



National Tracking Ecologies

Digital Methods Summer School 2013

Anne, Esther, Astrid, Sarieta, Marc, Bev, Gabriele, Lonneke, Carolin, Marta.

Research Problem

- Knowing that there is a multiplicity of trackers collecting data online, can we detect **specific national tracking ecologies**?
- Original research question: **What is the extensiveness of tracking per country?**
- What does it tell us about the **global and local tracking economies**?

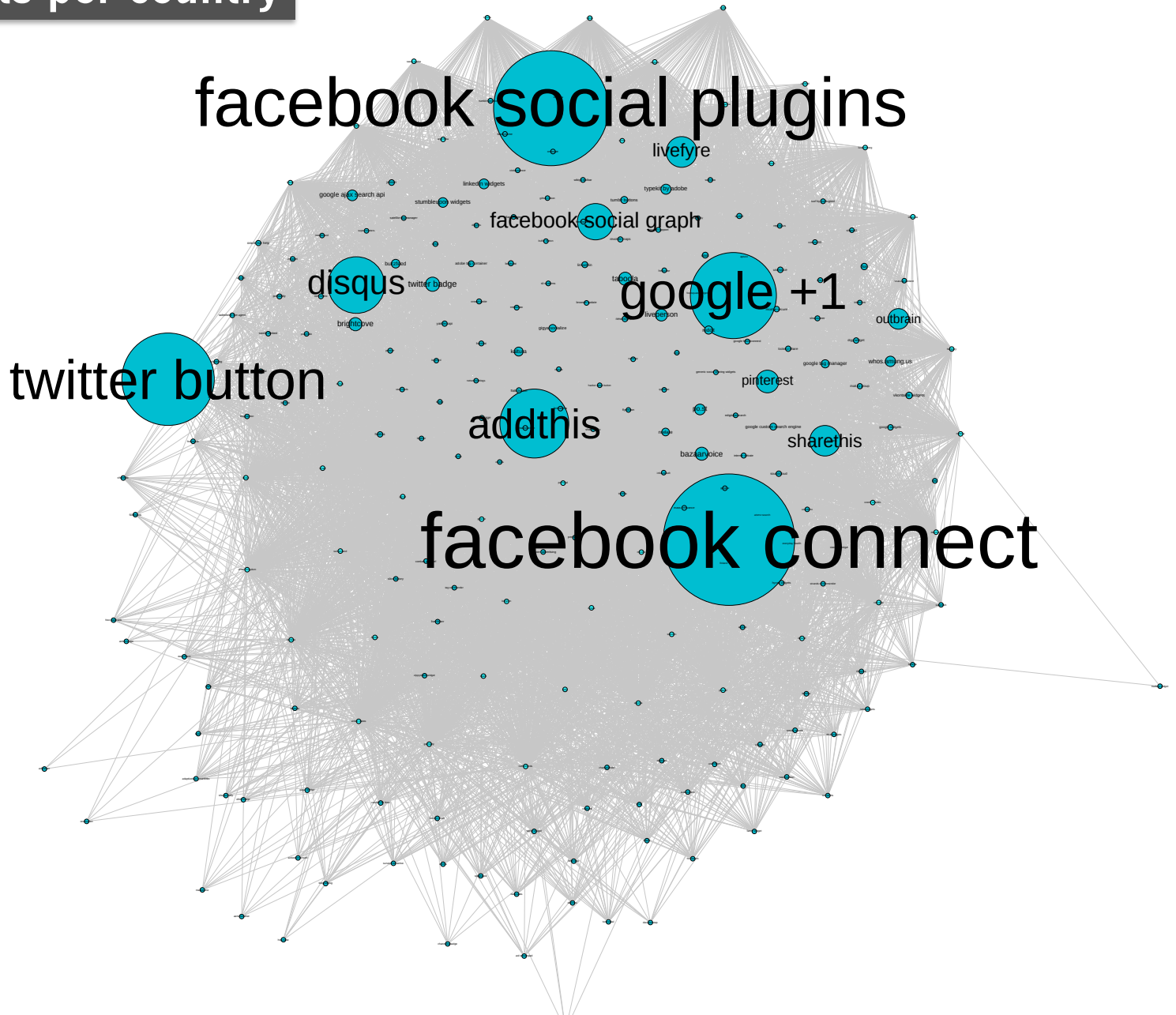
The dataset

- Special dataset from Ghostery: **trackers encountered from country location** (anonymised IP to geo data, we only received country name).
- Date range: May 2013
- Limitation I: **Based on Ghostery data** (specific population, uneven country distribution).
- Limitation II: Ghostery **does not detect all trackers**, main coverage North America & Europe.
- Limitation III: IP address possibly does not correspond to real location of user (proxy usage).
- **New research question:** Which trackers do users encounter & potentially participate in when surfing from specific countries?

