

Exploring the Furry Fandom Through Data

- * Exploring the furry fandom
 - * I'm Makyo
 - * Write for \[adjective\]\[species\] along with the awesome JM, an Australian horse in the UK, and a few others.
 - * Want to talk about exploring furry through data



Why?

Furry is interesting

- * Furry is interesting
 - * Growing fast
 - * How to estimate growth - responses vs. convention attendance
 - * Growth over the last five years
 - * No membership requirements
 - * Spans boundaries



There's a lot to explore

- * There's a lot to explore
 - * Understanding individual aspects
 - * Understanding change over time
 - * Making sense of the fandom as a whole

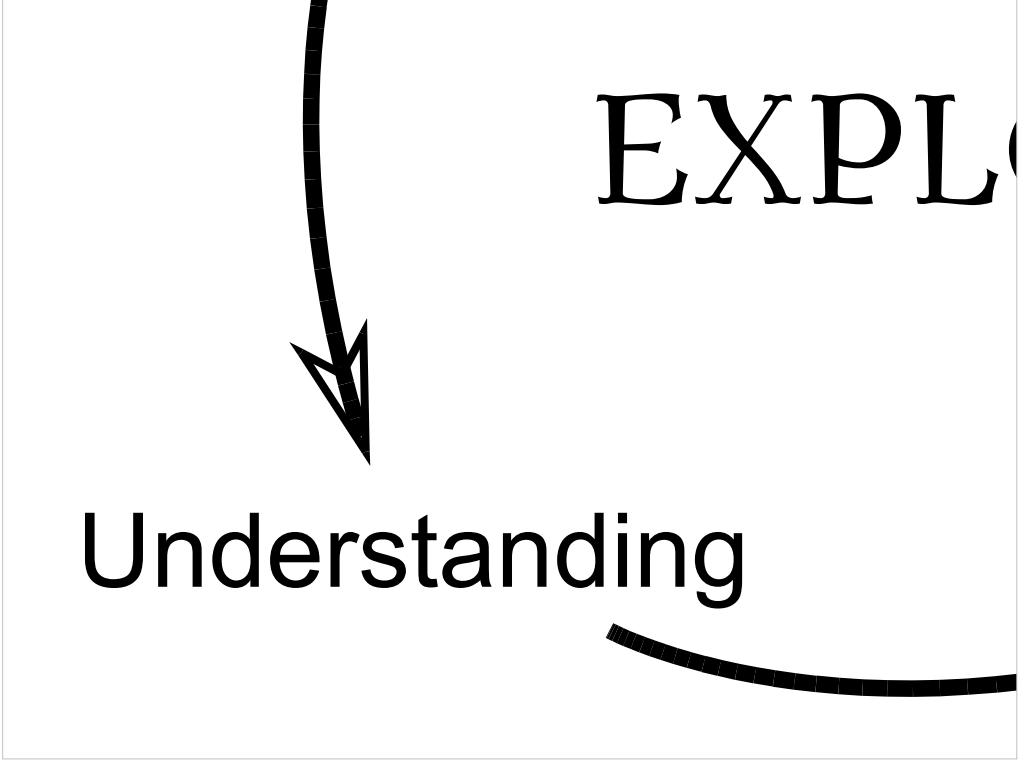
So what is exploring?

Collection

EXPLORATION

- * Collection

- * First we need to collect information
- * Two main resources
- * Surveys and spelunking for outside data
- * Introspection for inside data



EXPLORATION

Understanding

- * Understanding
 - * Looking through data
 - * Searching for stories
 - * Verifying against other sources
 - * Deciding on interesting points

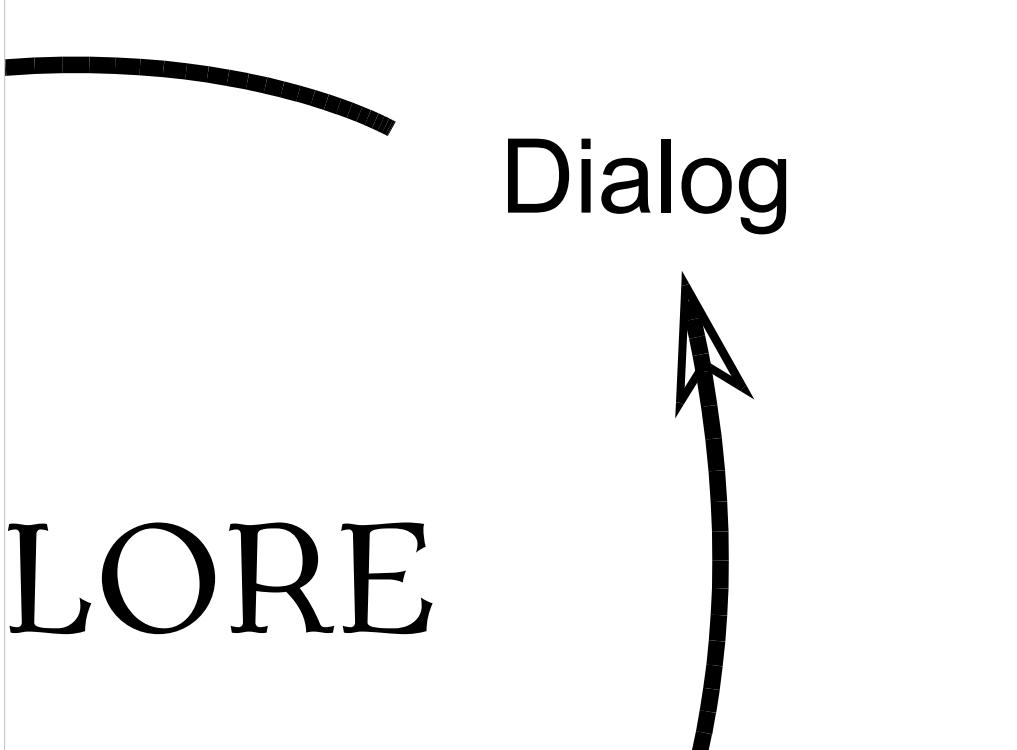
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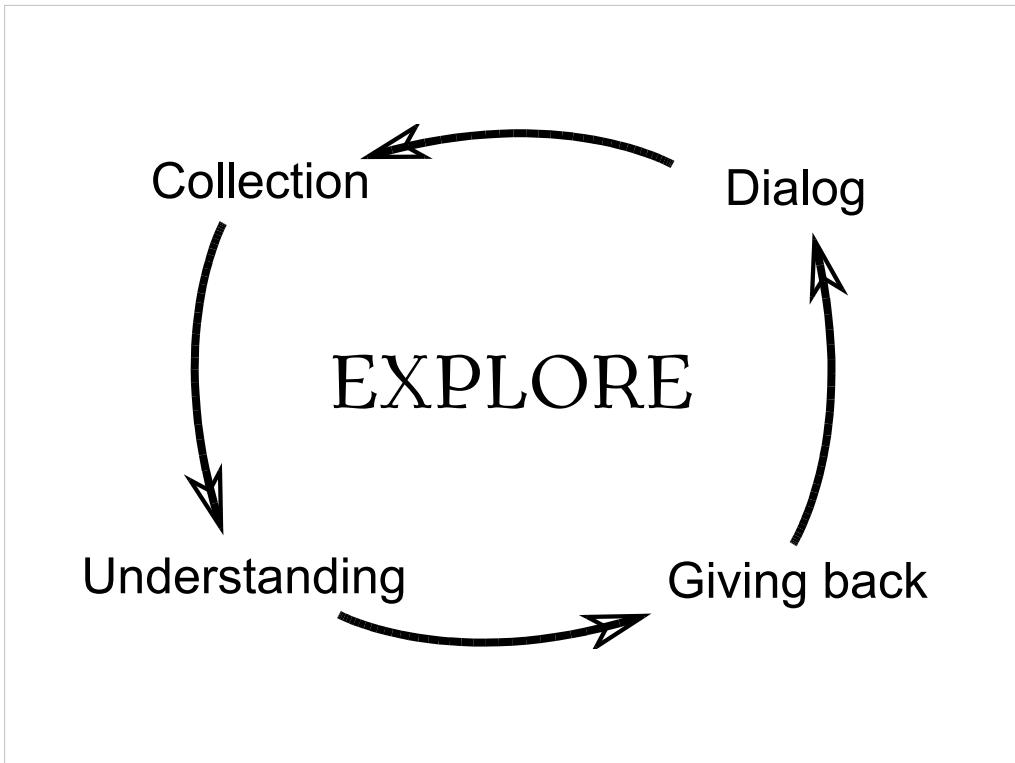
Giving back



