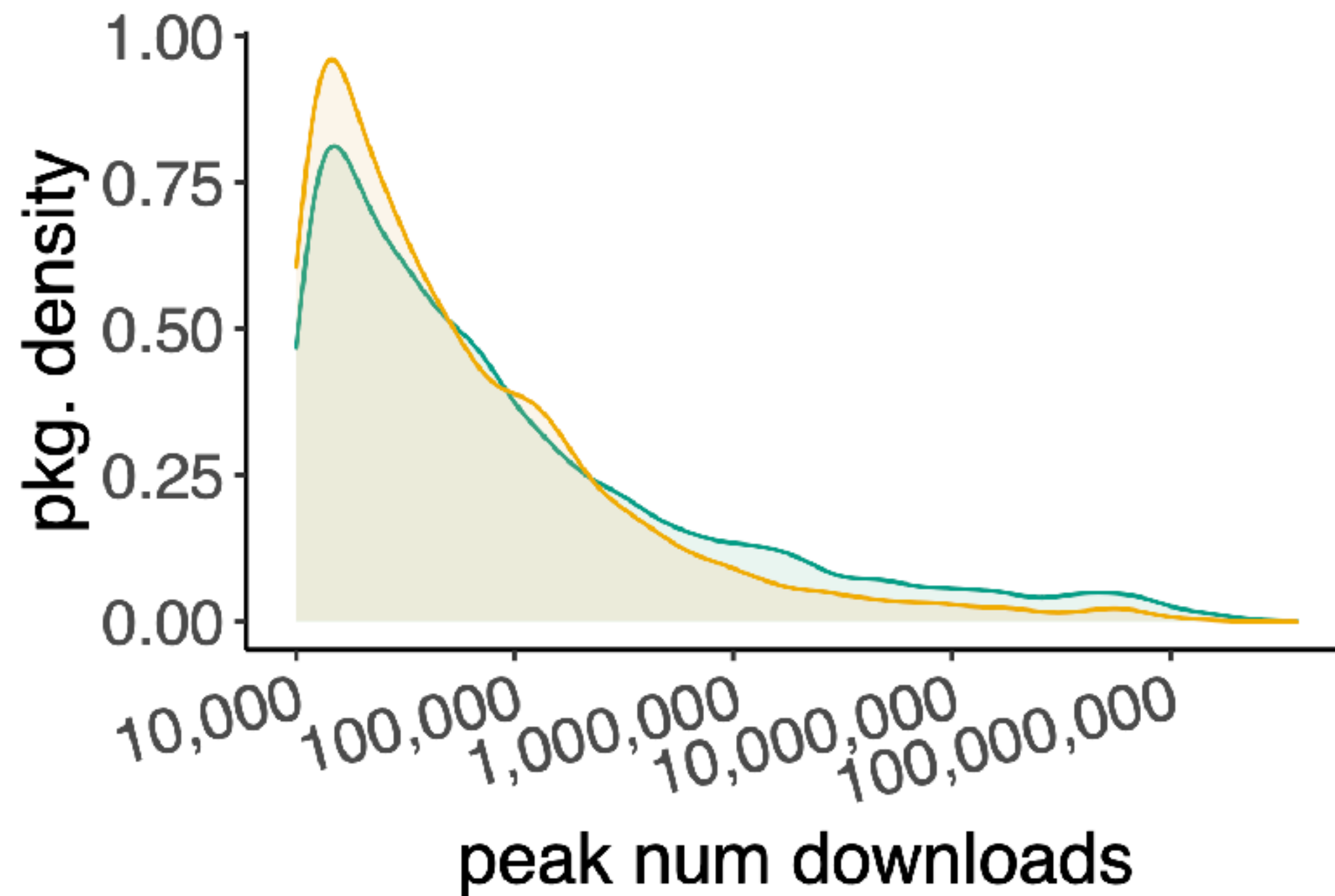
 [+ 48,712](#)

## Contributors 53





The distributions of peak download and current star counts for both abandoned and non-abandoned packages are similar.



The abandoned projects impacted

**~280k+ downstreams**  
**on GitHub**


## About

 [Readme](#)

 [MIT license](#)

 [Activity](#)

 **11.4k stars**

 **371 watching**

 **3.5k forks**

[Report repository](#)

## Releases 8

 **1.2.0** Latest  
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[+ 7 releases](#)

## Packages

No packages published

## Used by 48.7k

 [+ 48,712](#)

## Contributors 53





The abandoned projects impacted

**~280k+ downstreams**  
**on GitHub**

of which

**~78k+ were still active at**  
**the time**

**About**

- 📖 Readme
- 📄 MIT license
- 📈 Activity
- ★ 11.4k stars
- 👁️ 371 watching
- 🔗 3.5k forks
- Report repository

---

**Releases** 8

📦 1.2.0 **Latest**  
on Jun 8

[+ 7 releases](#)


---

**Packages**

No packages published


---

**Used by** 48.7k

 + 48,712

---

**Contributors** 53

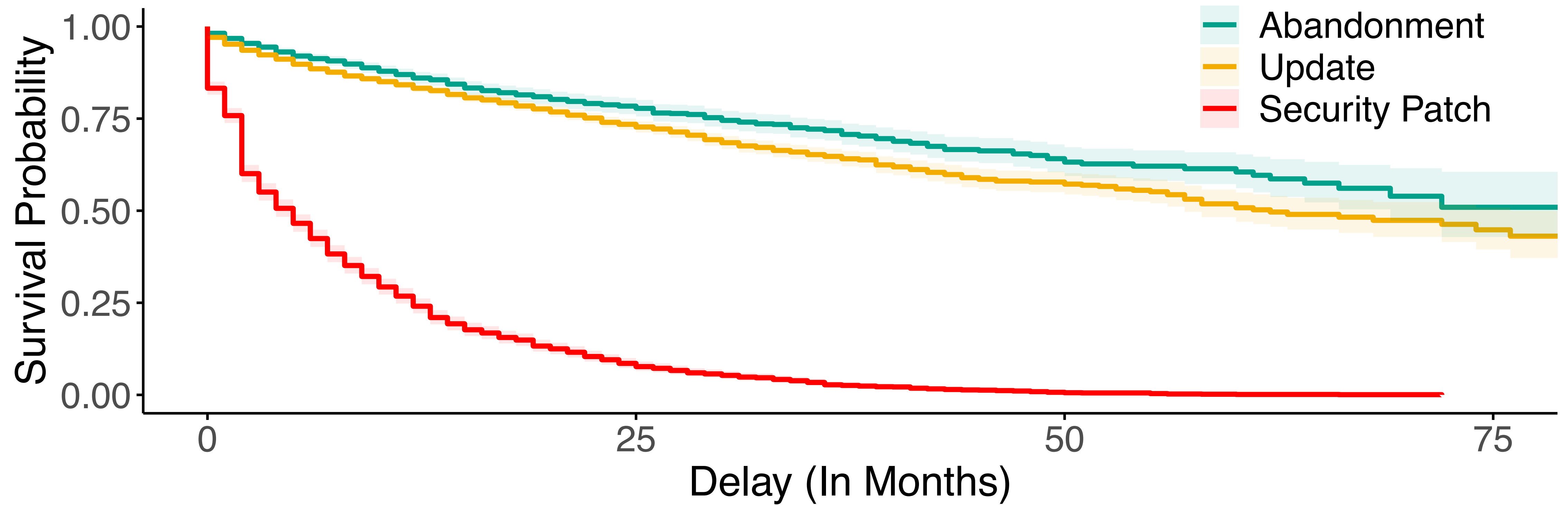


How much do people downstream react?

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The rate of removing abandoned dependencies is similar to random dependency updates, and slower than security patch updates.

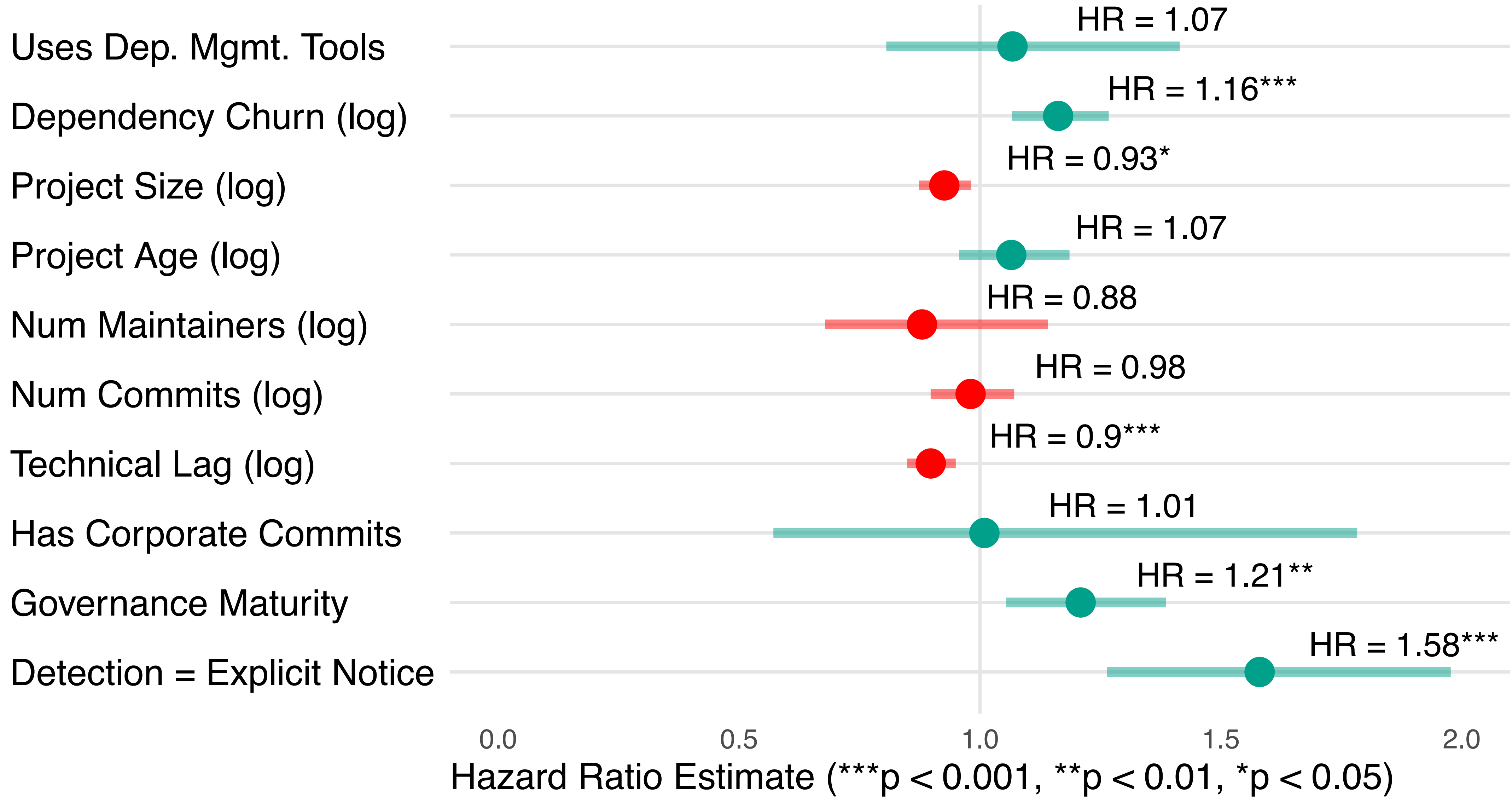


Which factors correlate with downstream projects reacting faster?

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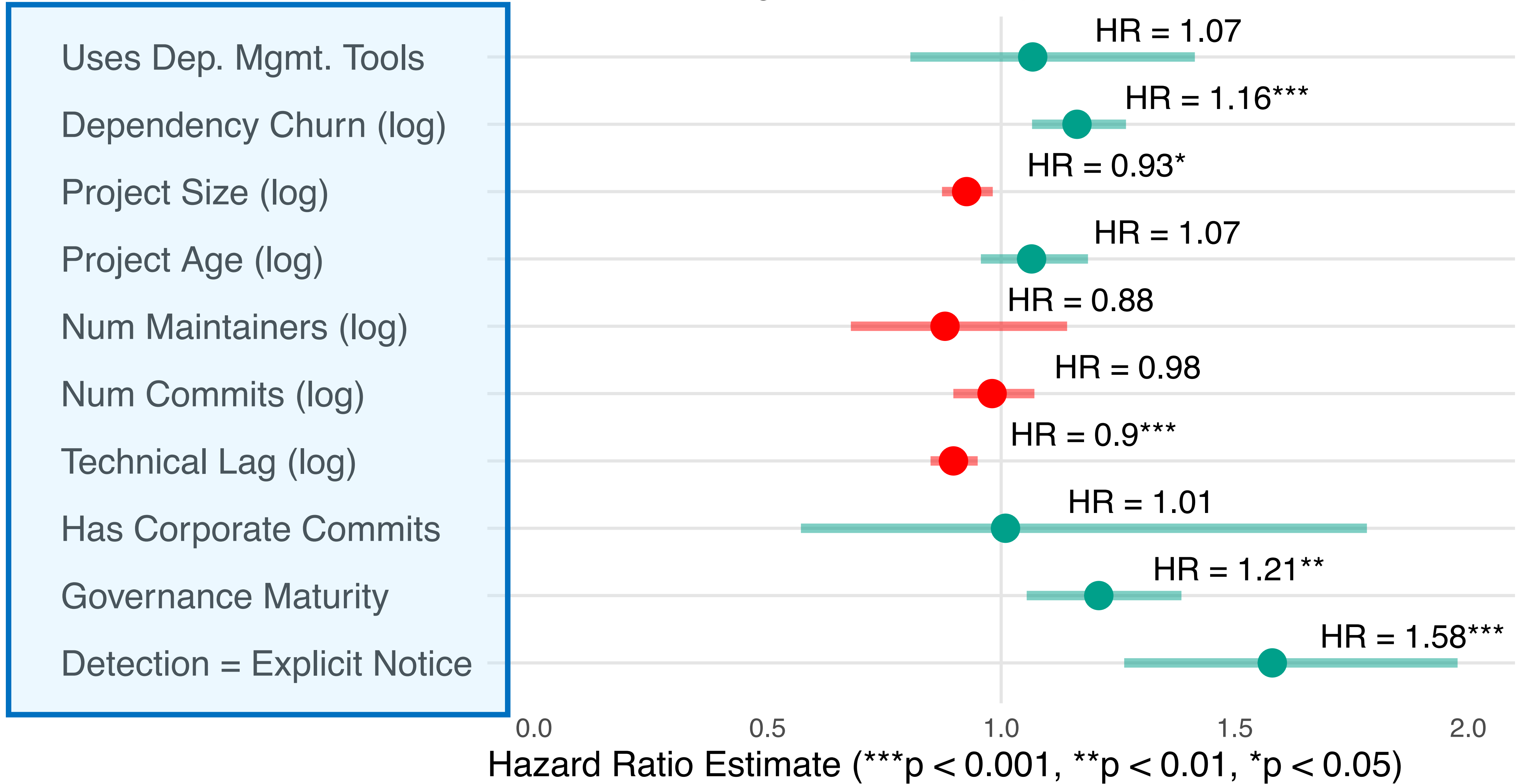


# Time to Removing Abandoned Dependencies



# Factors

## Time to Removing Abandoned Dependencies

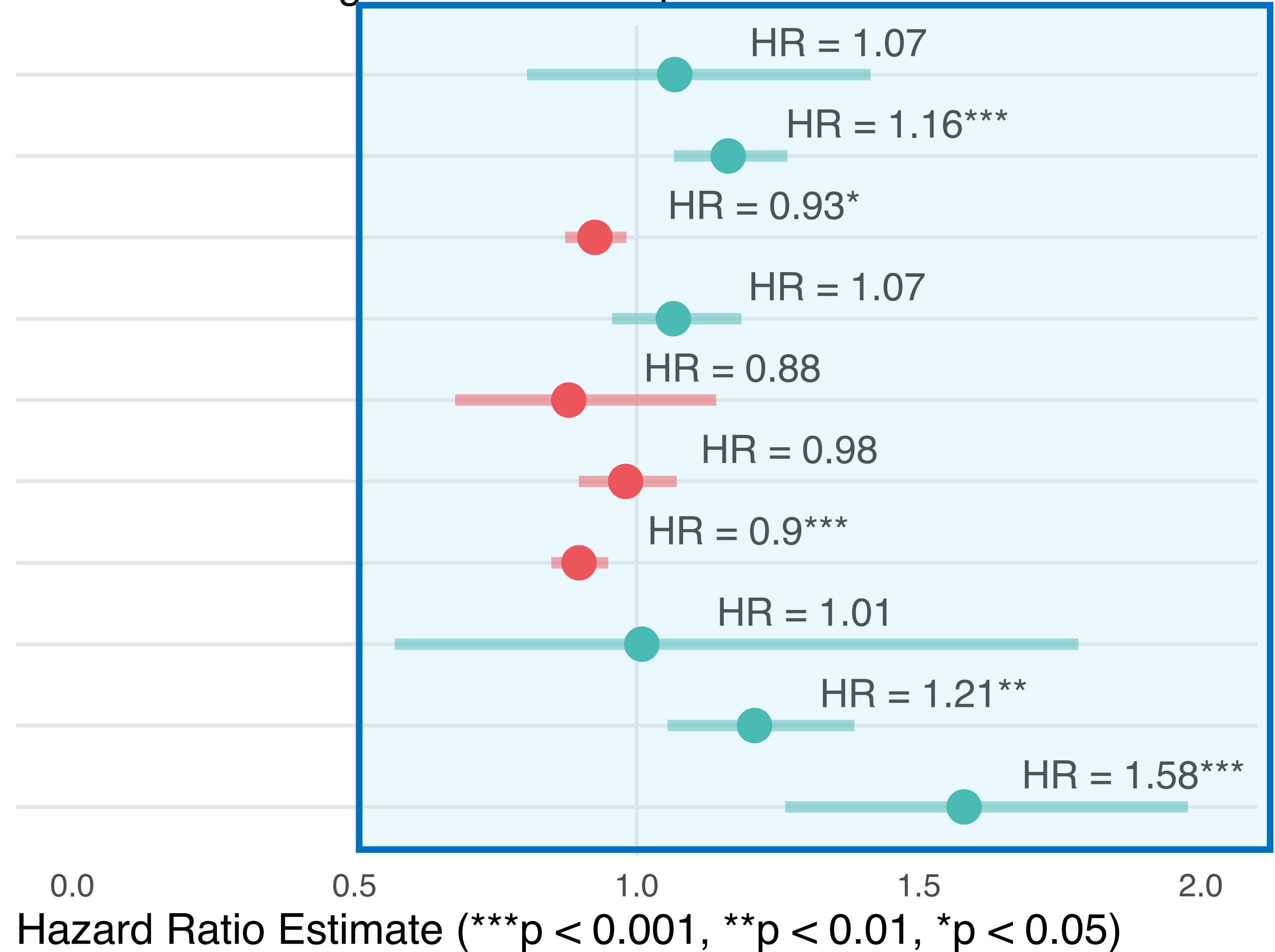




# Magnitude of correlation

Time to Removing Abandoned Dependencies

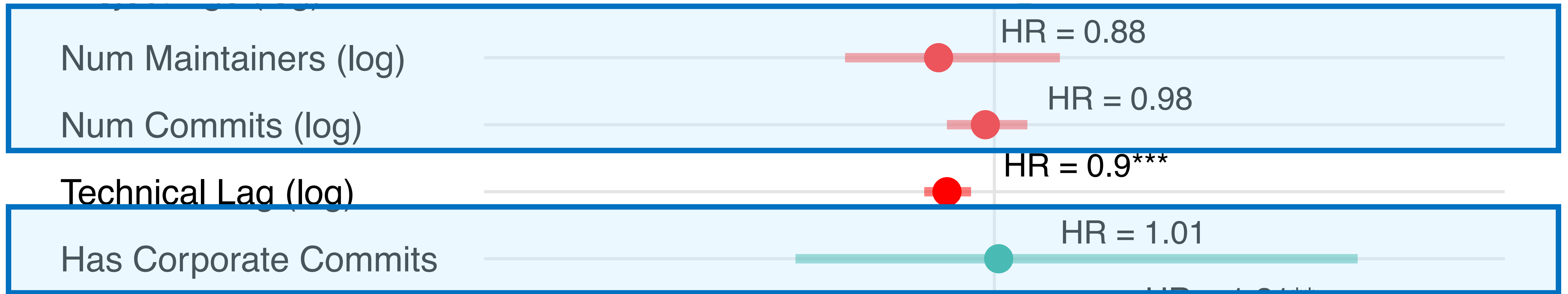
- Uses Dep. Mgmt. Tools
- Dependency Churn (log)
- Project Size (log)
- Project Age (log)
- Num Maintainers (log)
- Num Commits (log)
- Technical Lag (log)
- Has Corporate Commits
- Governance Maturity
- Detection = Explicit Notice



# Automation: no effect



# Project size: no effect

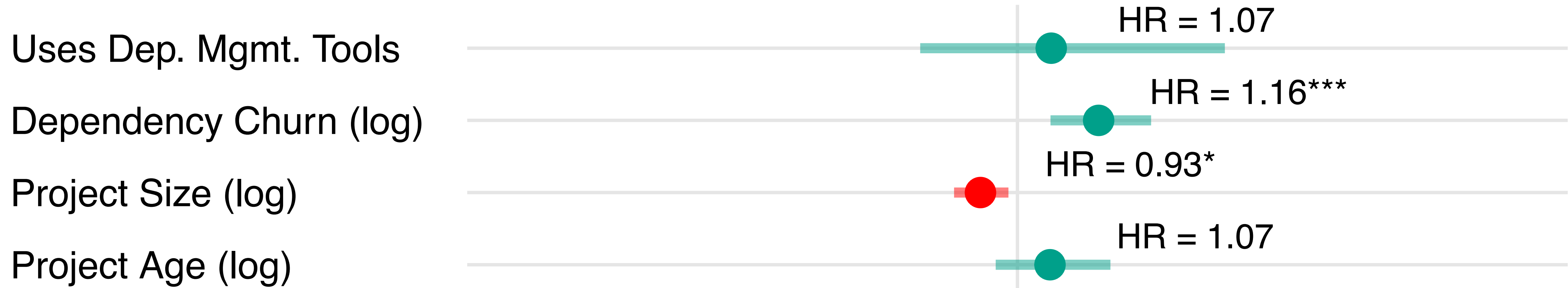


# Corporate involvement: no effect

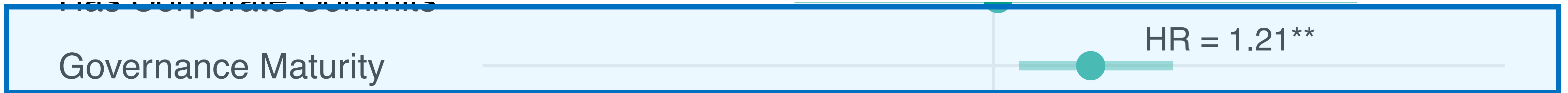
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0  
Hazard Ratio Estimate (\*\*\*)  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ )



## Time to Removing Abandoned Dependencies

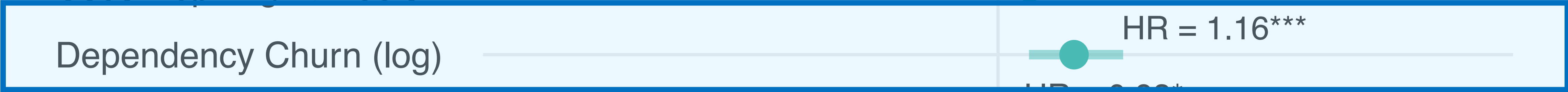


**Six governance best practices: having a README, a license, issue templates, pull request templates, contributing guidelines, and a code of conduct**

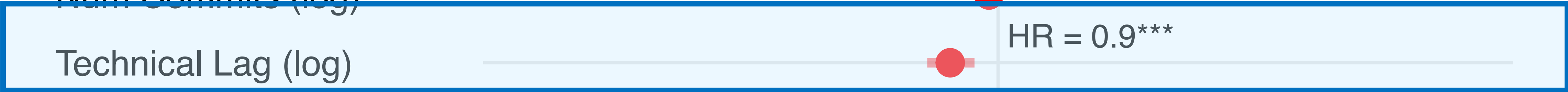


0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0  
Hazard Ratio Estimate (\*\*\*)  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ )

