



@cfiesler

I

#AOIR2018



Information Science
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER



Moving Across Lands

Fandom and Online Community Migration

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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

We're talking about fanworks.



“

Readers are travellers;
they move across lands
belonging to someone
else, like nomads
poaching their way across
fields they did not write...

- Michel Certeau (as quoted by Henry Jenkins in *Textual Poachers*)

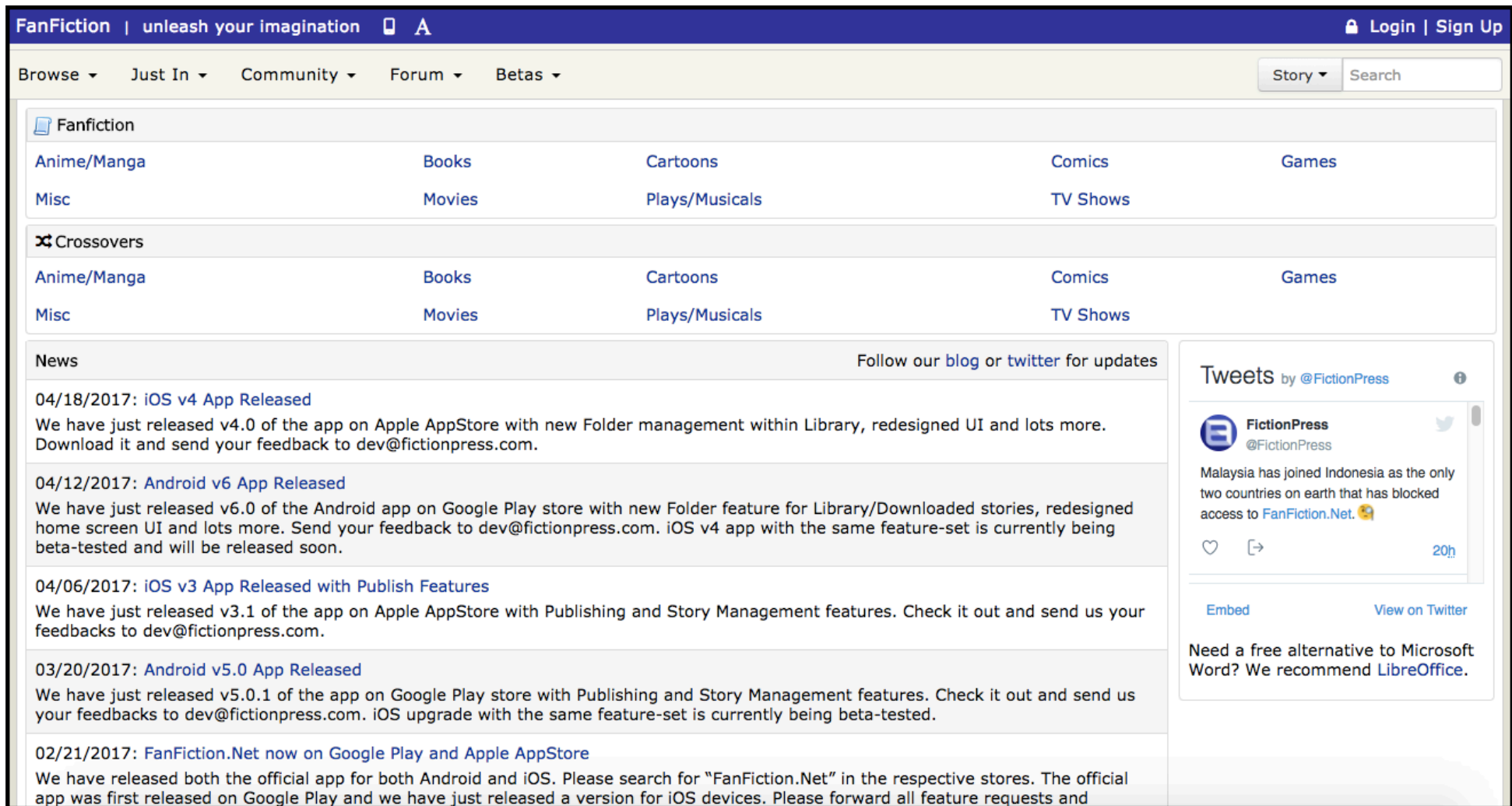
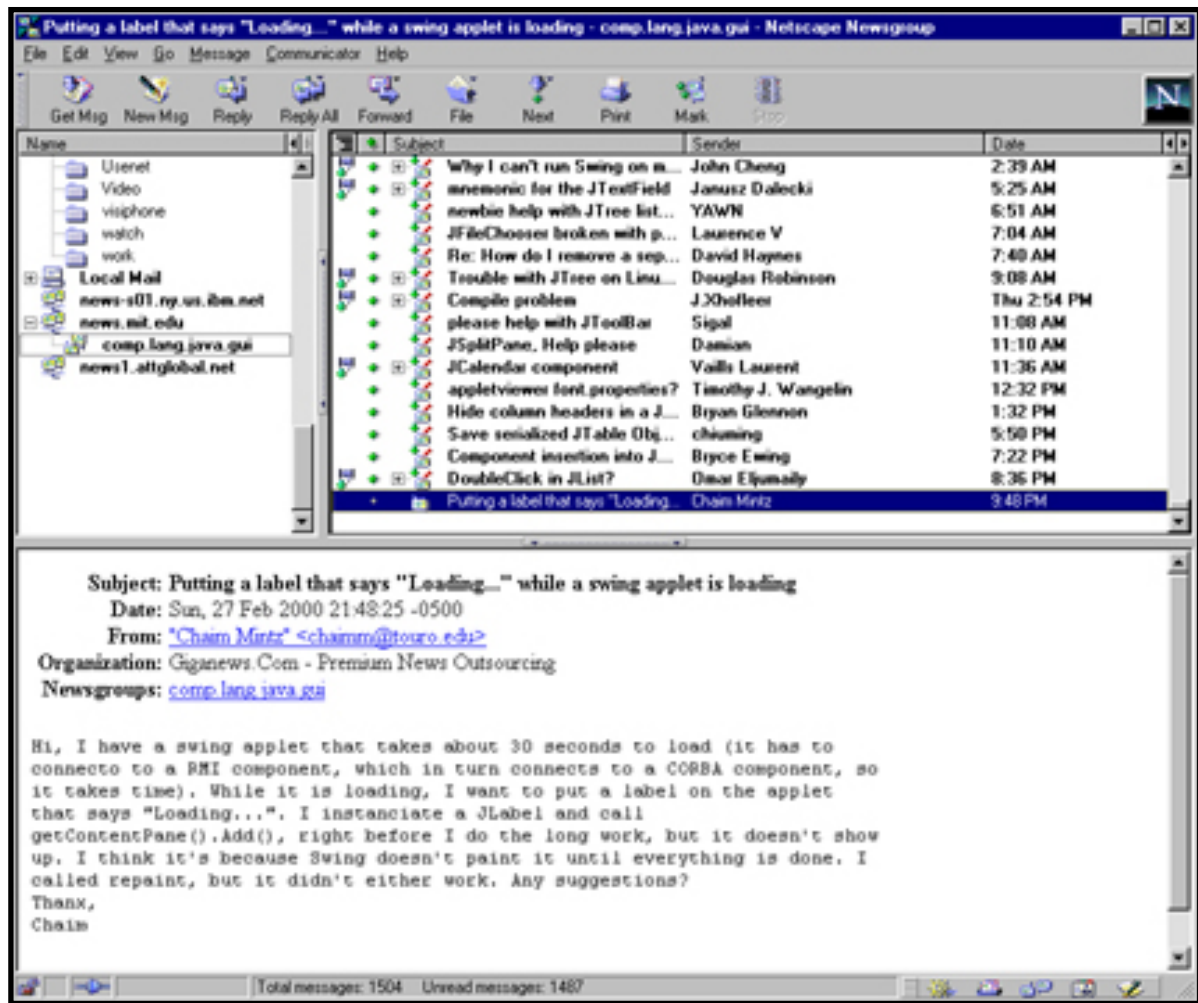