- * Giving back
 - * Data presentation
 - * Data visualization
 - * Data accessibility
 - * Data description



- * Dialog
 - * Sharing - social currency
 - * Commenting
 - * Differing opinions
 - * What's missing



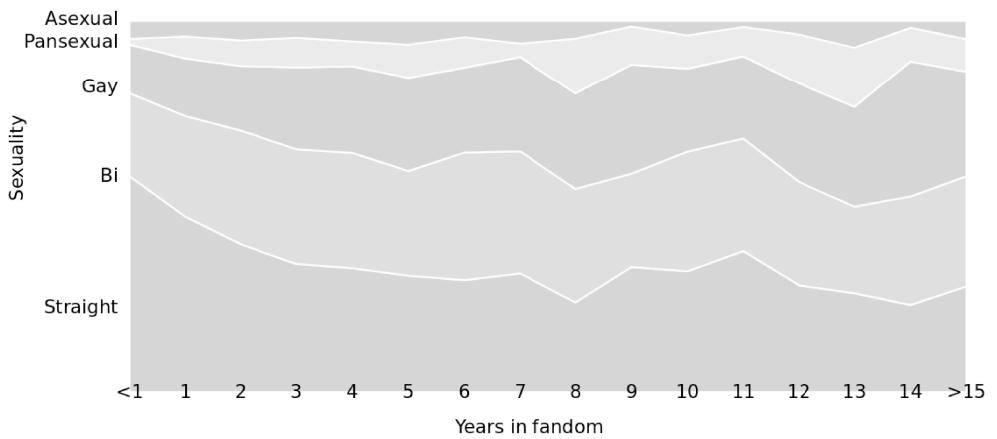
- * Explore cycle
 - * Exploration is really a cycle
 - * Collect data
 - * Piece it together into a story
 - * Pull it into a presentable format
 - * Start a dialog
 - * Learn what/where/how to collect next time



For example...

- * For example
 - * Here's a small example of a story told through data
 - * JM wanted to explore how furry might help one re-evaluate their sexual preference
 - * Collected pertinent data to work with - years in the fandom correlated with sexual orientation
 - * Trend was visible

Years vs. Orientation



* Pulled into a vis (slide)

The screenshot shows a website with a dark header bar containing links for Surveys, Visualizations, Forums, Twitter, FurAffinity, and Google+. Below the header is a large banner featuring a stylized white fox head with glasses and a black turtleneck. The text "the furry world from the inside out" is above the main title, and "[adjective][species]" is prominently displayed in large, light-colored letters. Below the banner is a navigation bar with Home, Contributing, About, and a Search field. The main content area has a light background. A small "Edit" button is visible next to the title "Re-evaluating Your Sexual Preference". The title is bolded and centered. Below the title is a paragraph of text. Further down, there is another paragraph followed by a note in smaller italicized text.

Posted on March 19, 2012 by JM

← Previous Next →

Edit

Re-evaluating Your Sexual Preference

There is a widely-held belief that new furries often re-evaluate their sexual preference after discovering the community.

Stereotypically, a young heterosexual male will begin socializing with furries – either online or in person – and will shortly re-evaluate himself as gay (or bi). Our young stereotype may think that furry helped him realize this about himself, and the experience will probably be a very positive one.

Confession time: my name is JM Horse and I am a stereotype.

I first heard about this phenomenon while reading about the community online. The then-popular Furvey, a long furry survey that people would fill in and post to alt.lifestyle.furry on Usenet, had this question (which I have lightly edited for clarity):

It is common for many furries to live as a heterosexual, and then through

- * Started dialog with article (slide)
- * Learn where to go next

Good.

What do we have to work with?

- * What do we have to work with?
 - * Gerbasi et al.
 - * Anthropomorphic research project
 - * The Furry Survey
 - * \[a\]\[s\]
 - * Some others
 - * Introspection, but will get into that later

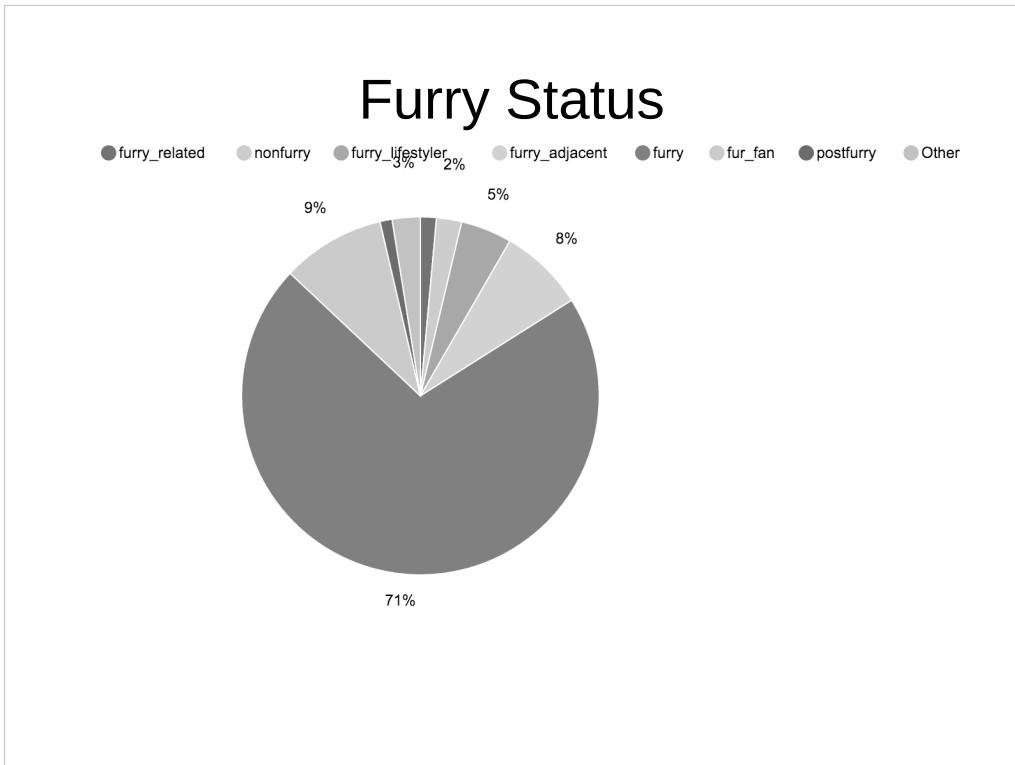
What have we learned so far?