# Updates to dependencies in the year before exposure

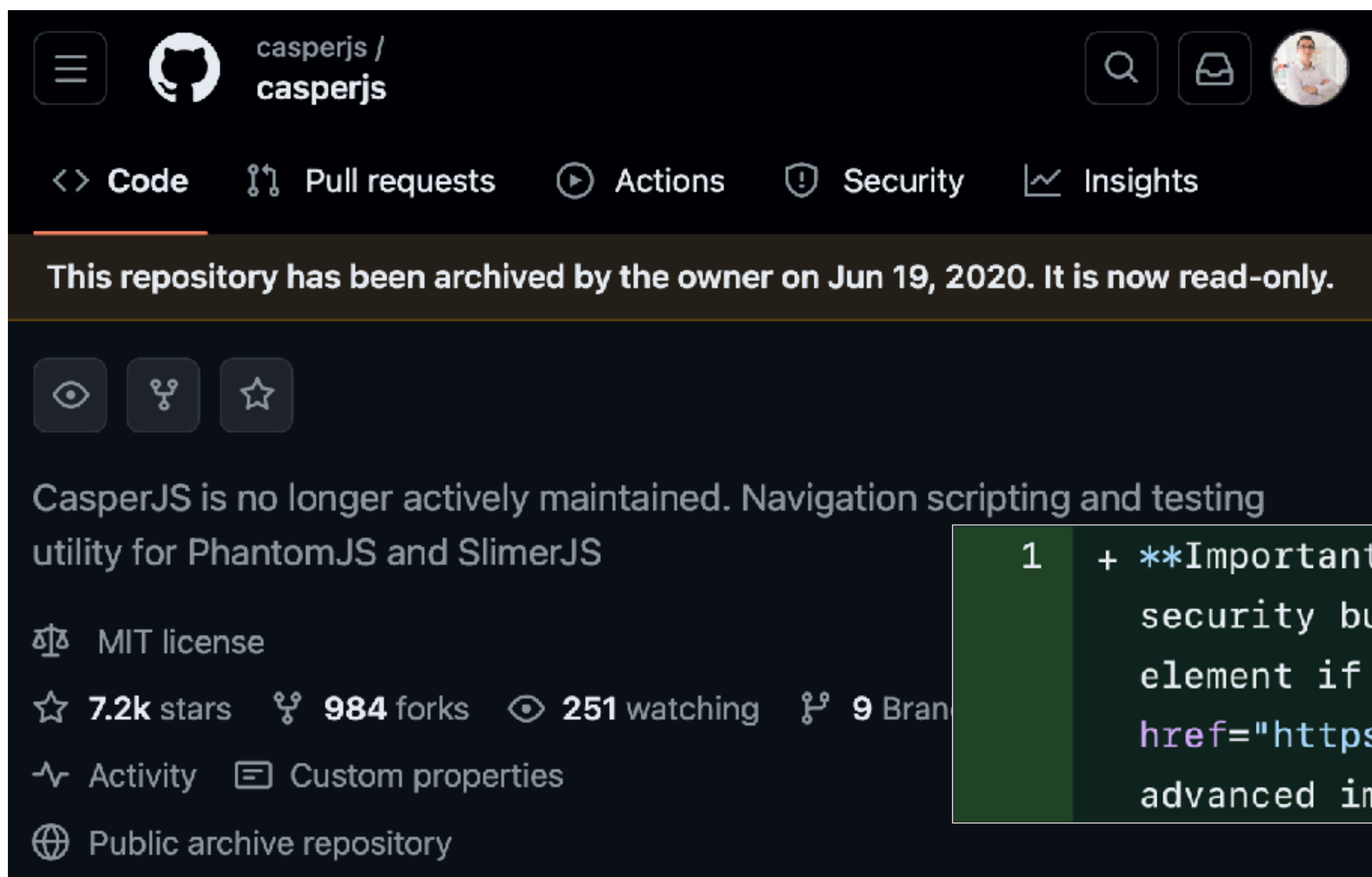


# Average lag of dependencies



0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0  
Hazard Ratio Estimate (\*\*\*)  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ )



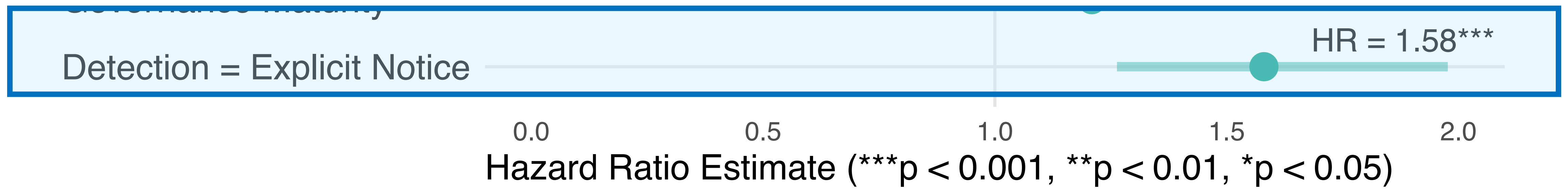


http://unmaintained.tech



# Strongest effect: Explicit notice of abandonment

(Github archive flag, no-maintenance-intended badge, other mention in README)



# Conclusion:

---

- Abandonment, even among widely-used npm packages, is fairly common.
- It can have rippling effects, especially when considering transitive impact.
- People seem to care about abandoned dependencies (many remove them), but may not notice them. It's also unclear what to do after.
- At the very least, we recommend that:
  - Maintainers place an **explicit notice** of abandonment somewhere visible.
  - Platforms implement features to **help with migration**.
- It's time to establish best practices for **responsible sunseting** of packages, rather than insisting on indefinite maintenance!



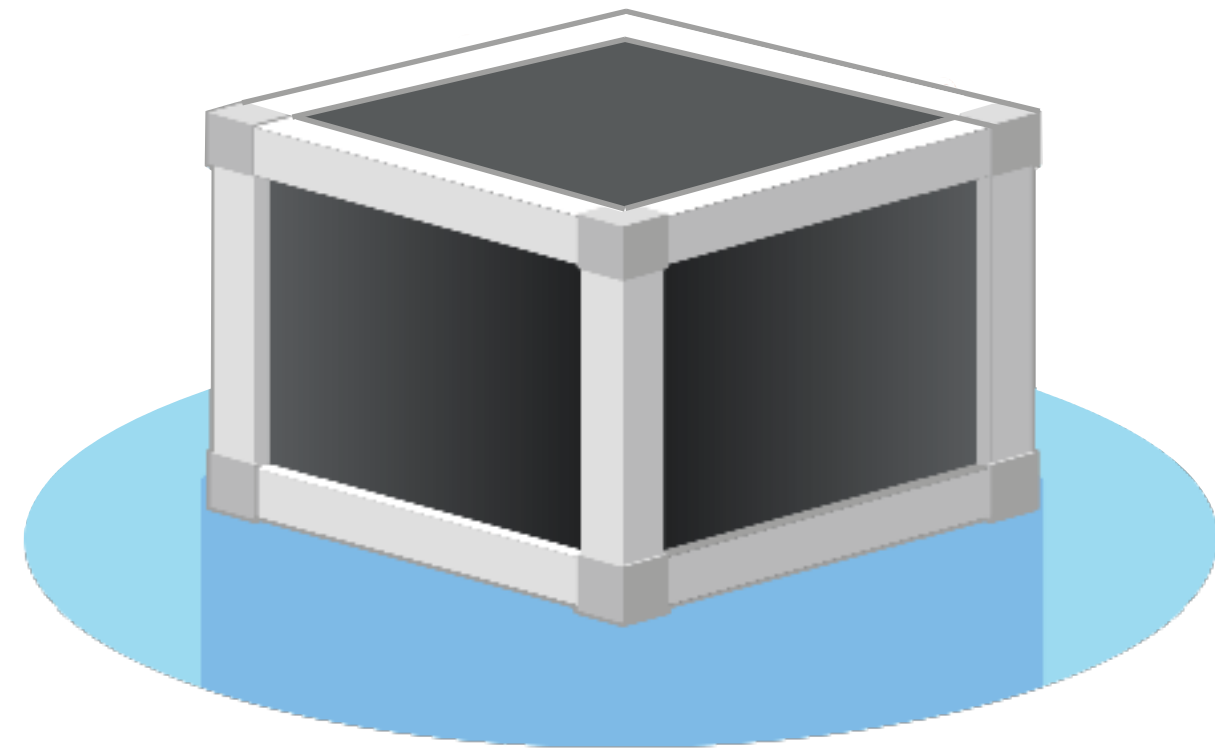
# Labor Pools

---

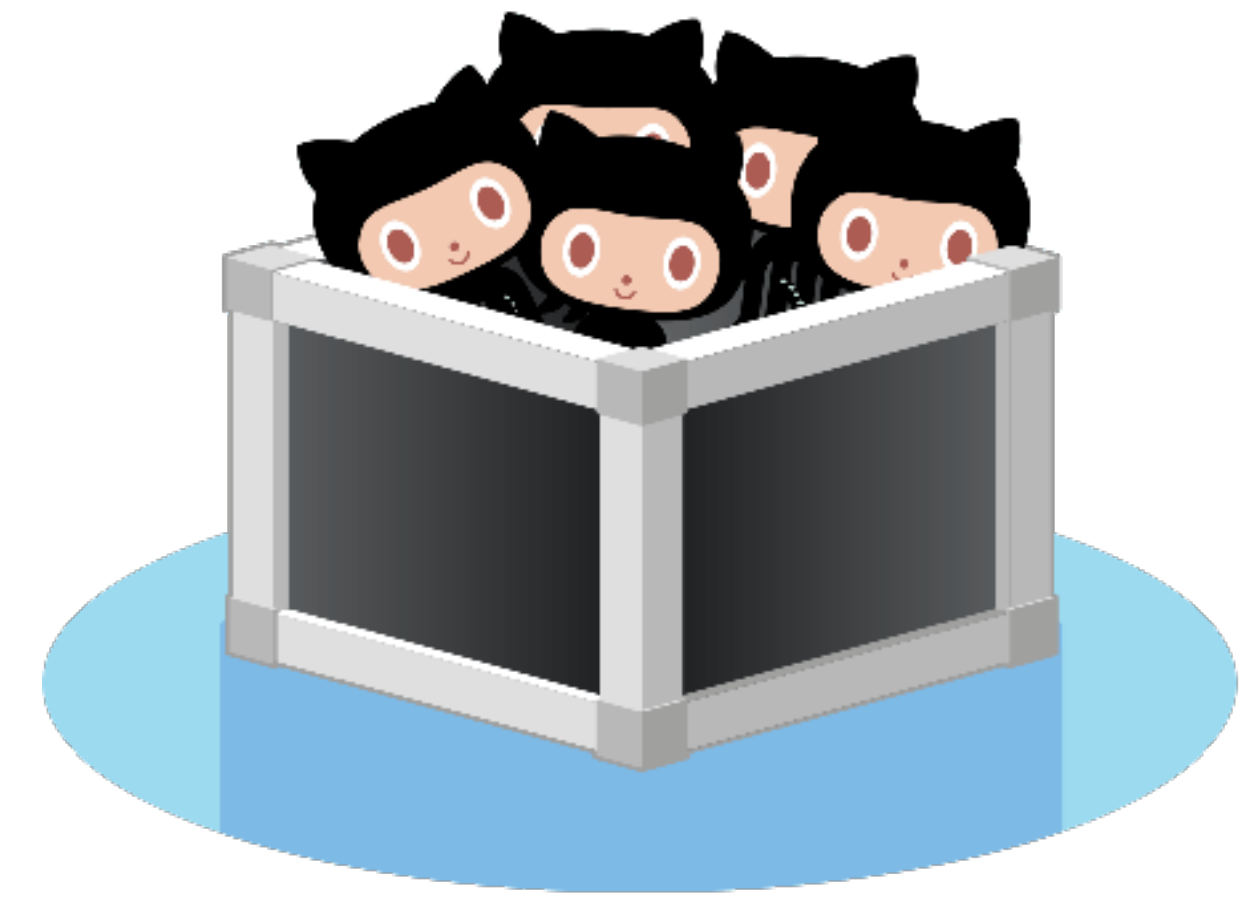
Fang, Herbsleb, and Vasilescu, "Matching Skills, Past Collaboration, and Limited Competition: Modeling When Open-Source Projects Attract Contributors." ESEC/FSE 2023







Key question:  
→  
How to attract  
new contributors?

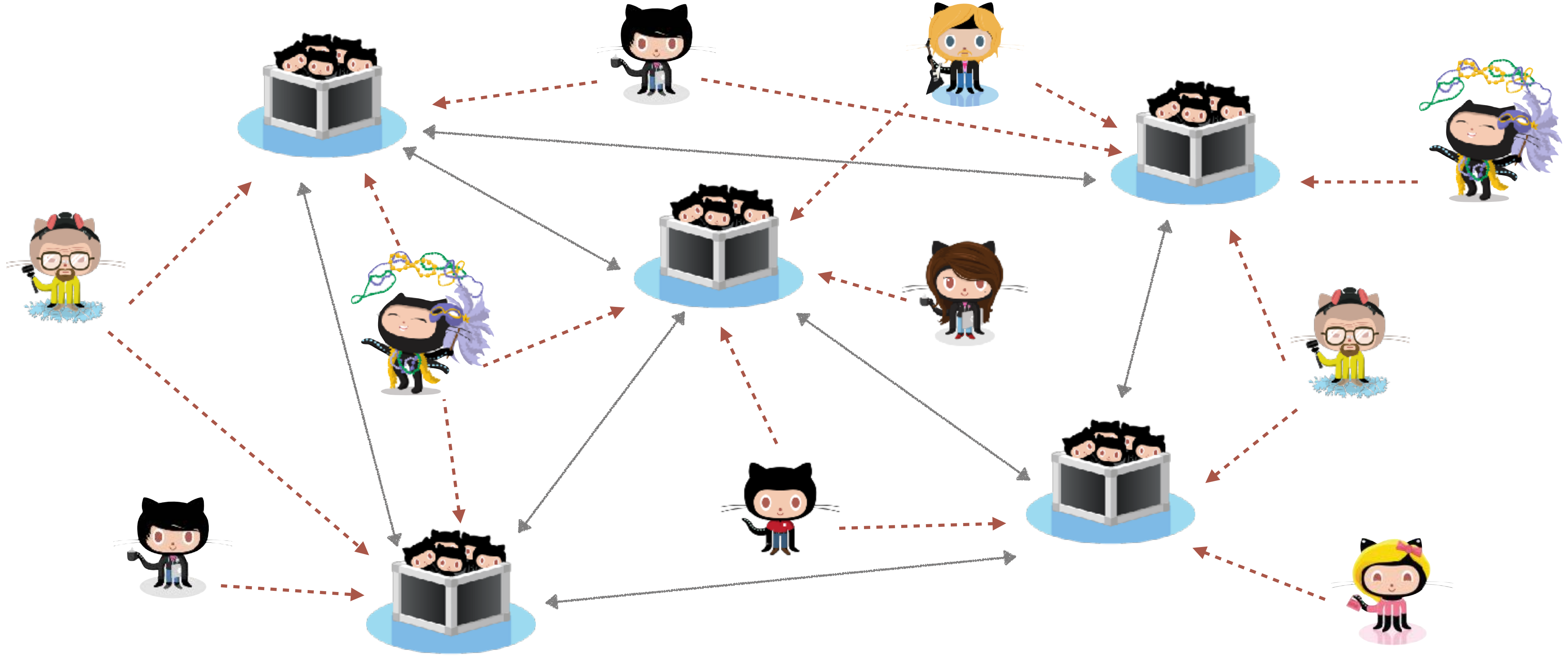


Many **project-level** factors associate with the likelihood of attracting new contributors

- Low barrier to first contribution
- Perceived welcomeness to newcomers
- Quality of README
- Current project popularity

...

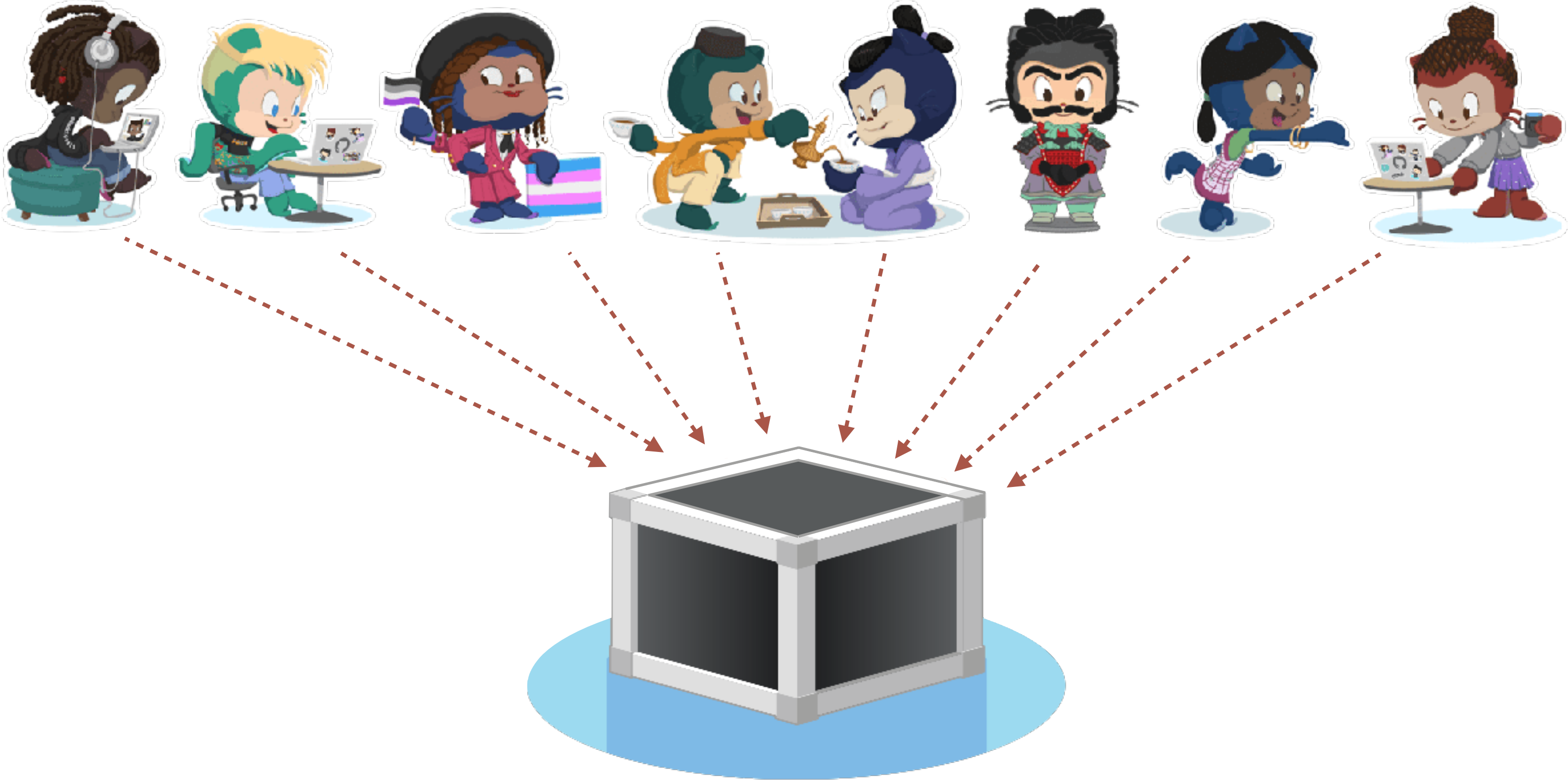
# Open-source projects form complex networks of interdependencies!



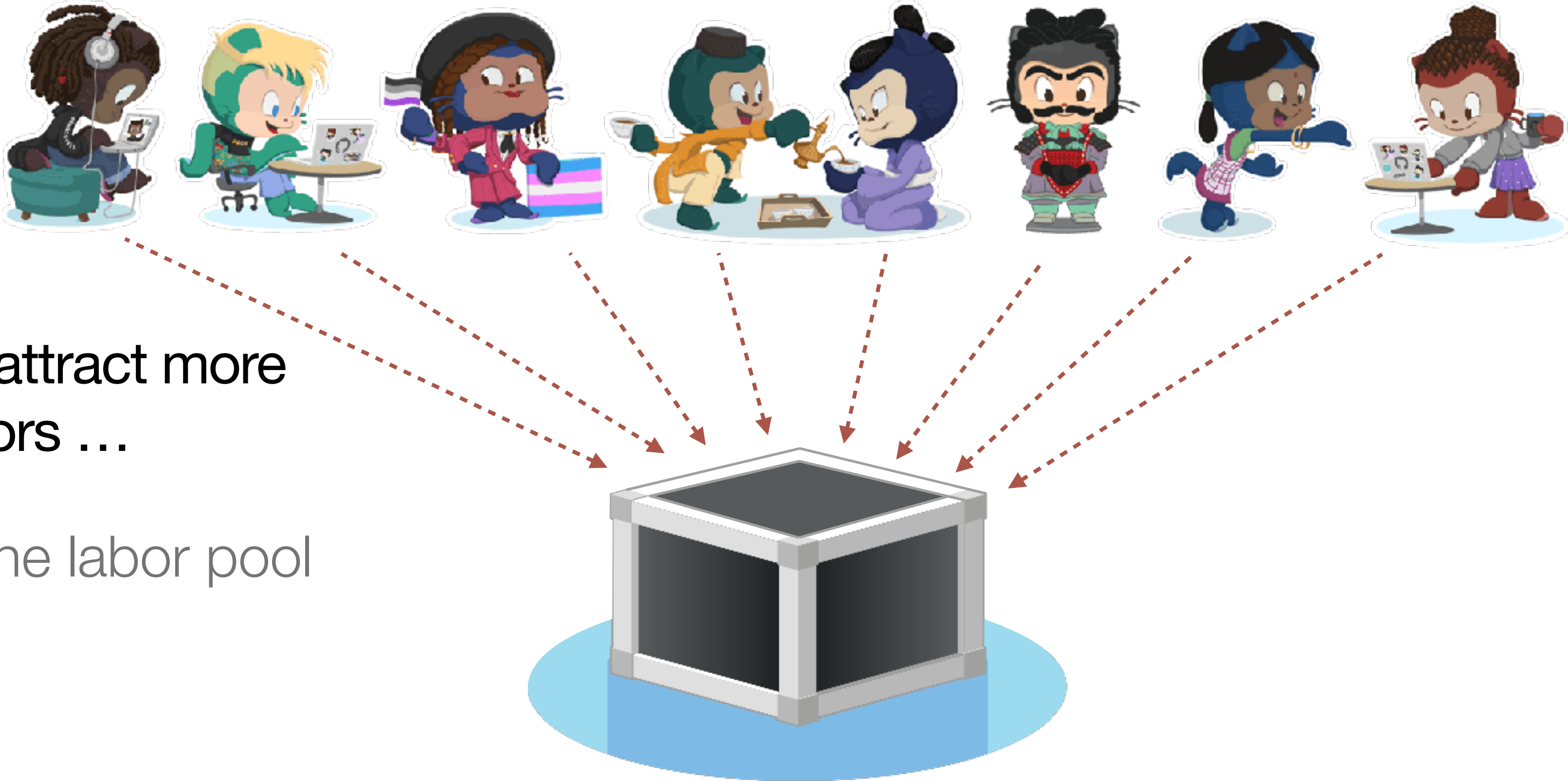
Can we measure the network effects?



