Threat Analysis: Things That Could Spoil Our Party

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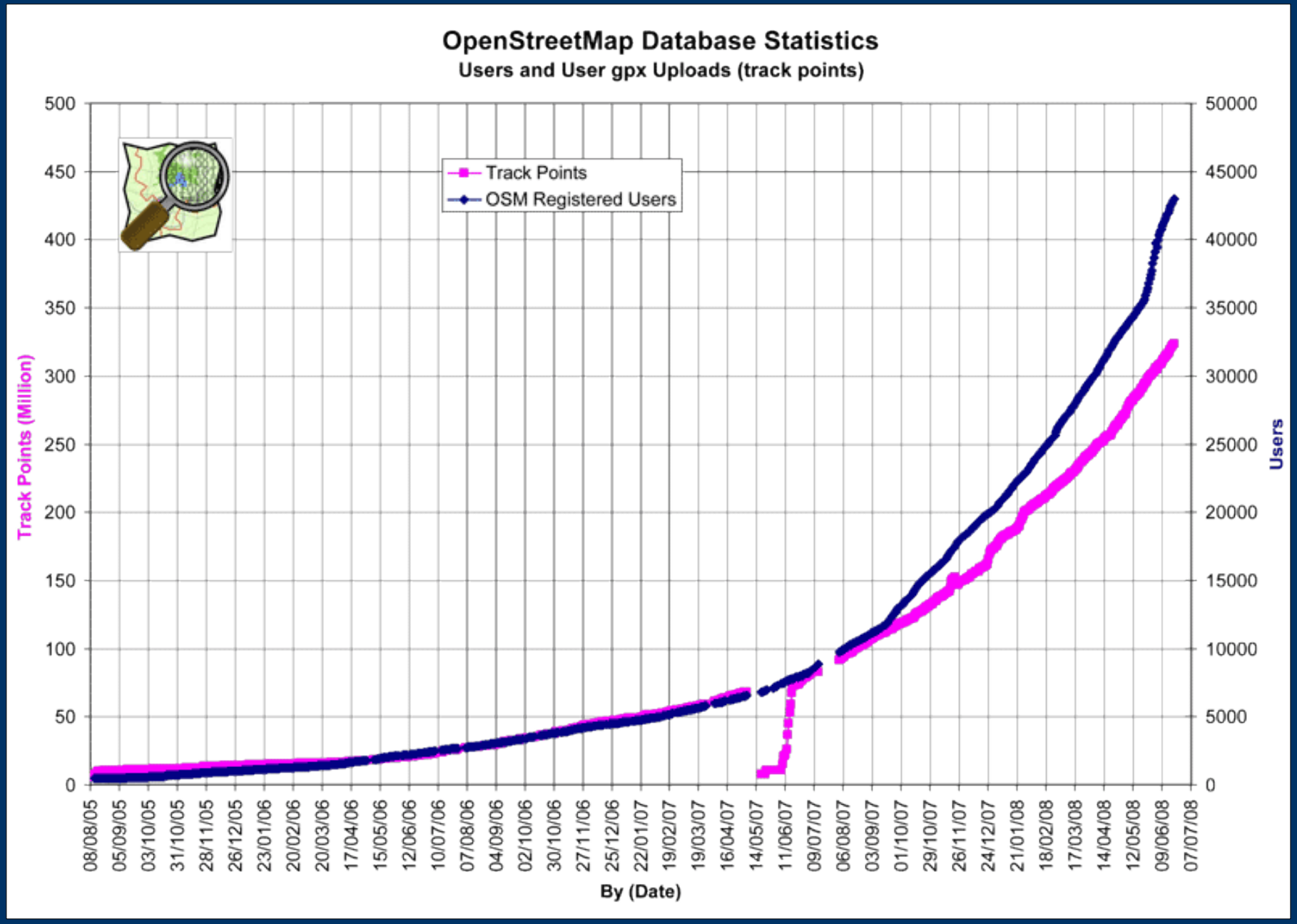
State Of The Map Conference
Limerick, July 12, 2008

OpenStreetMap is great.


