

# Quo vadis IETF?

## Is the IETF (becoming) ossified?

IESG Open Microphone Session

Two minutes per question  
Two minutes per answer

Ignacio Castro  
IETF115 - IESG



# Is the IETF “organisationally healthy”?

- More complex discussions
- Harder to publish
- Influential minority



# Analysing decision making in the IETF

## Published work:

- P. Khare, M. Karan, S. McQuistin, C. Perkins, G. Tyson, M. Purver, P. Healey, I. Castro. *“The Web We Weave: Untangling the Social Graph of the IETF”*. AAI ICWSM, 2022.
- S. McQuistin, M. Karan, P. Khare, C. Perkins, G. Tyson, M. Purver, P. Healey, W. Iqbal, J. Qadir, Ignacio Castro. *“Characterising the IETF Through the Lens of RFC Deployment”*. ACM IMC, 2021

## Project:

- SODESTREAM: Streamlining Social Decision Making for Improved Internet Standards (<https://sodestream.github.io>)



# IETF standardisation process

**Draft  
proposal**

**Draft  
adoption**

**RFC  
publication**

**RFC  
Deployment**

emails

drafts

\*Disclaimer:  
(slightly) different periods of analysis<sup>4</sup>

# Is it harder to publish?

**Draft  
proposal**

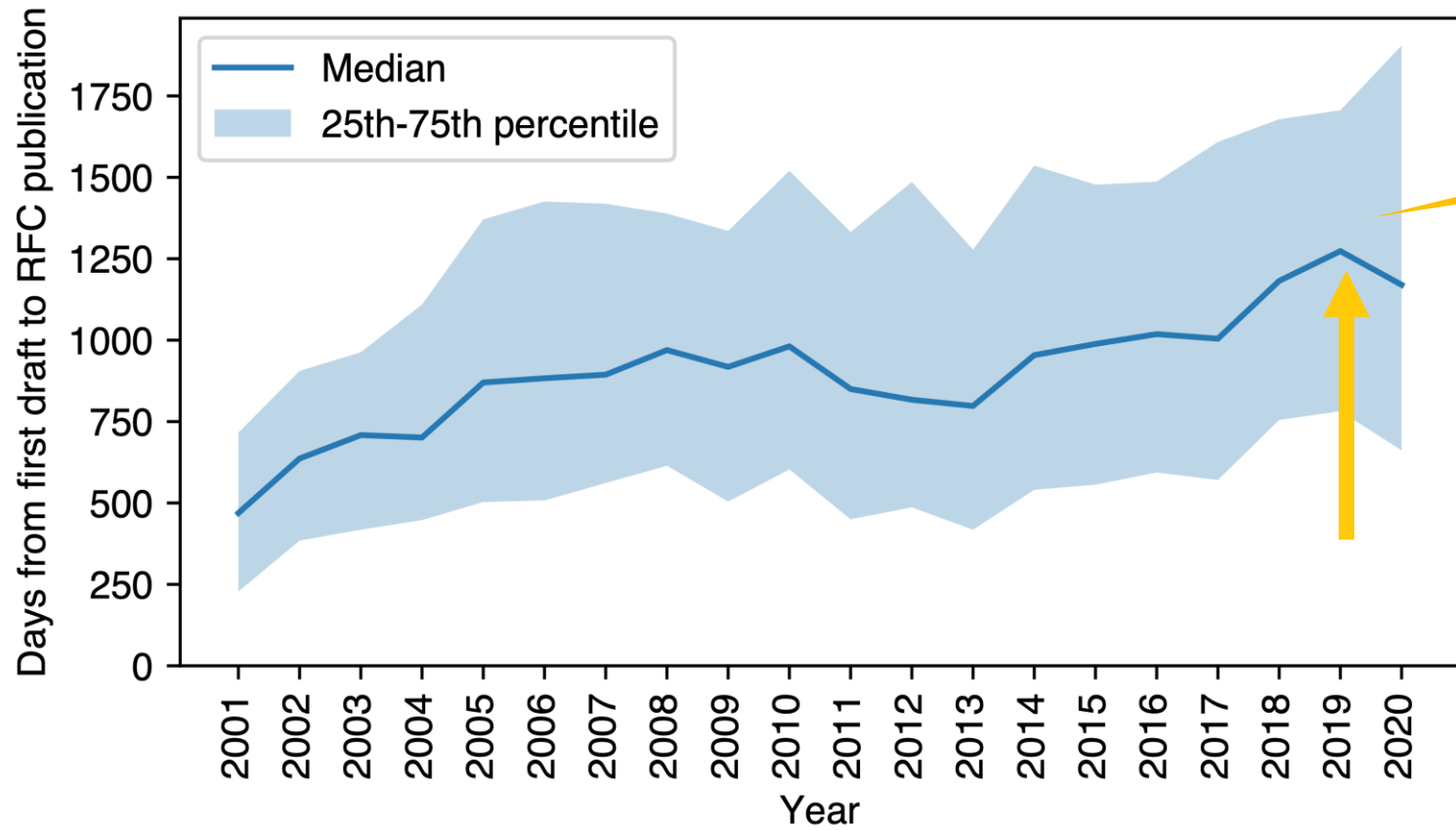
**Draft  
adoption**

**RFC  
publication**

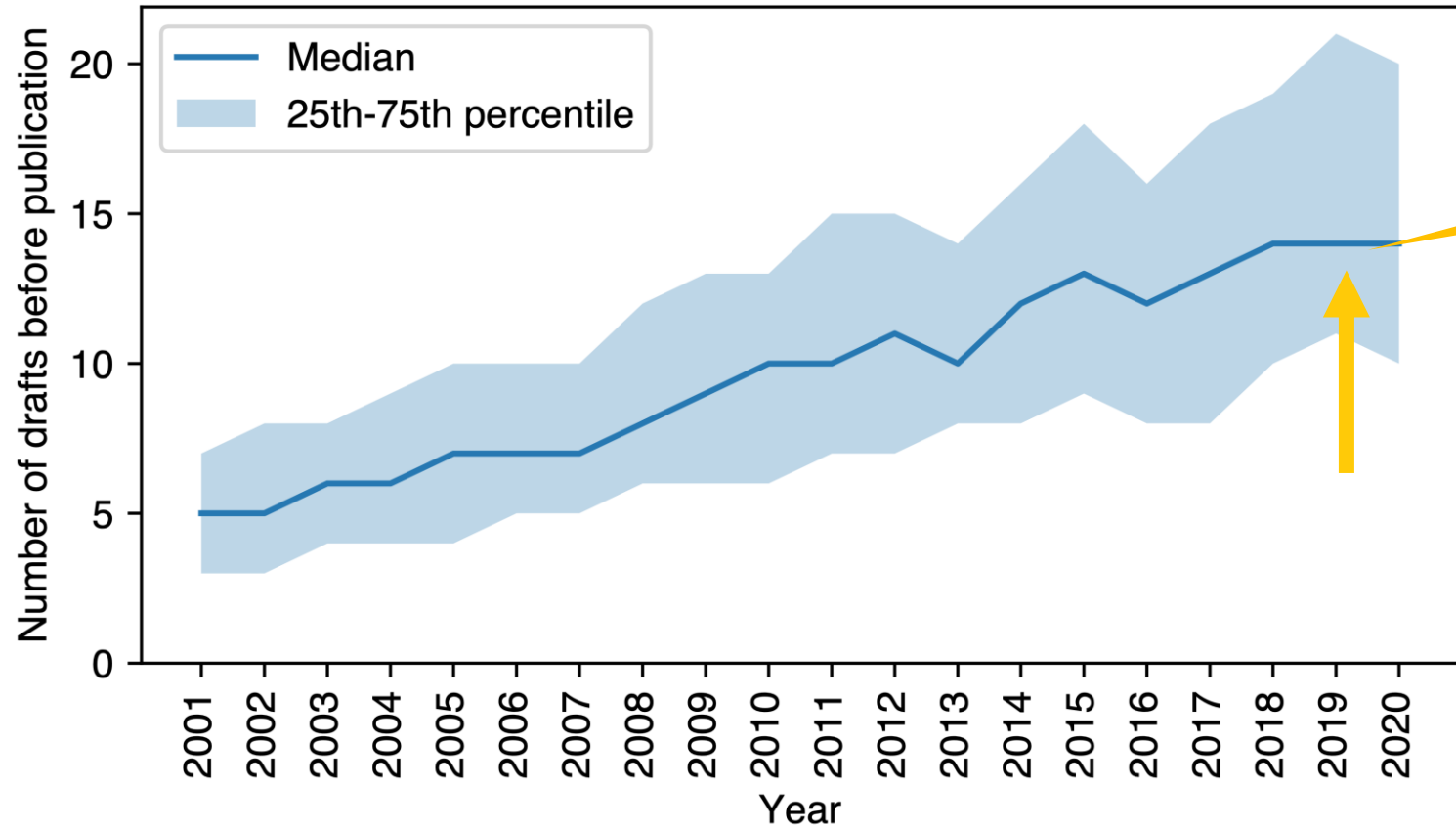
**RFC  
Deployment**

**E-Mails**

**Drafts**



3x increase in time to publish



# drafts pre-RFC publication has more than doubled

# Is it harder to publish?

- Publishing takes longer & more drafts
- More affiliations, areas, authors

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# Are discussions becoming “more complex”?

**Draft  
proposal**

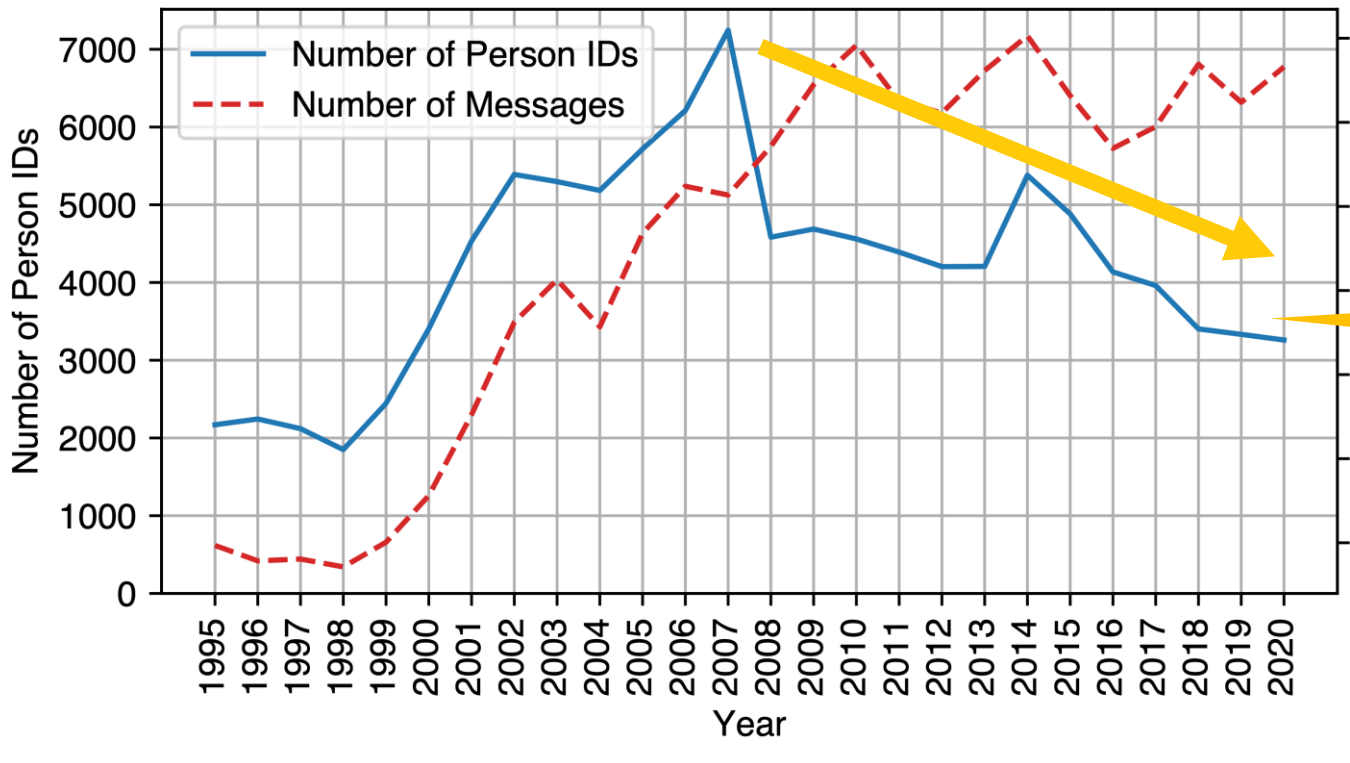
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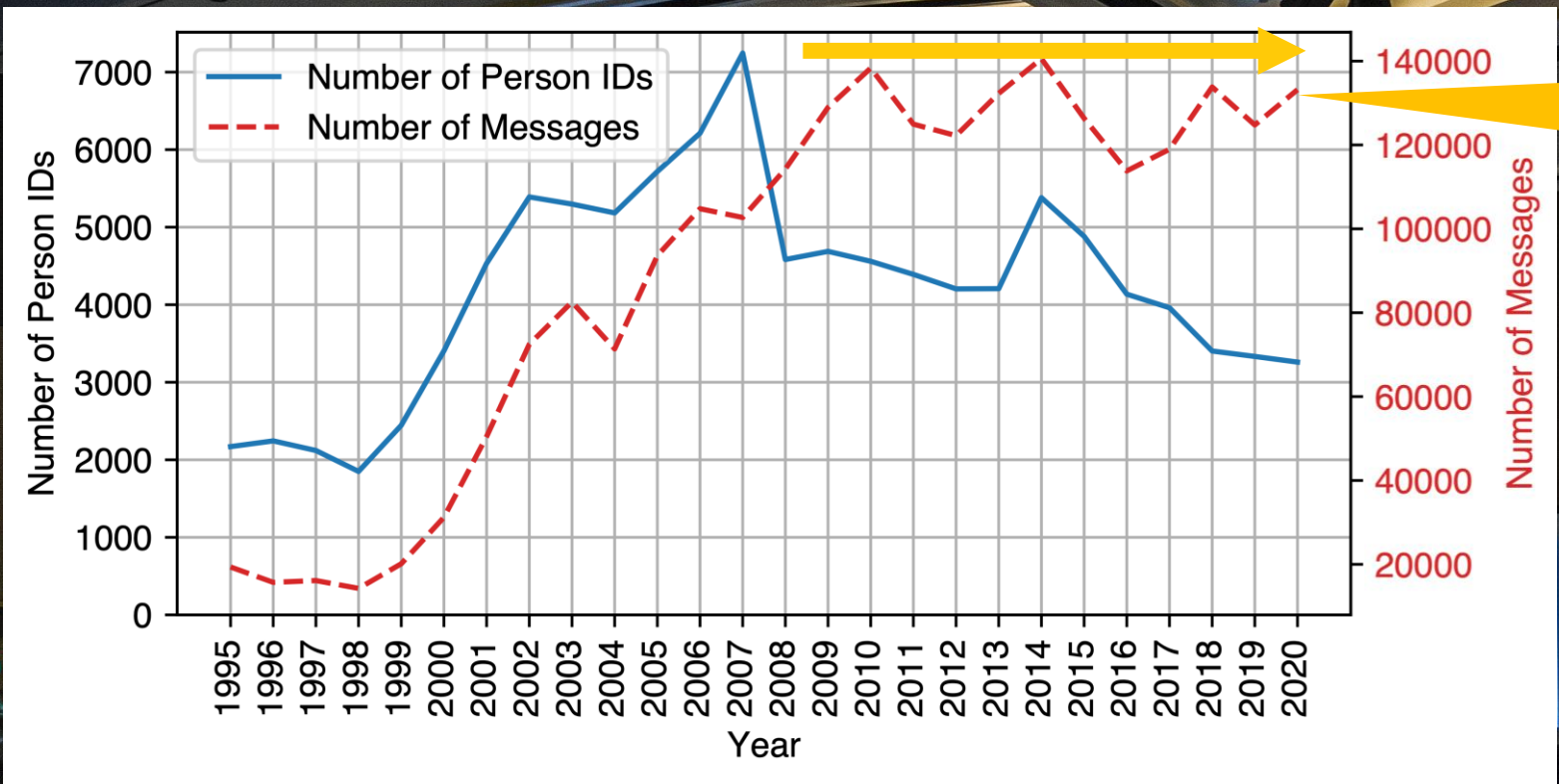
**E-Mails**