New construct: a project's **labor pool** — the set of active participants in the overall ecosystem that the project could attempt to recruit from at a given time



New construct: a project's **labor pool** — the set of active participants in the overall ecosystem that the project could attempt to recruit from at a given time

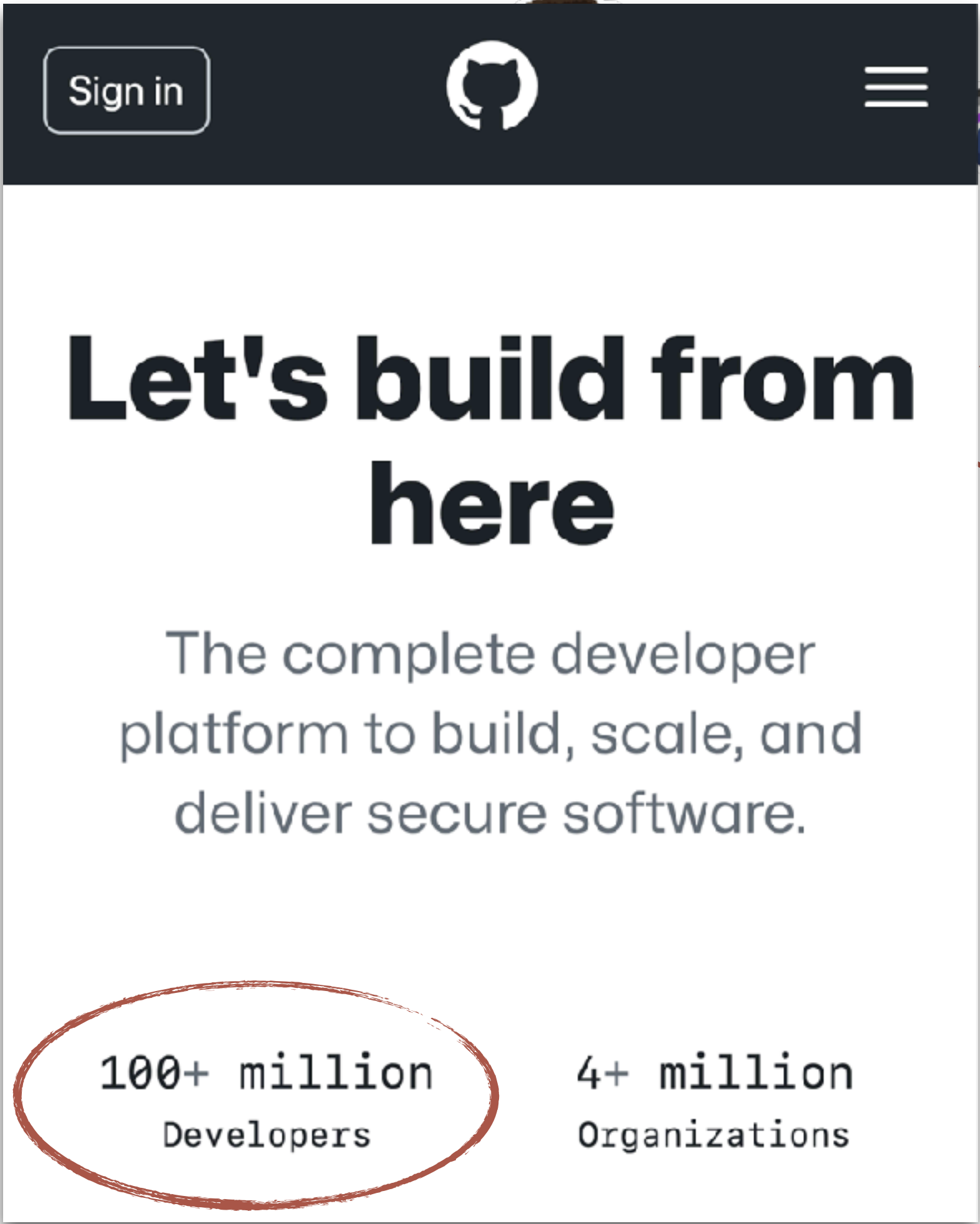


Hyp: Projects attract more new contributors ...


... the larger the labor pool



New construct: a project's **labor pool** — the set of active participants in the overall ecosystem that the project could attempt to recruit from at a given time



Sign in

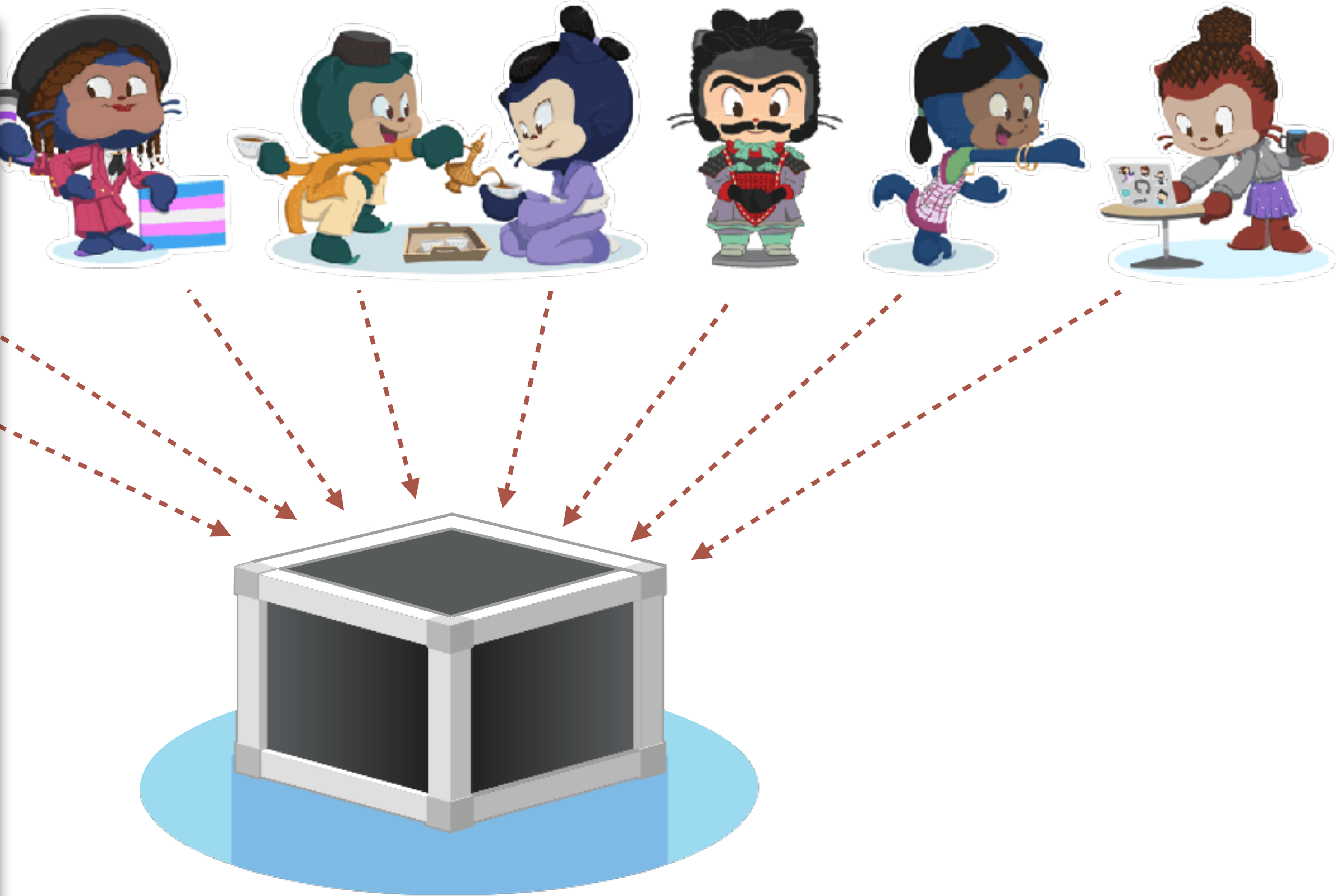


# Let's build from here

The complete developer platform to build, scale, and deliver secure software.

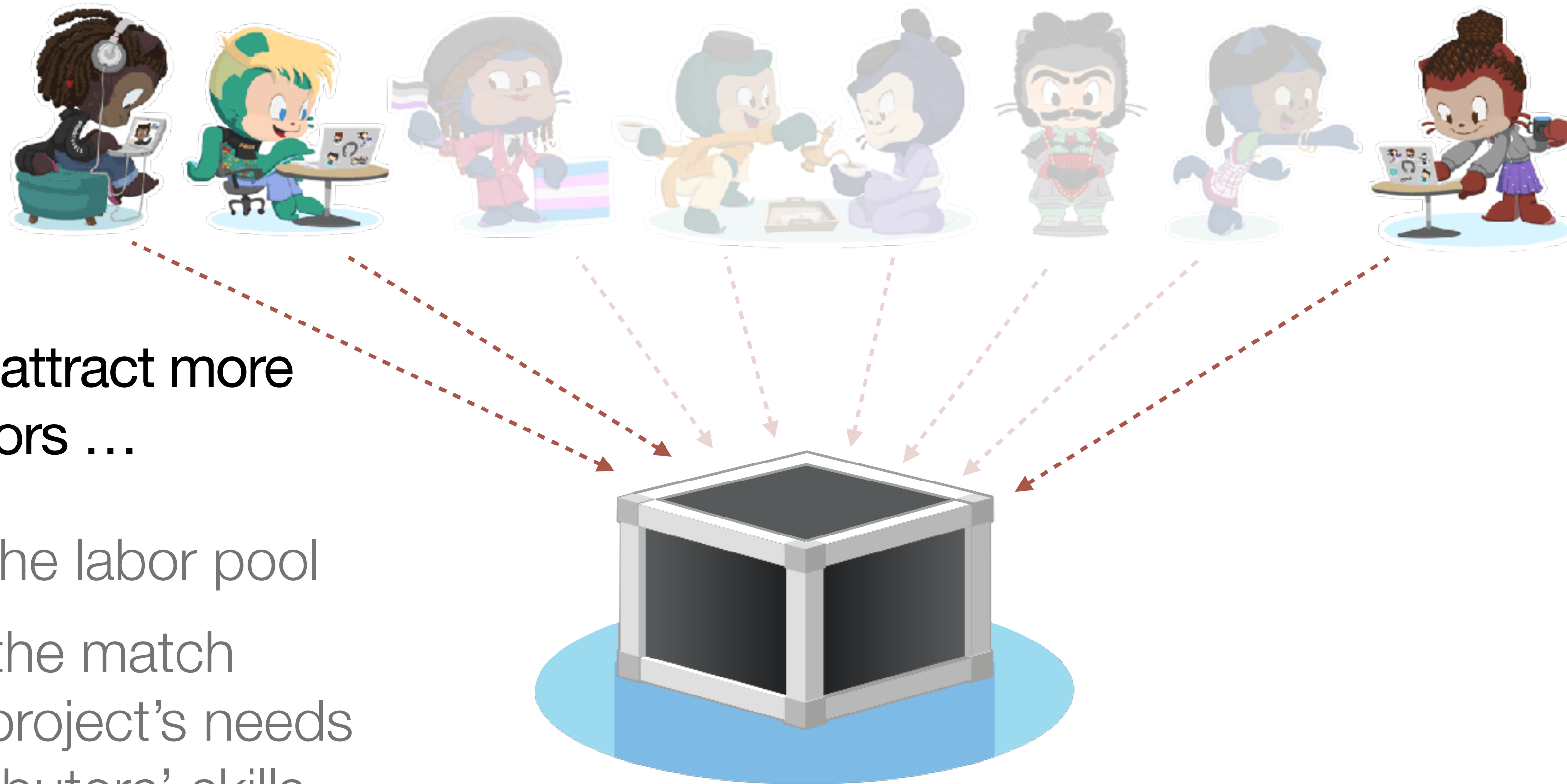
**100+ million**  
Developers

4+ million  
Organizations



<https://github.com/about>

New construct: a project's **labor pool** — the set of active participants in the overall ecosystem that the project could attempt to recruit from at a given time

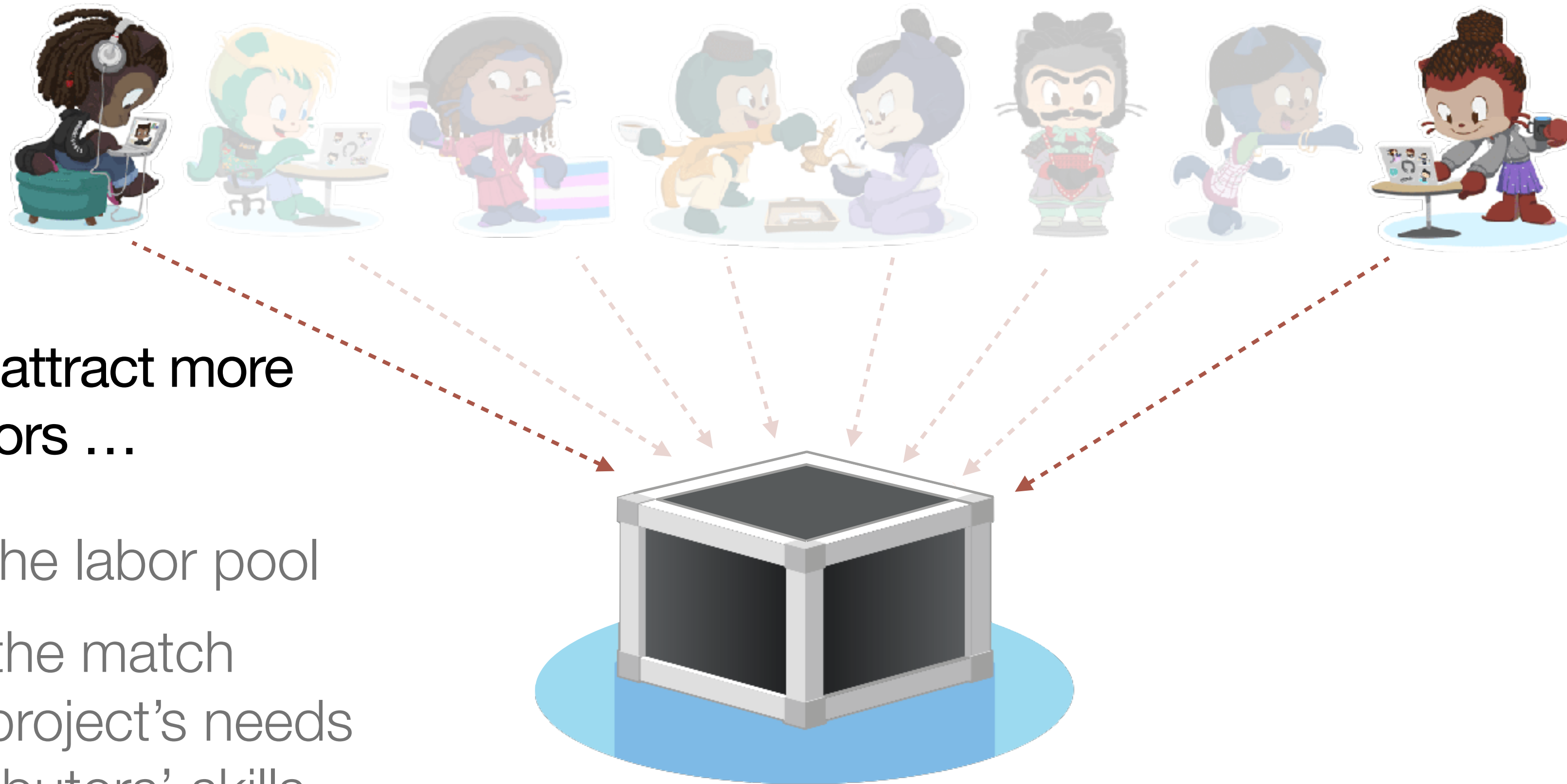


Hyp: Projects attract more new contributors ...

... the larger the labor pool

... the better the match between the project's needs and the contributors' skills

New construct: a project's **labor pool** — the set of active participants in the overall ecosystem that the project could attempt to recruit from at a given time



Hyp: Projects attract more new contributors ...

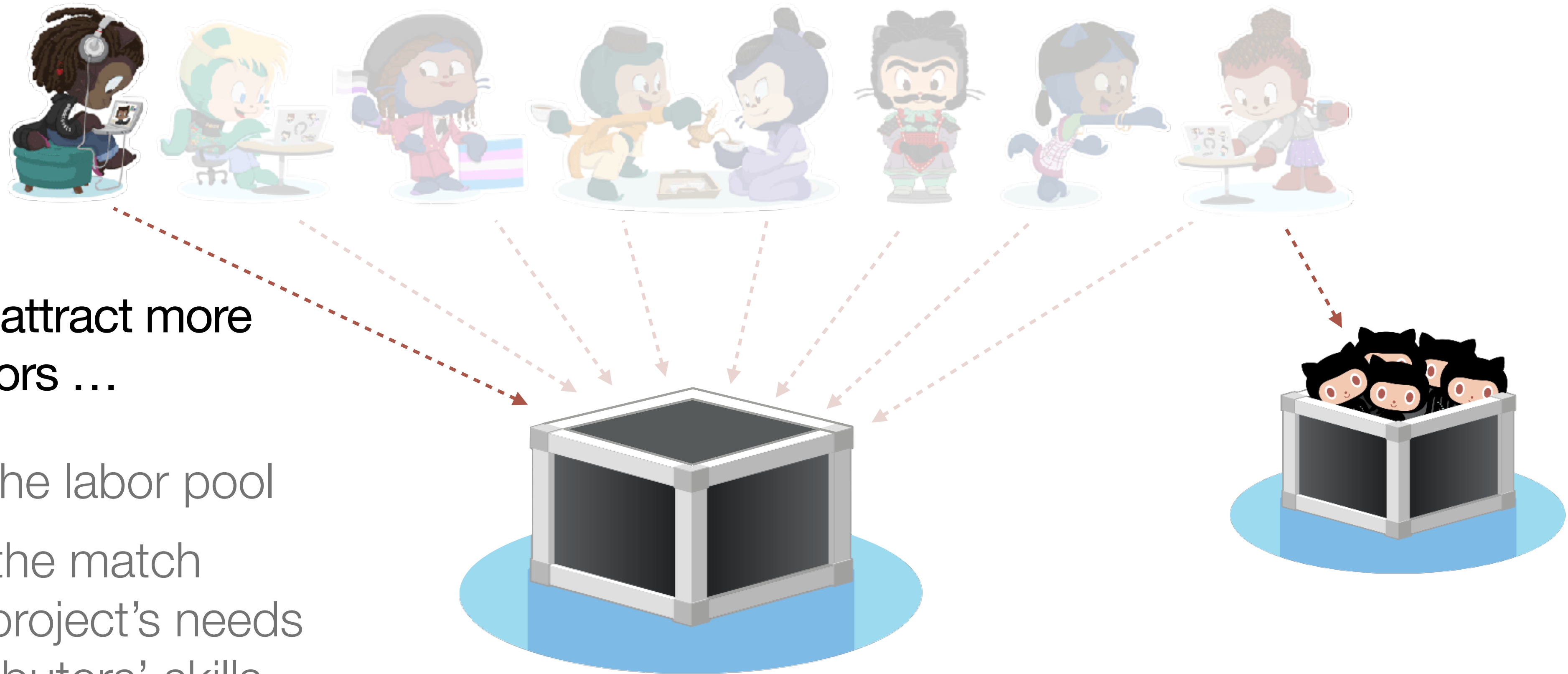
... the larger the labor pool

... the better the match between the project's needs and the contributors' skills

... the stronger the pre-existing social connections to current project maintainers



New construct: a project's **labor pool** — the set of active participants in the overall ecosystem that the project could attempt to recruit from at a given time



Hyp: Projects attract more new contributors ...

... the larger the labor pool

... the better the match between the project's needs and the contributors' skills

... the stronger the pre-existing social connections to current project maintainers

... and the less competition there is with other projects the same people could contribute to

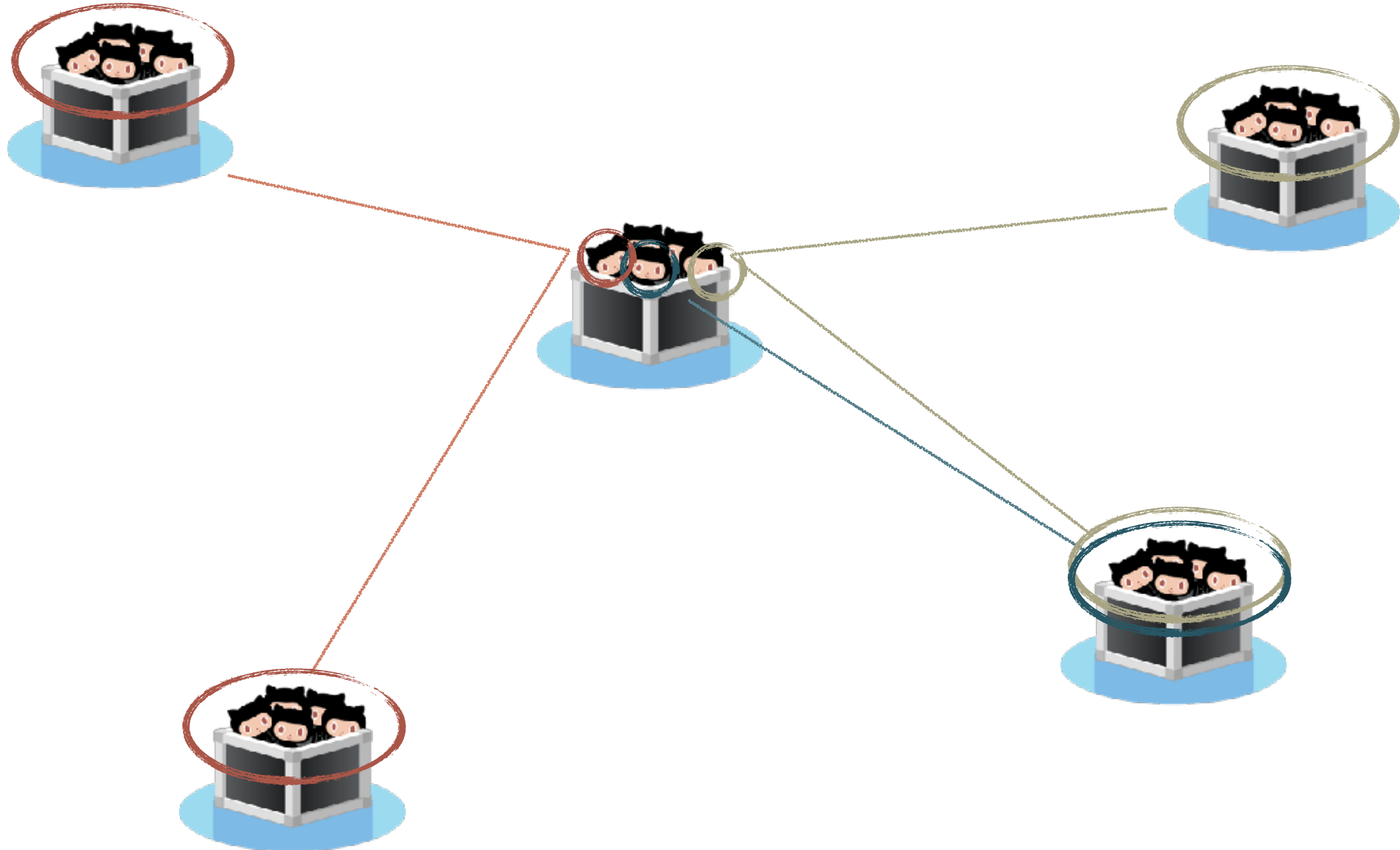
# Key labor pool operationalization idea: the collaboration network

