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QUANTITATIVE METHODS FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCHERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
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HISTORY AND DISCIPLINES

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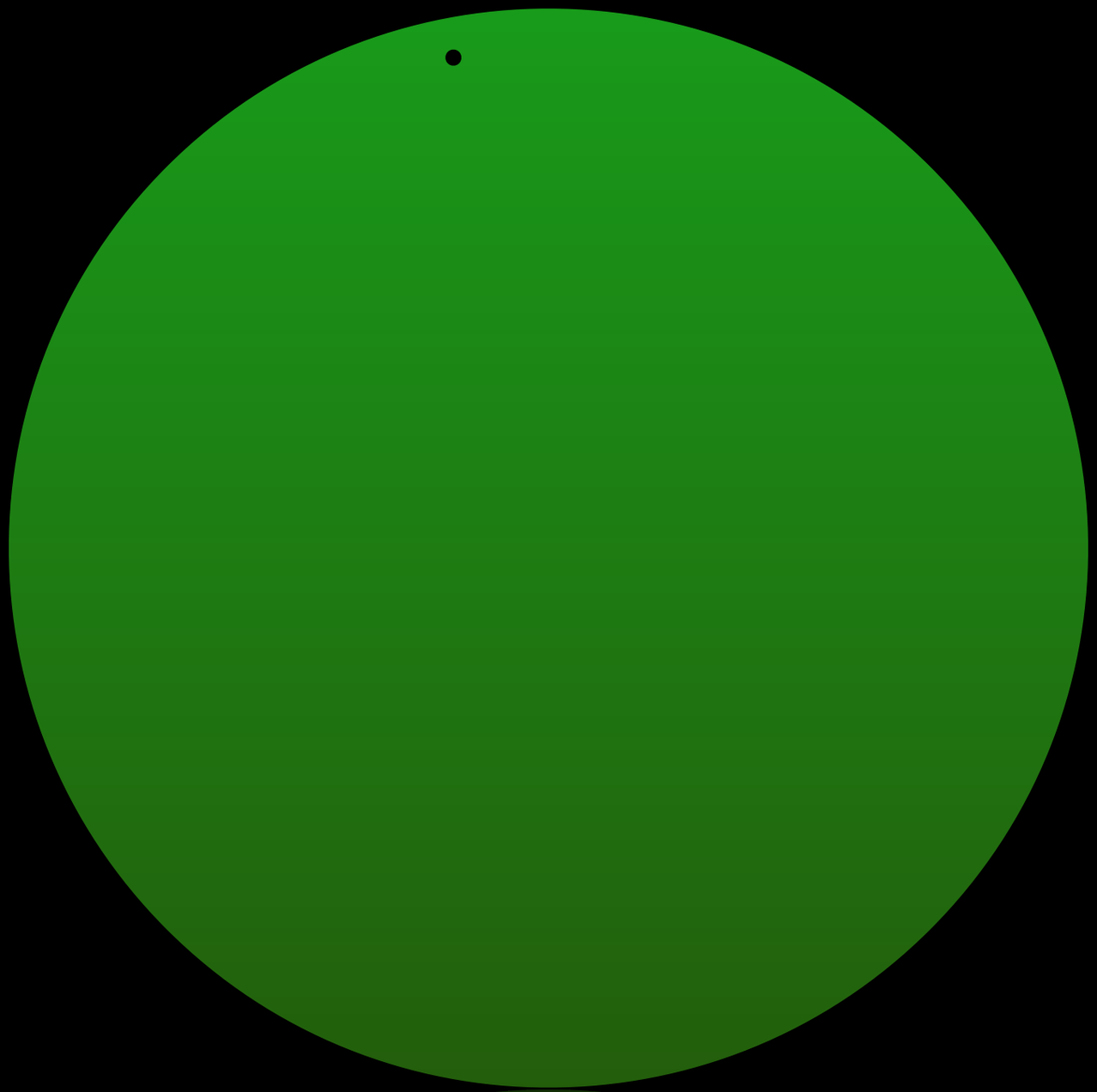
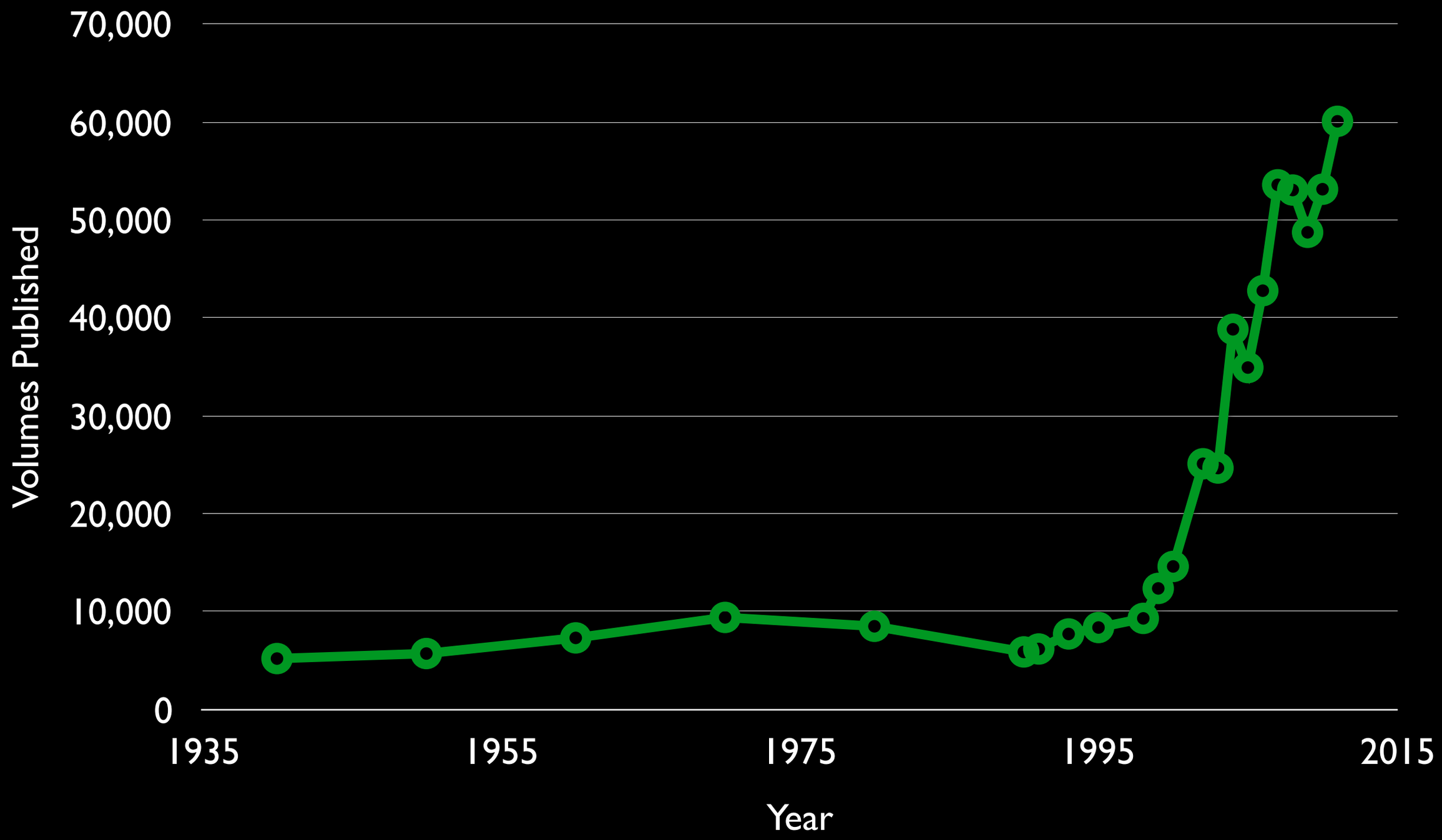
- Concordances and indices
- "Cliometrics" and economic history
- Editions and archives
- Public history
- Media studies
- Content analysis, theory, social sciences

THE PROBLEM OF ABUNDANCE

SIZE OF THE LITERARY CANON



NEW FICTION IN U.S.



CURRENT METHODS

"What can we do with a million books?"

- Content summary (LDA, entity extraction)
- Form and structure (textual analysis, networks)
- Clustering and classification (machine learning)
- Cultural embedding (demographics, economics)

PRACTICE OF QUANT RESEARCH

- **Relations** and **trends** generally more valuable than static analysis
- Don’t need a million objects, but do need “many”
  - Umm … can you be more specific?
  - Not just texts
- Data sources
  - Texts and objects
  - Social data

COURSE DESIGN

- **Assumptions:**
  No programming knowledge,
  limited math and statistics,
  existing humanities expertise and projects,
  desire to evaluate quant methods for personal use

- **Goals:**
  Show (some of) what's possible and how it's done.
  Gain knowledge about next steps and further training.
  Are these methods right for me?

ONWARD TO DETAILS ...