OpenStreetMap Database Statistics
Users and User gpx Uploads (track points)
Track Points
OSM Registered Users
Track Points (Million)
Users
By (Date)
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
500
0
5000
10000
15000
20000
25000
30000
35000
40000
45000
50000
08/08/05
05/09/05
03/10/05
31/10/05
28/11/05
26/12/05
23/01/06
20/02/06
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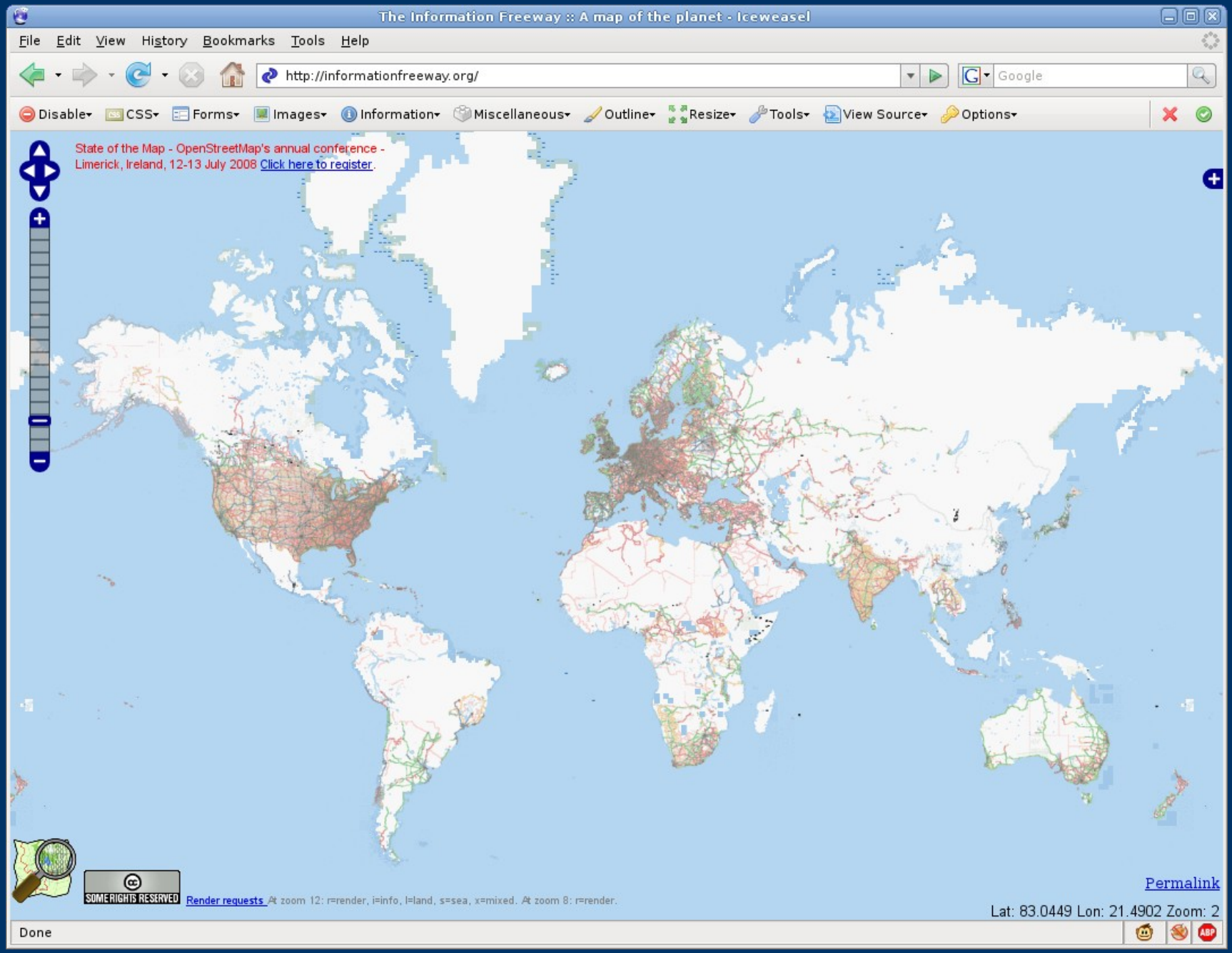
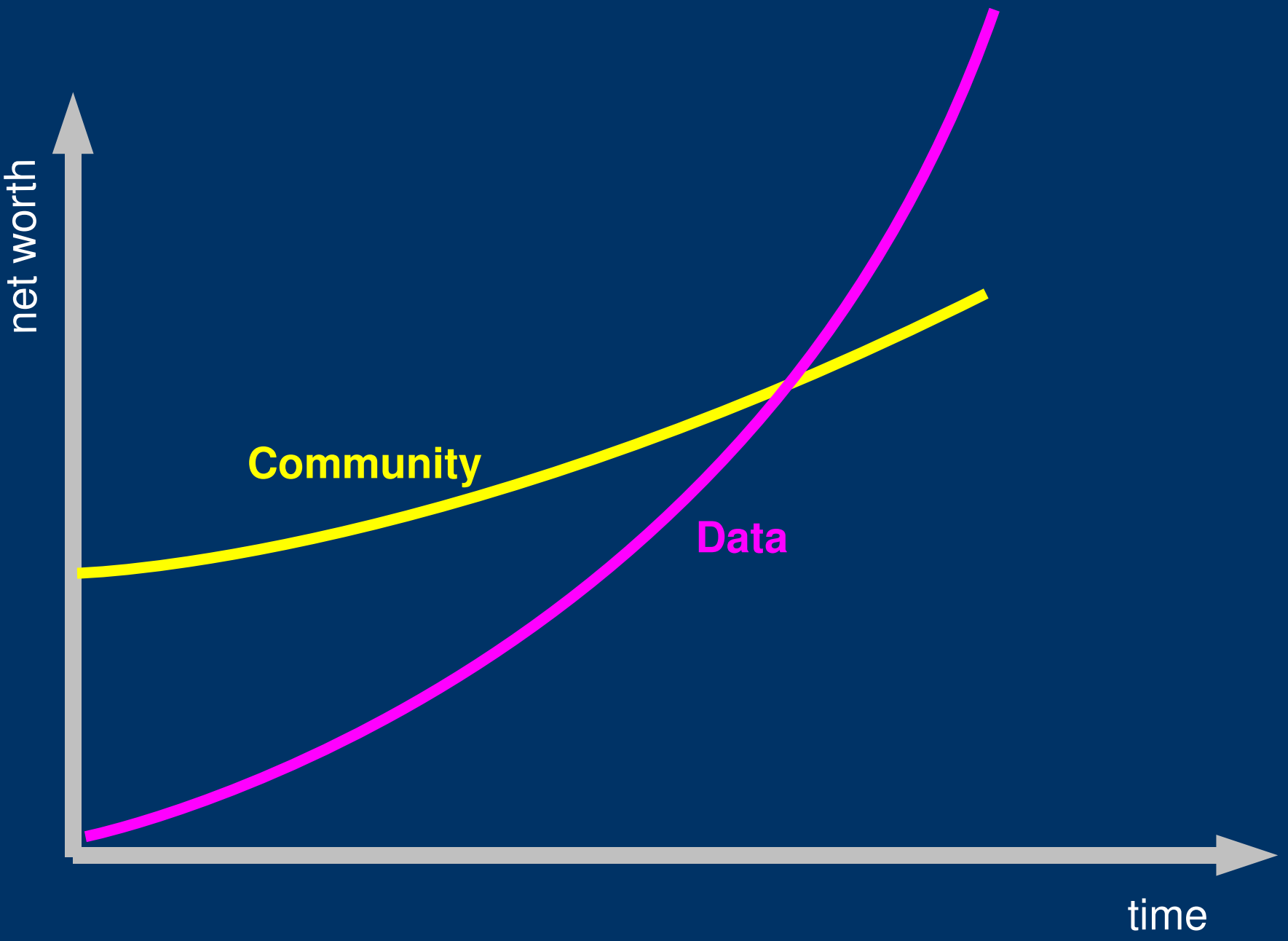
07/07/08