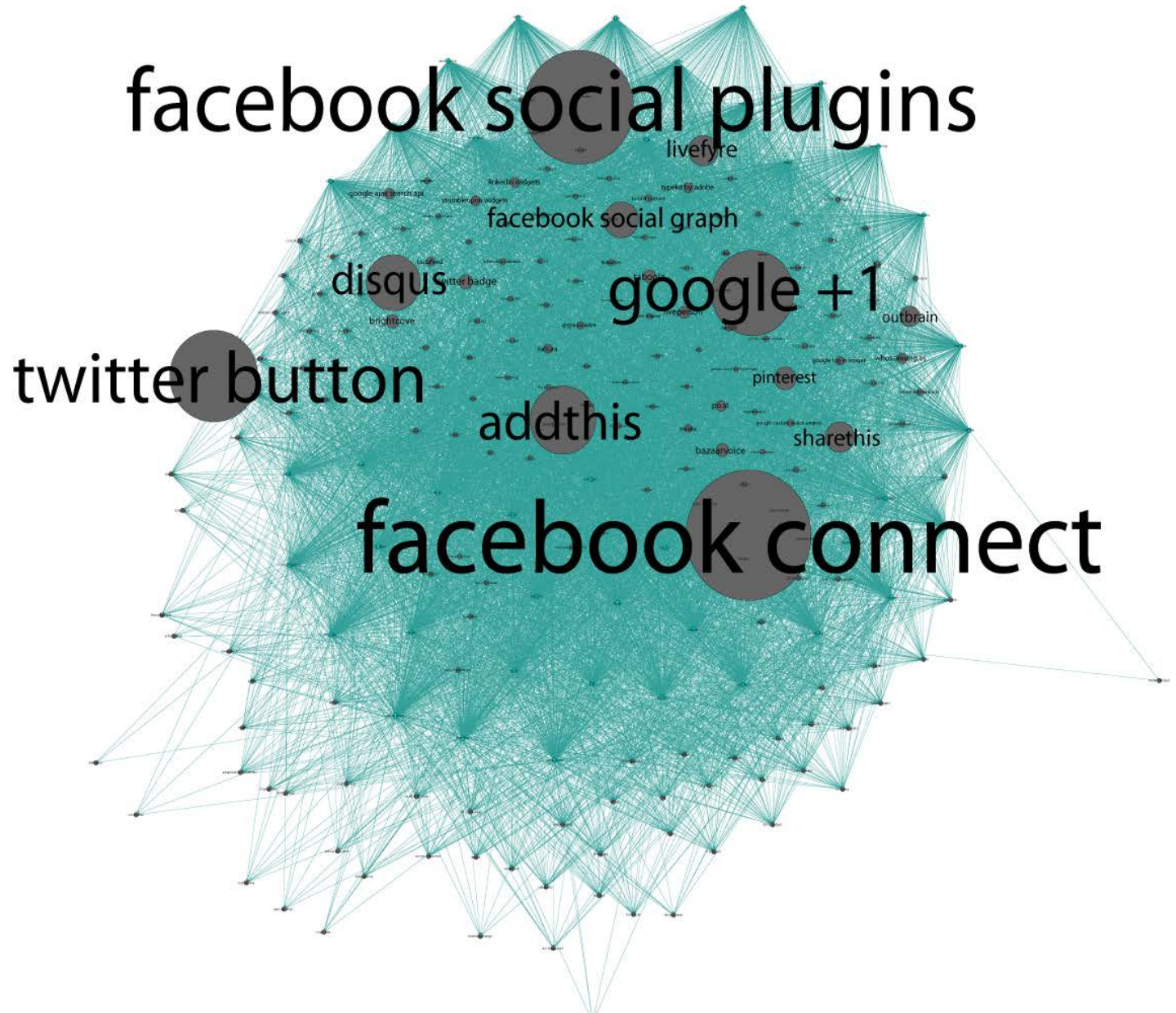
Overview

- 44 Countries.
- Based on IP to geo service.
- 1465 unique trackers found.
- All countries have more than 1000 trackers (except Malta & Cyprus).
- Draw on Ghostery categories: ads, tracker/beacon, analytics, privacy, widget.
- Focus on: (1) overall tracker encounters & (2) widgets.
- Most prominent and unique trackers encounter per country.