- * What have we learned so far?
 - * Quite a bit, really
 - * Diverse fandom in some ways, not others
 - * Growing fandom
 - * Problems with our own definition
 - * But that's okay, leads to looser membership "requirements"

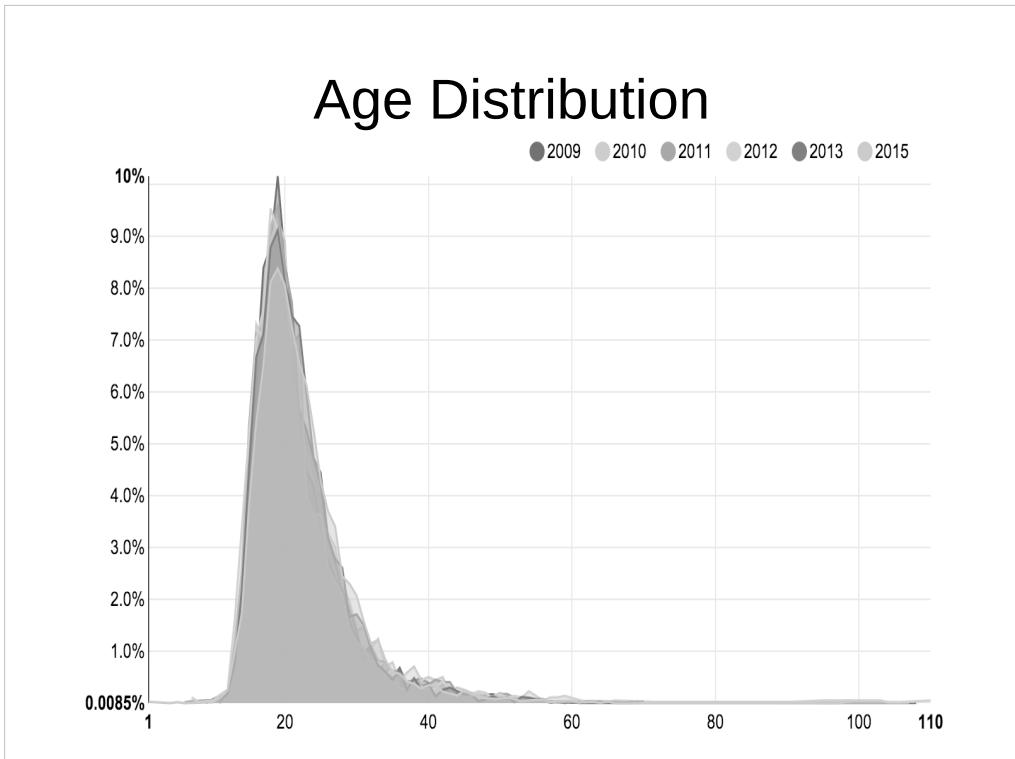


Before I continue...

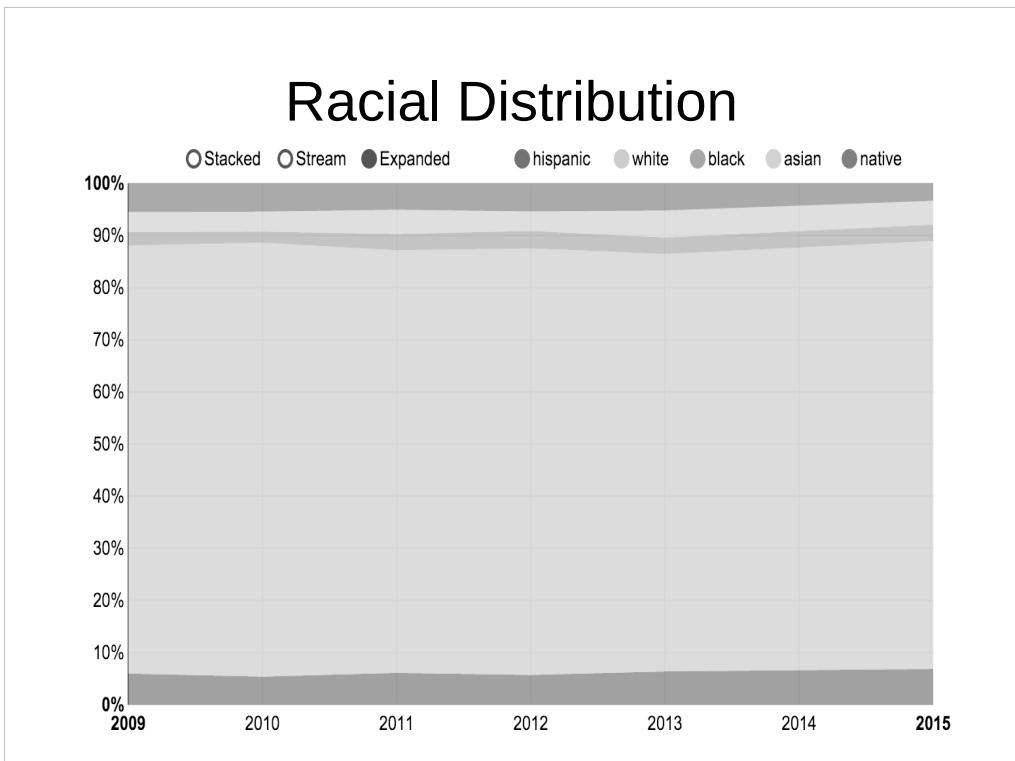
- * Before I continue...
 - * Want everyone to pay attention to something
 - * I am going to talk about the following things:
 - * age
 - * race
 - * sex and gender
 - * sexual orientation
 - * relationship status
 - * political views
 - * importance of sex
 - * Pay attention to your own reaction
 - * Look around you and see how this compares to what you observe.
 - * What is surprising and new?
 - * What did you already expect was the case?
 - * Will explain why this is important after.



- * First of all, who are we talking about?
 - * 2015 survey
 - * Primarily self identified furries

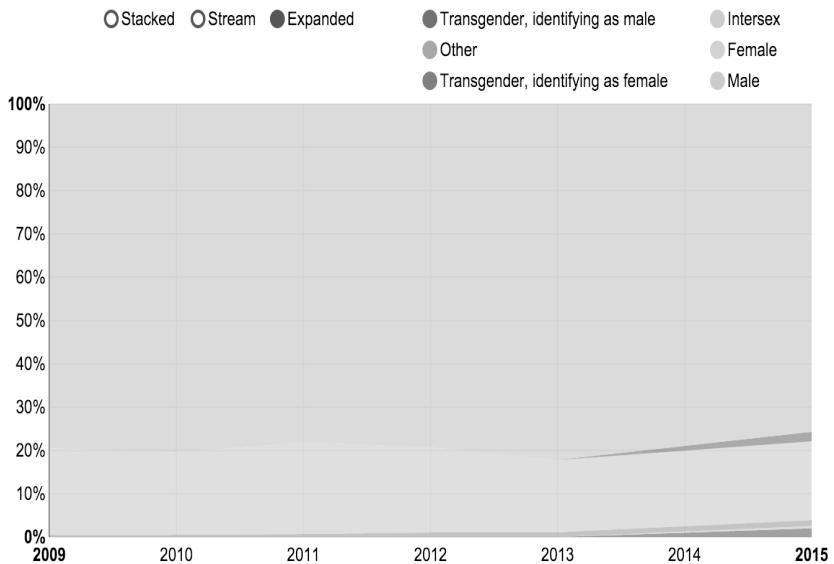


- * Age
 - * Not too surprising that furry is young
 - * Still a long tail
 - * Does this also imply that there's a drop-out age?



- * Race
 - * Far and away white
 - * Fairly stable over time, but slowly diversifying
 - * What sort of story could lead to this data?