---



# Key labor pool operationalization idea: the collaboration network

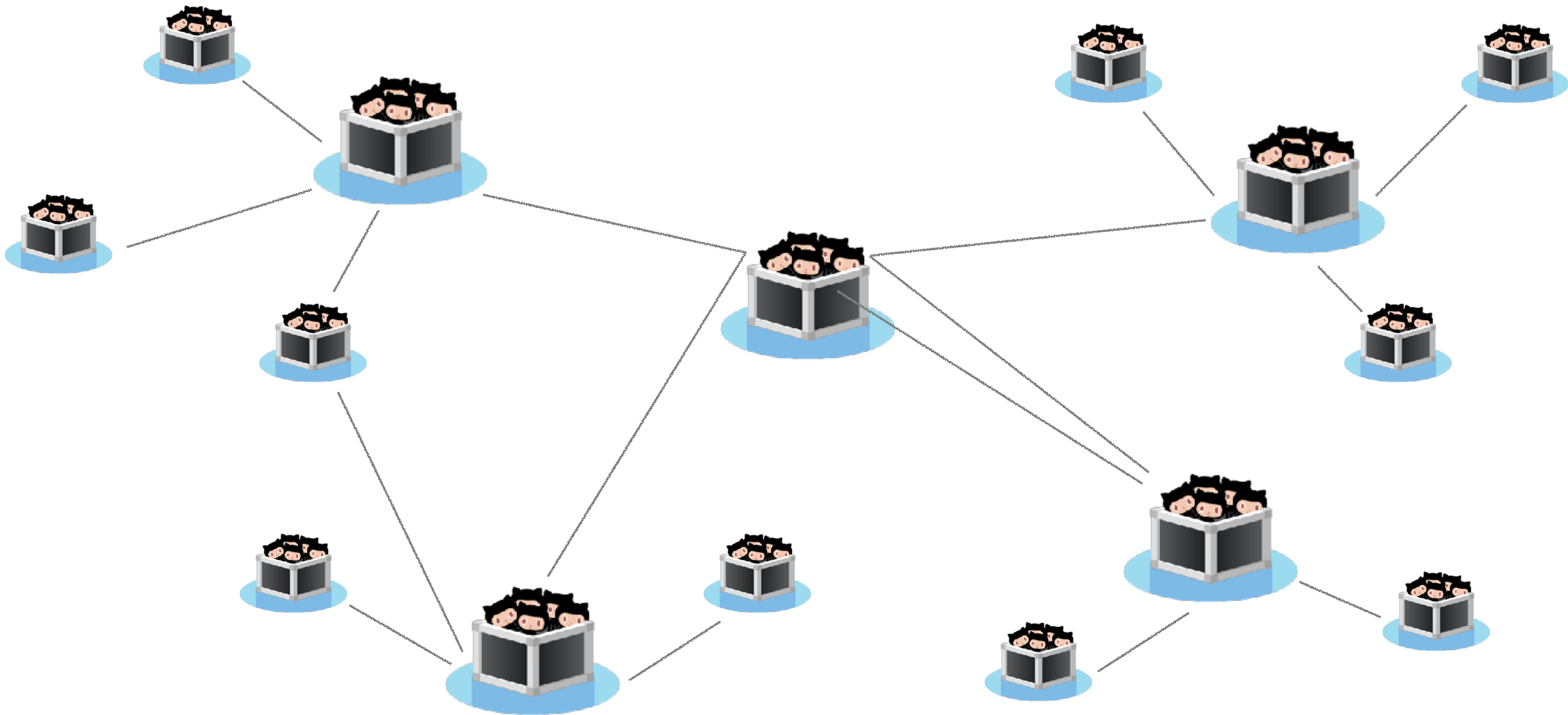
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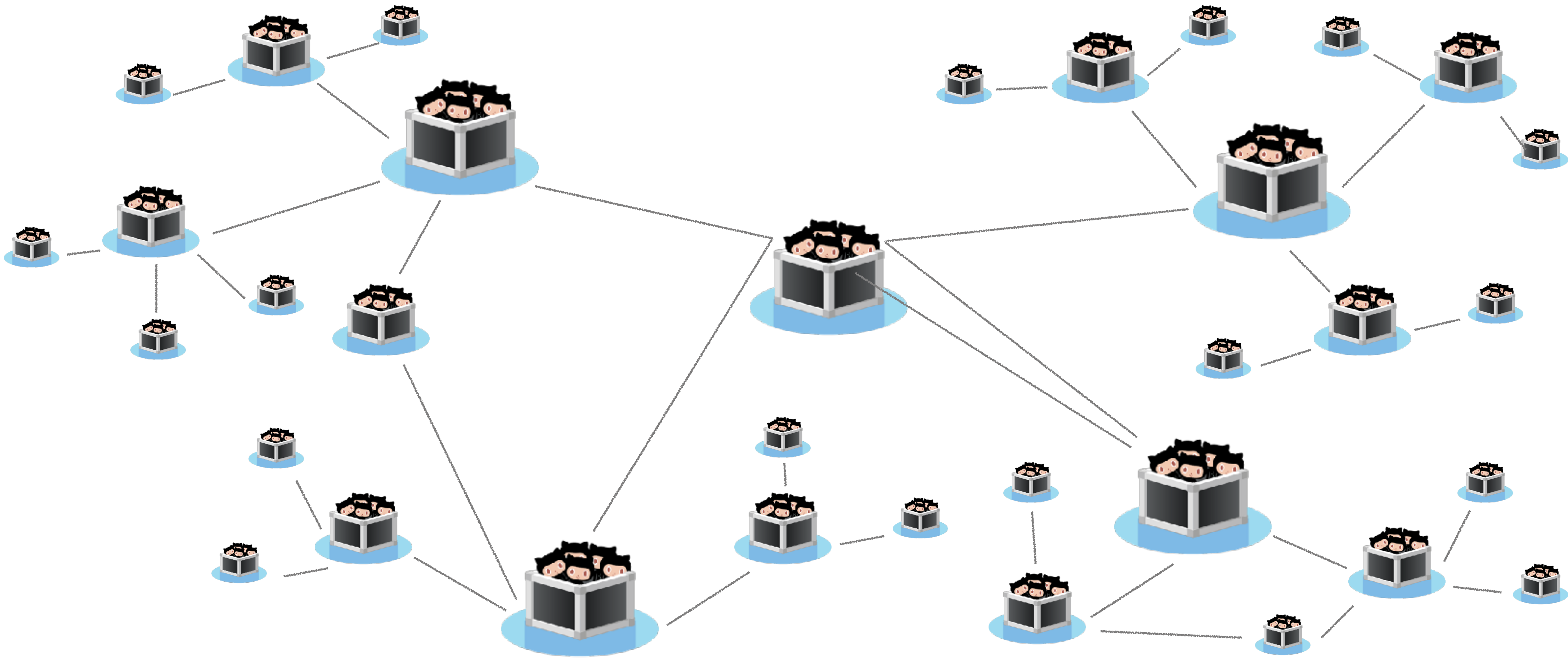


# Key labor pool operationalization idea: the collaboration network

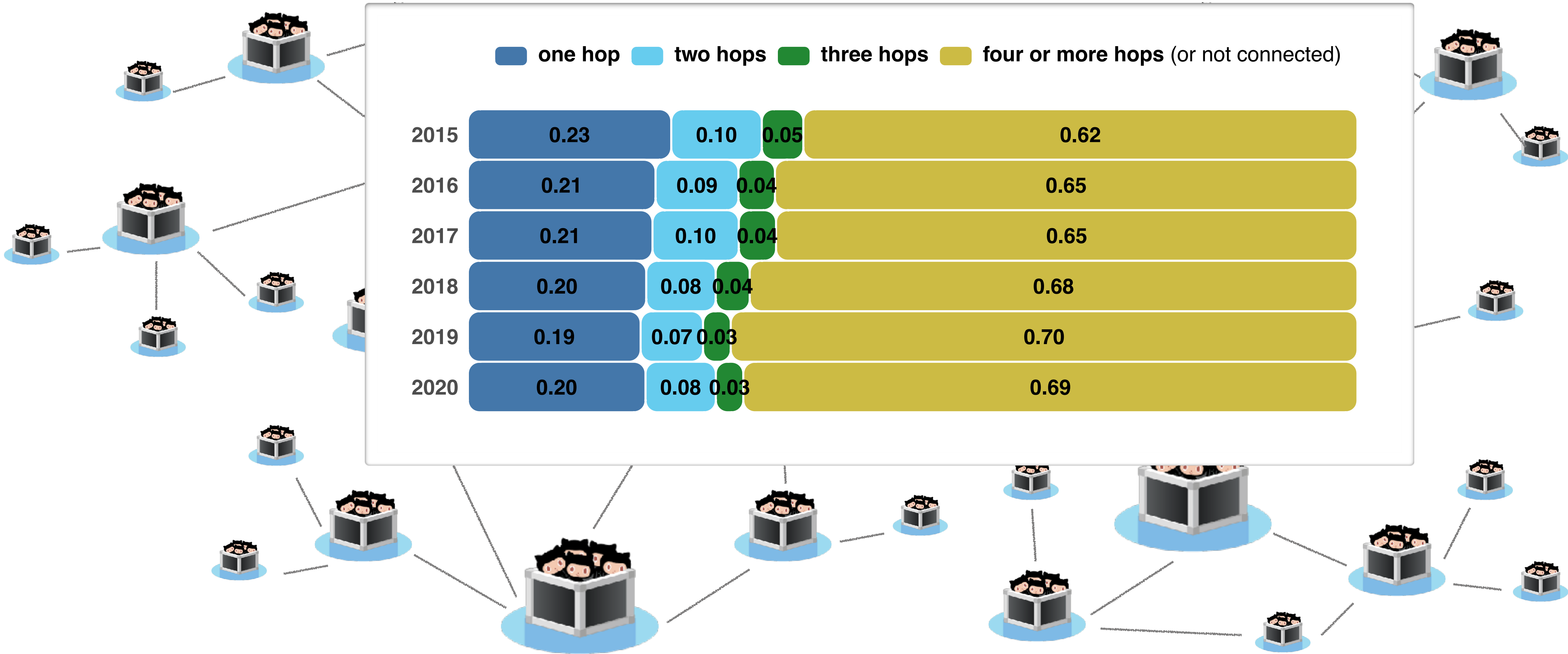
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# Key labor pool operationalization idea: the collaboration network



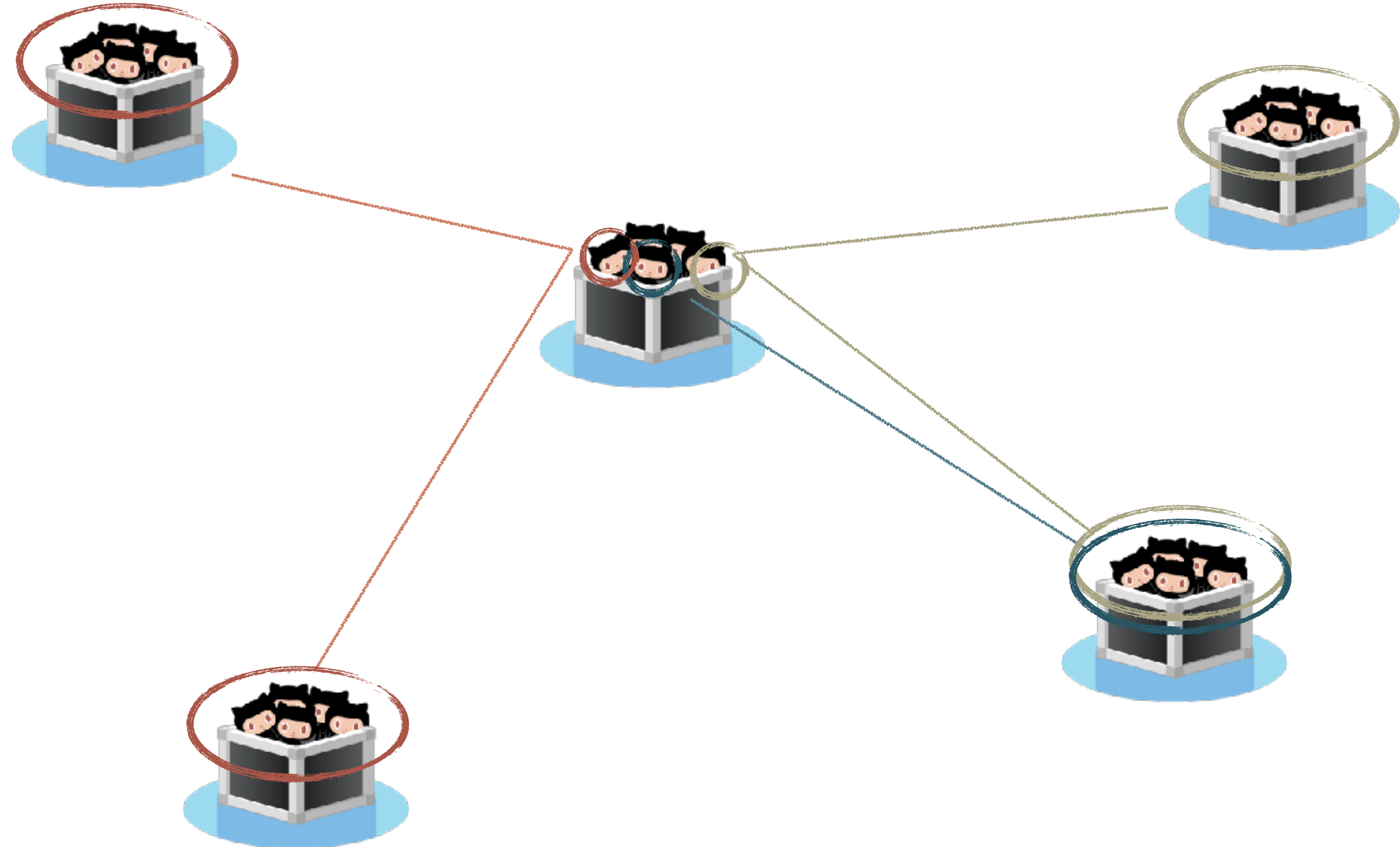
# One hop captures 61-65% of everyone identifiable within three hops.





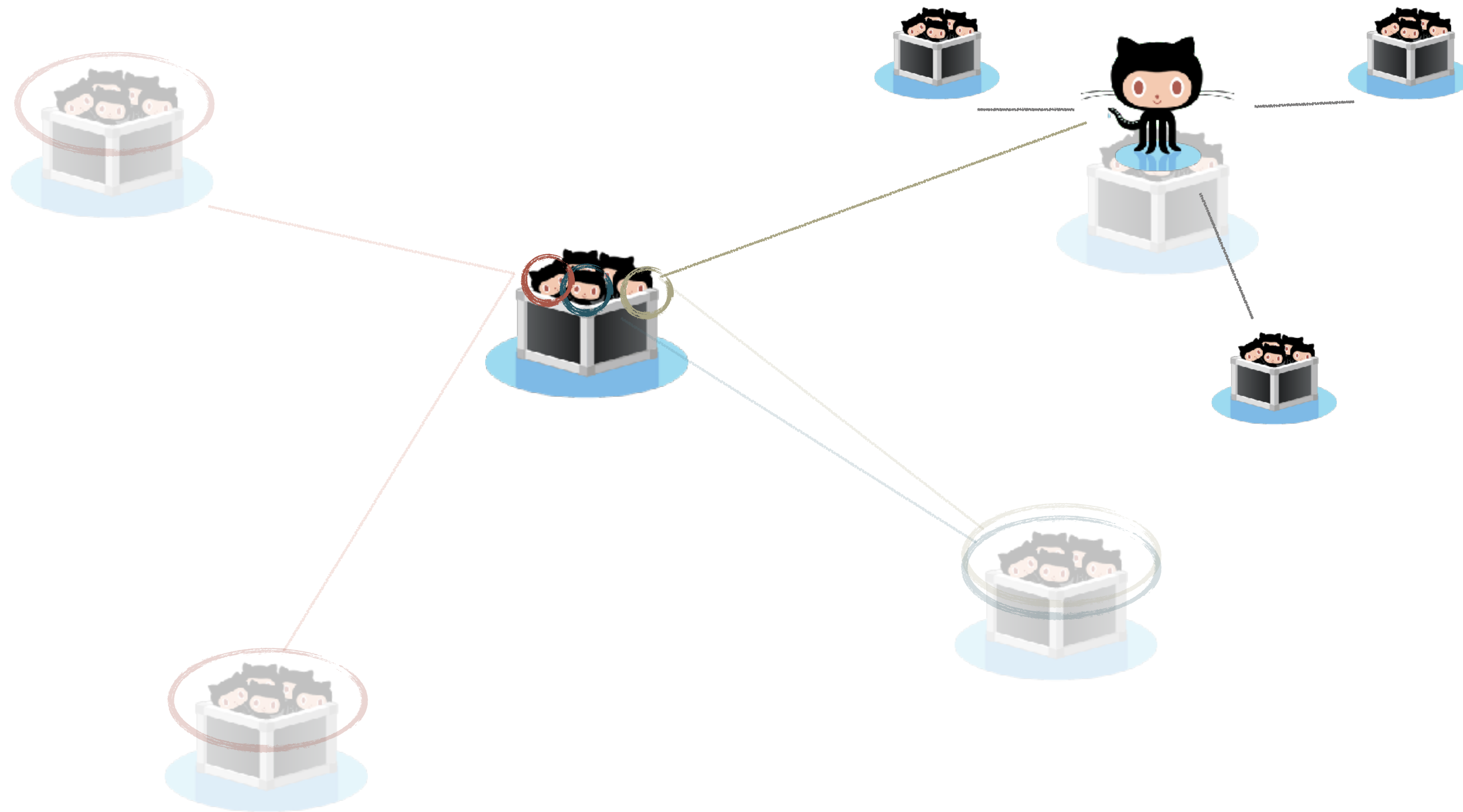
Labor pool operational definition: everyone **one hop away** in the collaboration network from current project contributors

---



# Labor pool operational definition: everyone **one hop away** in the collaboration network from current project contributors

---



For each of these people, we estimate the **strength of their social connection** to the focal project contributors and their **skill match** to the focal project, both absolutely and relatively.

# Cosine distance between the developer's and the project's embeddings as a proxy for skill match.

We mine **package imports** from the commit history to compute technical need / skill (Doc2Vec) embeddings of developers and projects.



Project perspective:

- json
- numpy
- ...

across all commits to the project

```
1 parent 824fab commit b665268
Showing 56 changed files with 15,559 additions and 1 deletion.
  434 ██████ PaintMixing.py
@@ -0,0 +1,434 @@
1 + import json
2 + import numpy as np
3 + import scipy
4 + from itertools import combinations
5 + from scipy.interpolate import interp1d
6 +
```



Developer perspective:

- json
- numpy
- ...

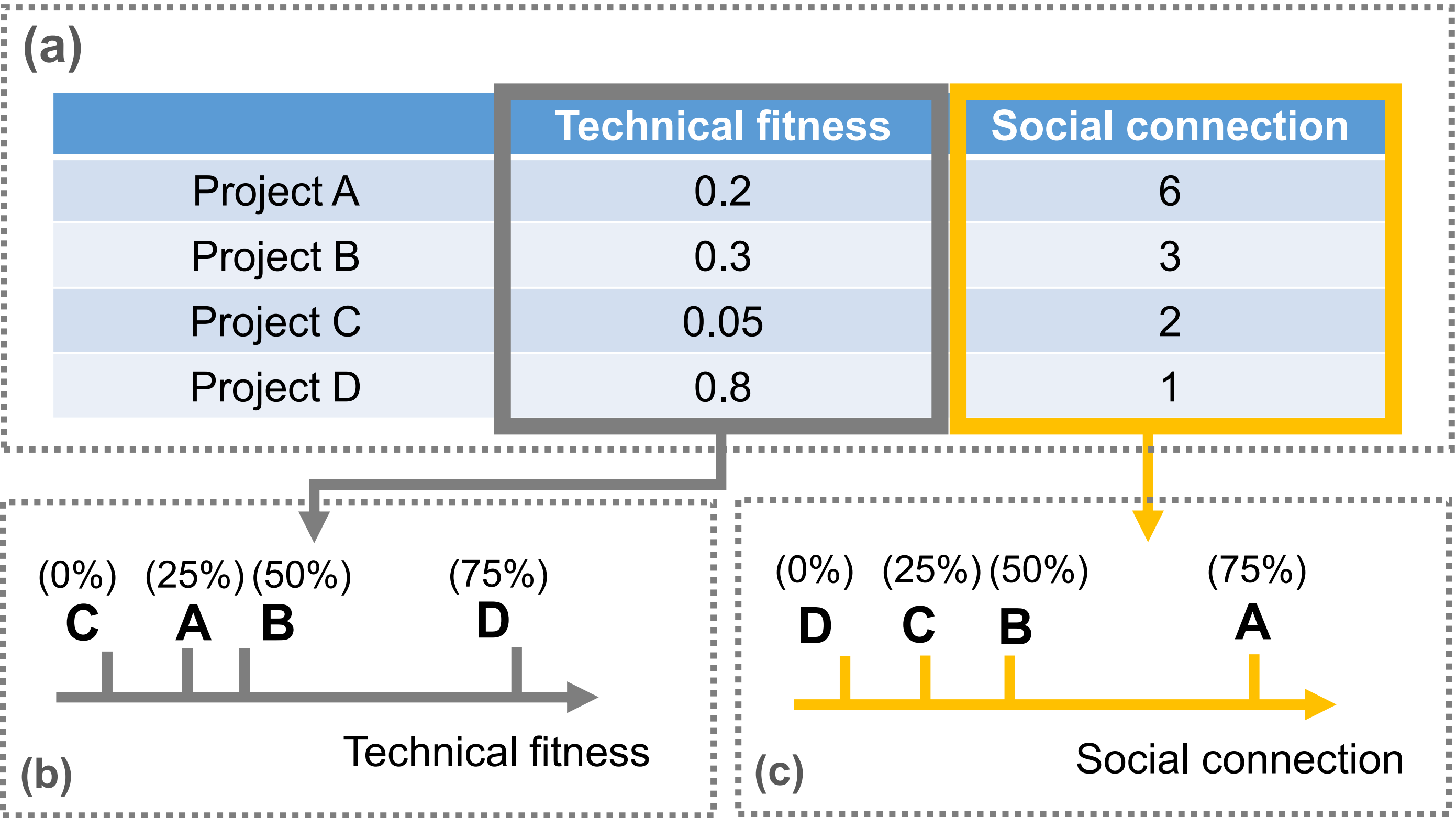
across all commits to all projects contributed to



# Relative ranking on social connection and technical fit as a proxy for standing with respect to competitors.



Project perspective:  
Where do I stand relative to my “competitors”?



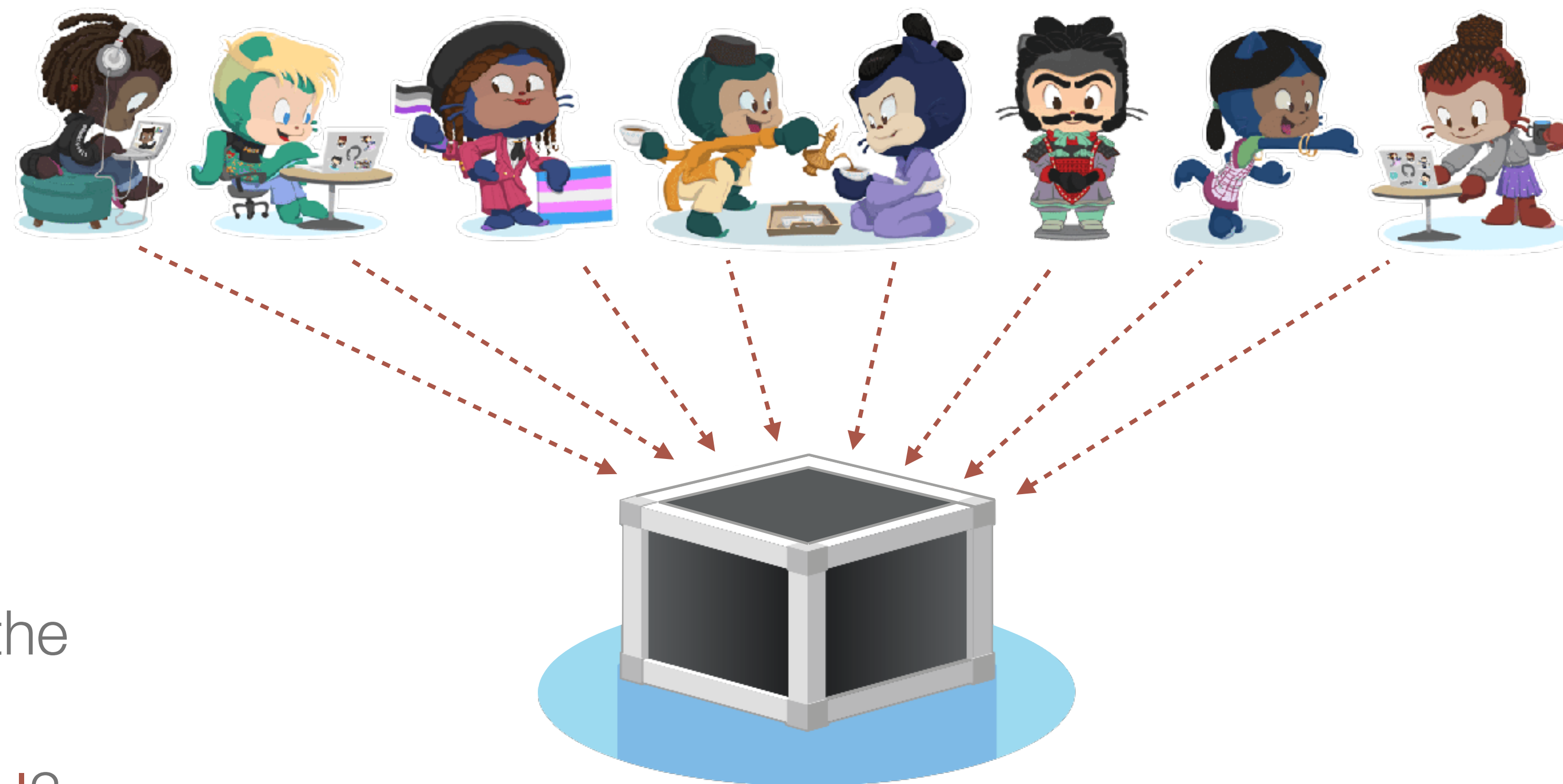
Developer perspective:  
Where does this project stand relative to my other options?

