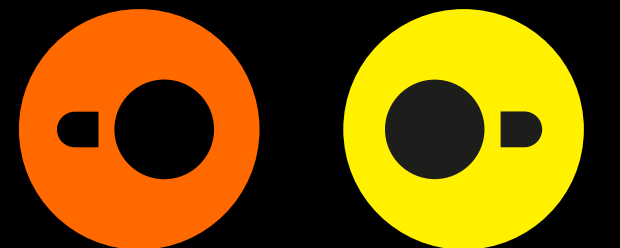# The Funding of DuckDB

GÁBOR SZÁRNYAS
DUCKDB LABS

Databases are hard

Databases:

- Serve as the source of truth
- Needs to be very robust
- Feature-rich (SQL standard!)

10+ person-years to develop a production-ready database

Fear #8: We are Ignoring the Most Important Problems

- In favor of ones that are easy to solve
  - Driven by the need for quickies
- Examples
  - Data integration
  - Data base design and evolution
  - Tuning a DBMS application is way too difficult
  - Average DBMS takes $20M to get to production readiness.

— Average DBMS takes $20M to get to production readiness.

Donald B. Gillies Lecture: Dr. Michael Stonebraker

Developing databases

Lots of upfront investment

Very difficult to do with volunteers

New problem:
cloud vendors can turn an open-source database into a DBaaS

Funding database development

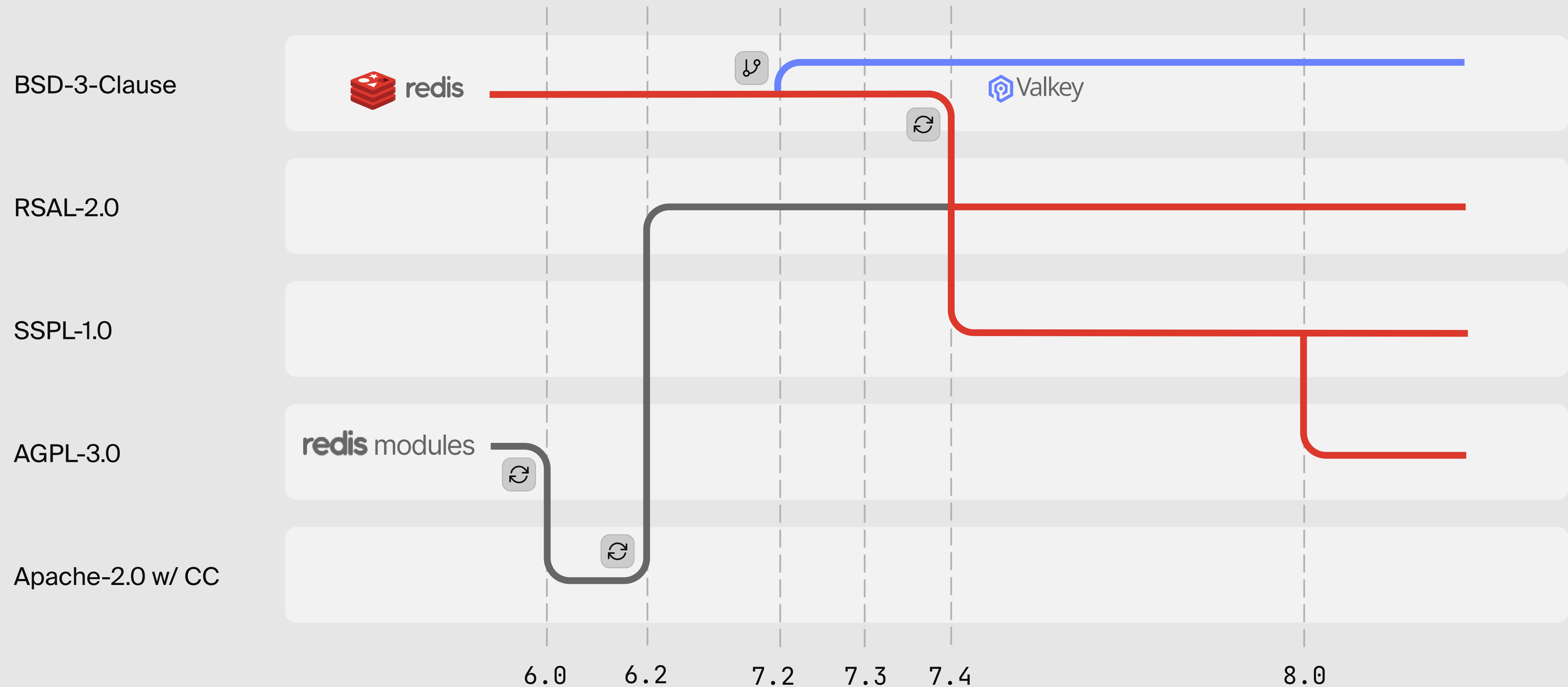VC money

Ecosystem model

Bootstrapping

Funding database development