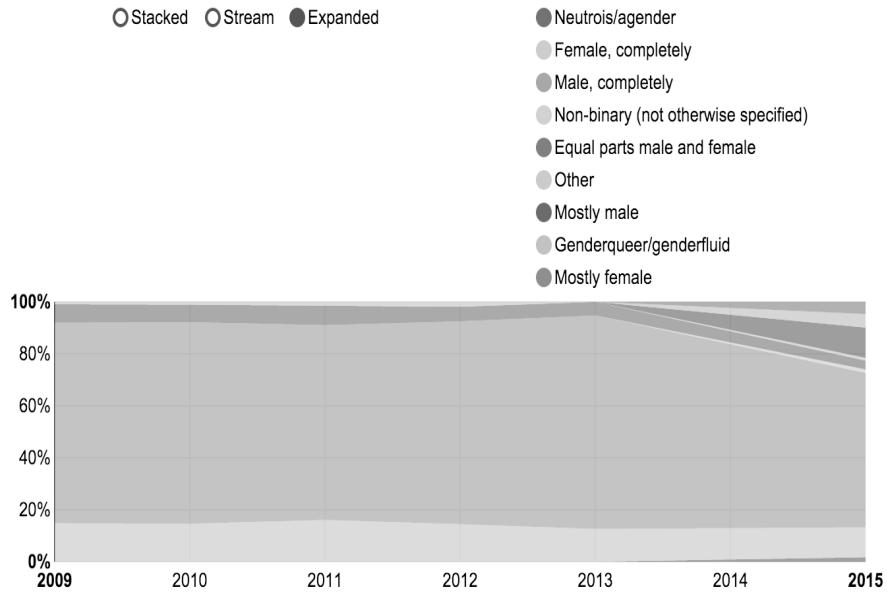
Sex and gender



- * Sex and Gender
 - * Wide gap here
 - * The 80-20 numbers are telling
 - * Ties in with the next slide