Changes to  
draft



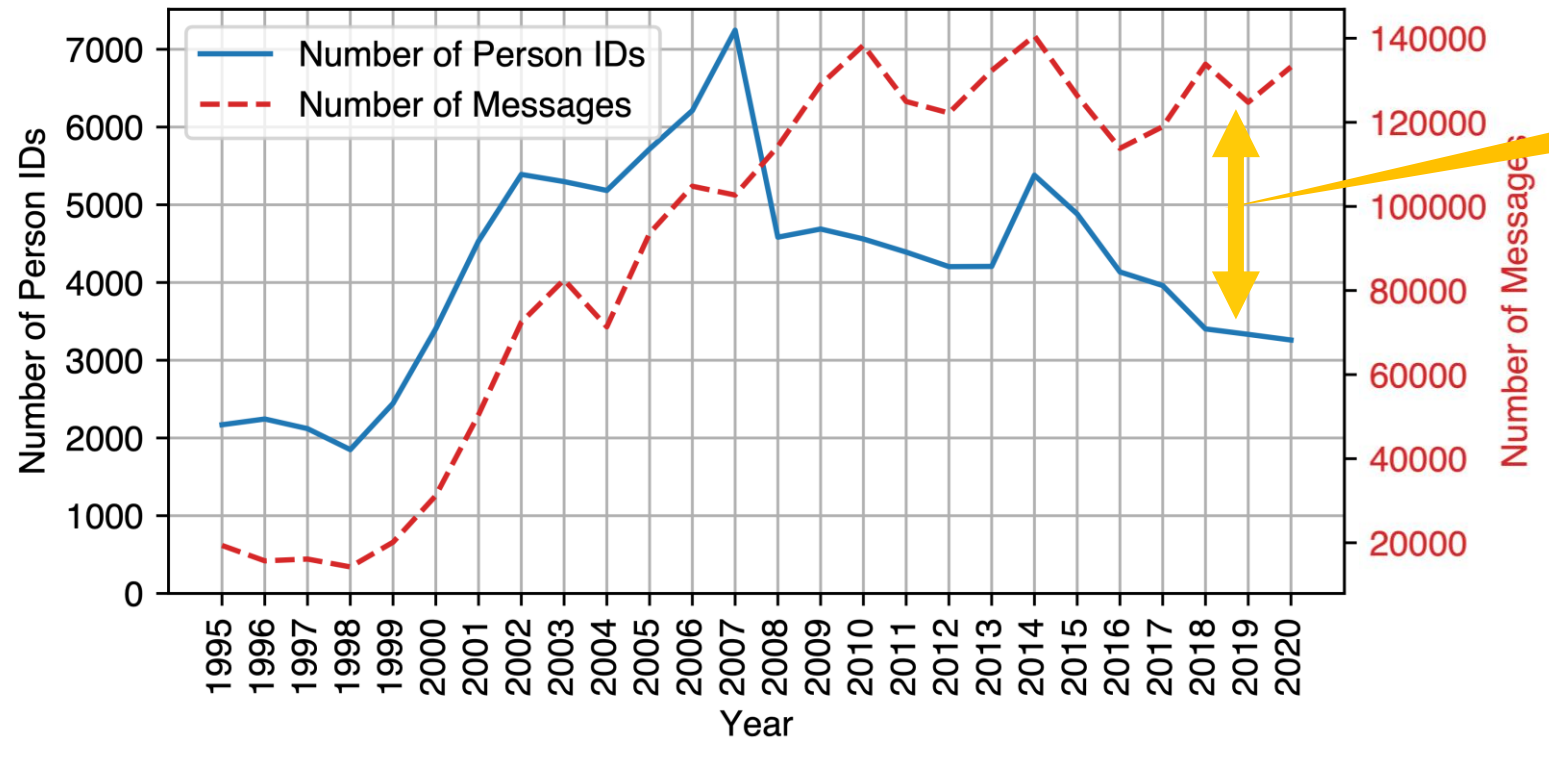
Decreasing number of email participants

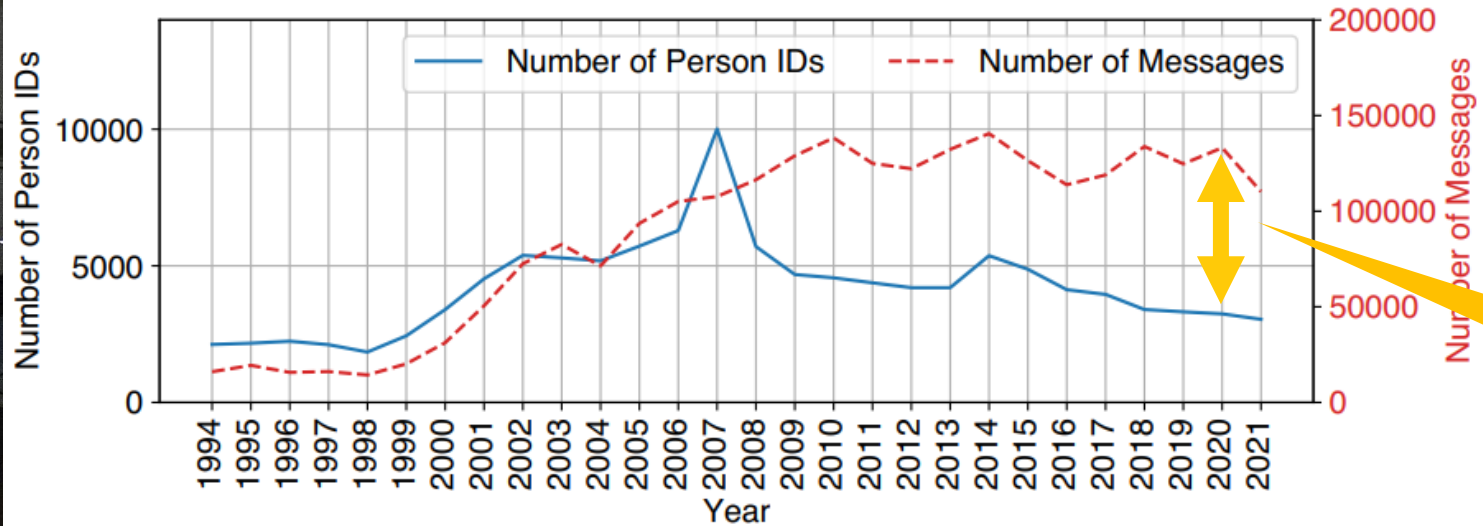
IETF  
 IESG Open Microphone Session  
 Two minutes per question  