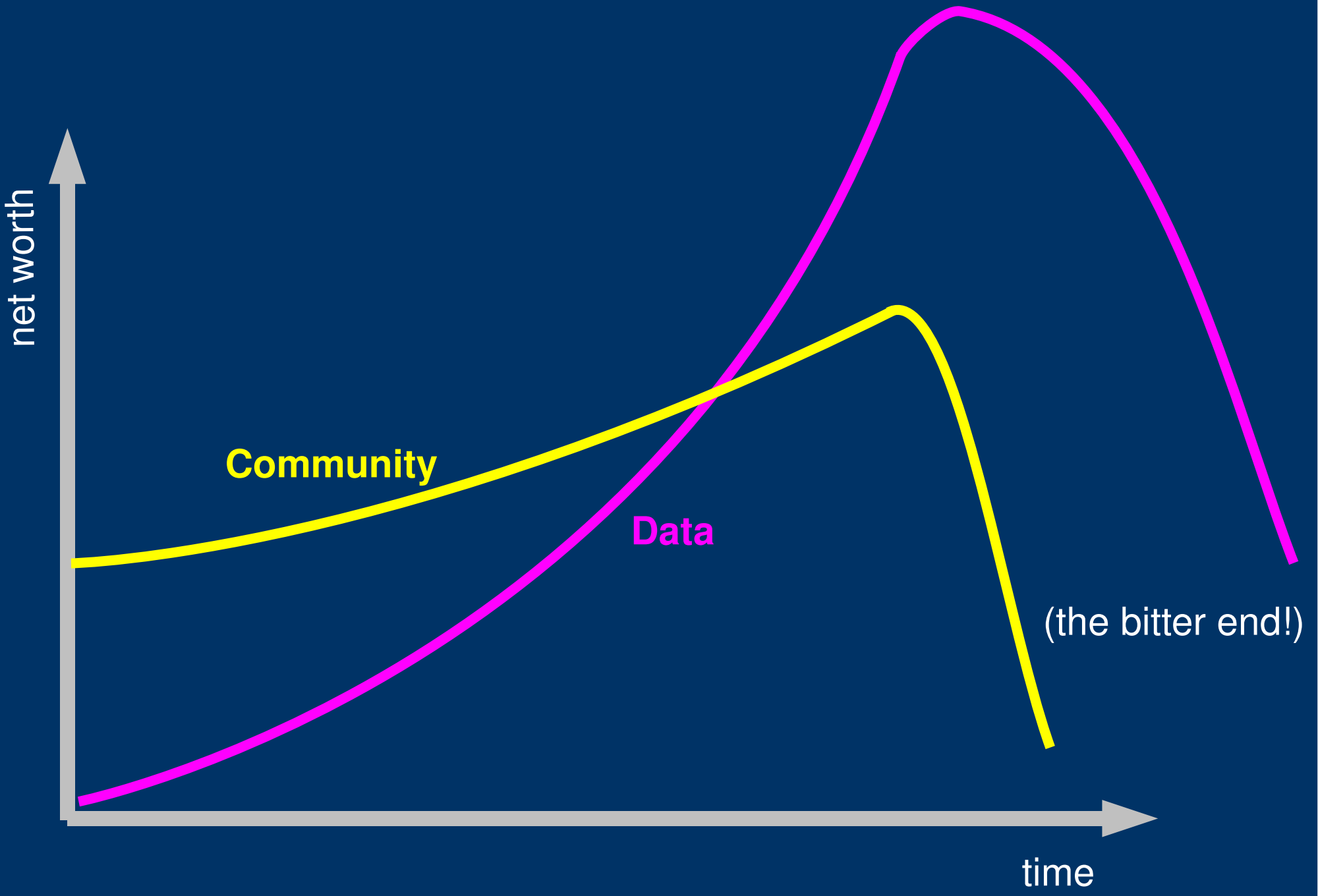

The Information Freeway :: A map of the planet - Iceweasel
File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help
http://informationfreeway.org/
Google
Disable CSS Forms Images Information Miscellaneous Outline Resize Tools View Source Options
State of the Map - OpenStreetMap's annual conference -
Limerick, Ireland, 12-13 July 2008 Click here to register.
SOME RIGHTS RESERVED
Render requests At zoom 12: r=render, i=info, l=land, s=sea, x=mixed. At zoom 8: r=render.
Permalink
Lat: 83.0449 Lon: 21.4902 Zoom: 2
Done

Nobody can take that away from us.

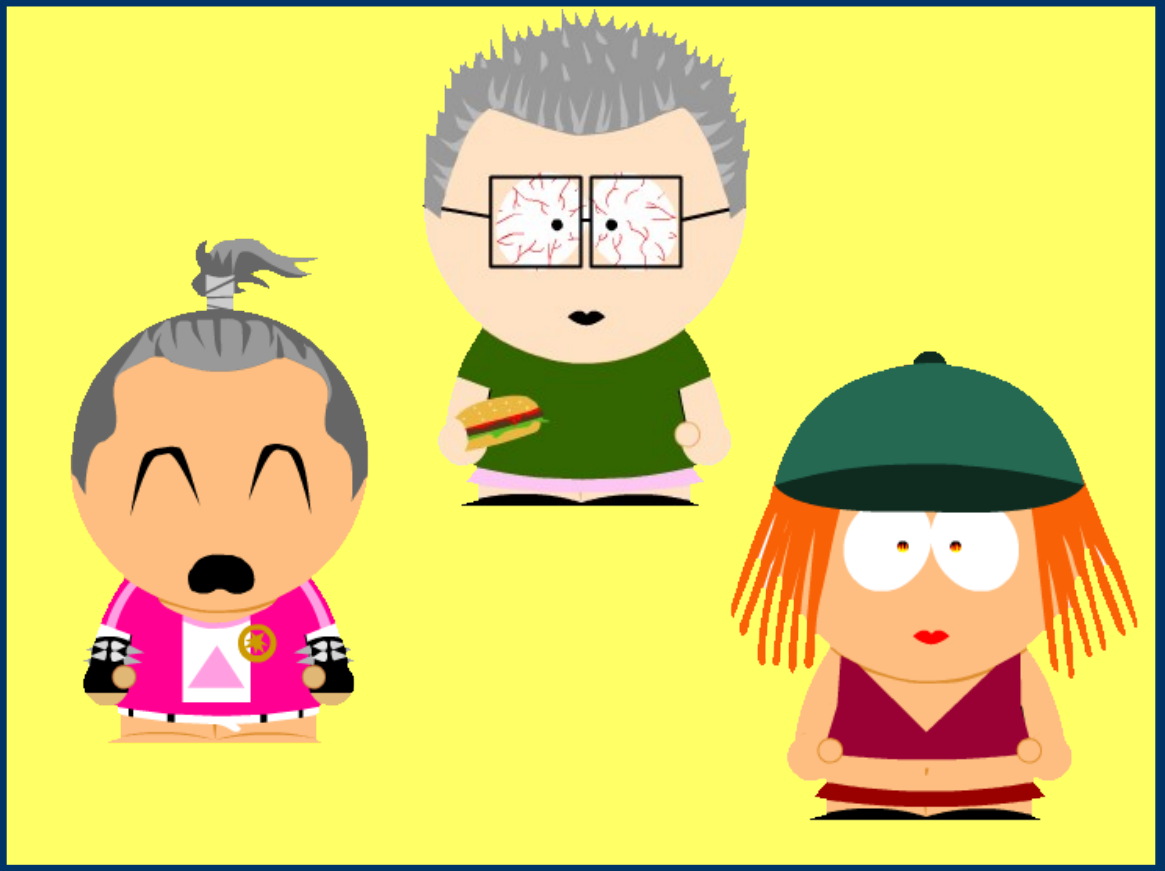
Right?