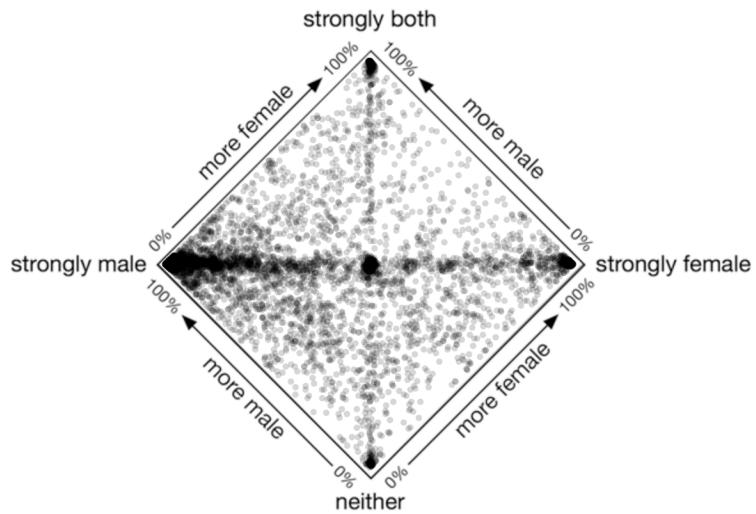
Sex and gender

Stacked Stream Expanded



Sex and gender

Gender identity



* Gender identity scatter

Sex and gender

Gender identity

strongly both

strongly male

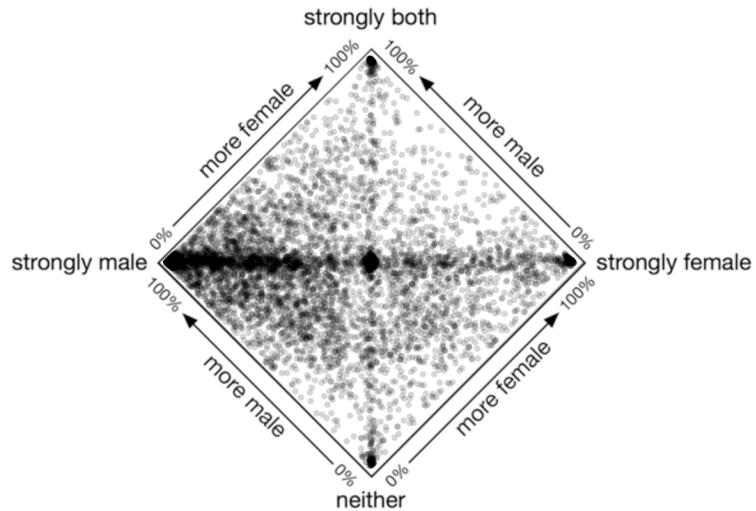
strongly female

neither

* Gender identity heat

Sex and gender

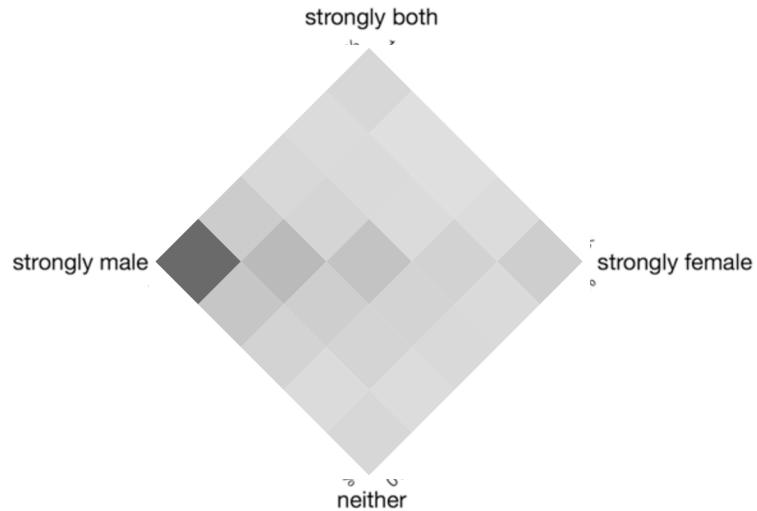
Gender expression



* Gender expression scatter

Sex and gender

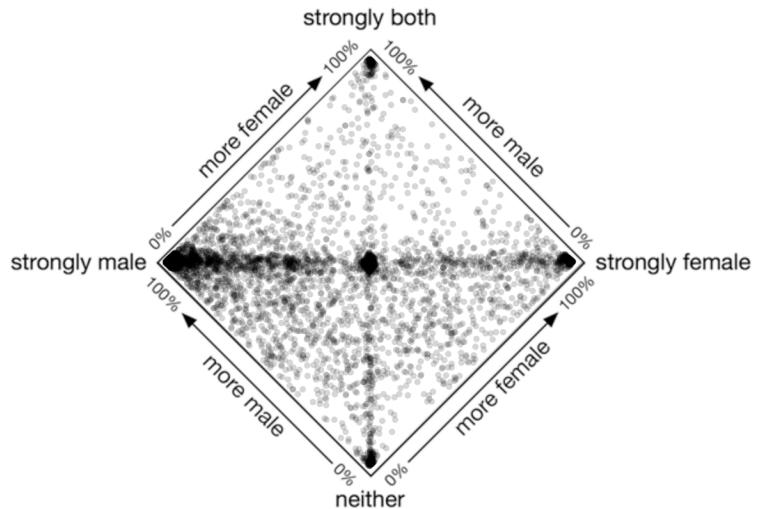
Gender expression



* Gender expression heat

Sex and gender

Gender in furry



* Gender in furry scatter

Sex and gender

Gender in furry

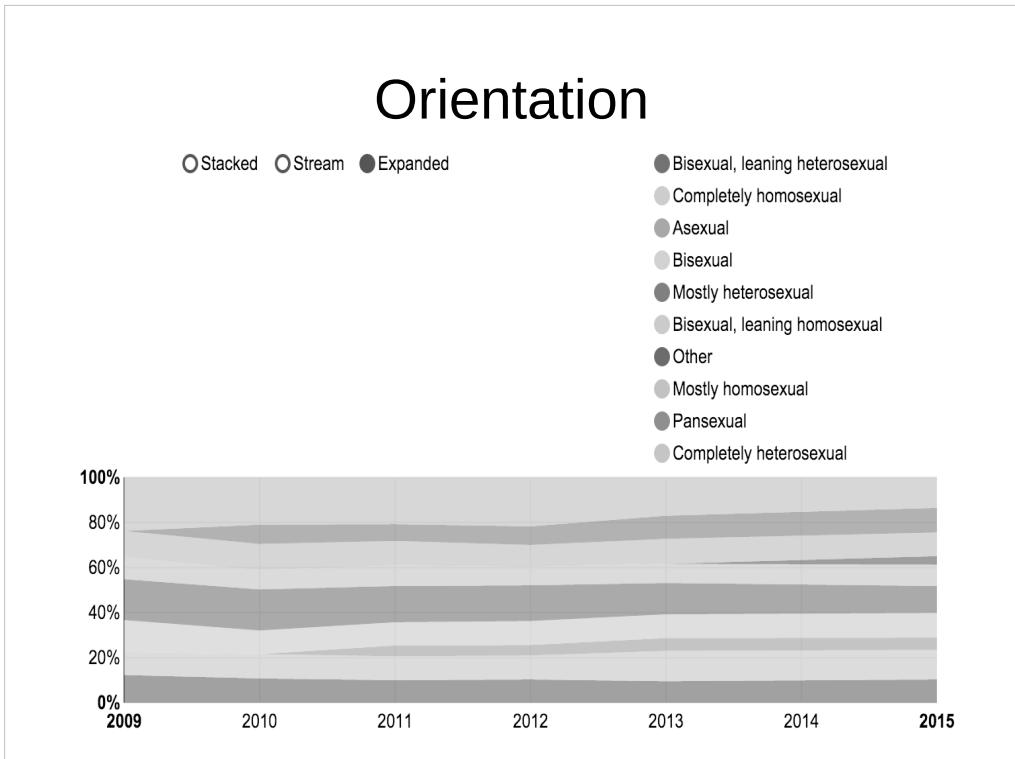
strongly both

strongly male

strongly female

neither

* Gender in furry heat



- * Orientation

- * Kind of heartening
- * Oft-quoted 10%
- * More even spread along kinsey scale
- * Tie in with last slide: large number of same-sex relationships due to the skewed gender numbers (i.e.: many who identify as bi wind up in same-sex relationships)

Relationship Status

○ Stacked ○ Stream ● Expanded

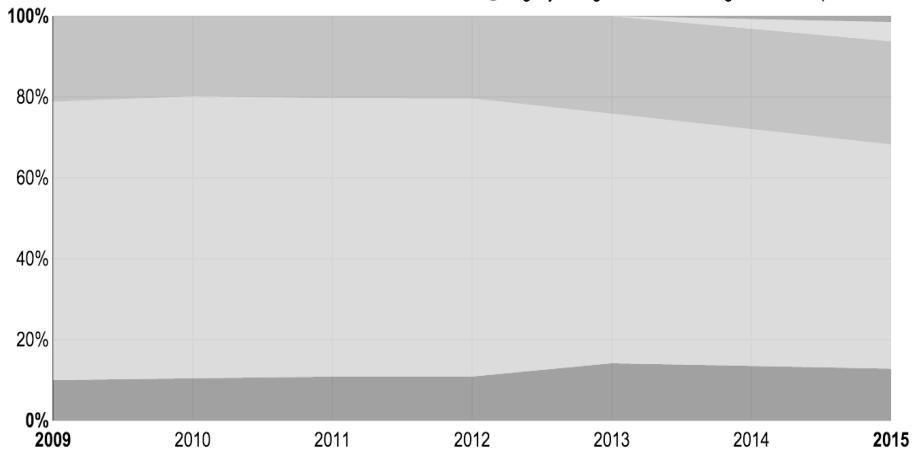
● Casual relationship

● Single

● Long-term relationship

● Marriage

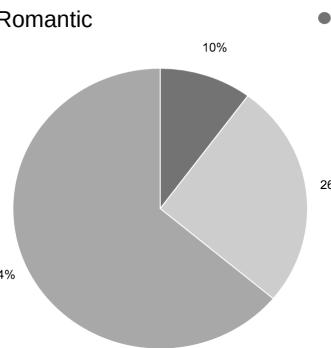
● Legally recognized non-marriage relationship



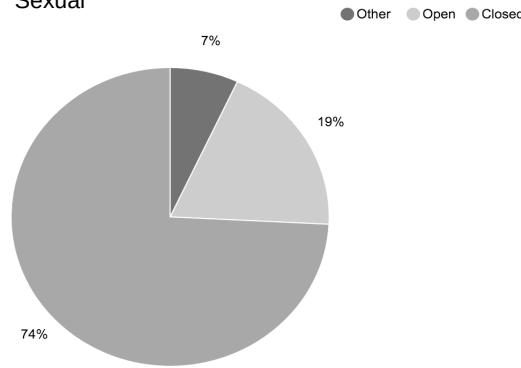
- * Relationship status
 - * While we're on the subject...
 - * Explain the graphs
 - * Relationship status: more single than perhaps expected

Relationship Status

Romantic



Sexual

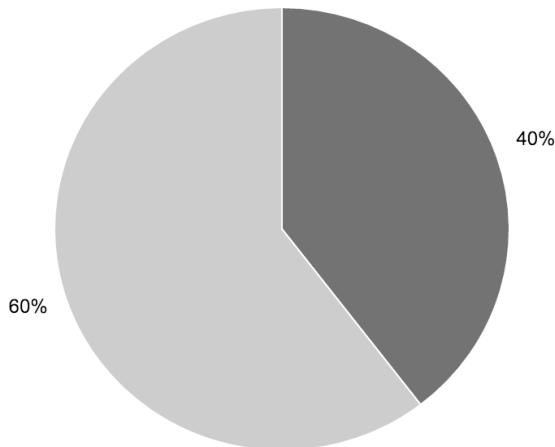


* Polyamory - sexual and romantic (2013): more open sexually than romantically; how does this compare to the world at large?

Relationship Status

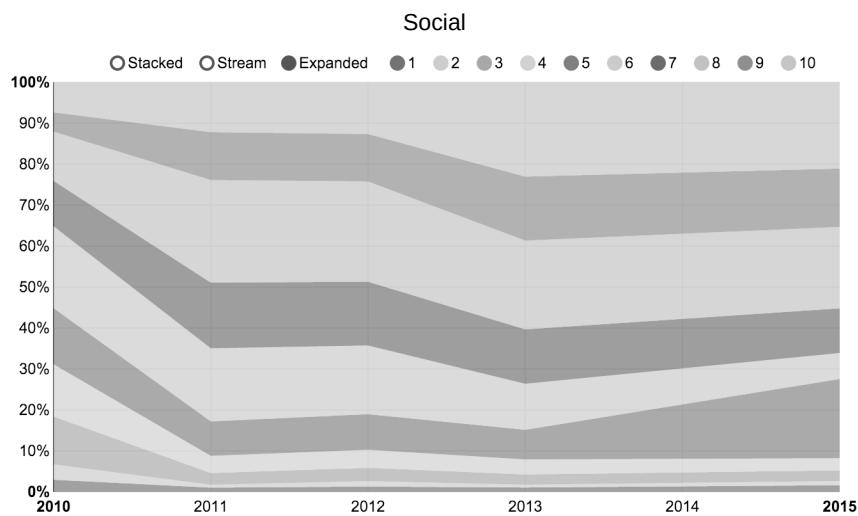
Partner is also furry (6 year mean)

● True ● False



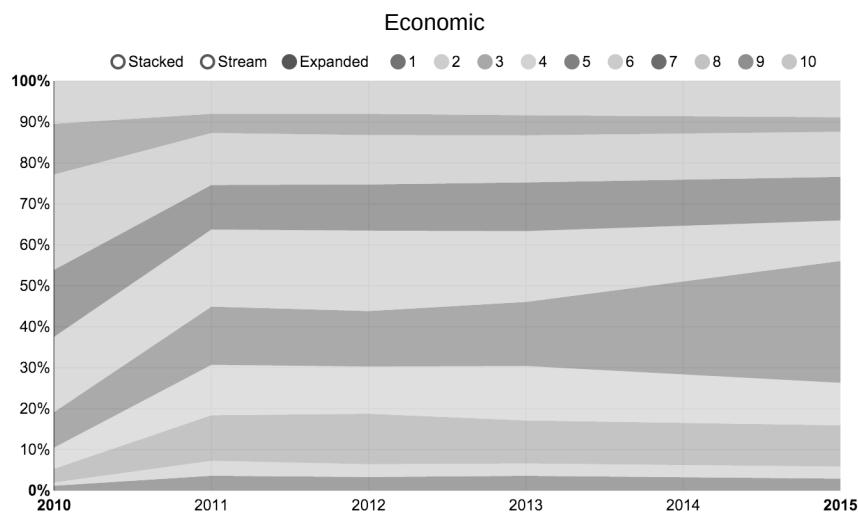
* Partner is a furry (5yr mean): maybe surprising that respondents often have non-furry partners