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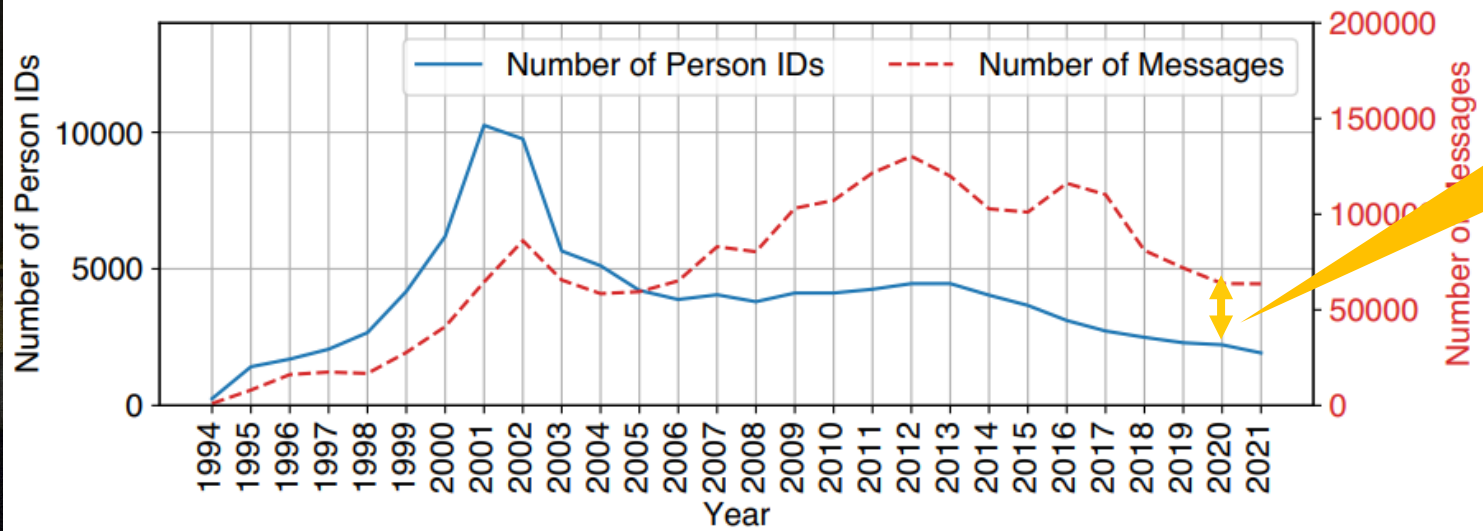
Stable number of emails

Increasingly “chatty”



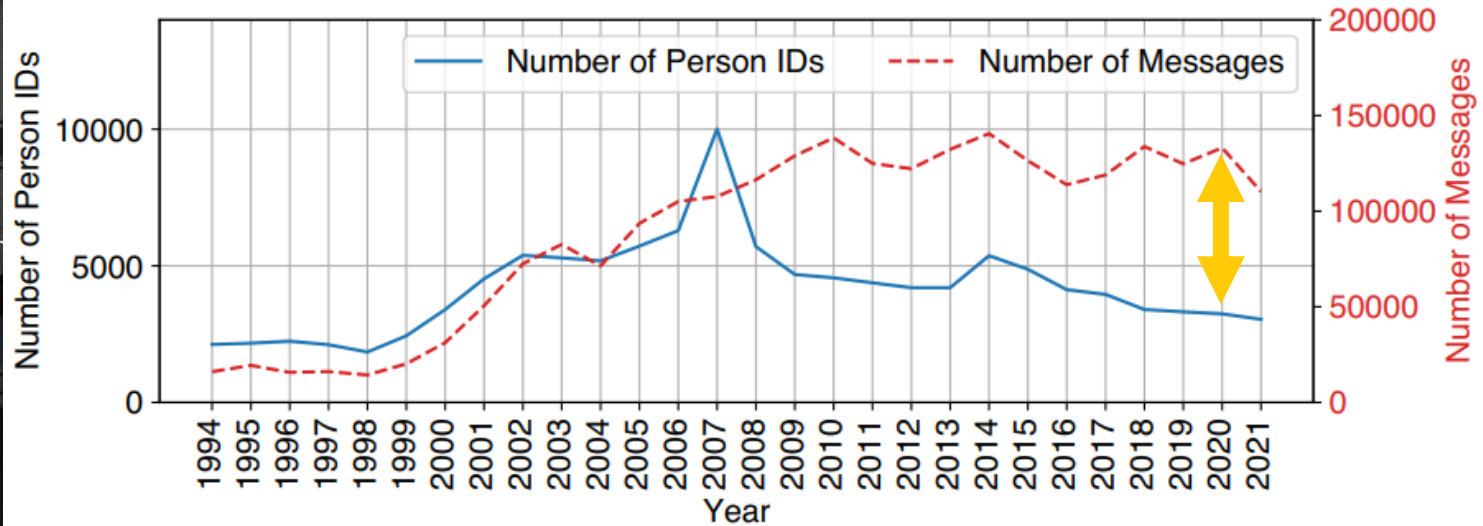


(a) IETF

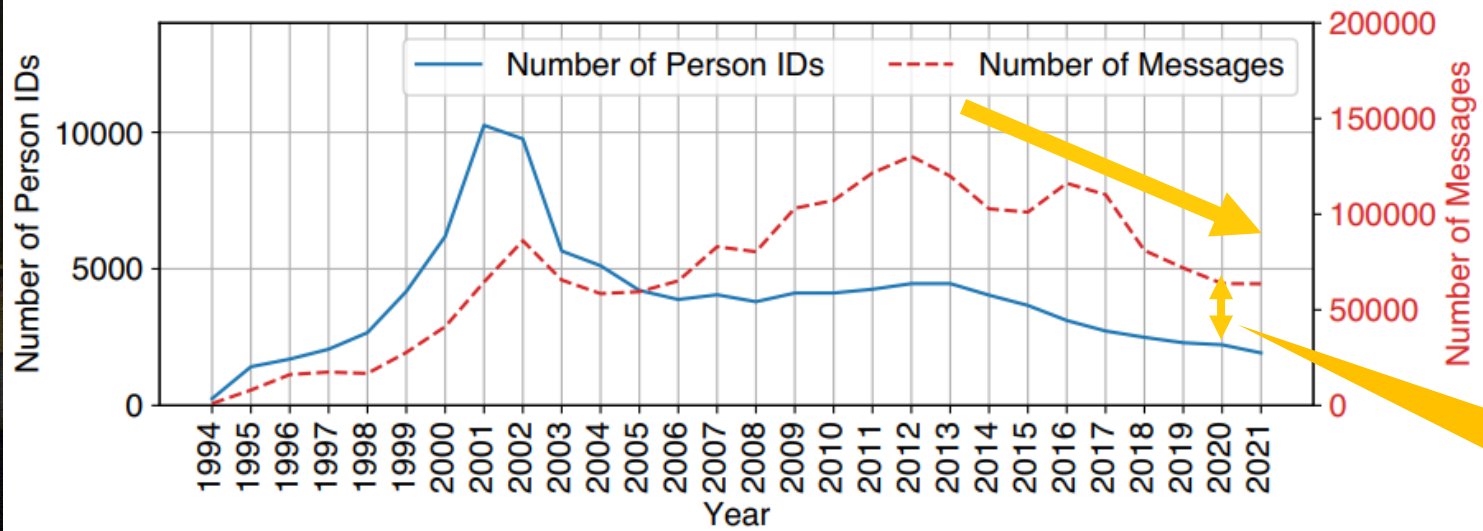


(b) W3C

IETF & W3C:  
Similar trends?