# Two-stage regression modeling: individual level + project level

Individual level:

(Logistic regression)

Will this developer contribute to the project next year?



Project level:

(Negative binomial regression)

How many new contributors can the project expect next year?

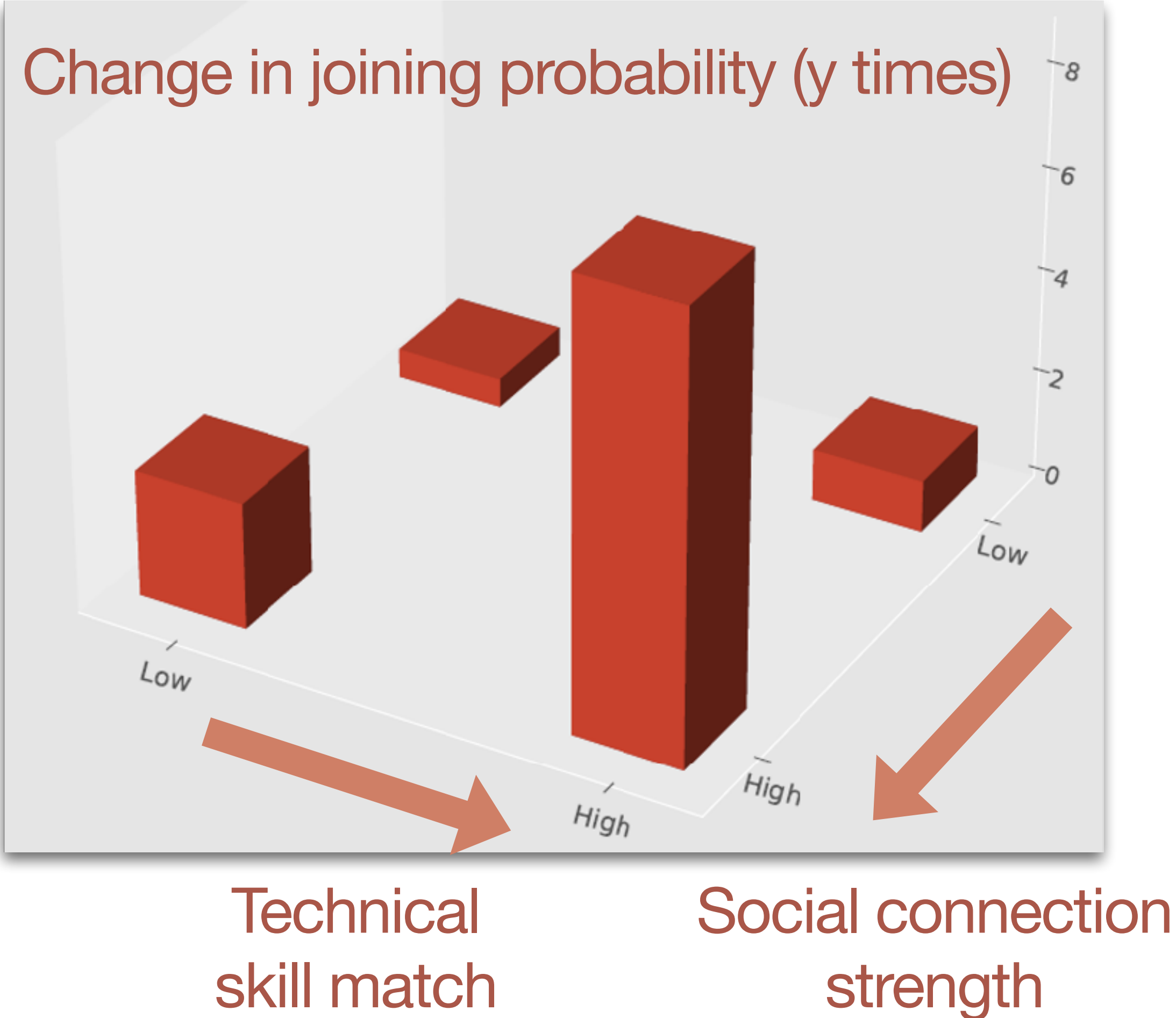
How big is the **effective labor pool**?

# Social connection strength, technical skill match, and amount of competition all explain variance in new contributors joining.

27% more variance explained by model with network effects vs only project-level characteristics

Individual-level effects (bottom 50% vs top 50%)

- Social connection strength ..... 6.95 x
- Technical skill match ..... 3.20 x
- Competition ..... -2.40 x

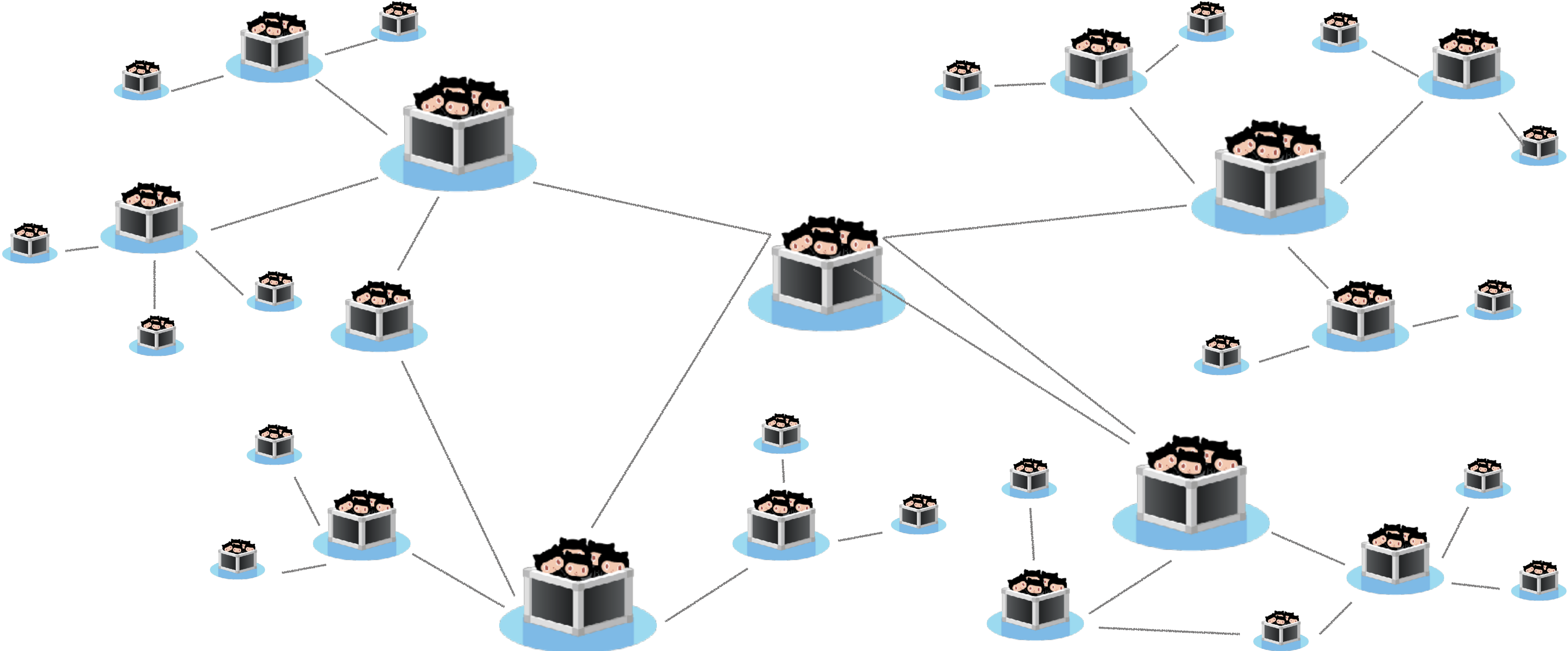


Fine print: Models estimated across 5.78M (contributor, project) pairs. Starting data is all public git repositories in World of Code with 50%+ of their files written in Python, and 10+ commits with import statements.



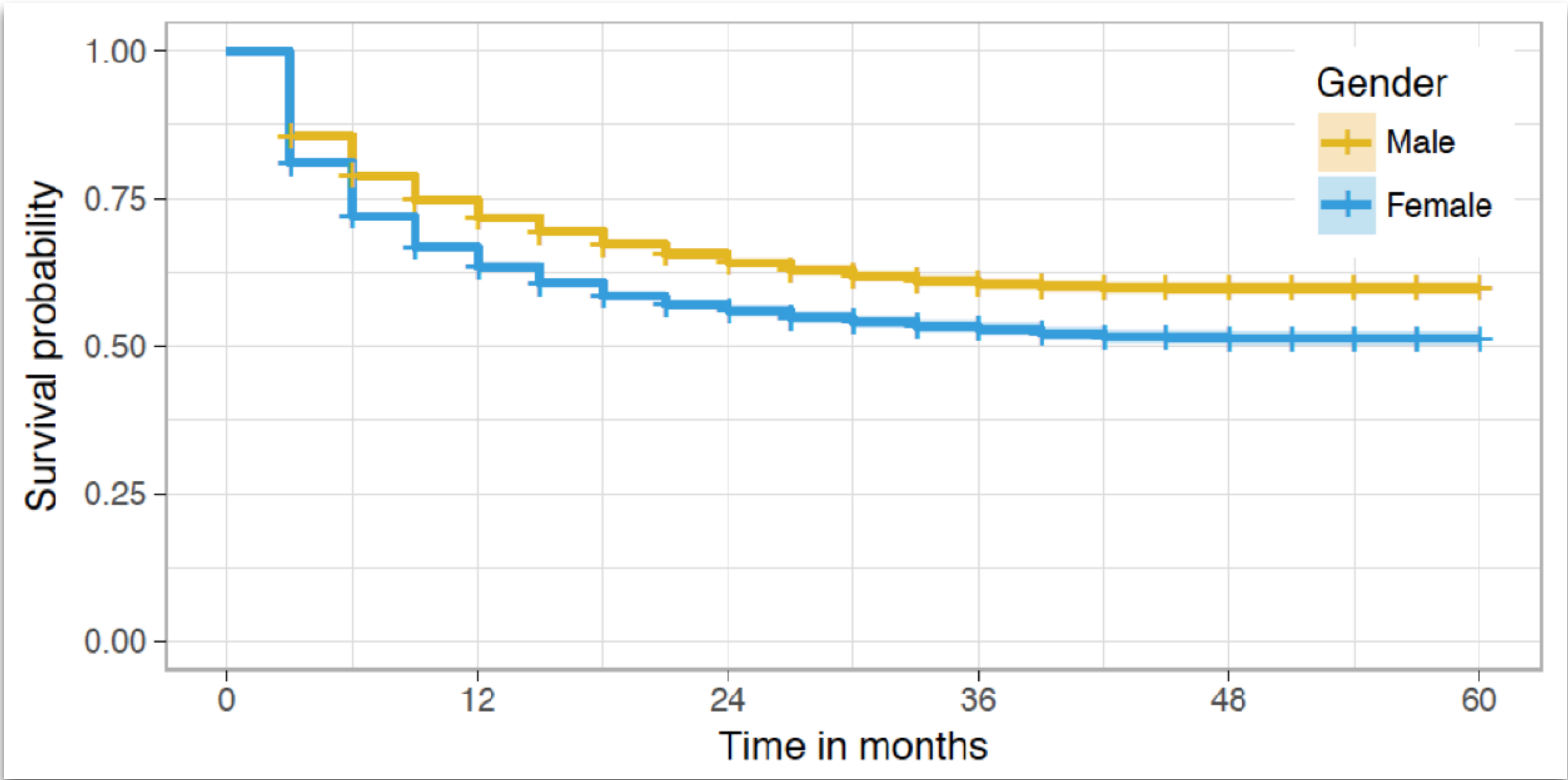
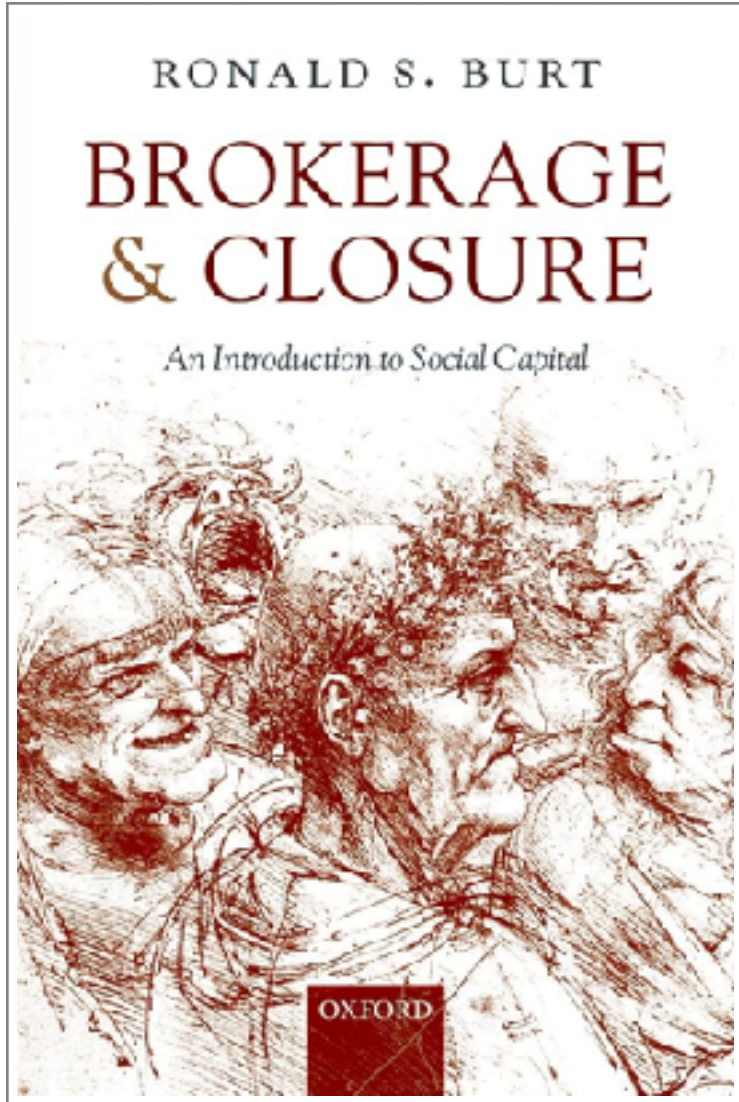
Conclusion: A network-centric perspective reveals interesting ecosystem-level dynamics.

---



# Conclusion: A network-centric perspective reveals interesting ecosystem-level dynamics.

Why do women on GitHub disengage earlier than men?



Qiu, Nolte, Brown, Serebrenik, and Vasilescu. "Going farther together: The impact of social capital on sustained participation in open source." ICSE 2019 Distinguished Paper Award.

# Conclusion: A network-centric perspective reveals interesting ecosystem-level dynamics.

How do tools and practices spread through the network?

## 12 popular quality assurance tools

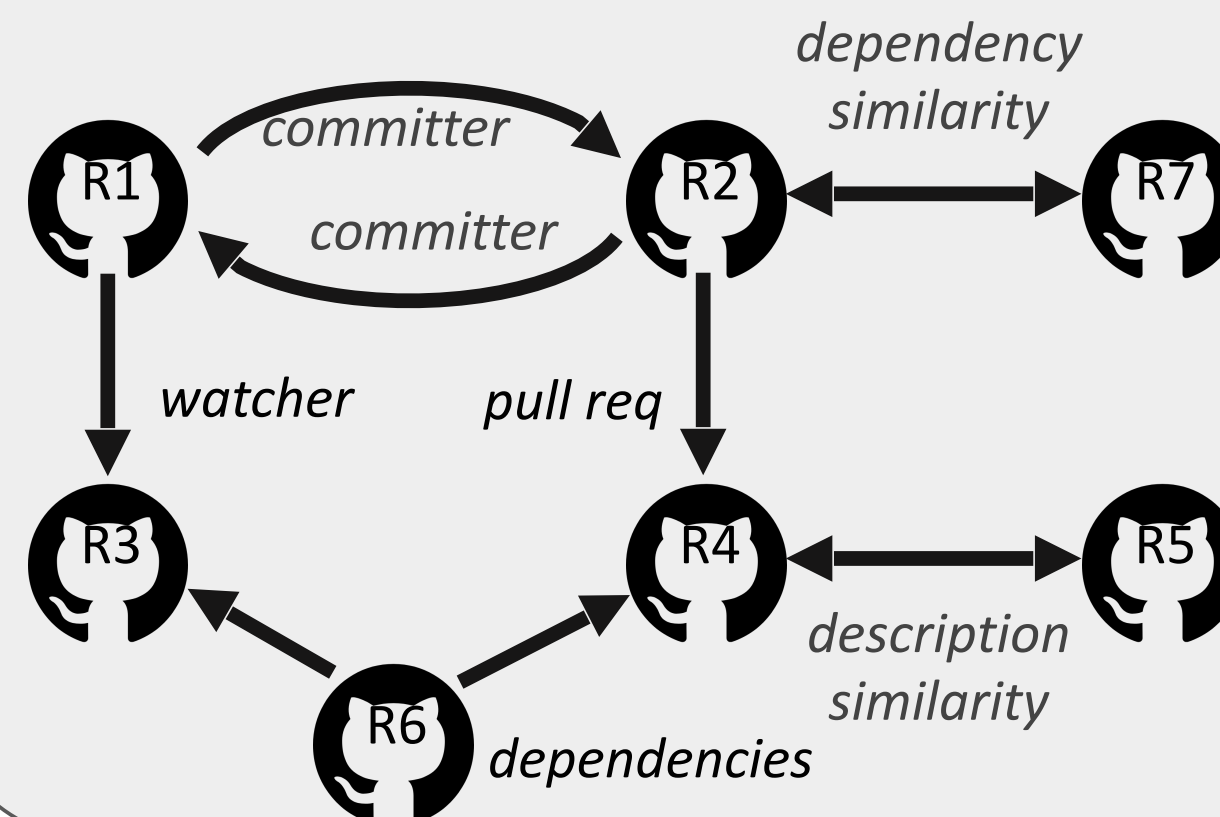
Continuous integration	Dependency management	Code coverage reporters	Cross browser testers
build <span style="background-color: green; color: white;">passing</span>	dependencies <span style="background-color: yellow;">up to date</span>	coverage <span style="background-color: green; color: white;">94%</span>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Firefox 82  7 <span style="color: green;">✓</span> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Chrome 86  7 <span style="color: green;">✓</span> </div> </div>
Travis Circle Appveyor Codeship	David Bithound Gemnasium	Coveralls Codeclimate Codecov Codacy	Saucelabs

~86,000 npm package repositories

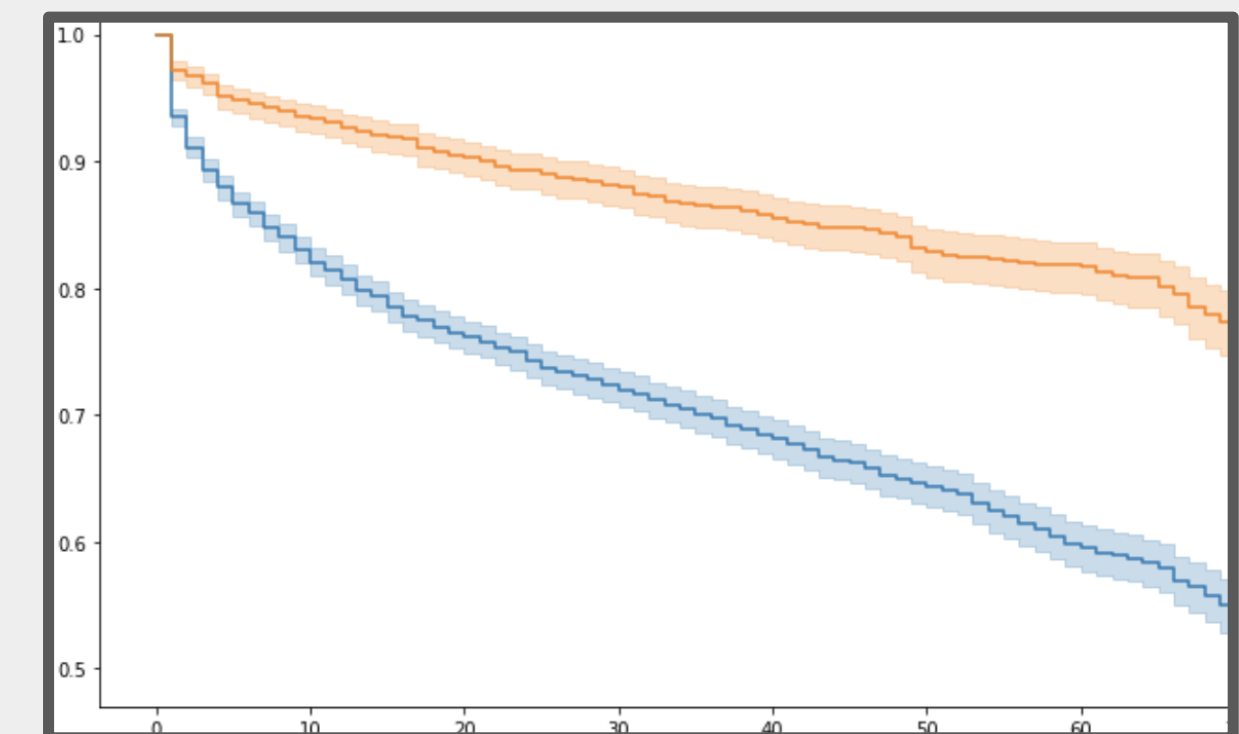


For each tool:

## Heterogeneous network



## Hazard modeling (Cox regression)





# Causal Effects of Tweeting

---

Fang, Lamba, Herbsleb, and Vasilescu. “‘This is damn slick!’ Estimating the impact of tweets on open source project popularity and new contributors.” ICSE 2022. Distinguished Paper Award.





# Do tweets **cause** GitHub stars (and new contributors)?

**Max Woolf** @minimaxir · Follow

I just released my new Python package: simpleaichat, an open-source tool for working with ChatGPT/GPT-4 with minimal code yet max flexibility!

I built simpleaichat out of sheer frustration with LangChain and aim to make it the easiest way to make AI apps.

### minimaxir/ simpleaichat

Python package for easily interfacing with chat apps, with robust features and minimal code complexity.

3 Contributors   1 Used by   549 Stars   22 Forks

github.com  
GitHub - minimaxir/simpleaichat: Python package for easily interfacing with chat apps, with robust features and minimal code complexity. - GitHub - ...

5:24 PM · Jun 8, 2023

737   Reply   Share

Read 18 replies

Timeline showing GitHub star growth:

- June 8, 2023: Initial release (Twitter icon)
- June 9, 2023: ~300 stars (Yellow star icon)
- Feb 25, 2024: 3.3k stars (Yellow star icon)

minimaxir / simpleaichat (Public)

Code   Issues 47   Pull requests 5   Actions   Projects   Security   Insights

main 1 Branch   6 Tags   Go to file   Go to file   Code

minimaxir Remove option param... 569dbf5 · last month   136 Commits

.github	GitHub sponsorship	8 months ago
docs	README images	8 months ago
examples	redesign coding notebook f...	8 months ago
simpleaichat	Remove option parameter f...	last month
.gitignore	working packahe	9 months ago
LICENSE	year bump	2 months ago
PROMPTS.md	last minute README tweaks	8 months ago
README.md	fix typo in README.md	7 months ago
setup.py	bump version to 0.2.2	7 months ago

About

Python package for easily interfacing with chat apps, with robust features and minimal code complexity.