Political Views

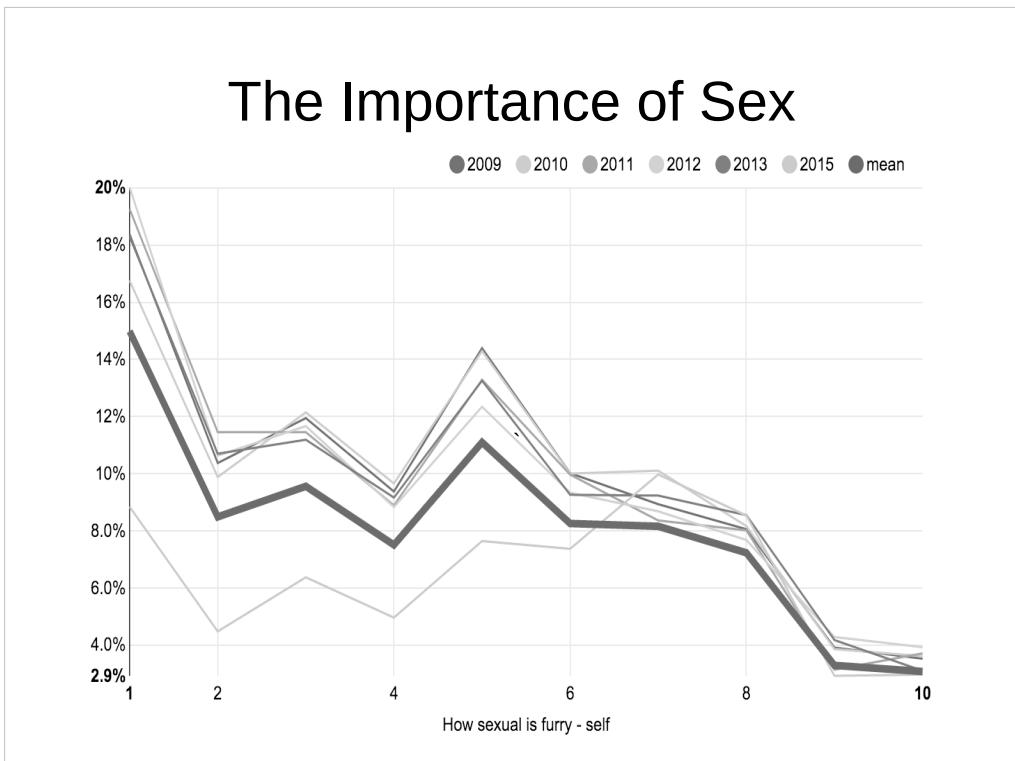


- * Fairly socially liberal
- * Less so over time, but still those left of center make up more than 70% of the total respondents

Political Views

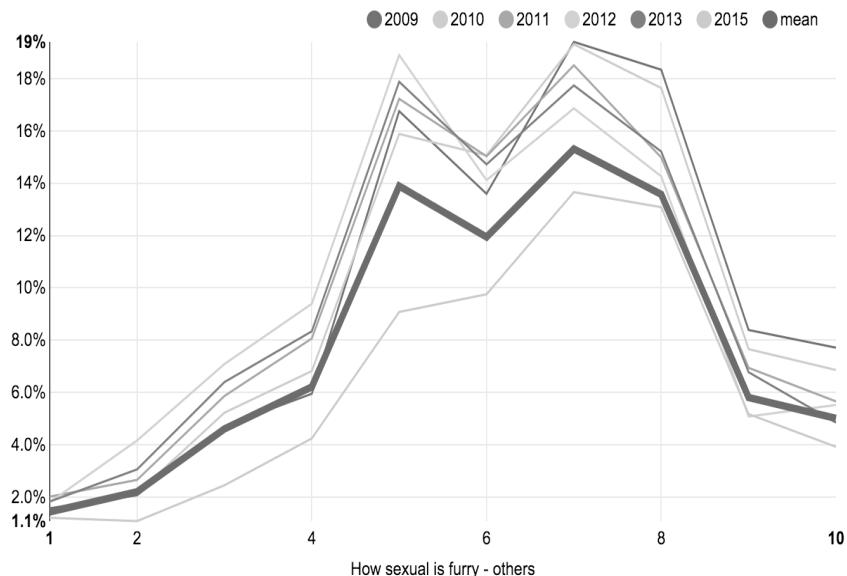


* Much more moderate/centrist economically, favoring some restrictions, rather than laissez-faire

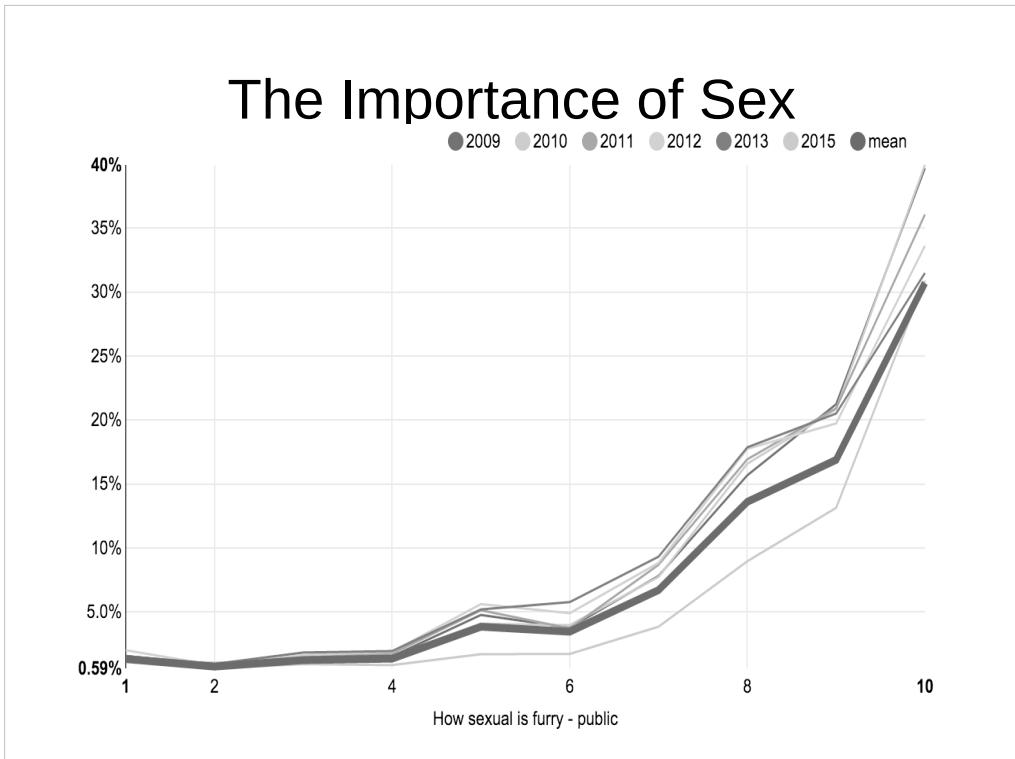


- * The importance of sex
 - * Perhaps a little surprising?
 - * Explanation of the four graphs:
 - * importance to respondent. Not terribly important