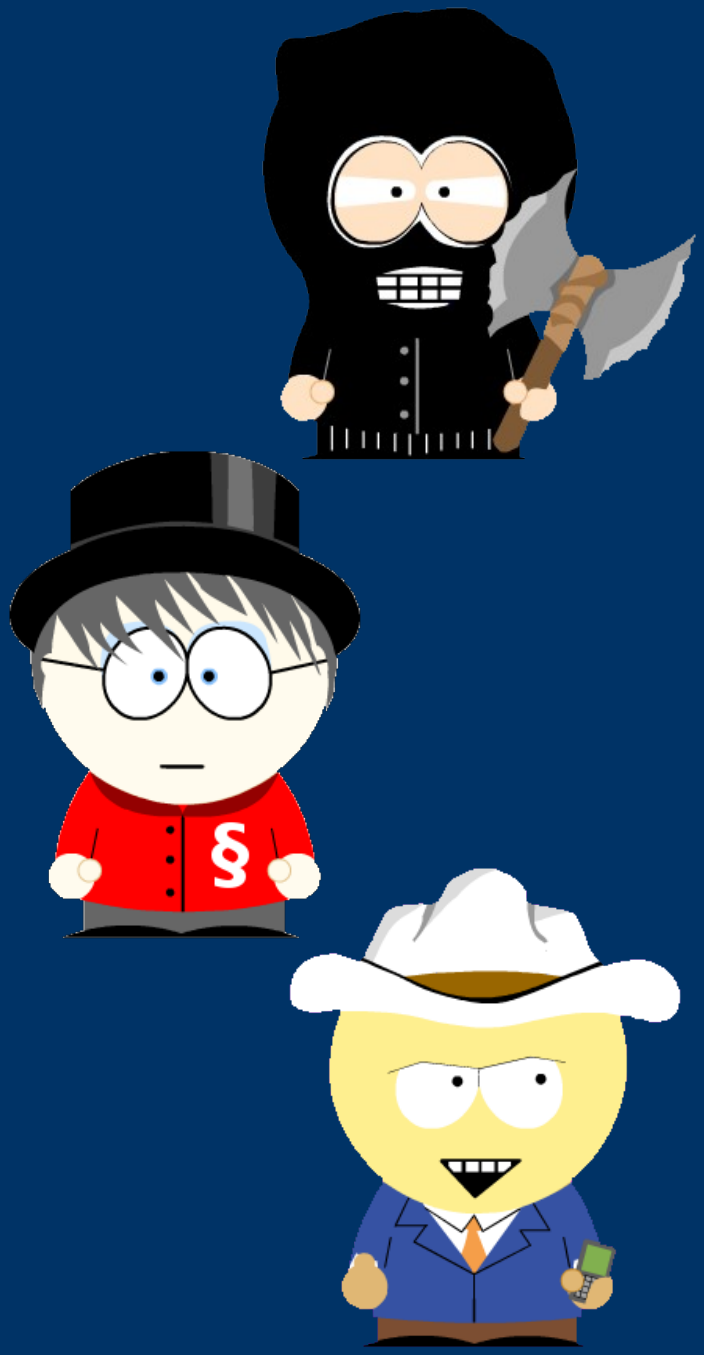
Right???


net worth
Community
Data
time


net worth
Community
Data
(the bitter end!)
time

Happy OSM country where the sun always shines!