#ai #chatgpt

Readme   MIT license   Activity

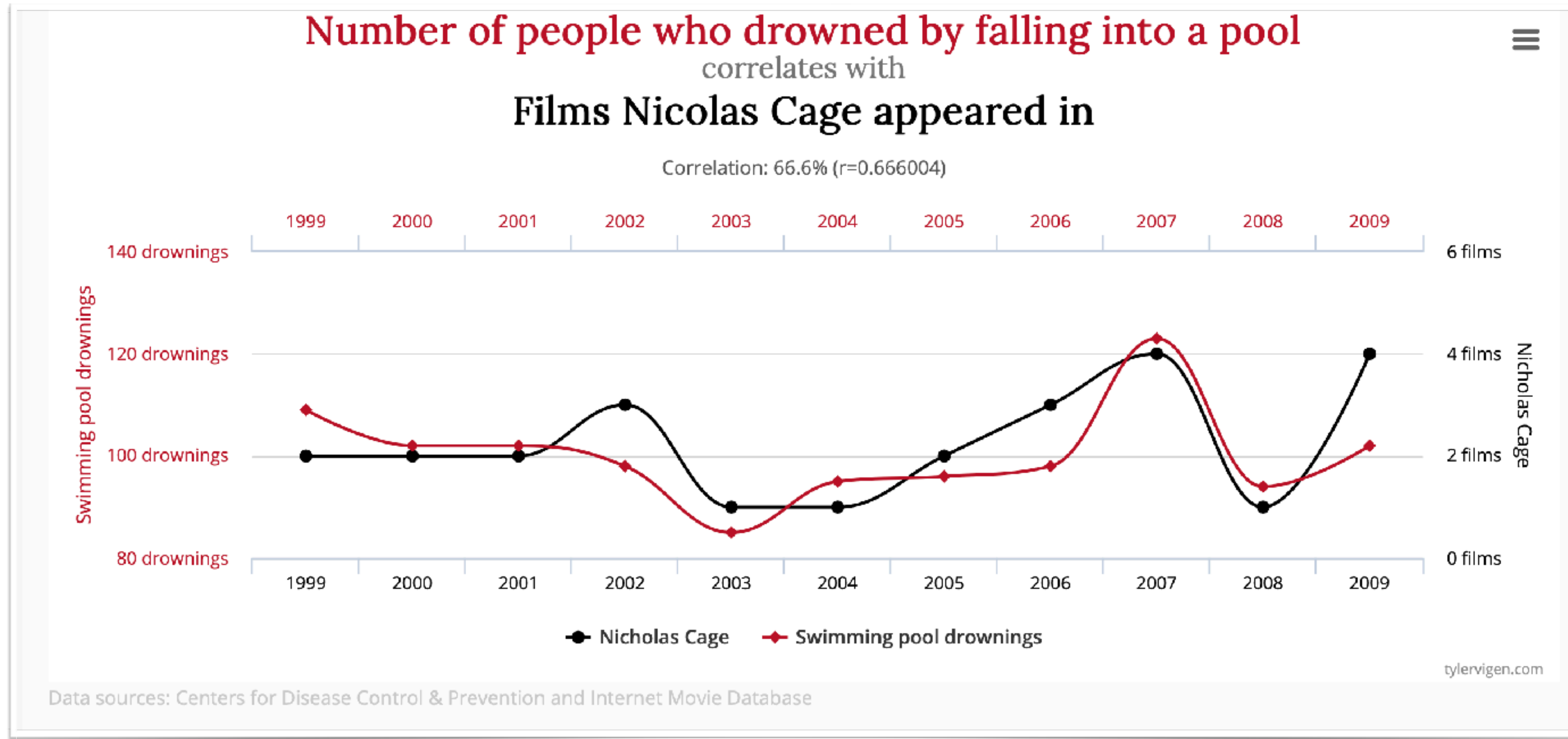
3.3k stars (circled)   34 watching   215 forks

Report repository

Releases 6

v0.2.2: Misc fixes/improvements on Jul 23, 2023 (Latest)

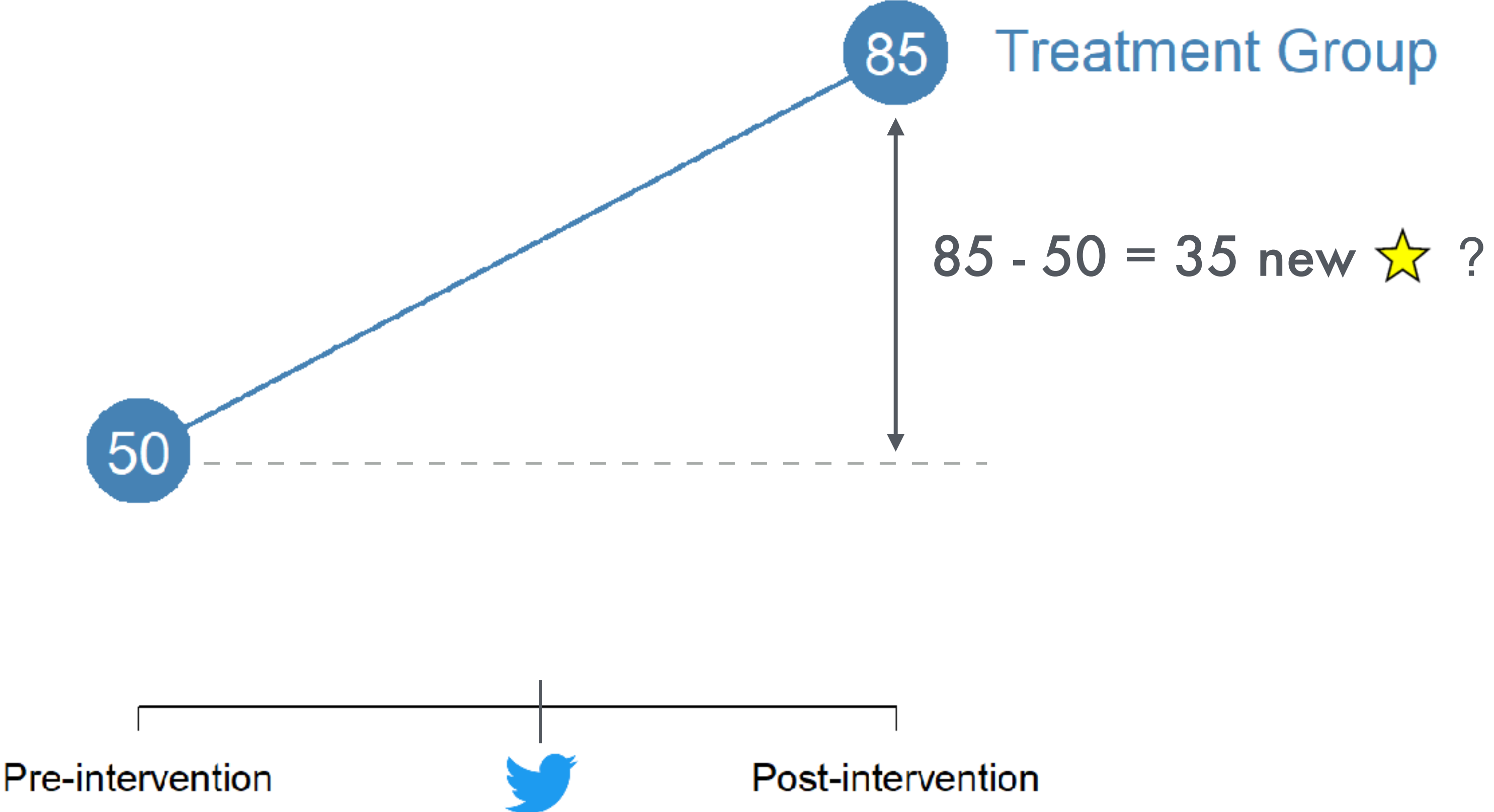
# Do Nicolas Cage movies **cause** drowning?



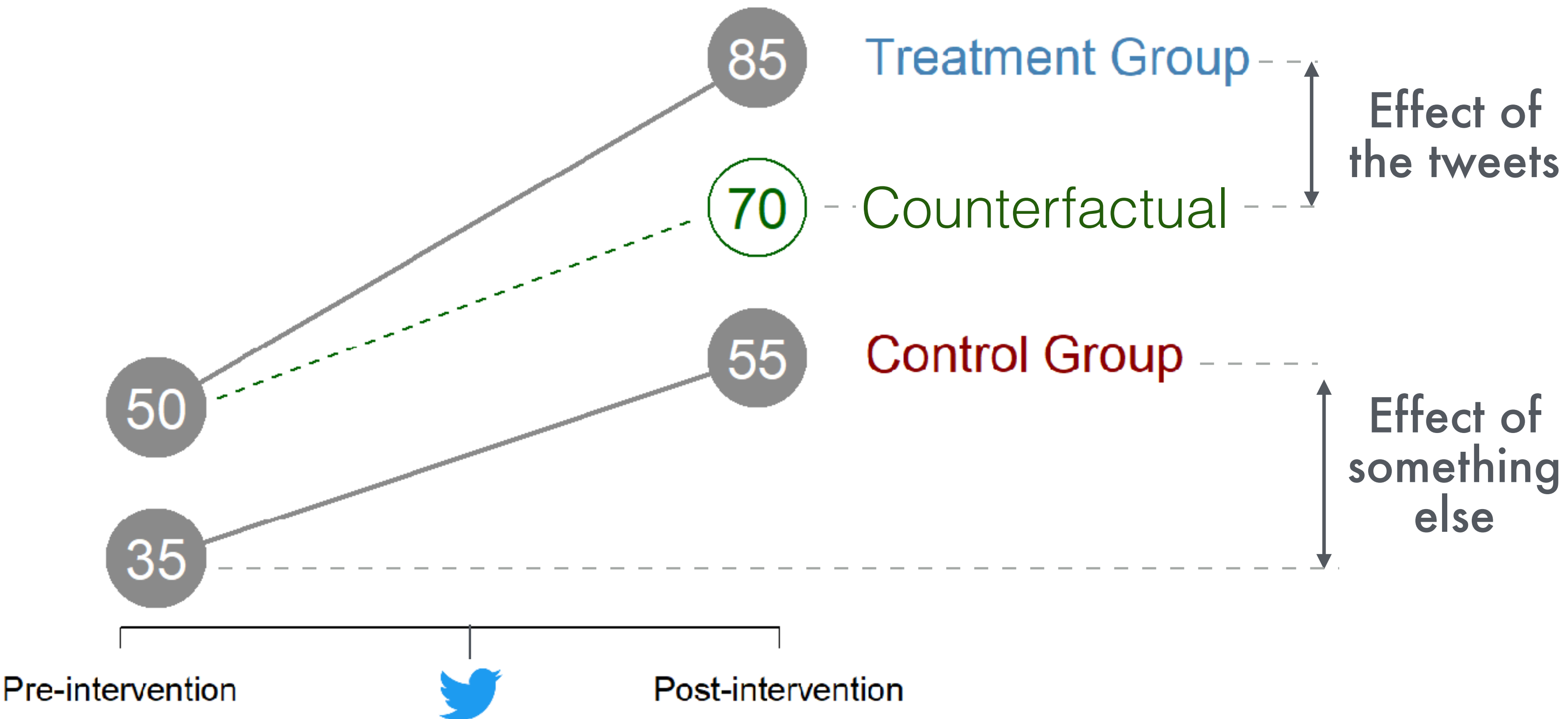
<http://www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations>



# Idea: Measure how much a group mean changes before and after an intervention

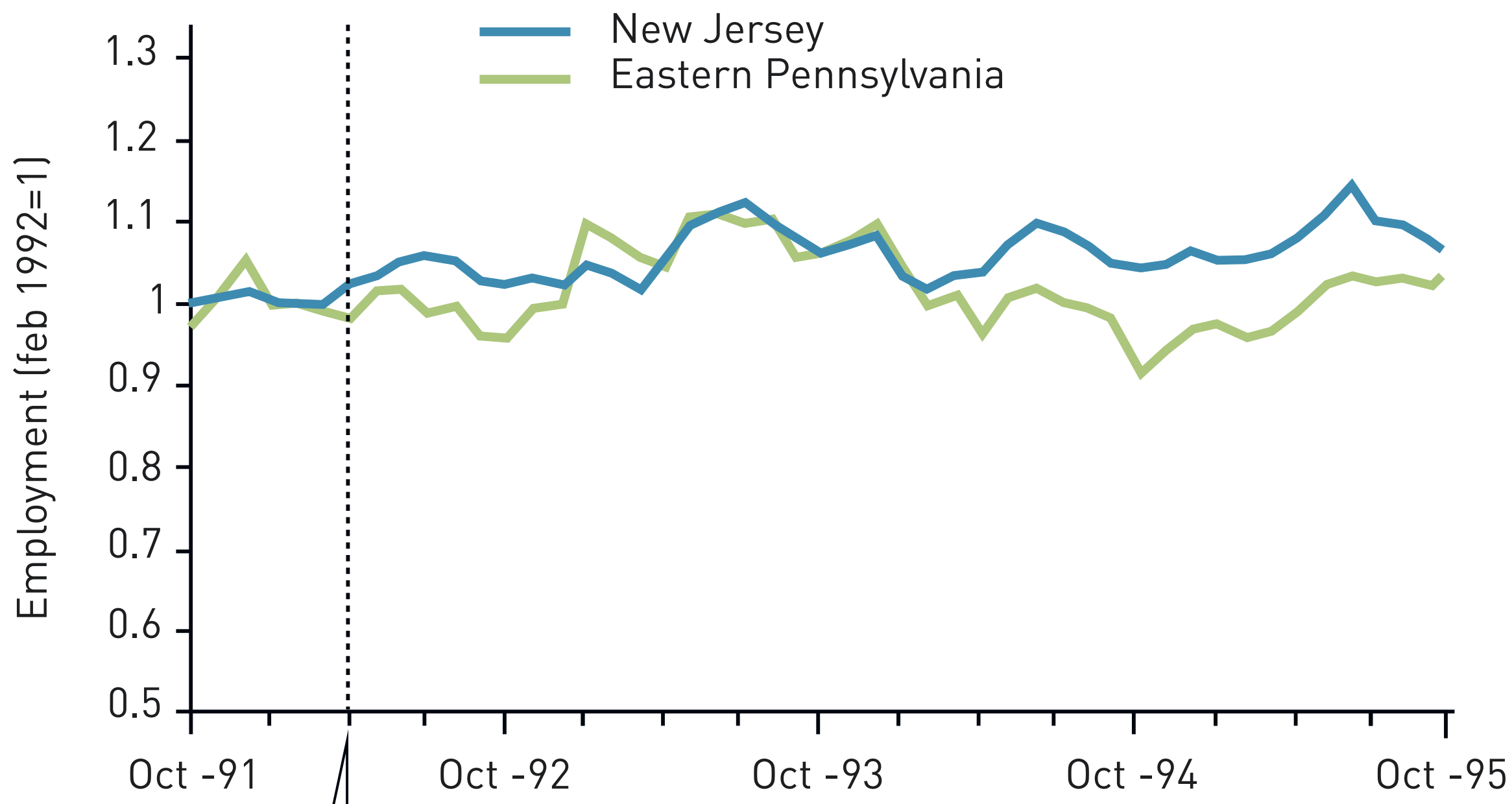
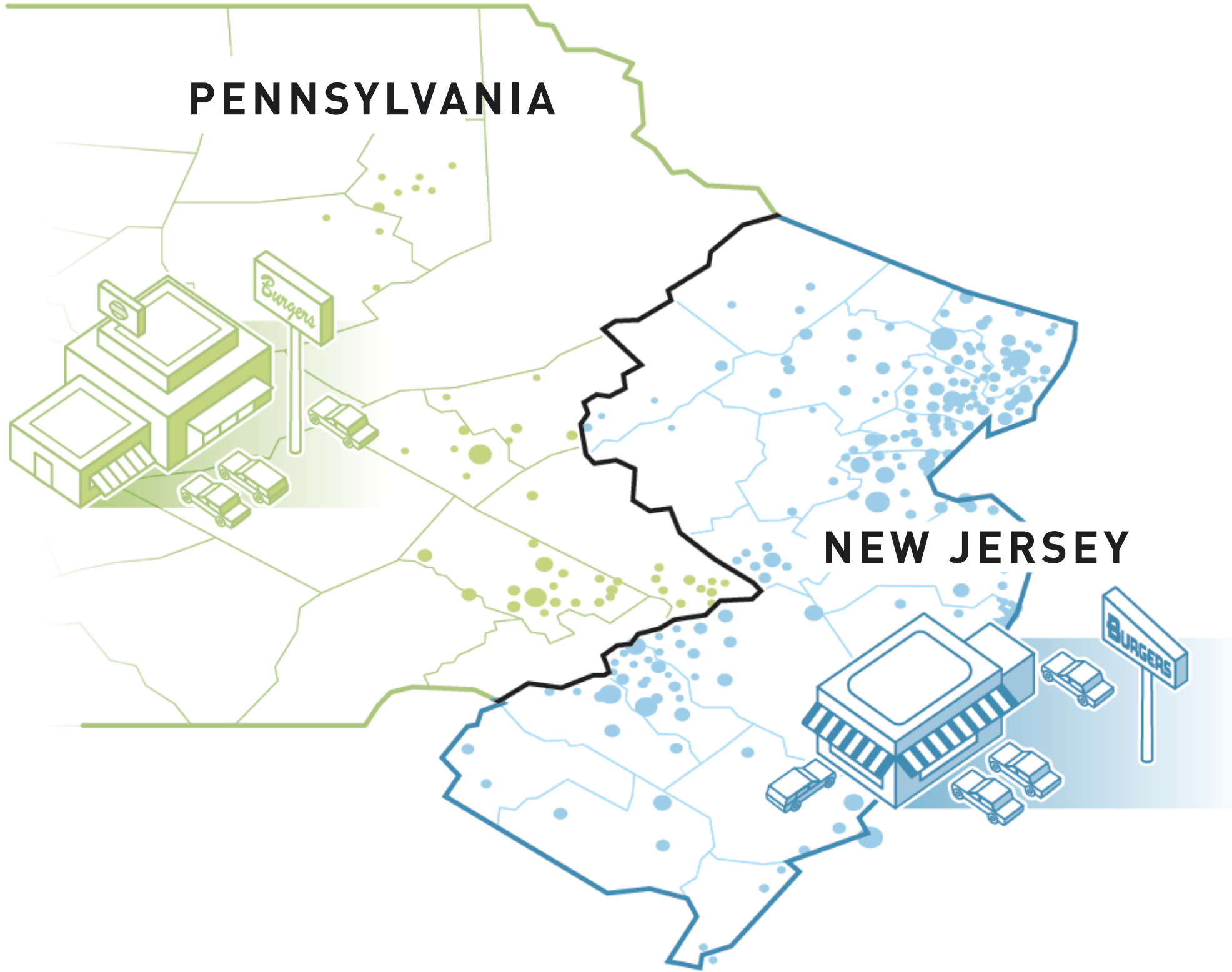


# Better idea: Compare that change to the change in an appropriate control group



# Card and Krueger (1993) natural experiment to study how increasing the minimum wage affects employment.

● CONTROL GROUP ● TREATMENT GROUP



1 April 1992: The hourly minimum wage in New Jersey was increased from 4.25 dollars to 5.05 dollars. Despite this, employment in New Jersey was not affected.

**NOBEL PRIZE**  
ECONOMICS



<https://www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2021/10/popular-economicsprize2021-2.pdf>



# Aside: Are we 20 years behind on empirical methods in SE?

## “This Is Damn Slick!” Estimating the Impact of Tweets on Open Source Project Popularity and New Contributors

Hongbo Fang, Hemank Lamba, James Herbsleb, Bogdan Vasilescu  
Carnegie Mellon University, USA  
{hongbofa,hlamba,jdh,bogdanv}@cs.cmu.edu

### ABSTRACT

Twitter is widely used by software developers. But how effective are tweets at promoting open source projects? How could one use Twitter to increase a project’s popularity or attract new contributors? In this paper we report on a mixed-methods empirical study of 44,544 tweets containing links to 2,370 open-source GITHUB repositories, looking for evidence of causal effects of these tweets on the projects attracting new GITHUB stars and contributors, as well as characterizing the high-impact tweets, the people likely being attracted by them, and how they differ from contributors attracted otherwise. Among others, we find that tweets have a statistically significant and practically sizable effect on obtaining new stars and a small average effect on attracting new contributors. The popularity, content of the tweet, as well as the identity of tweet authors all affect the scale of the attraction effect. In addition, our qualitative analysis suggests that forming an active Twitter community for an open source project plays an important role in attracting

Several mechanisms through which OSS projects can gain attention [11, 40, 68] and attract new contributors [9, 40, 53] have been studied in the past. The literature is especially rich in recent years, in the context of social coding platforms like GITHUB, because of the high level of transparency and many opportunities for project maintainers to *signal*, explicitly and implicitly, about their work [20]. For example, prior studies of OSS projects hosted on GITHUB have found that how projects organize their repository homepages and README files [53], whether projects get *featured* by the hosting platform [40], whether projects have public releases [10], and how maintainers use prominent repository badges to indicate less observable project qualities [68], all have an impact on how the project is perceived by its audience and even the actions that some audience members take, e.g., joining the project.

However, prior work has, by and large, focused only on *endogenous* or “in-network” attention eliciting mechanisms, i.e., taking actions or displaying signals afforded by the code hosting platform

2019 IEEE/ACM 41st International Conference on Software Engineering (ICSE)

## Do Developers Discover New Tools On The Toilet?

Emerson Murphy-Hill *Google, LLC* emersonm@google.com  
Edward K. Smith\* *Bloomberg* tedks@riseup.net  
Caitlin Sadowski *Google, LLC* supertri@google.com  
Ciera Jaspan *Google, LLC* ciera@google.com  
Collin Winter\* *Waymo* collinwinter@waymo.com

Matthew Jorde *Google, LLC* majorde@google.com  
Andrea Knight *Google, LLC* aknight@google.com  
Andrew Trenk *Google, LLC* atrenk@google.com  
Steve Gross *Google, LLC* stevegross@google.com

**Abstract**—Maintaining awareness of useful tools is a substantial challenge for developers. Physical newsletters are a simple technique to inform developers about tools. In this paper, we evaluate such a technique, called *Testing on the Toilet*, by performing a mixed-methods case study. We first quantitatively evaluate how effective this technique is by applying statistical causal inference over six years of data about tools used by thousands of developers. We then qualitatively contextualize these results by interviewing and surveying 382 developers, from authors to editors to readers. We found that the technique was generally effective at increasing

Testing on the Toilet Presents... *Healthy Code on the Commode* Episode 284  
April 30 2013

### Automatic formatting for C++

by Daniel Jasper in Munich

Are you tired of hitting space and backspace more often than anything else while coding? Are you annoyed by fighting over parameter and comment alignment in code reviews?

Consistent formatting allows readers to quickly scan and interpret code, dedicating their attention to what the code does and how it works. Without this consistency, effort is wasted parsing the wide variety of personal styles code might follow. However, keeping your code formatting nice and shiny is not a good task for humans. Luckily, we now have clang-format, which can do this tedious task for you.

Clang-format produces both readable and Google style-compliant code:

```
$ cat file.cc
int a; // clang-format can ..
int bbb; // .. align trailing comments.
```

Difference in differences (ICSE 2022)

Causallmpact (ICSE 2019)

**SPOILER ALERT**

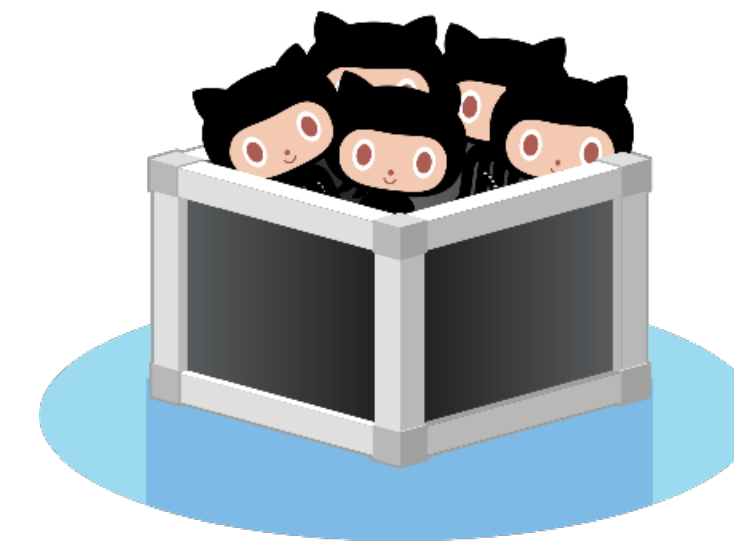
# Yes! Tweets cause stars and new contributors.