The Importance of Sex



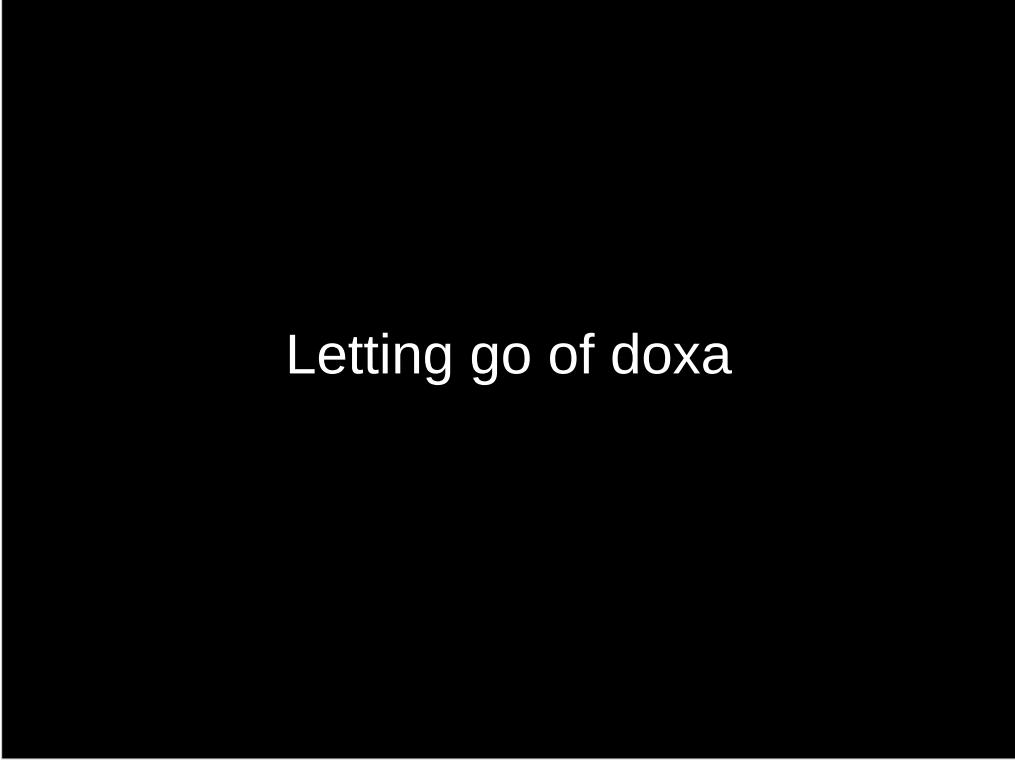
* perceived importance to rest of fandom. More important than self



- * perceived importance to fandom by public. Big difference
- * What does this say?
- * Are we really crazy sexual, or are we just defensive about sexuality?

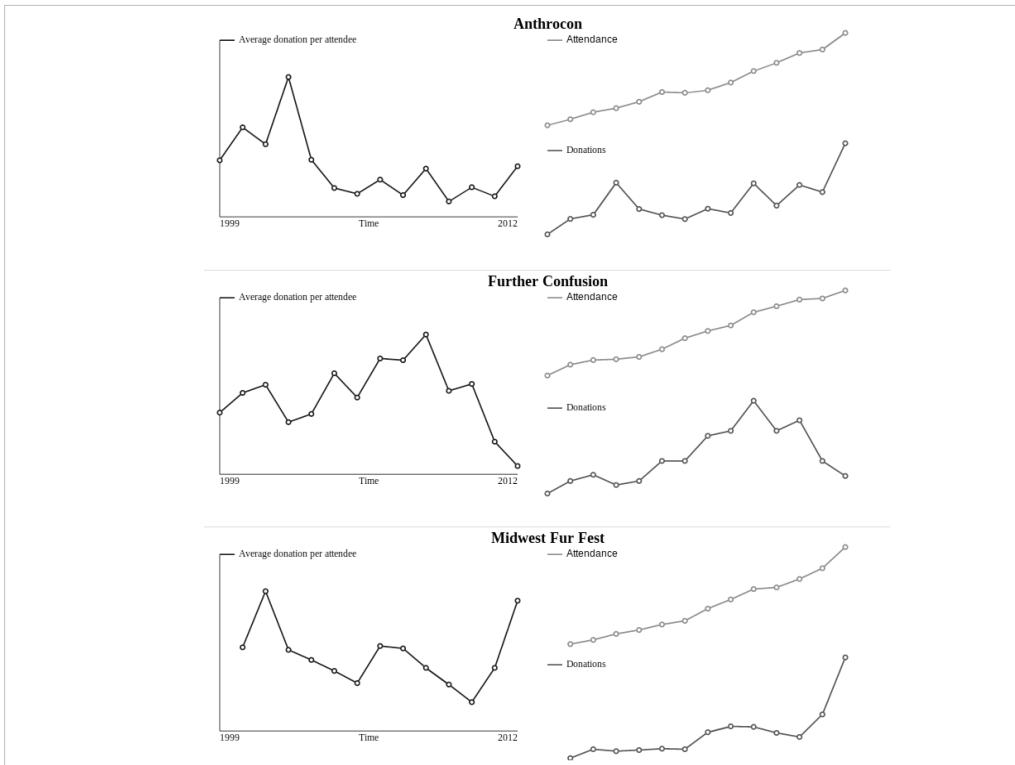
Doxa and introspection

- * Doxa and Introspection
 - * What is doxa?
 - * What we accept as truth without needing proof, common belief and judgement
 - * What is the doxa within the fandom?
 - * Look at the data:
 - * What is intuitive?
 - * What is surprising?

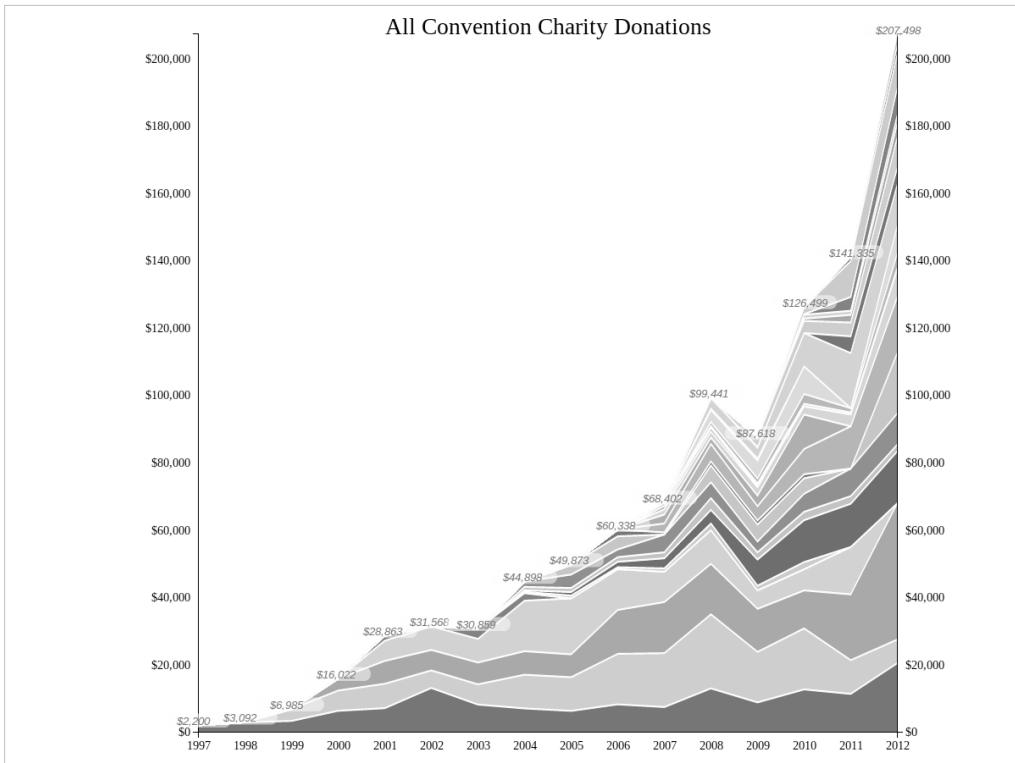


Letting go of doxa

- * Letting go of doxa
 - * Sometimes necessary to let go of an idea
 - * Can be difficult to do, but necessary
 - * For example, wanted to explore average charity donation per con attendee
 - * Expected donation/attendee to increase as attendance increased due to social aspect of giving



* Reality is more complicated (slide)