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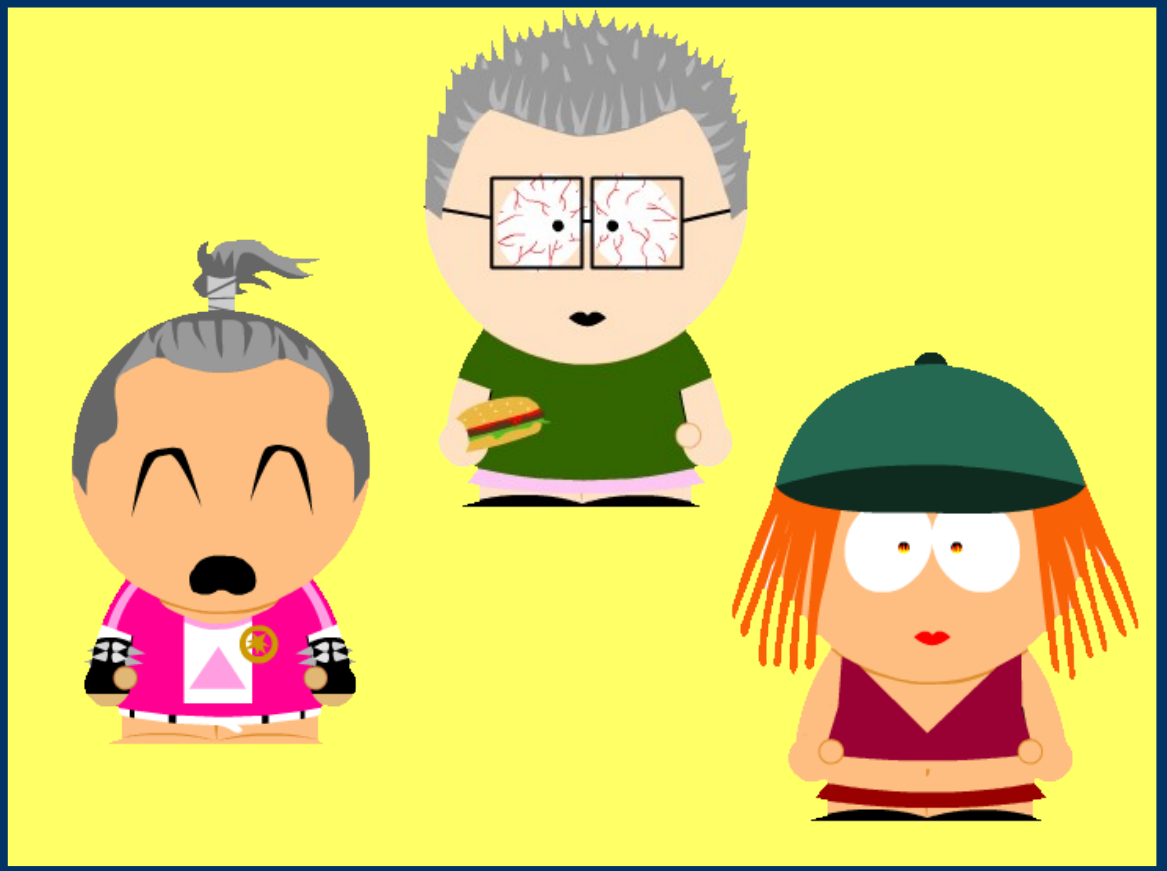

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- Other legal changes

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  → might drive OSM underground