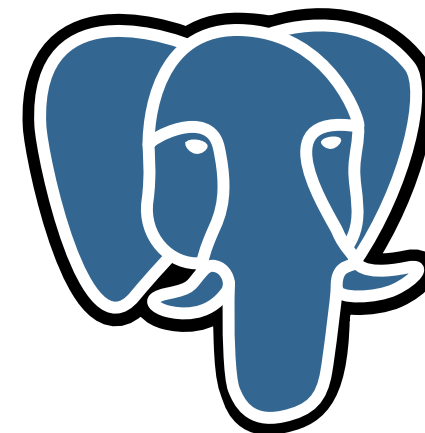
VC money

Ecosystem model

Bootstrapping

redis

BSD-3-Clause

RSAL-2.0

SSPL-1.0

AGPL-3.0

Apache-2.0 w/ CC

6.0   6.2   7.2   7.3   7.4   8.0

Read more at https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~pavlo/blog/2025/01/2024-databases-retrospective.html

Funding database development

VC money

Ecosystem model

Bootstrapping

Funding database development
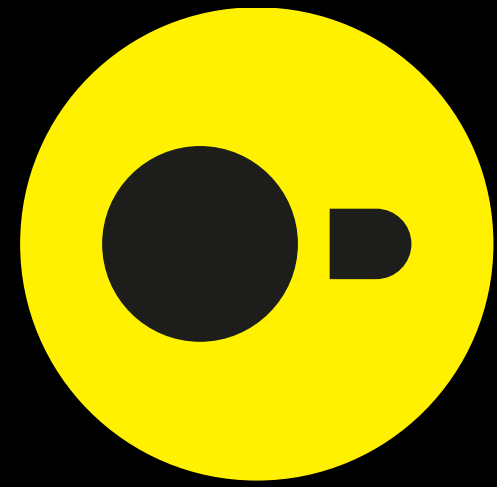
VC money	Ecosystem model	**Bootstrapping**

DuckDB

An in-process analytical DB

MIT license

Academic roots at CWI Amsterdam
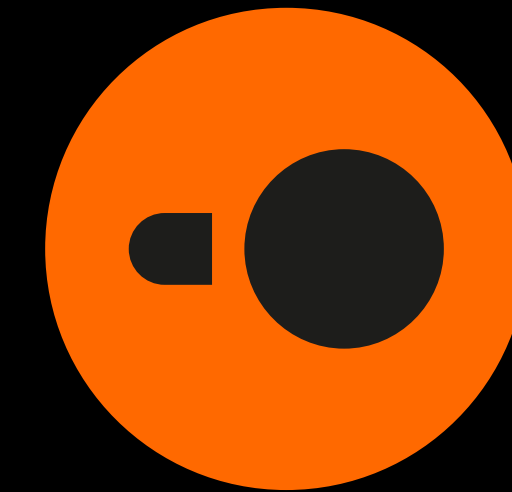
Every single day on duckdb.org:

- ~ 1M DuckDB downloads
- > 300 000 unique visitors

Tried the foundation model:
doesn't work

- Founded in 2021
- Services around DuckDB
  - "Red Hat model"
  - Support (SLA, ...)
  - Feature prioritization
- **Bonus round:** co-founding companies, e.g., MotherDuck
- Going well so far

DuckDB Labs

Bootstrapped company based in Amsterdam