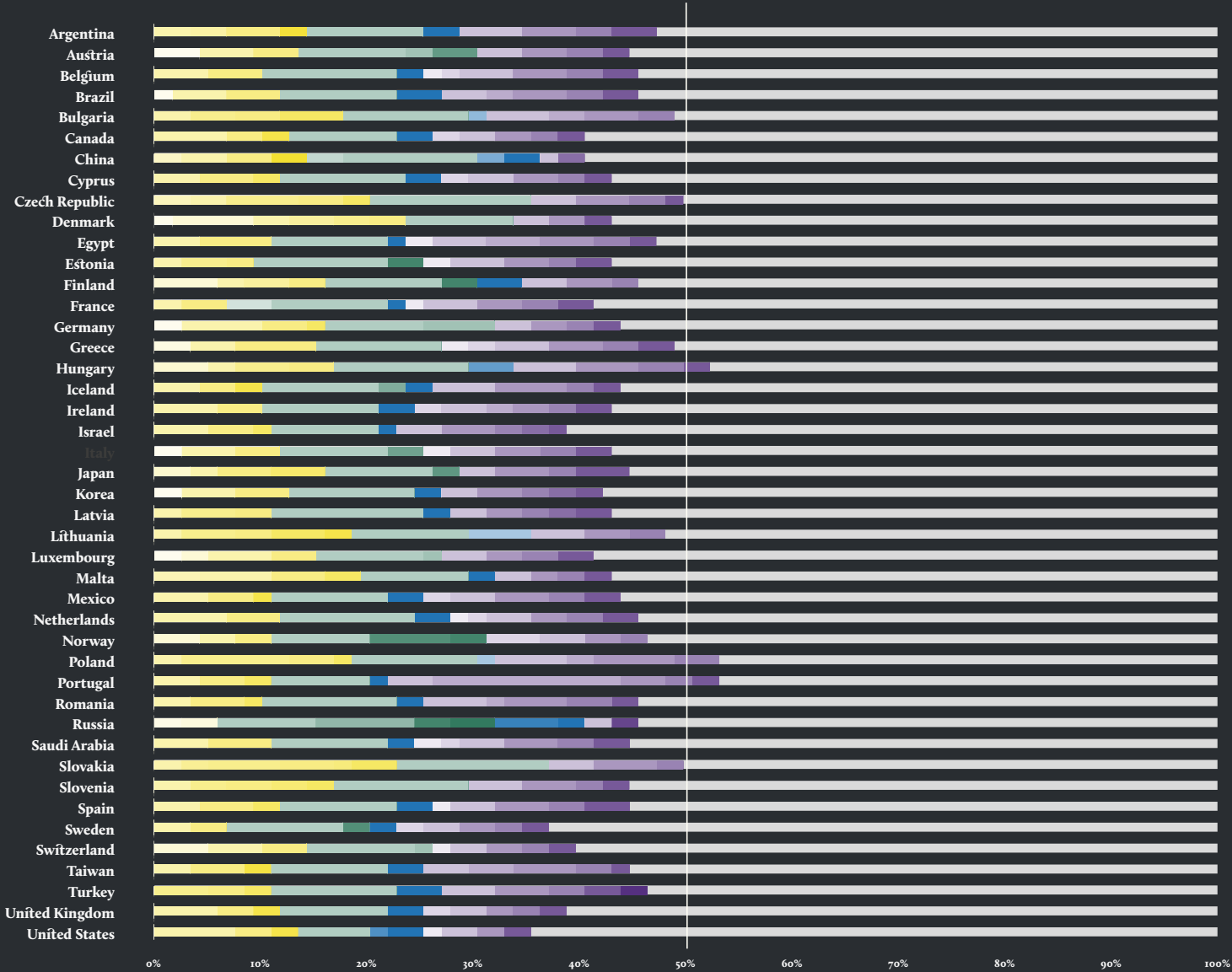
Widgets per country



Widgets per country



Top 10 trackers per country



Ad
842.777.785

Analytics
634.301.927

Tracker
259.261.245

Widget
779.939.192

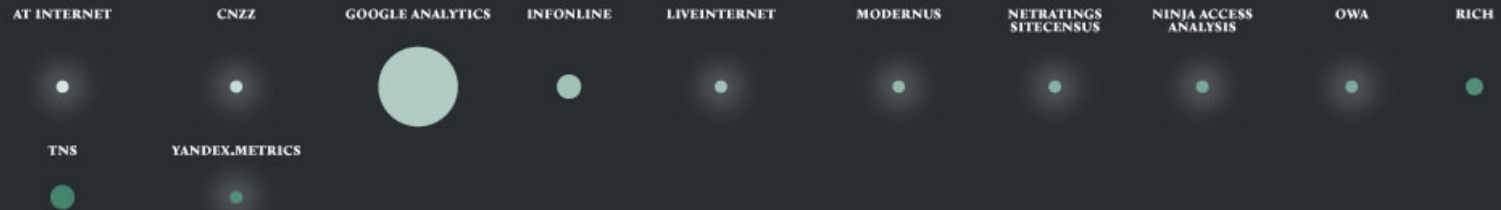
Top 10 trackers overview sized by country presence