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Latest Stories: September 9th

Next Update: December 31st

Story Listings

- Author Pages
- Title Listings
- Date Listings
- Search Engine

Category Listings

- Crossovers
- X-Files
- Adventures
- Stories
- Vignettes
- Spoilers

Information

- Help Desk
- Author FAQ
- Reader FAQ
- Archive Policies
- About Gossamer



Complete Archives

- Tooms
- Krycek
- Fluky
- FTP Site

Specialized Archives

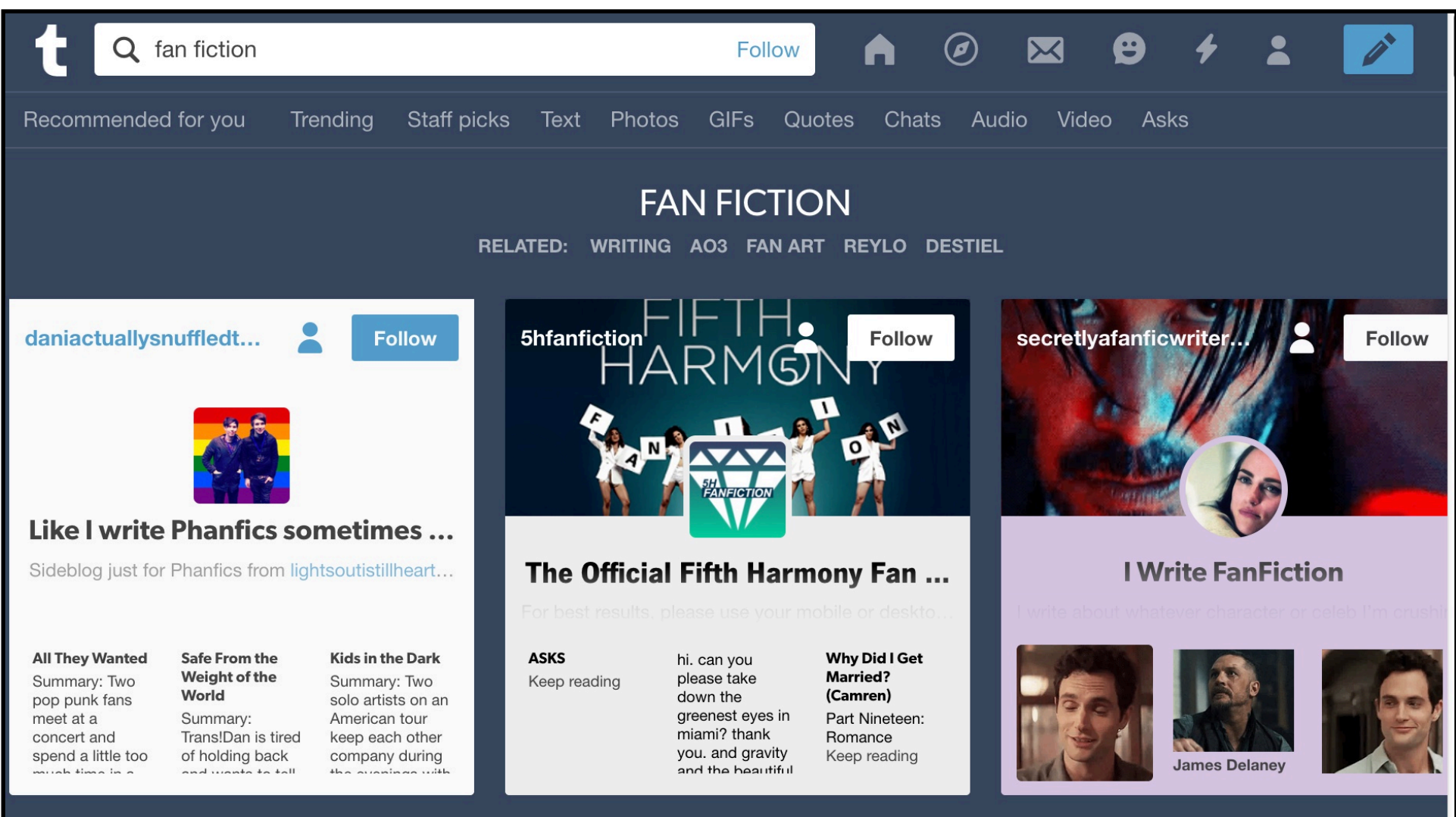
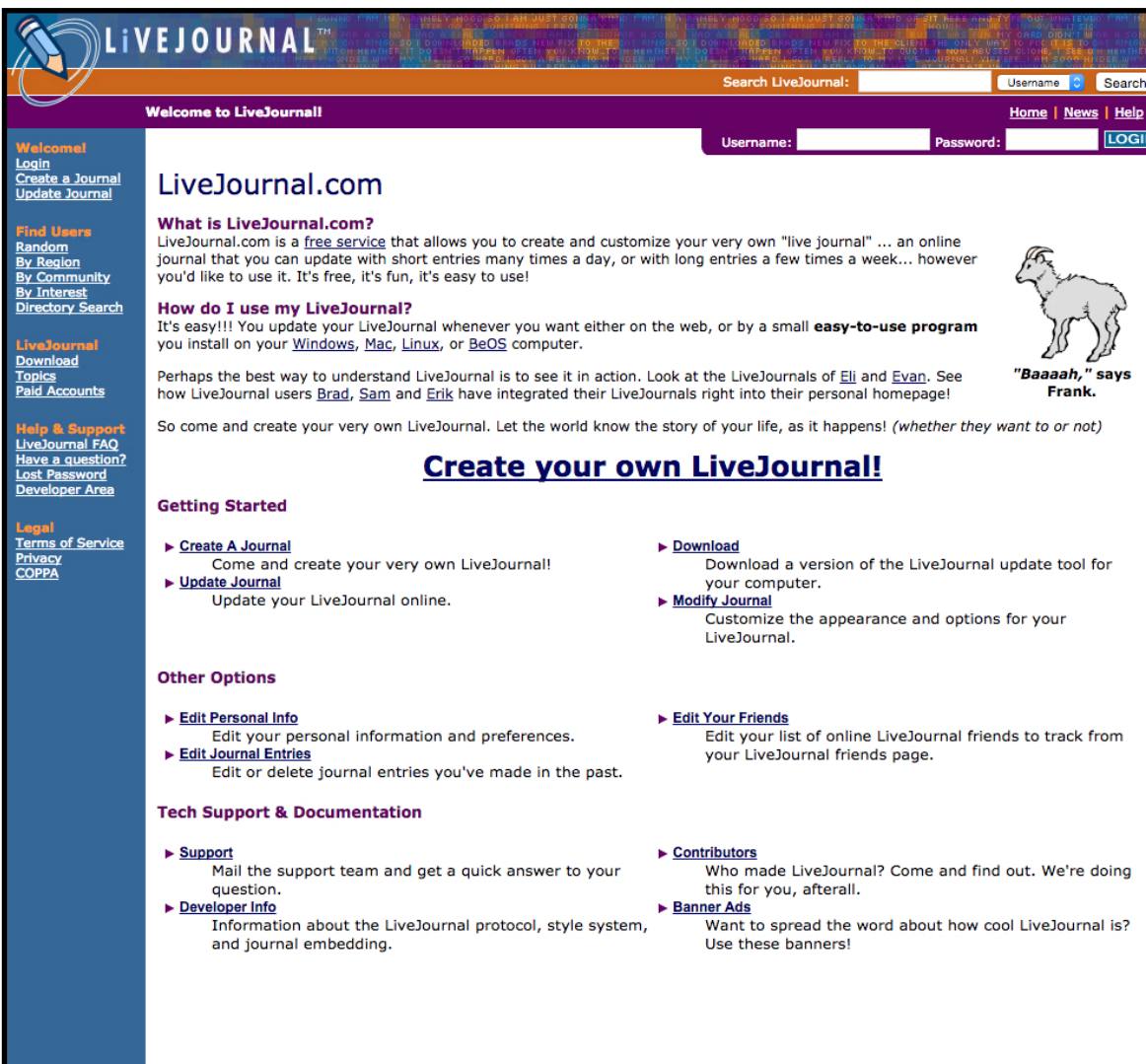
- Update Archive
- Specialty Archive
- WIP Archive