---



+7%

(+1.2 stars every tweet burst)



+2%

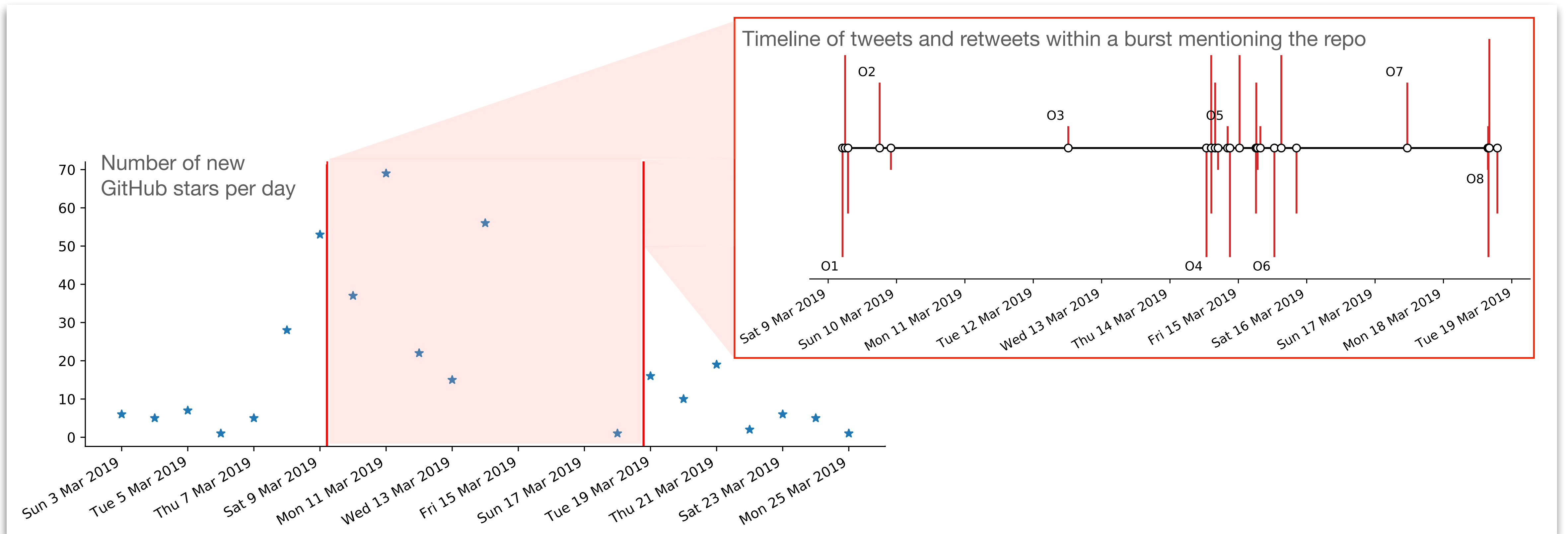
(+1 new contributor every 250 tweet bursts)

How to actually measure these effects?

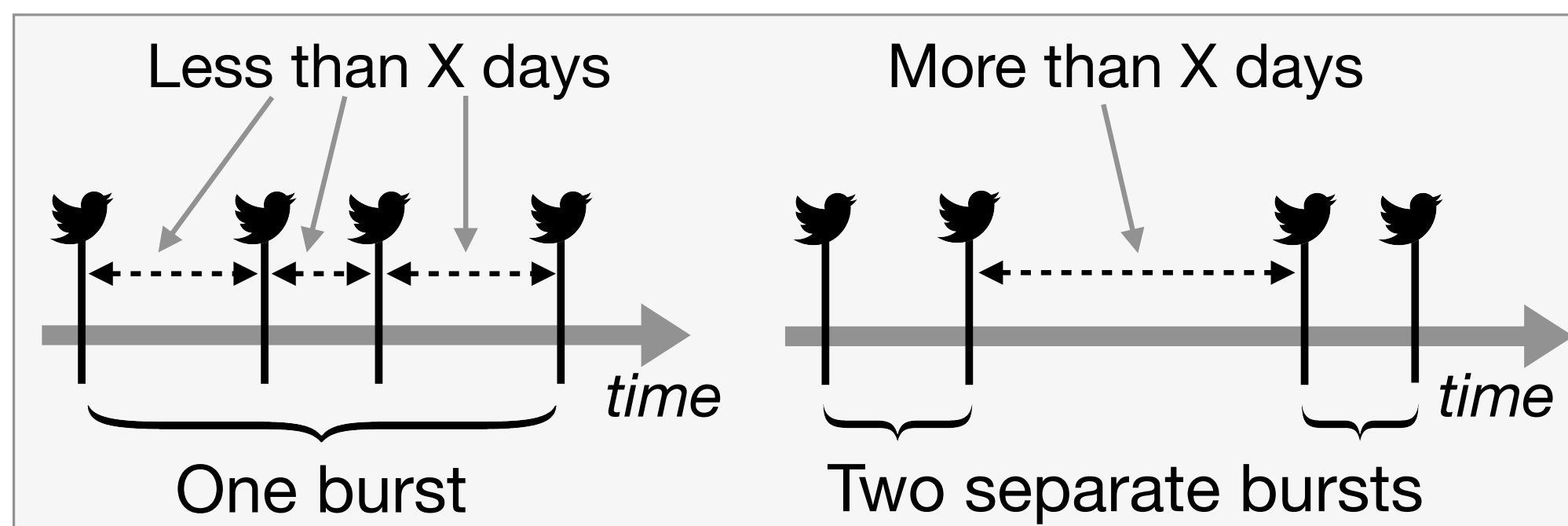


# Challenge: (Usually) More than one tweet. What should count?

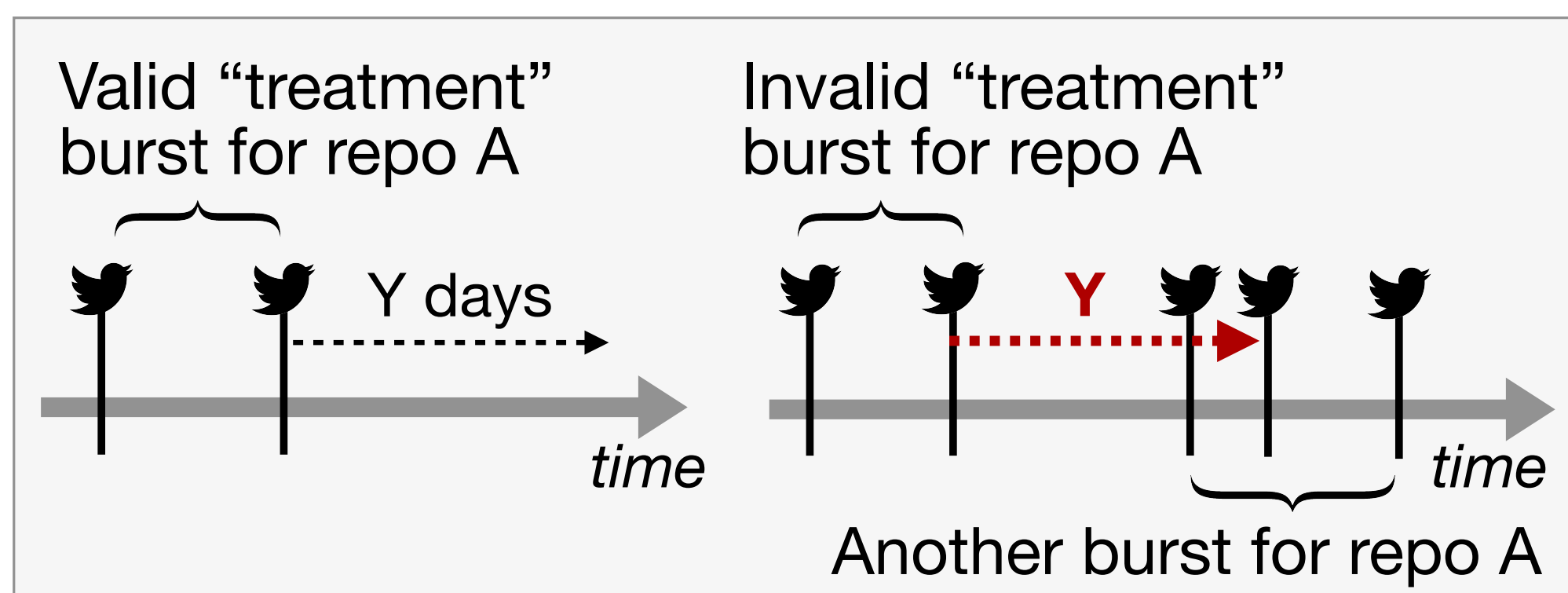
Many heuristics to group tweets into “bursts.” Manual validation + sensitivity analysis.



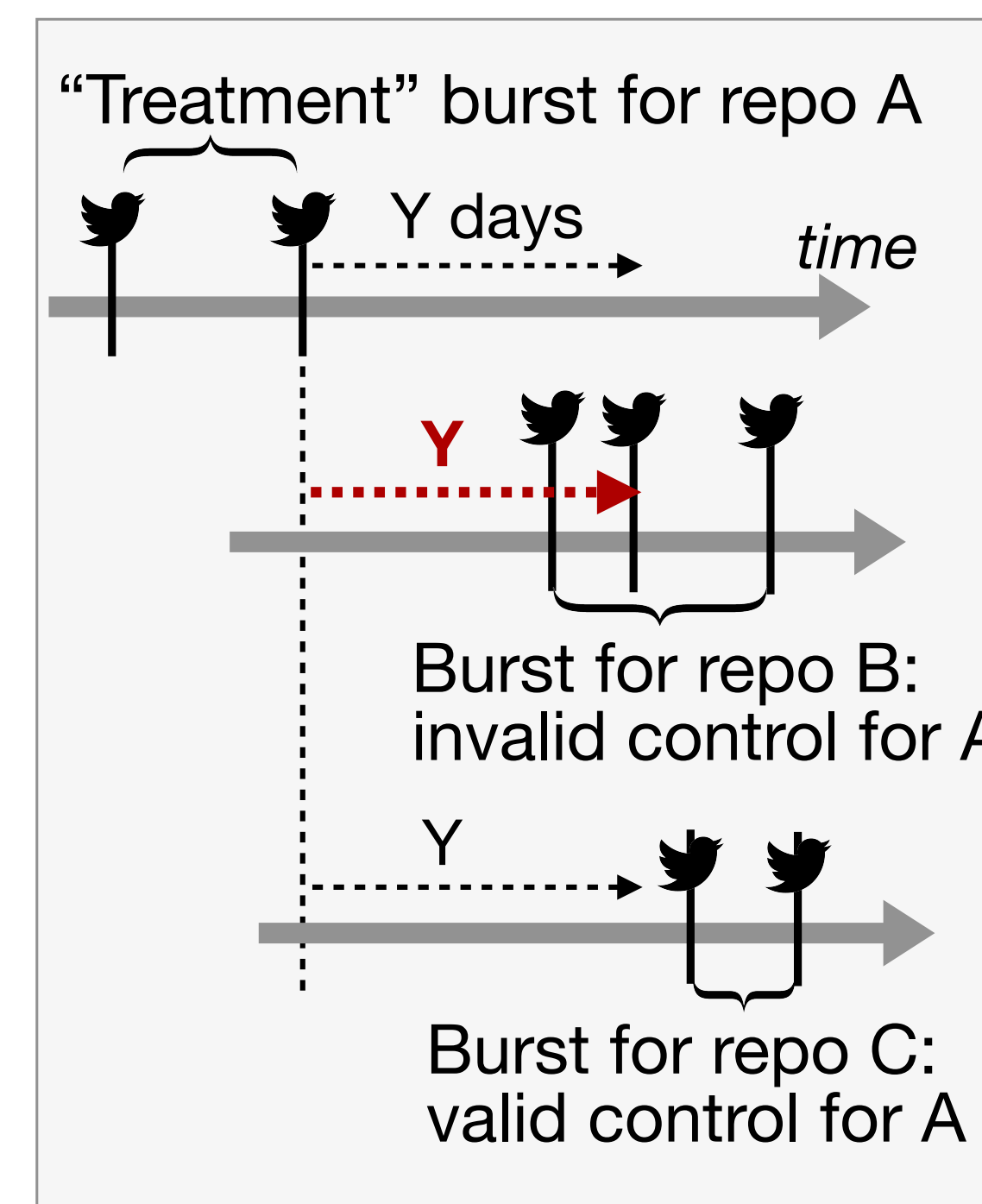
# Challenge: (Usually) More than one tweet. What should count?



Tweets mentioning the same project within X days of each other are considered part of the same burst.



Two bursts mentioning the same project must be at least Y days apart.



Control group repositories must not have experienced any bursts of their own at least Y days after the end of the corresponding treatment group repository burst.

# Challenge: Merging identities

Many heuristics, manually validated, to cross-link users between the two platforms.



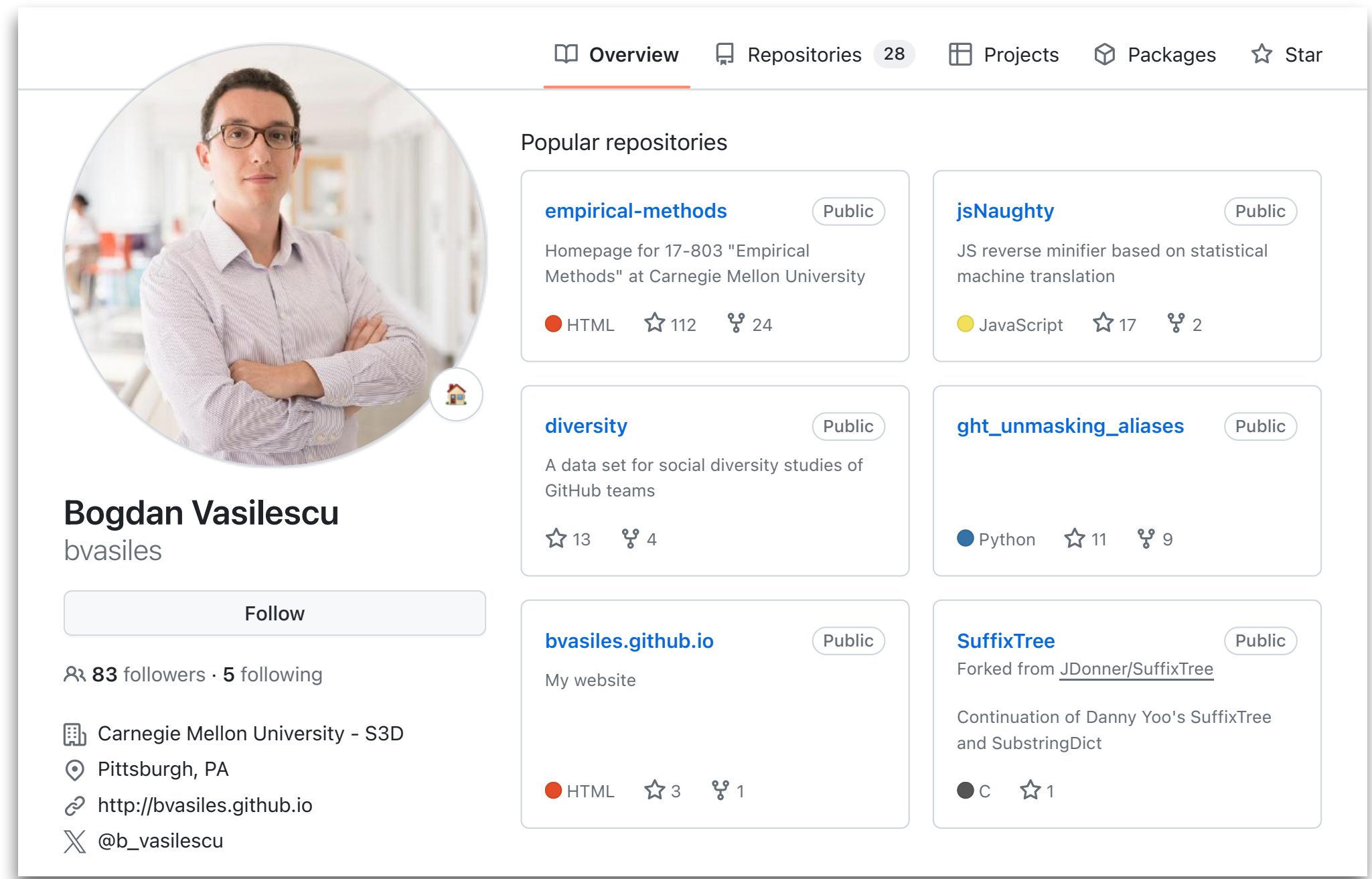
**Bogdan Vasilescu**  
@b\_vasilescu

I shorten academic research papers to fit in 10 pages for a living, at CMU.  
[pronoun.is/he/him](http://pronoun.is/he/him) #BlackLivesMatter

Pittsburgh, PA [bvasiles.github.io](http://bvasiles.github.io) Joined November 2011

1,152 Following 1,749 Followers

Edit profile



Overview Repositories 28 Projects Packages Star

**Bogdan Vasilescu**  
bvasiles

Follow

83 followers · 5 following

Carnegie Mellon University - S3D  
Pittsburgh, PA  
<http://bvasiles.github.io>  
@b\_vasilescu

Popular repositories

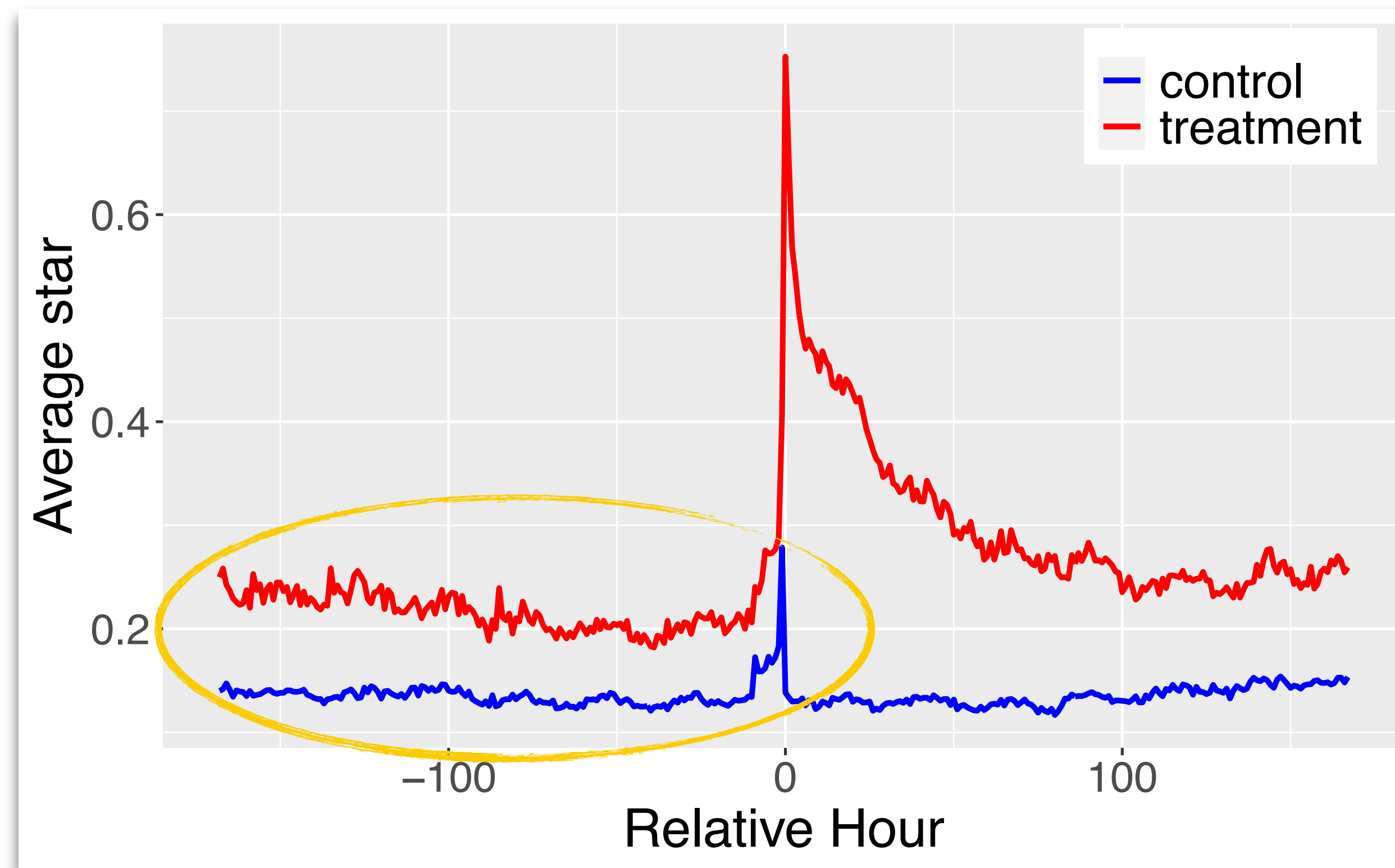
- empirical-methods** (Public)  
Homepage for 17-803 "Empirical Methods" at Carnegie Mellon University  
HTML 112 stars 24 forks
- jsNaughty** (Public)  
JS reverse minifier based on statistical machine translation  
JavaScript 17 stars 2 forks
- diversity** (Public)  
A data set for social diversity studies of GitHub teams  
13 stars 4 forks
- ght\_unmasking\_aliases** (Public)  
Python 11 stars 9 forks
- bvasiles.github.io** (Public)  
My website  
HTML 3 stars 1 fork
- SuffixTree** (Public)  
Forked from [JDonner/SuffixTree](#)  
Continuation of Danny Yoo's SuffixTree and SubstringDict  
C 1 star





# Challenge: Parallel trends assumption

Propensity score matching to ensure the control repositories, on average, have the same pre-treatment trend in outcome variables as the treatment group.



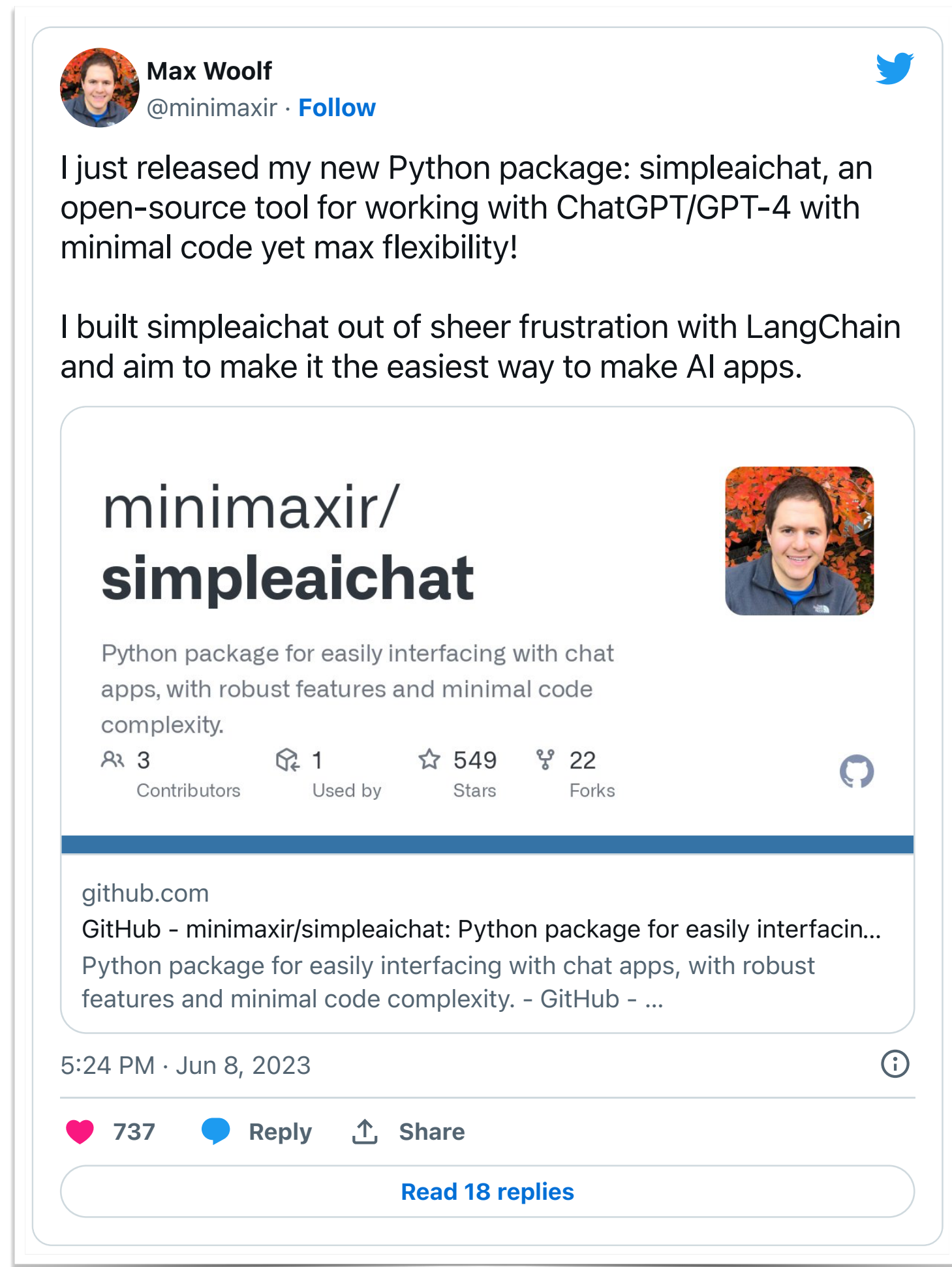
# Challenge: Confounding events more likely to impact treatment group

Control for official releases, being featured on Trending, and overall Google chatter.