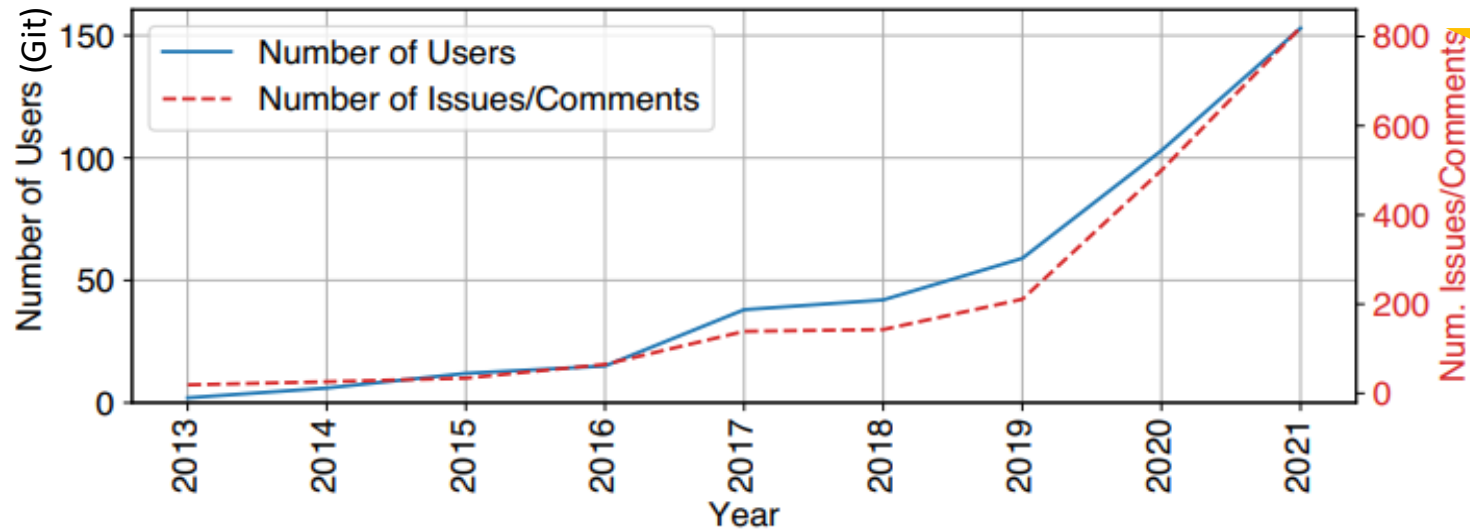


(a) IETF



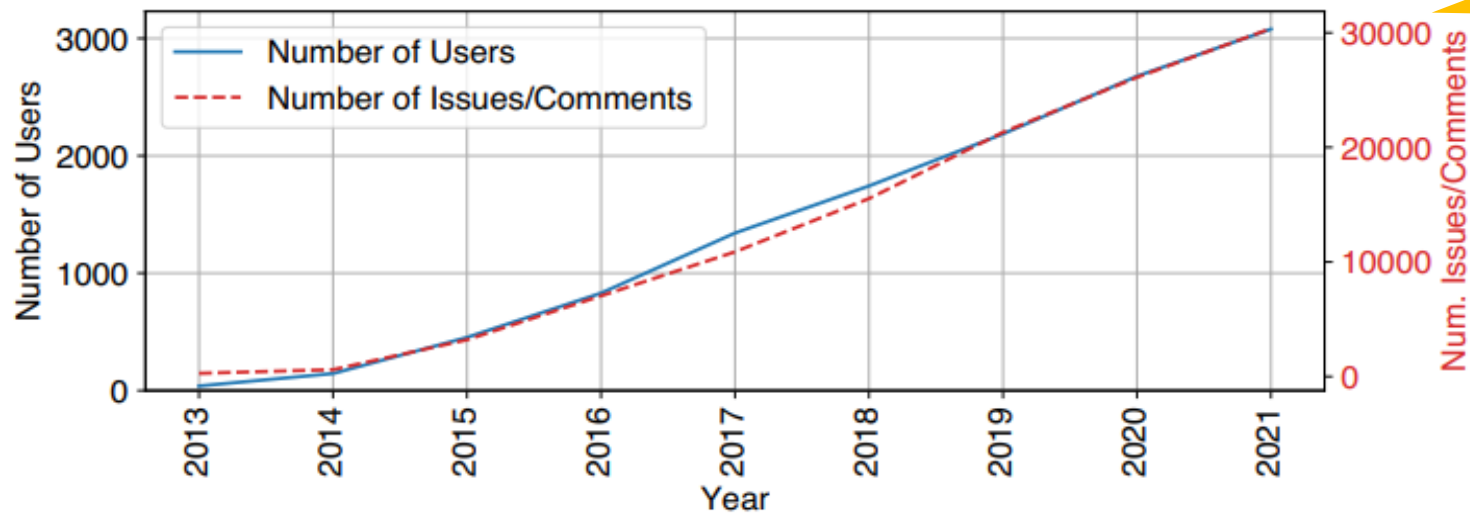
(b) W3C

W3C:  
 Similar decline in participants  
 Greater decline in mails