Other Resources

- Ephemeral
- Other Archives
- Posting Fan Fiction
- Update Notification

E-mail Addresses

- Archive Business
- Problems with this site





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Log In

Fandoms Browse Search About

Search

Find your favorites

- » All Fandoms
- » Books & Literature
- » Celebrities & Real People
- » Other Media
- » TV Shows
- » Uncategorized Fandoms
- » Anime & Manga
- » Cartoons & Comics & Graphic Novels
- » Movies
- » Music & Bands
- » Theater
- » Video Games

News

[All News](#)

AO3, GDPR and You

Published: Thu 24 May 2018 12:11PM EDT Comments: [71](#)

You may have heard that the European Union's new regulation on data protection, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), is coming into effect on May 25. It has effects on sites and organizations all around the world, including Archive of Our Own.

[Read more...](#)

A fan-created, fan-run, non-profit, non-commercial archive for transformative fanworks, like fanfiction, fanart, fan videos, and podfic

more than **28550** fandoms | **1510000** users | **3886000** works

The Archive of Our Own is a project of the [Organization for Transformative Works](#).

With an AO3 account, you can:

- Share your own fanworks
- Get notified when your favorite works, series, or users update
- Participate in challenges
- Keep track of works you've visited and works you want to check out later


You can join by getting an invitation from our automated invite queue. All fans and fanworks are welcome!

Get Invited!

Tweets

OTW Tweets





- Recent Entries
- Archive
- Friends
- Profile

APRIL 2016

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30


LINKS

- ao3
- fanfic
- vids
- yuletide

TAGS

- about this journal -
- 24
- adam lambert
- agents of shield
- american idol
- american revolution rpf

An Archive Of One's Own



****NEW ETA****: we're going to take a stab at putting this together. For more information and discussion, please join and/or watch [otw news](#).

ETA: If you are coming to the conversation late, [xenacryst](#) has helpfully collected up a bunch of links to a subset of noteworthy discussion threads, [over here](#)!

First, [why fanfic is not illegal and why YOU should stop saying that it is even if you don't agree](#), by [cesperanza](#). Please read it.

That said, the people behind fanlib (talked about many places, see [astridv here](#)) don't actually care about fanfic, the fanfic community, or anything except making money off content created entirely by other people and getting media attention. They don't have a single fanfic reader or writer on their board; they don't even have a single woman on their board. They're creating a lawsuit-bait site while being bad potential defendants, and they deserve to be chased out being pelted with rocks.

But even if they were, which I doubt is going to happen, because hey, they have people and money, we're still left with this problem: we are sitting quietly by the fireside, creating piles and piles of content around us, and other people are going to look at that and see an opportunity. And they are going to end up creating the front doors that new fanfic writers walk through, unless we stand up and build our OWN front door.

“

I know we have project managers in this community — and coders and designers — can't we do this? Seriously, we can come up with a site that would be miles better and more attractive to fanfic writers/readers than anything else out there, guys, because we actually USE this stuff. **We need a central archive of our own.**

Research Questions

- ◆ What are the common **reasons** for leaving one platform and joining another?
- ◆ How do these moves **impact** communities?
- ◆ What are the broader **lessons** for online communities?