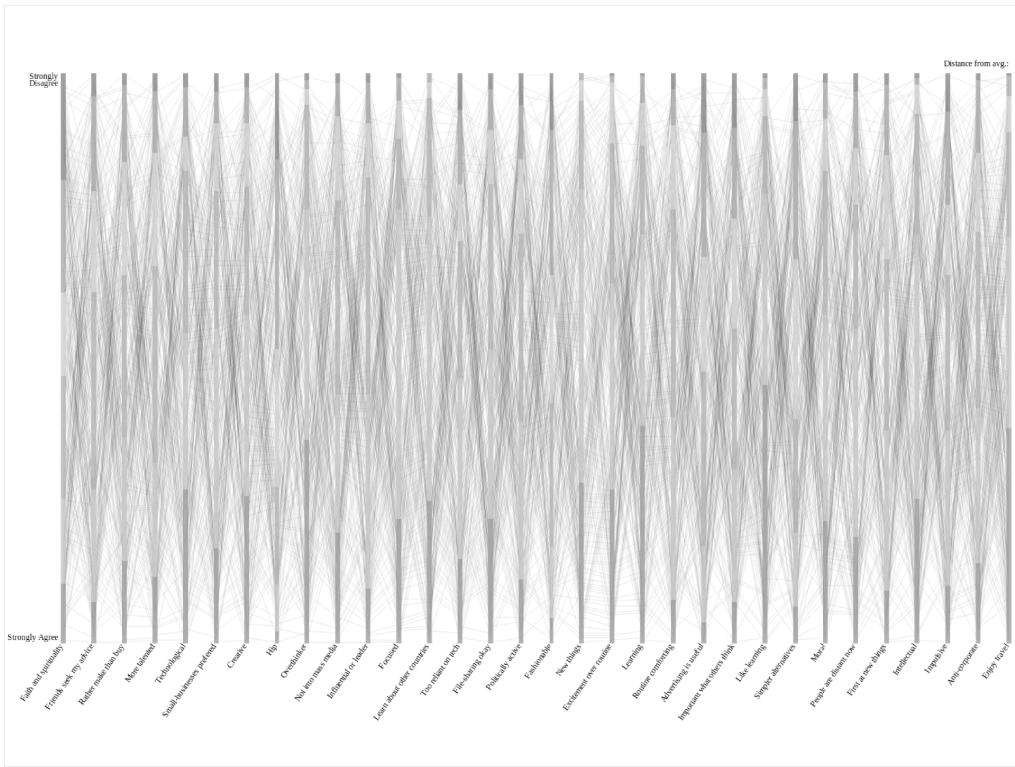


- * Total donations have increased, but donations aren't just from attendees (slide)
- * Have to let go of a concept in order to get down to the truth of things

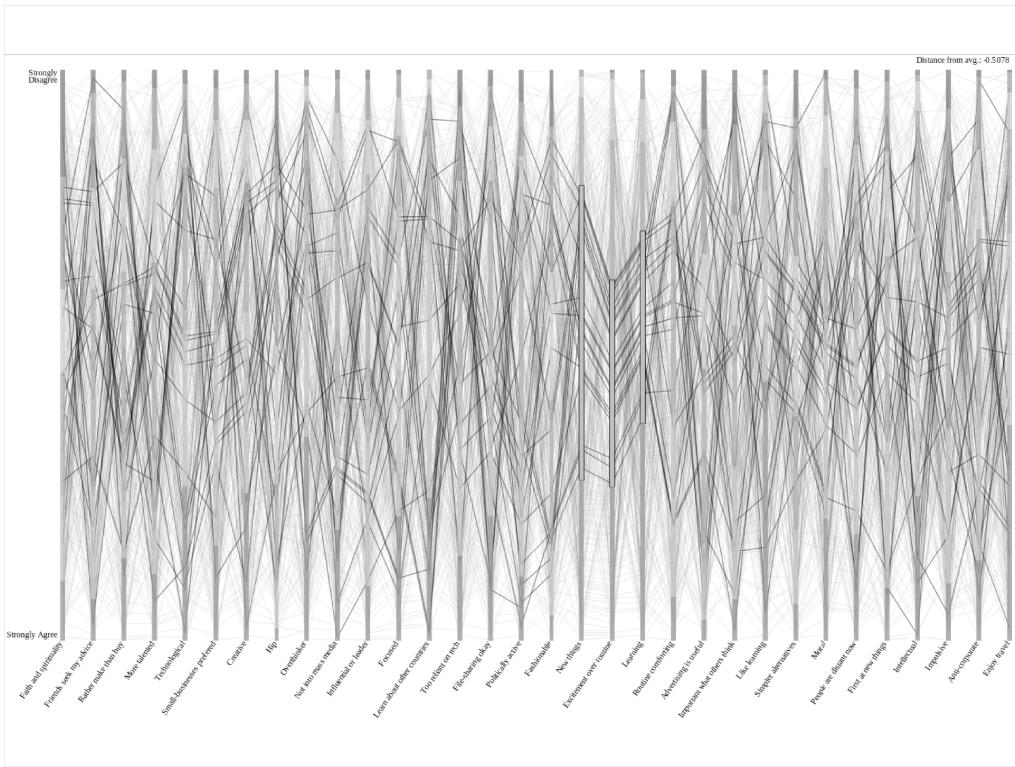


Where do we go from here?

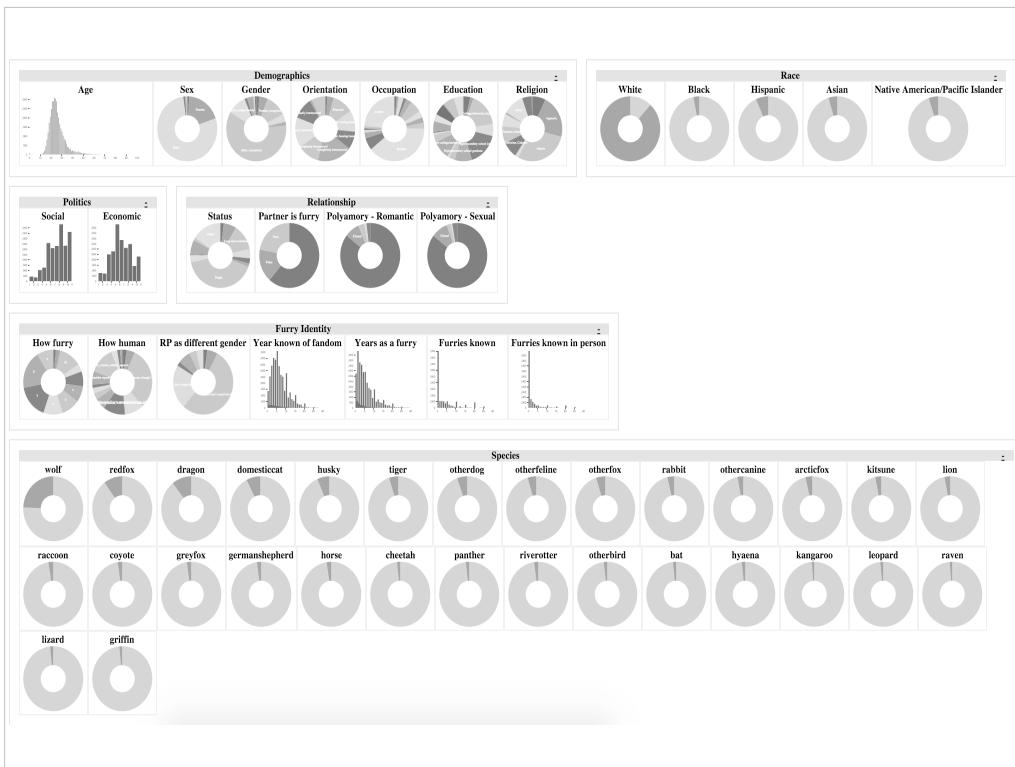
- * Where do we go from here?
 - * This was part of our dialog



* There's a lot of data



* Needs to be sorted, stories need to be found
(slide)



- * What do we need to collect? (slide)
- * Where can studies be improved?
- * Where can we gain more information?



- * (Open for questions, announce other projects)
- * Take a picture of the audience