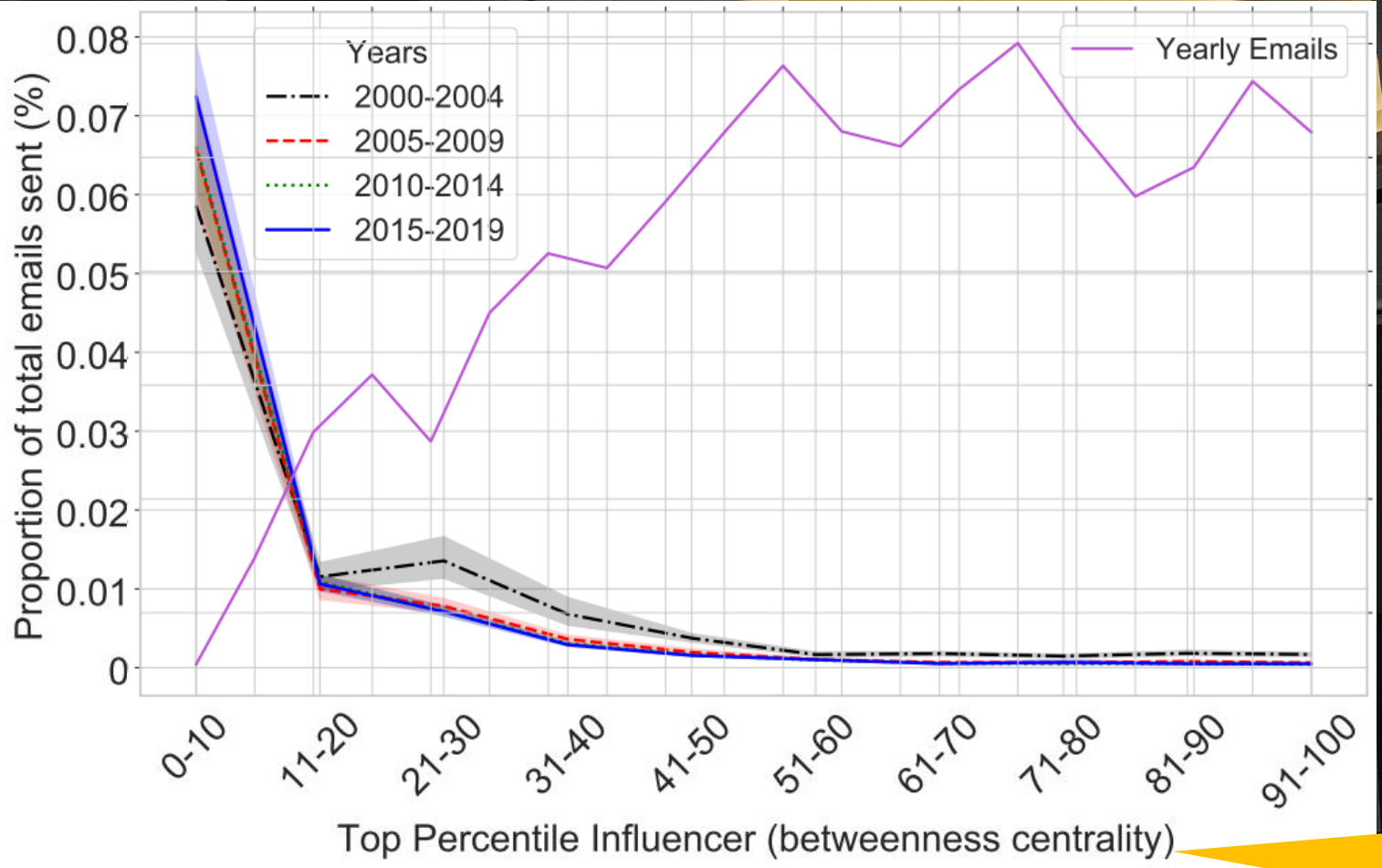
**IETF**

IETF:  
Growing but restricted Git uptake



**W3C**

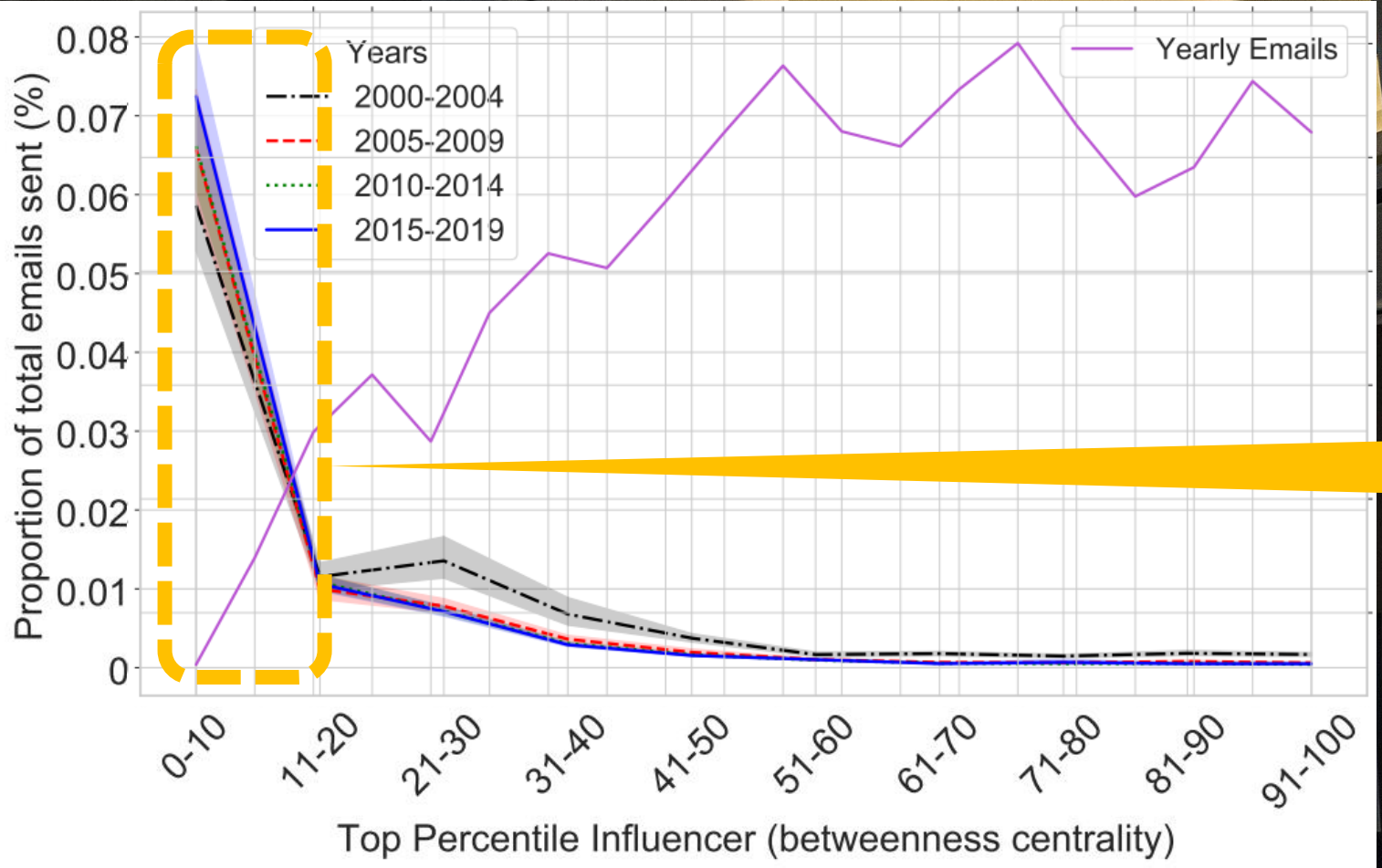
W3C:  
Git has replaced mails (mostly)