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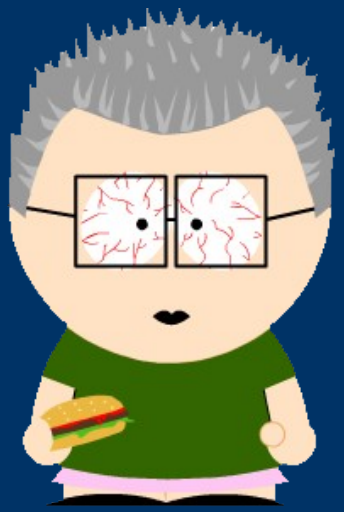
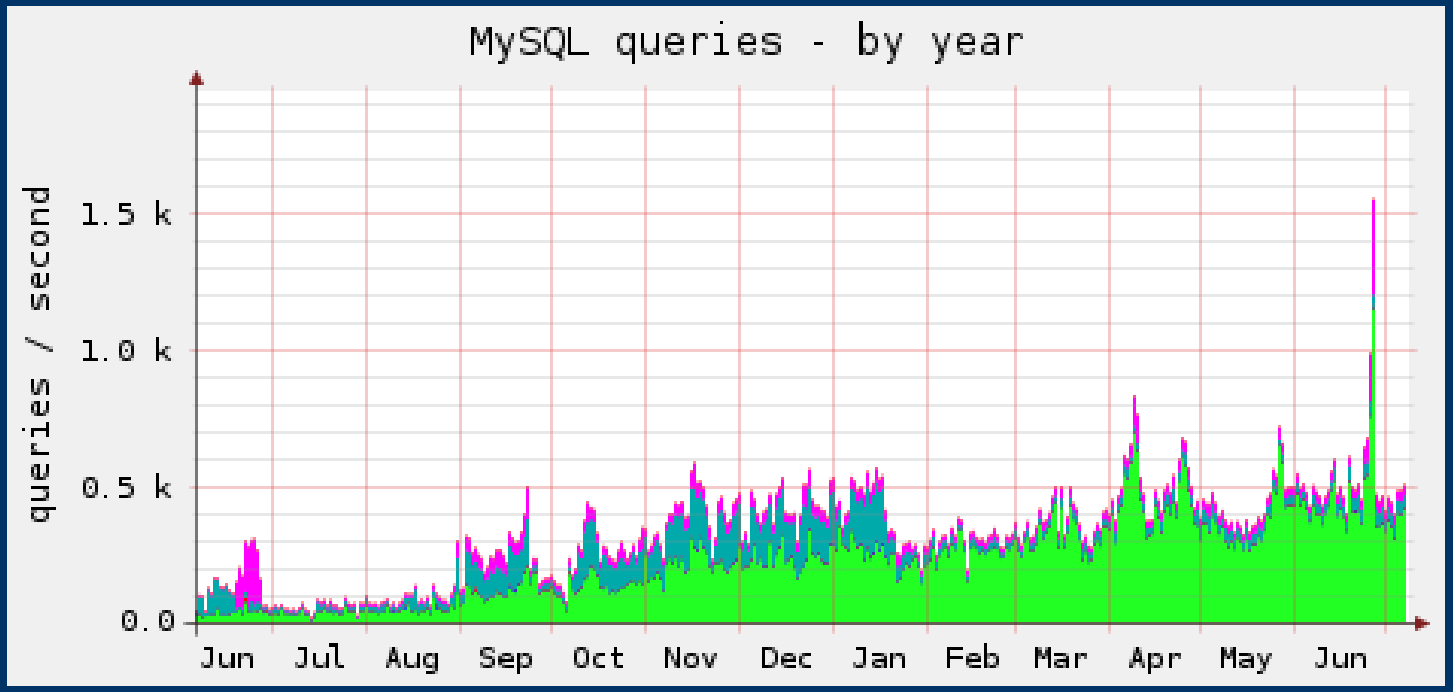
- Competition outperforms us on a free license
  → why worry!