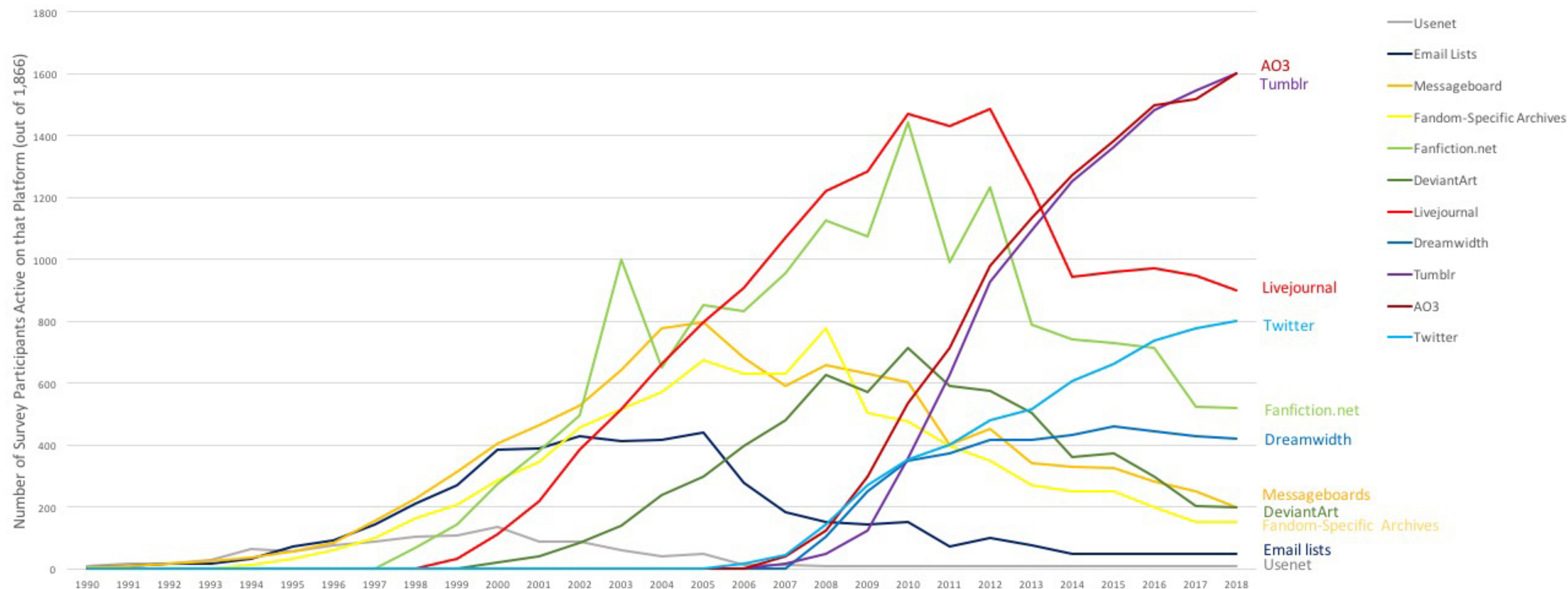


- ◆ **Semi-structured interviews with AO3 users and developers**
- ◆ **Thematic analysis (secondary): reasons and consequences**
- ◆ **N = 28**



- ◆ **Survey developed from interview themes**
- ◆ **Inclusion: Fandom participant for at least 10 years**
- ◆ **Questions: Fandom activity, platform use, migration**
- ◆ **Statistical and thematic analysis**
- ◆ **N = 1,886**

Fandom Platform Use over Time





What prompted you to join []?

- ◆ The site had features I liked
- ◆ The values of the site aligned with my own
- ◆ The site had content I liked
- ◆ My fan community started using it
- ◆ I joined a new fan community

What prompted you to leave []?

- ◆ Design change(s)
- ◆ Policy change(s)
- ◆ Technical problems (downtime, content loss)
- ◆ There was another site that was better
- ◆ My community left
- ◆ I changed fan communities
- ◆ I no longer participated in that community



There were **new sparkly**
online options that drew
EVERYBODY away from
email lists.

[P-S1015]

“

People found the LiveJournal platform **a lot easier** to follow. You could consolidate all your fic in one place... So you didn't need to have a separate website. You could just keep everything on your LiveJournal.