More influence -----> less influence

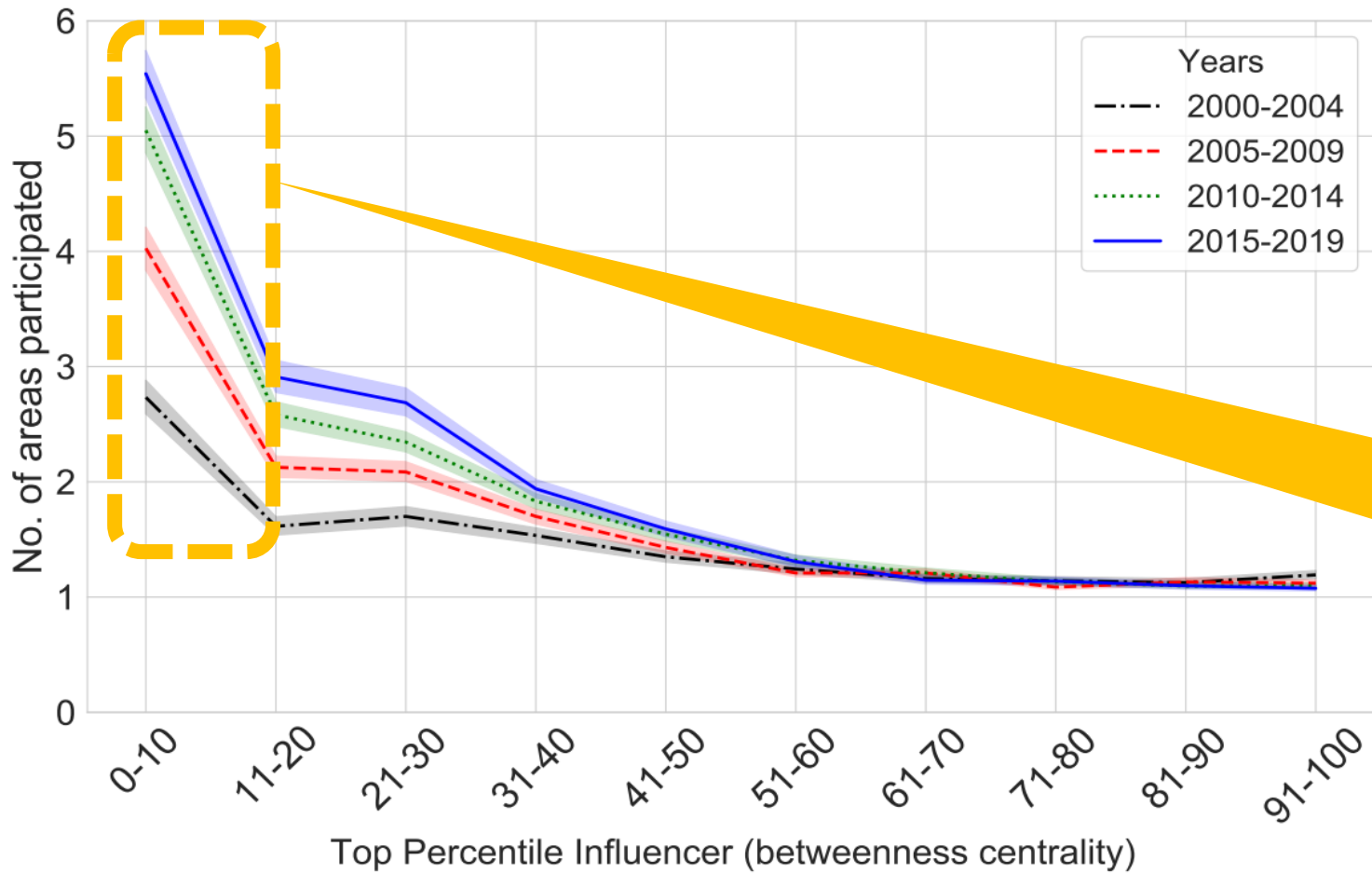
- Graph (email participants)
- Betweenness ~influence
- Influence percentiles (+→-)





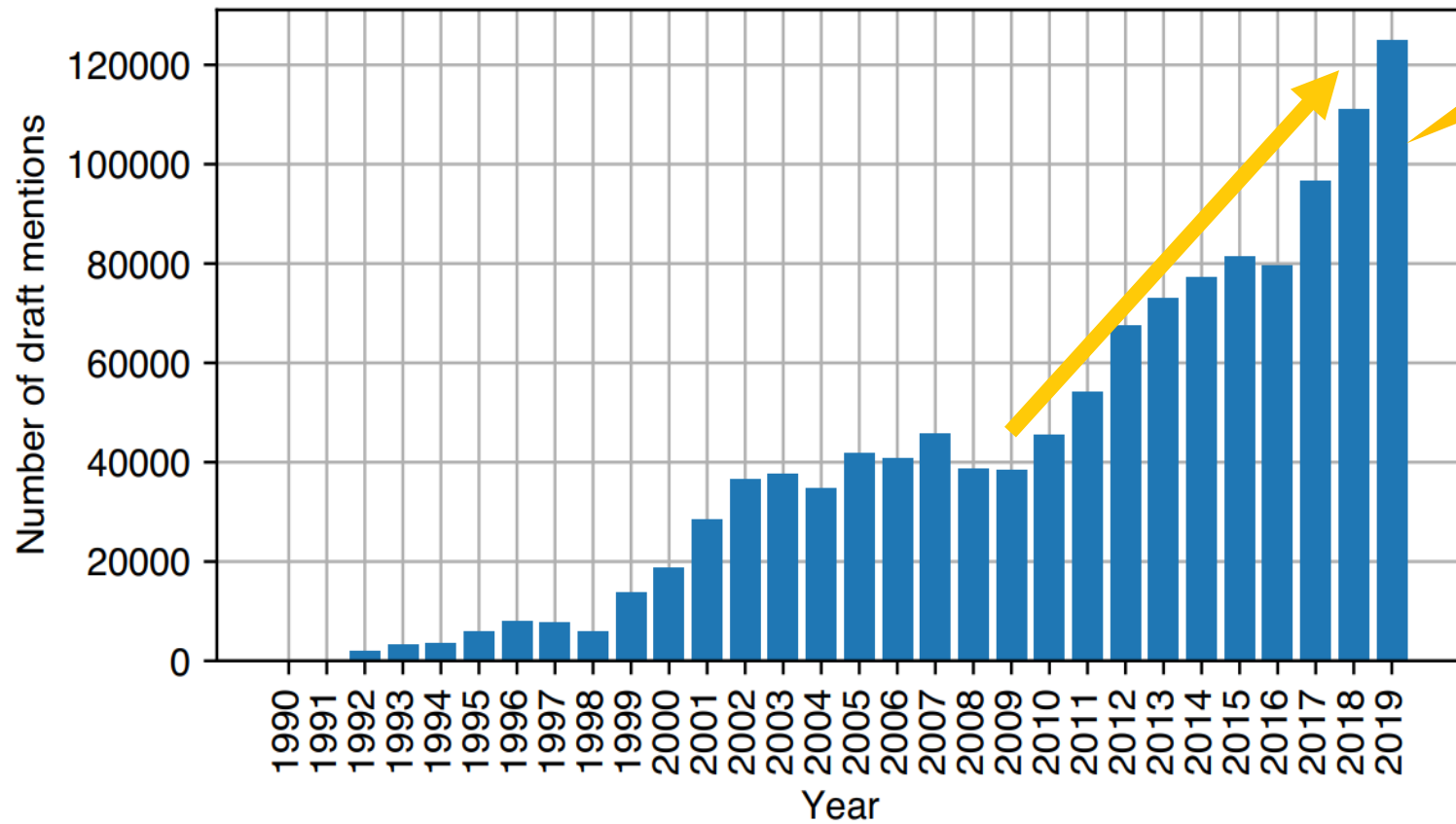
An influential minority dominates the email discussions

More influence -----> less influence



- More areas discussed
- Influential participants discuss more areas

More influence -----> less influence



Explosion in the number of draft mentions in the emails

# Are discussions becoming “more complex”?

- “Chatty”
- Multi-area discussions
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Changes to  
draft