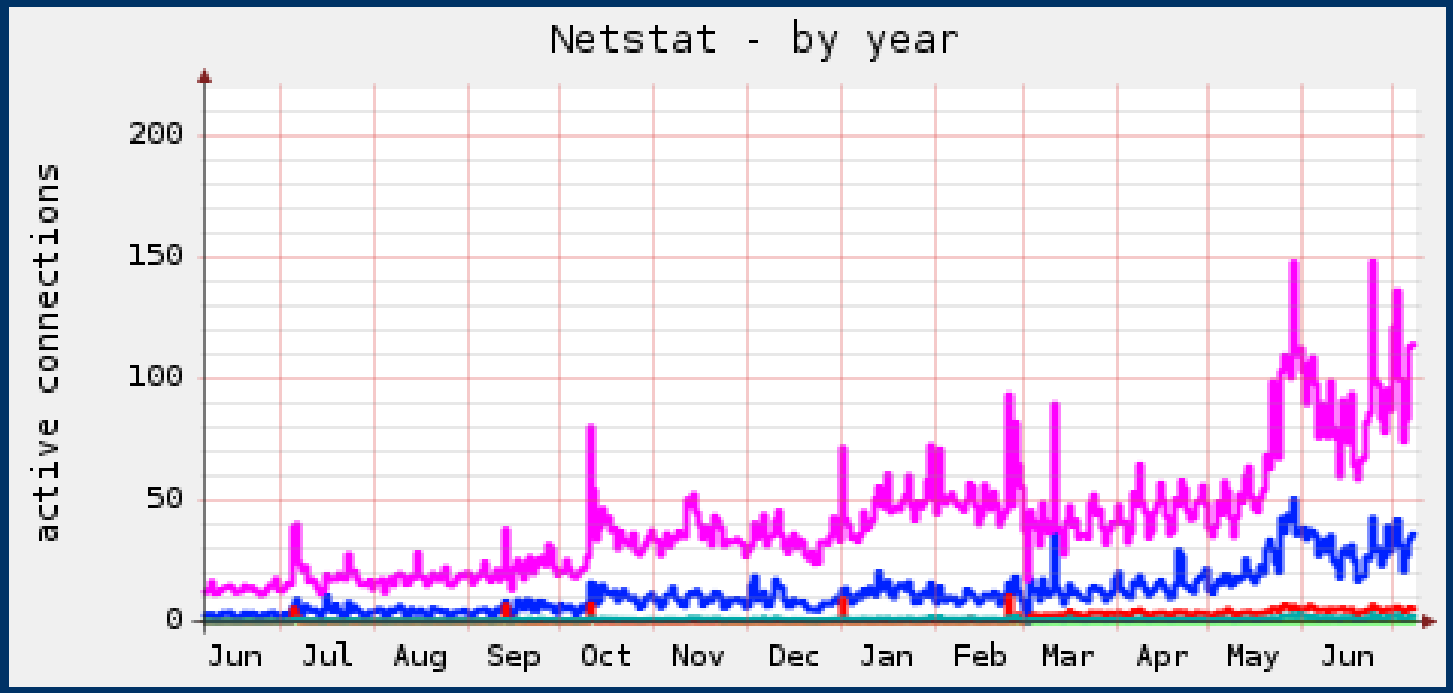


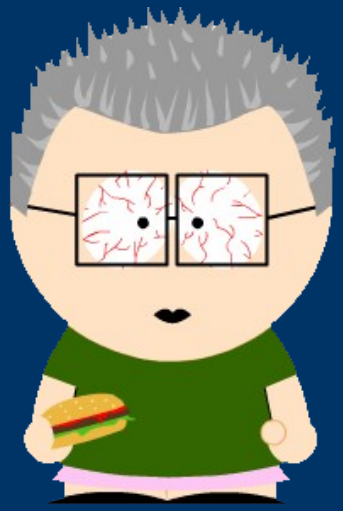
Technical threats

db


MySQL queries - by year
queries / second
1.5 k
1.0 k
0.5 k
0.0
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun

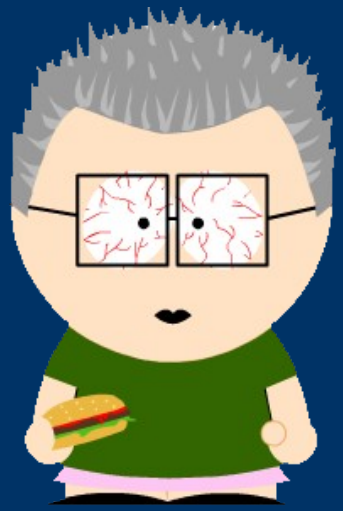
tile


Netstat - by year
active connections
200
150
100
50
0
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun



Technical threats

- Single point of failure for write accesses (“world is our mirror” for reading)
- Ill-prepared for the kind of massive request spikes that would result from e.g. being “slashdotted”



Technical threats

- Don't need 24/7 service but must not alienate community; already near impossible to take system offline for a weekend
- Pragmatism may lead to short-term solutions
- proven do-ocracy stuff not applicable

Internal threats

~~Unlimited~~ Free Labour

- We're in a competition for the spare time of our community members
- Must remain interesting, worthwile

Community disintegration

- Local/national community changes as data matures; new goals, new processes
- Danger of national communities drifting apart

Community disintegration

- As project gains publicity: who "speaks for the project"? Who takes money from donors, who decides?

- Danger of killing "do-ocracy" (not meritocracy!) and replacing it with power structures.

Losing "openness"

- People becoming over-protective of their work and time invested
- Protection against detrimental edits by newcomers
- More complexity; tendency to command-and-control

License in-fighting

- Anti-Capitalists against Share-Alike fans against PD advocates
- License change necessary but will definitely hurt
- Danger of alienating community members and users

Summary

- External threats are limited
- Technical challenges may be present but not immediately life threatening
- Community is our Achilles' Heel.
- Fix the license!

EOF

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“South Park” figures from www.sp-studio.de