● = UNIQUES

Ad



Analytics



Tracker



Widget



Unique national trackers



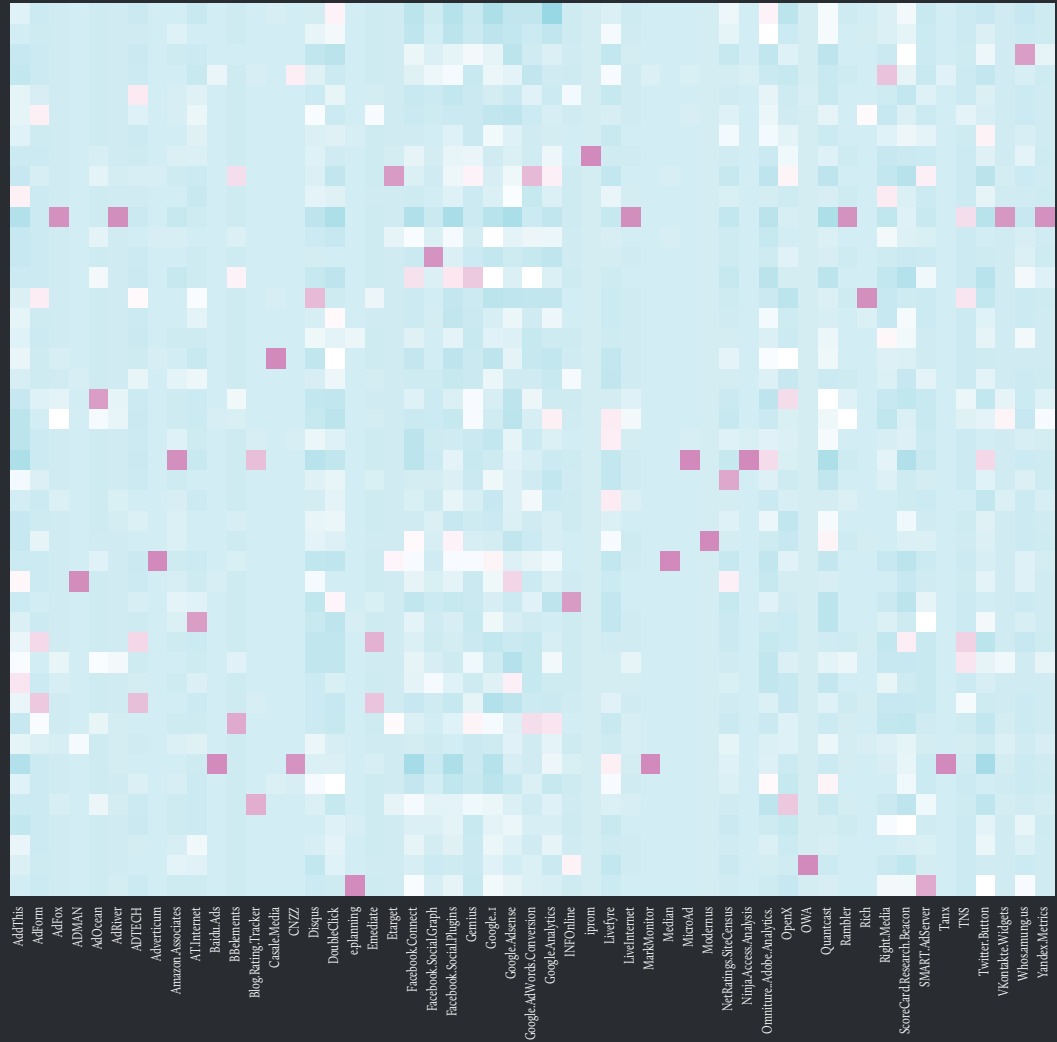
Top 10 trackers per country

LEGEND



NON COUNTRY SPECIFIC

COUNTRY SPECIFIC



- United States
- United Kingdom
- Turkey
- Taiwan
- Switzerland
- Sweden
- Spain
- Slovenia
- Slovakia
- Saudi Arabia
- Russia
- Romania
- Portugal
- Poland
- Norway
- Netherlands
- Mexico
- Malta
- Luxembourg
- Lithuania
- Latvia
- Korea
- Japan
- Italy
- Israel
- Ireland
- Iceland
- Hungary
- Greece
- Germany
- France
- Finland
- Estonia
- Egypt
- Denmark
- Czech Republic
- Cyprus
- China
- Canada
- Bulgaria
- Brazil
- Belgium
- Austria
- Argentina

The background of the slide is a detailed, grayscale illustration of crumpled paper, showing various folds, creases, and textures. A dark grey rectangular box is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing the title 'Key findings'. Below it, another dark grey rectangular box contains a bulleted list of findings.

Key findings

- Distribution: Top 10 trackers make up around 50% of all tracker encounters.
- Users from all countries participate in global tracking economies.
- **Few unique** trackers, but **several specific** national trackers per country.

Conclusion

Dataset shifted research focus:

1. From identifying trackers specific to countries to participation of local Ghostery users in global tracking economies.
2. From studying unique to studying specific trackers: global ecologies & economies.
3. From focus on tracking companies to tracker encounters.



Thank you.

Thanks Alexei!

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