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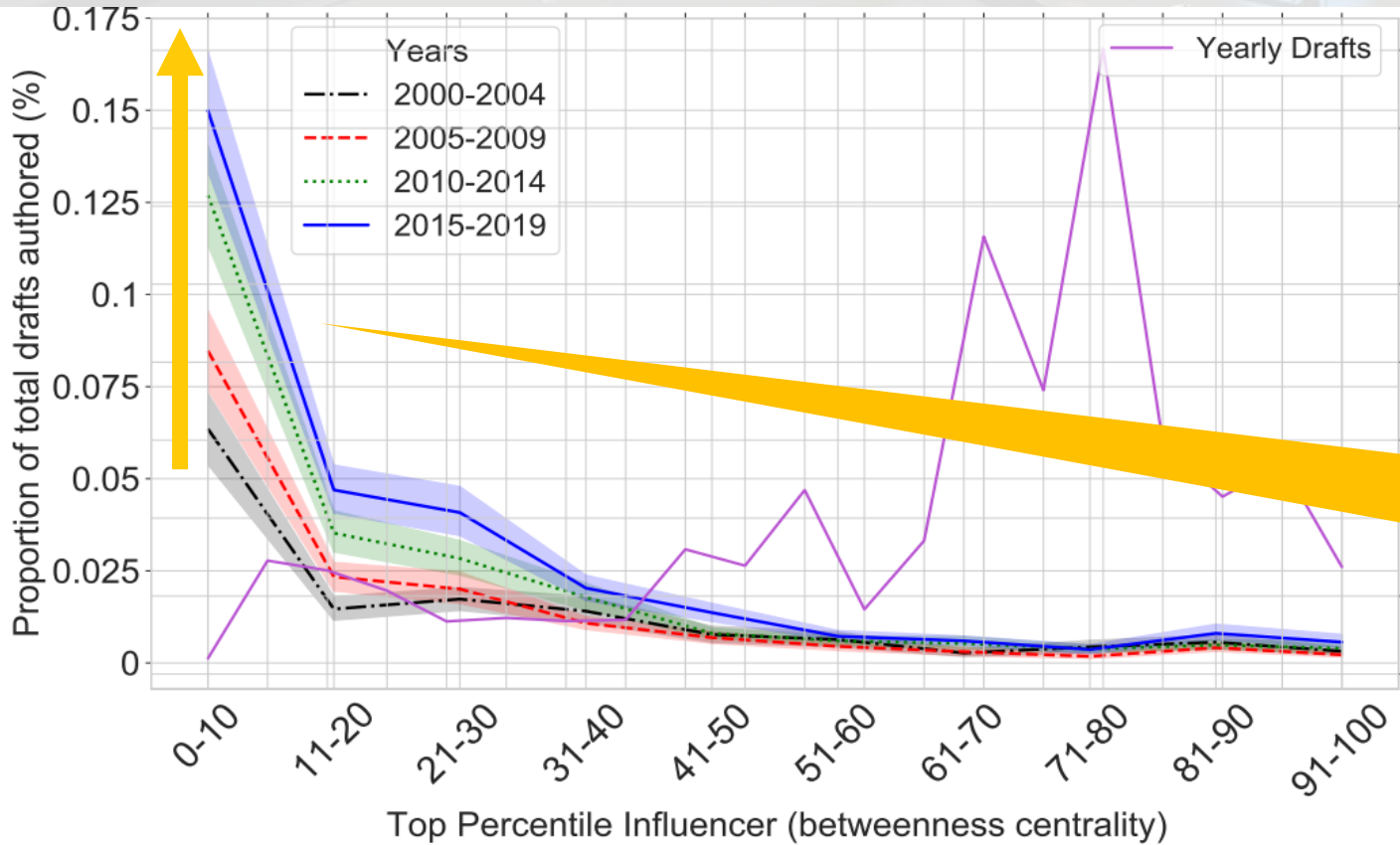
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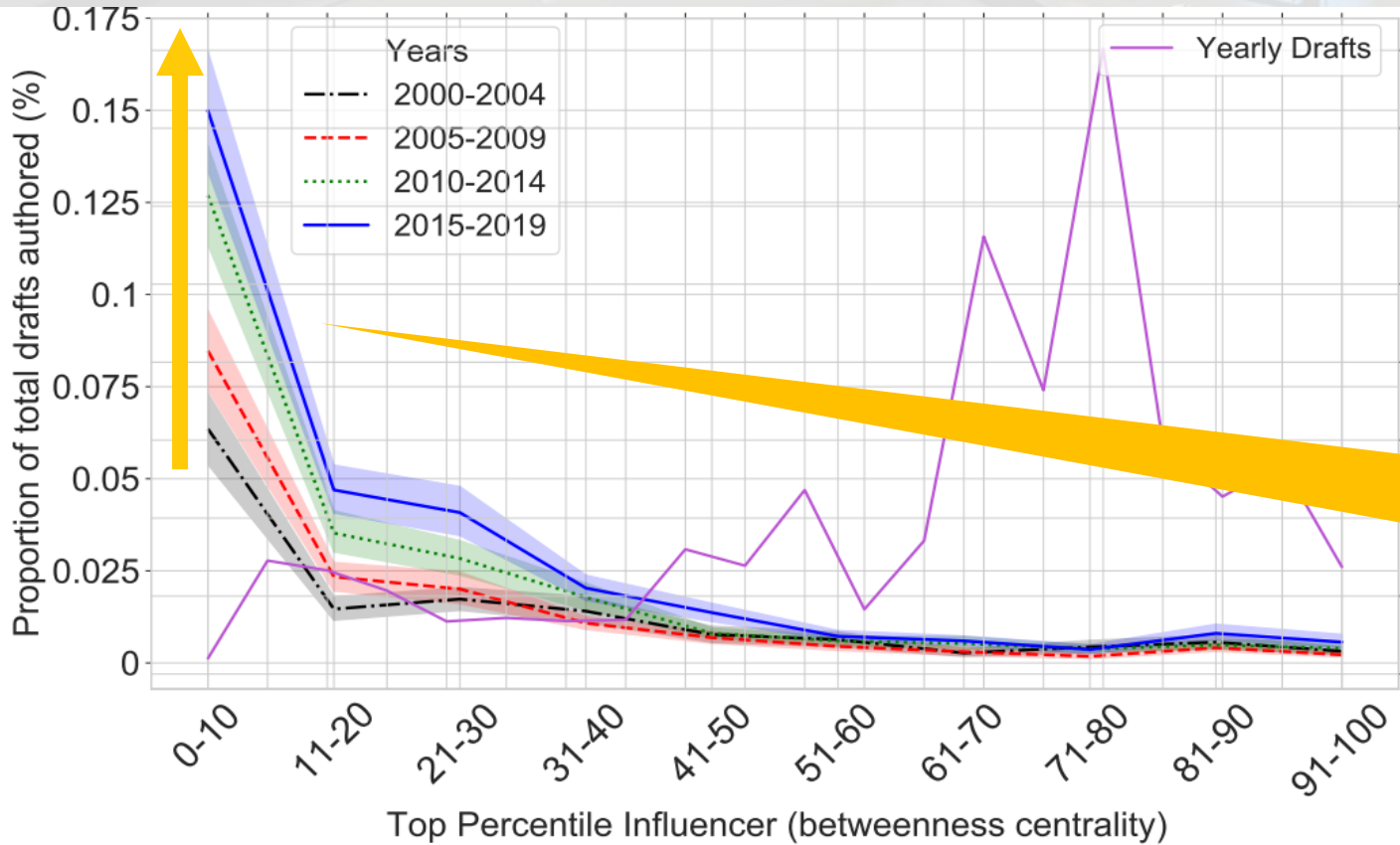
**E-Mails**

**Drafts**



Influential authors increasingly dominate draft creation

More influence -----> less influence



Influential authors increasingly dominate draft creation

Rise of Influential participants ?

# IETF standardisation process

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## Harder to publish?

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**Rise of Influential participants ?**



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**Rise of Influential participants ?**

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## Rise of Influential participants:

**“sherpas” of the standardization process?**

Collaborative/community-oriented language is more common in influential participants



Next:

- Ground-truth
- Tooling
- IRTF RG: RASP

<https://sodestream.github.io>



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RFC  
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RFC  
Deployment

Decision making  
analysis

Review  
recommendation  
tool

Survey on  
adoption