The image consists of three overlapping screenshots illustrating the challenge of confounding events in causal inference.

- Left Screenshot:** Shows the TensorFlow 2.15.0 release page on GitHub. The release is dated Nov 14, 2023, and is the latest version. It has 688,736 downloads.
- Middle Screenshot:** Shows the GitHub Trending page. The top repository is `google / gemma.cpp`, a lightweight C++ inference engine for Google's Gemma models, with 3,273 stars and 245 forks. Other trending repositories include `WongKinYiu / yolov9` (Python, 2,618 stars) and `ollama / ollama` (Go, 40,525 stars).
- Right Screenshot:** Shows a Google search for `"github.com/atom/xray" -twitter.com after:2018-01-01 before:2019-01-01`. The search results include:
  - Reddit · `r/programming`: 1.4K+ comments. A post titled `[deleted by user] : r/programming` mentions `github.com/atom/xray`.
  - Hacker News: An article titled `Wow, very cool. Lots of new players in this space` from Jun 25, 2018, discussing `github.com/atom/xray#web-compatibility`.
  - GitHub: An issue titled `add documentation for zig fmt · Issue #1523 · ziglang/zig` from Sep 13, 2018, mentioning `github.com/atom/xray/blob/master/docs/updates/2018_09_14.md`.

# Yes! Tweets **cause** GitHub stars and new contributors



**Max Woolf** @minimaxir · Follow

I just released my new Python package: simpleaichat, an open-source tool for working with ChatGPT/GPT-4 with minimal code yet max flexibility!

I built simpleaichat out of sheer frustration with LangChain and aim to make it the easiest way to make AI apps.

### minimaxir/ simpleaichat

Python package for easily interfacing with chat apps, with robust features and minimal code complexity.

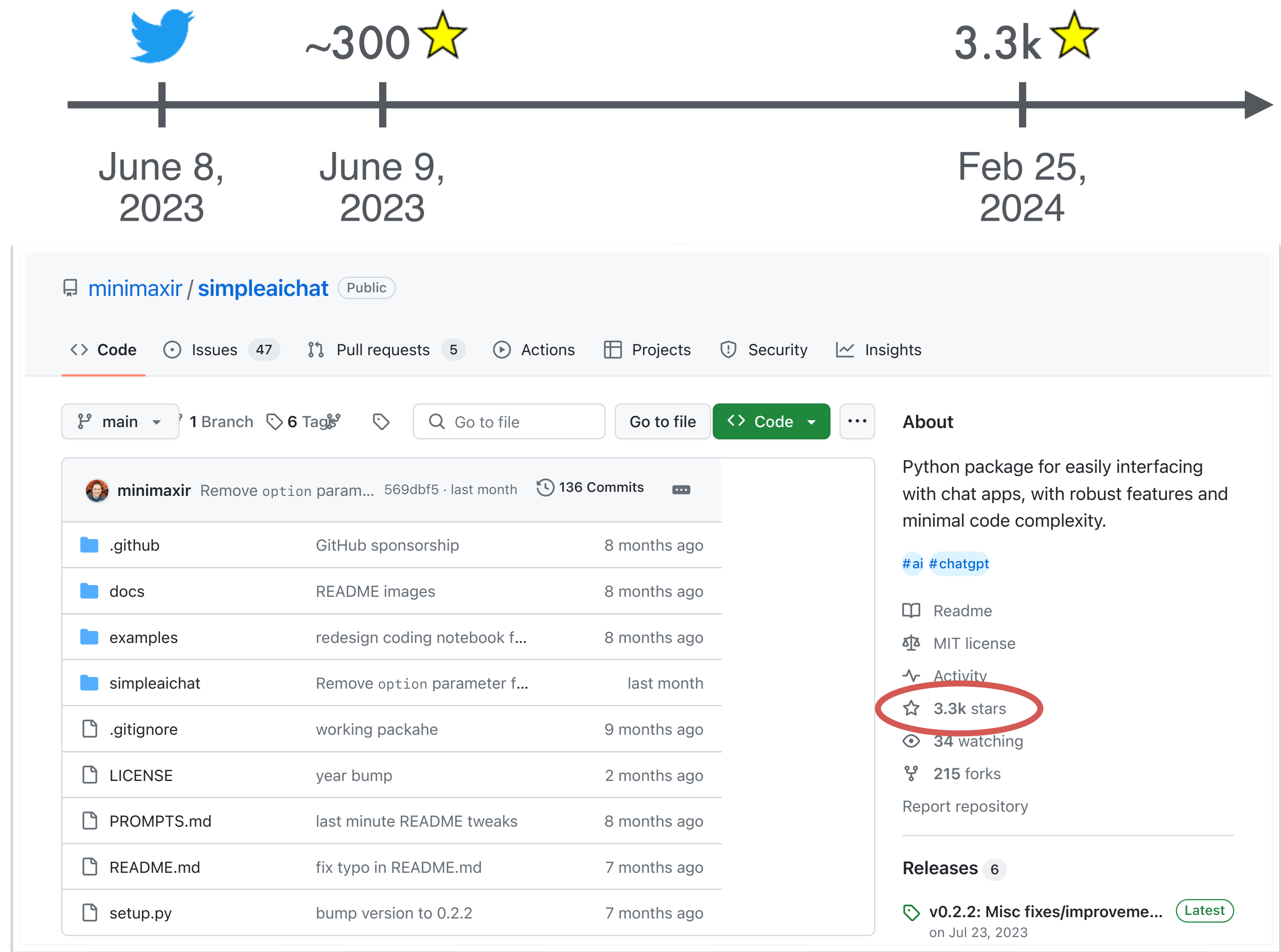
3 Contributors · 1 Used by · 549 Stars · 22 Forks

github.com  
GitHub - minimaxir/simpleaichat: Python package for easily interfacin...  
Python package for easily interfacing with chat apps, with robust features and minimal code complexity. - GitHub - ...

5:24 PM · Jun 8, 2023

737 Likes · Reply · Share

Read 18 replies



Timeline showing GitHub star growth:

- June 8, 2023: Initial release (Twitter icon)
- June 9, 2023: ~300 stars (Yellow star icon)
- Feb 25, 2024: 3.3k stars (Yellow star icon)

### minimaxir / simpleaichat

Public

Code Issues 47 Pull requests 5 Actions Projects Security Insights

main 1 Branch 6 Tags Go to file Go to file Code

**minimaxir** Remove option param... 569dbf5 · last month 136 Commits

.github	GitHub sponsorship	8 months ago
docs	README images	8 months ago
examples	redesign coding notebook f...	8 months ago
simpleaichat	Remove option parameter f...	last month
.gitignore	working packahe	9 months ago
LICENSE	year bump	2 months ago
PROMPTS.md	last minute README tweaks	8 months ago
README.md	fix typo in README.md	7 months ago
setup.py	bump version to 0.2.2	7 months ago

**About**

Python package for easily interfacing with chat apps, with robust features and minimal code complexity.

#ai #chatgpt

Readme MIT license Activity **3.3k stars** 34 watching 215 forks Report repository

**Releases** 6

v0.2.2: Misc fixes/improvement... Latest on Jul 23, 2023





Dealing with abandoned upstream dependencies



Estimating a project's effective labor pool

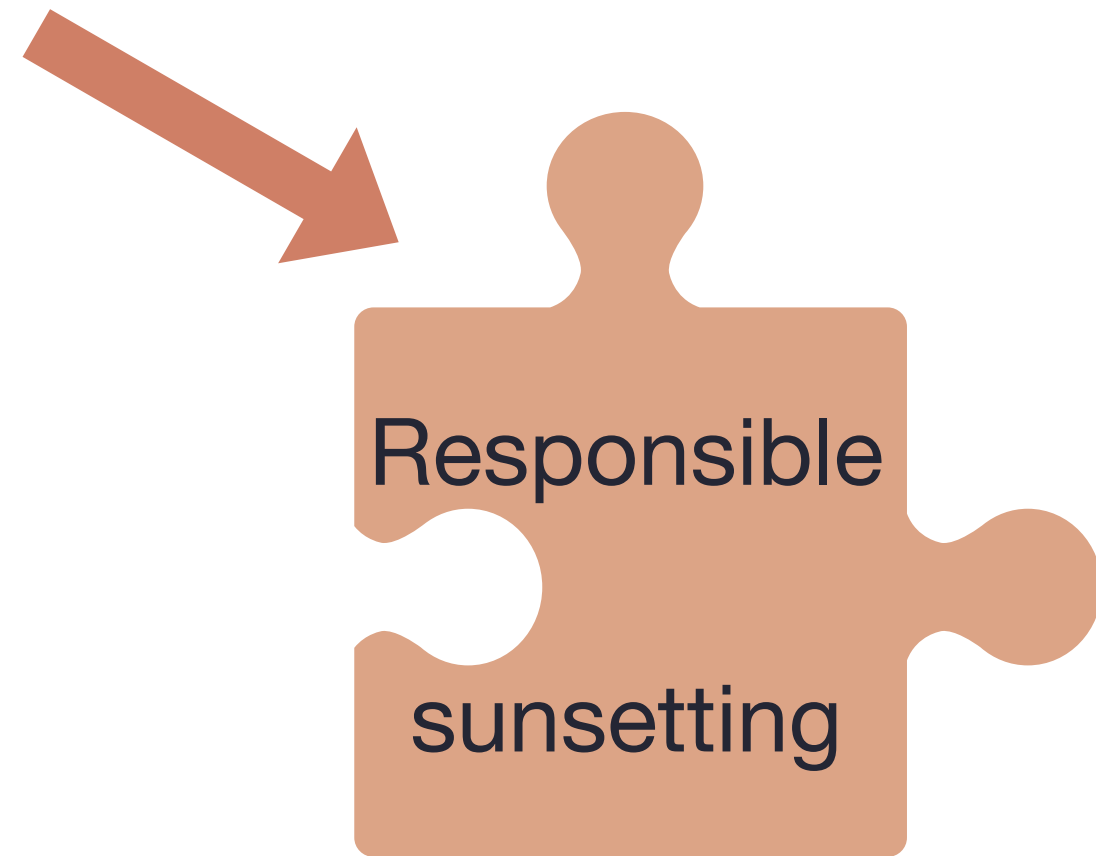


Estimating causal effects of promotional activities

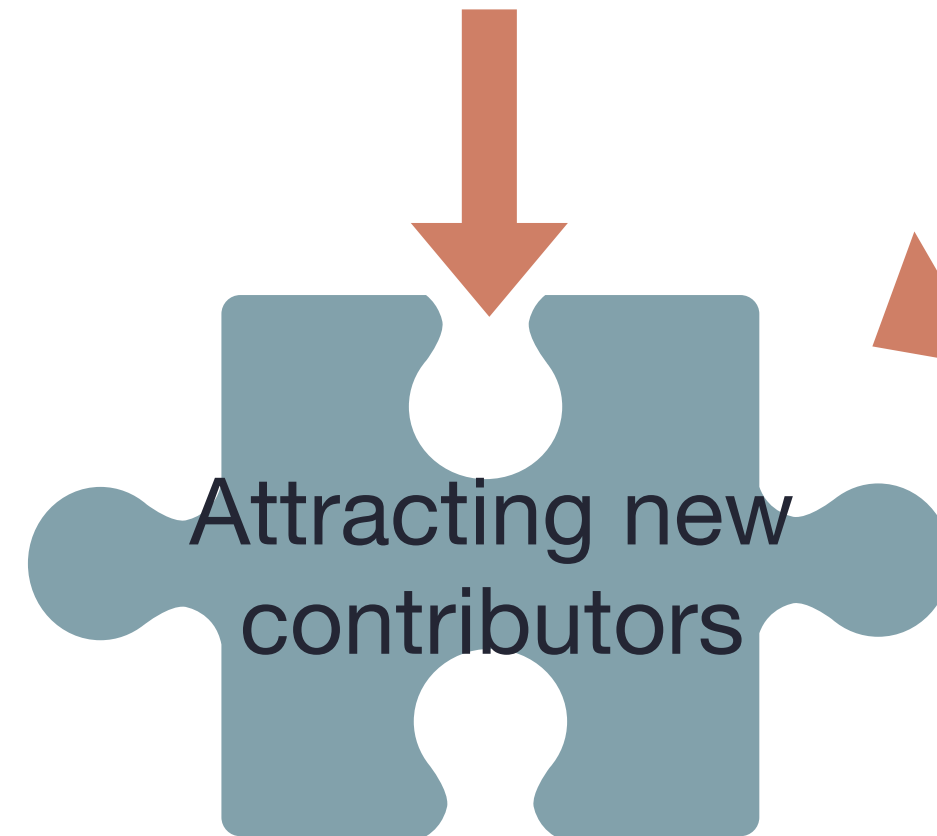




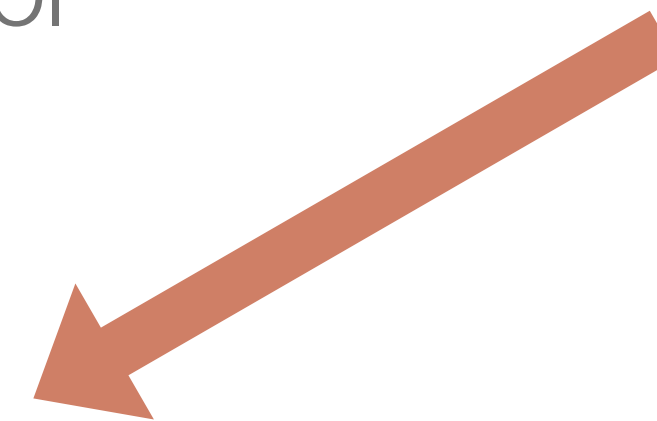
Dealing with abandoned upstream dependencies



Estimating a project's effective labor pool



Estimating causal effects of promotional activities







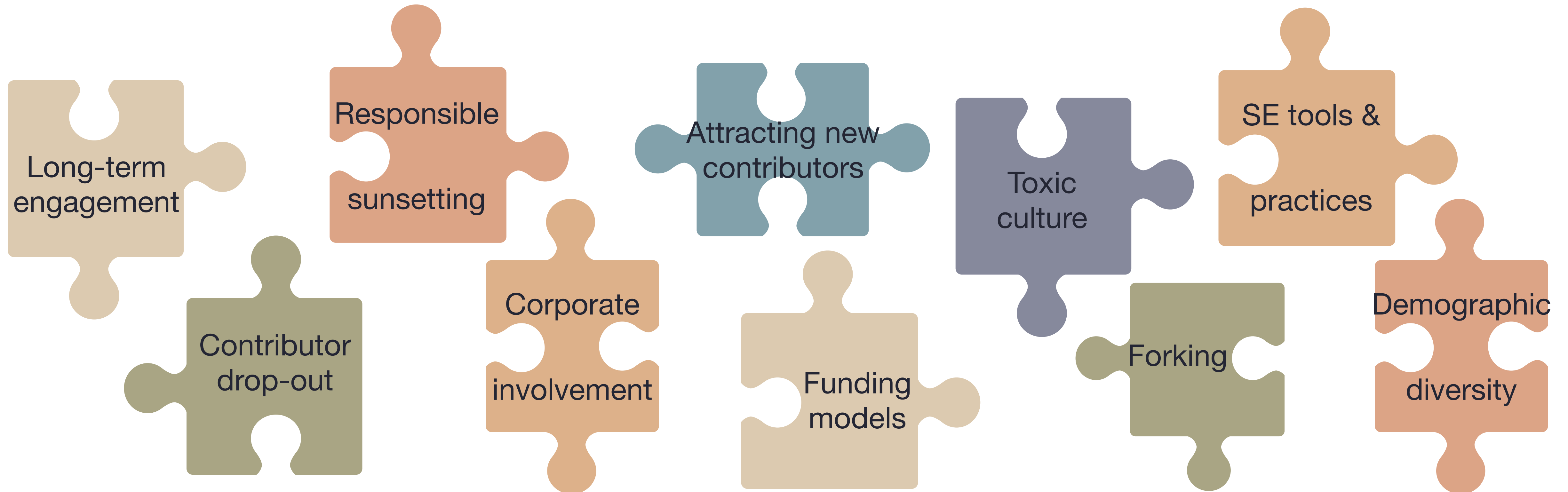
Dealing with abandoned upstream dependencies



Estimating a project's effective labor pool



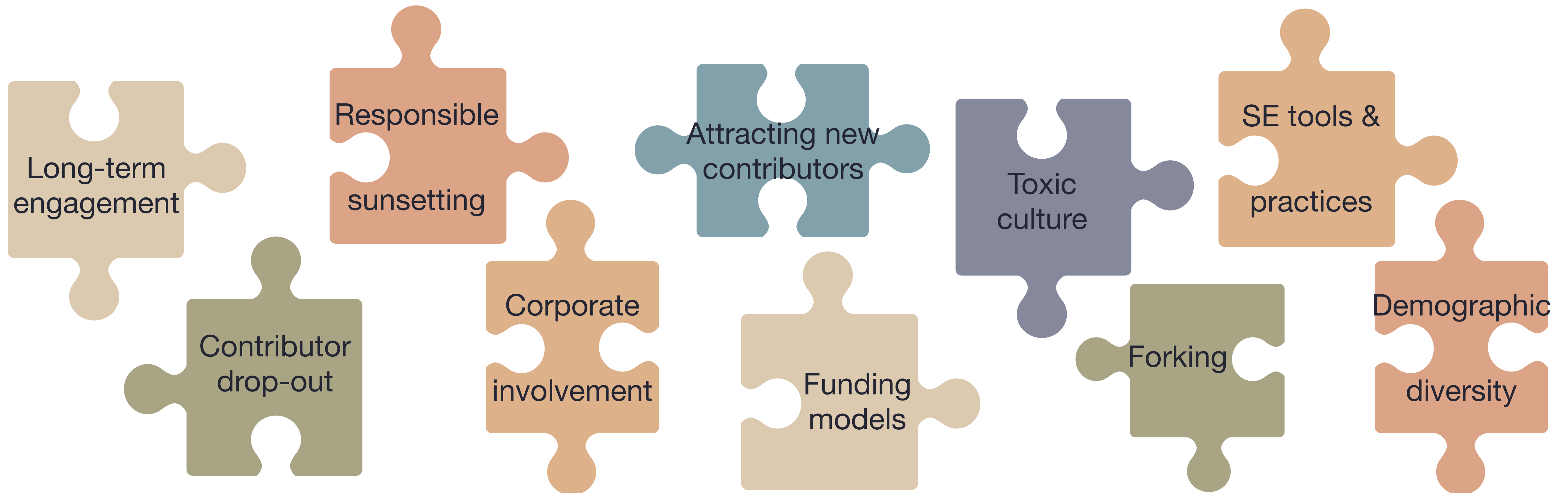
Estimating causal effects of promotional activities





# More open questions remaining than answers so far

- How does it all work?
  - How do the competing needs of different stakeholders get satisfied?
  - How does responsibility emerge?
- How healthy and sustainable is the ecosystem?
  - ... especially with the attention it has been getting
- How to design effective interventions lacking centralized control?
- How do variations across contexts impact all of the above?





# Acknowledgements



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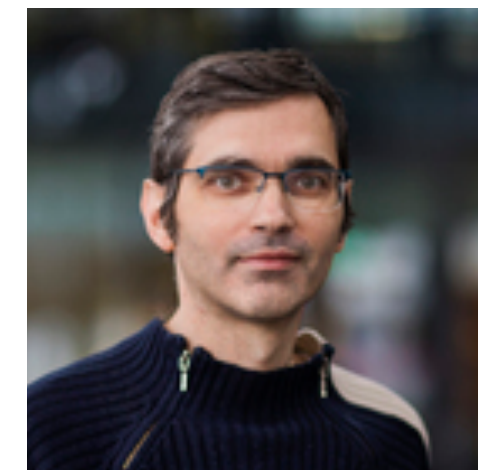
Audris Mockus



Alex Nolte



Sophie Qiu



Alex Serebrenik



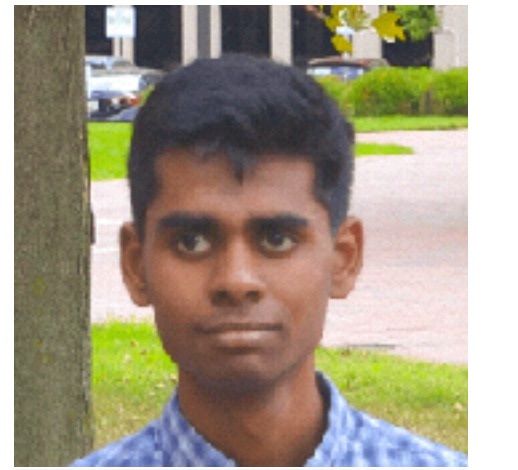
Marat Valiev



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Lily Li



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Hao He



Christian Kästner



Hemank Lamba



Emerson  
Murphy-Hill



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# STRIDEL sustainability research on ...

## Project practices

- [CHASE 2023](#) (social media)
- [ICSE 2020](#) (forking)
- [ESEC/FSE 2019](#) (forking)
- [ESEC/FSE 2018](#) (abandonment factors)

## Funding models

- [ICSE 2020](#) (donations)

## Sunsetting

- [ESEC/FSE 2023](#)
- [ICSE 2025](#) (dealing with abandonment)

## Attracting contributors

- [ICSE 2022](#) (Twitter)
- [MSR 2020](#) (Twitter)
- [CSCW 2019](#) (signals)
- [ESEC/FSE 2015](#) (social connections)

## Transparency and signaling

- [ESEC/FSE 2020](#) (diffusion of practices)
- [CSCW 2019](#) (signals)
- [ICSE 2018](#) (badges)

## Stress, burnout, disengagement

- [ICSE 2022](#) (toxicity theory)
- [ICSE SEIS 2022](#) (toxicity vs pushback)
- [ICSE NIER 2020](#) (toxic language)
- [ICSE 2019](#) (overwork)
- [OSS 2019](#) (dropout, survival analysis)

## Diversity and inclusion

- [CHI 2023](#) (ClimateCoach)
- [ICSE SEIS 2023](#) (census)
- [ICSE 2019](#) (social capital)
- [CHI 2015](#) (gender & tenure)
- [CHASE 2015](#) (survey)

## Novelty and innovation

- [ICSE 2024](#) (atypical combinations)

## Network effects

- [ICSE 2024](#) (innovation)
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- [ICSE 2022](#) (Twitter)
- [ESEC/FSE 2020](#) (diffusion of practices)
- [ICSE 2019](#) (social capital)
- [ESEC/FSE 2018](#) (abandonment factors)