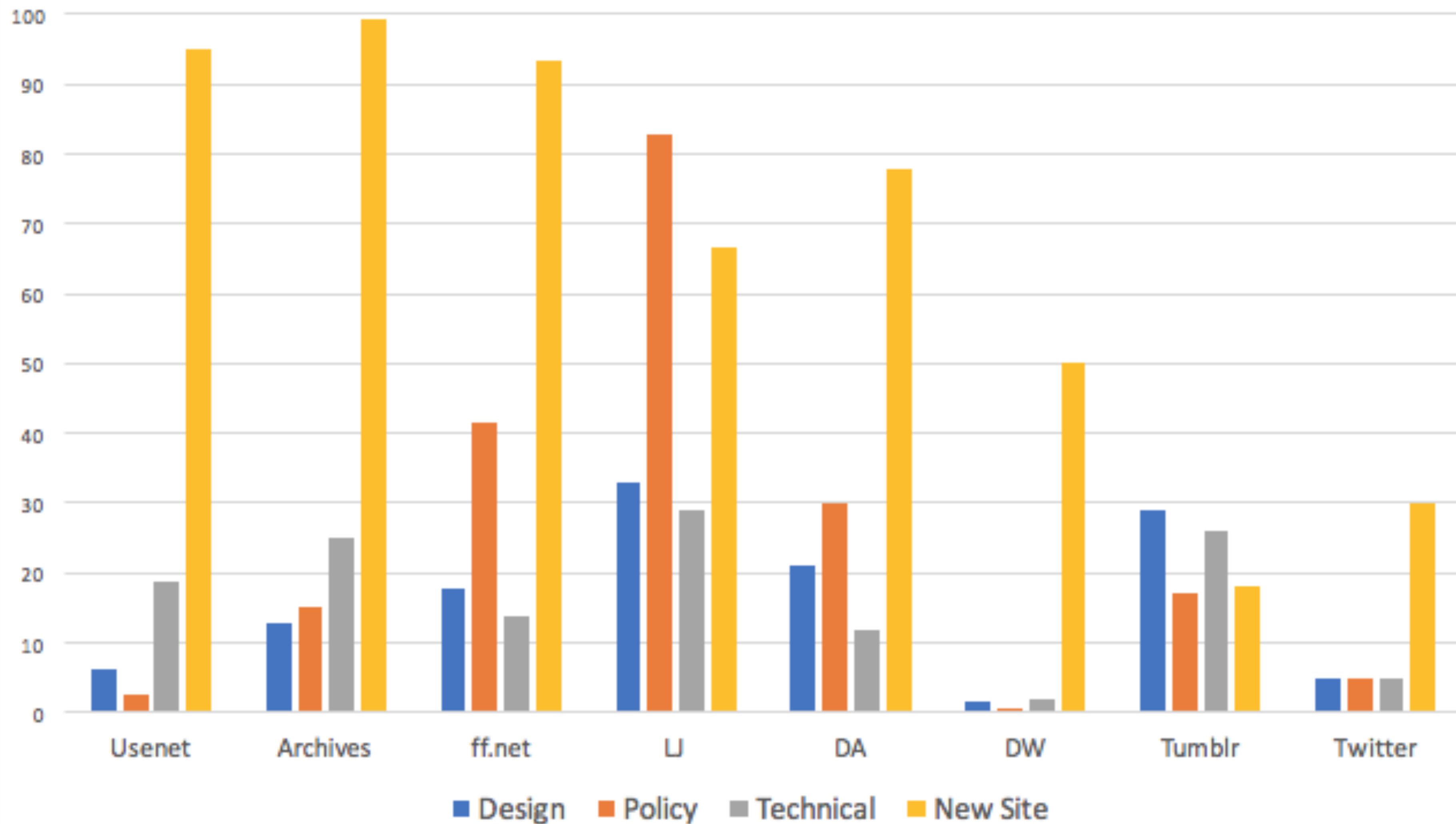
[P-18]

“

The search features [on AO3] were **a lot easier** to use... You could search for a specific trope or whatever it was that you wanted. You couldn't do that precisely on any other platform.

[P-11 1]

Platform-Based Reasons for Leaving a Platform





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(Anonymous)

2012-01-04 04:00 pm (UTC) ([Link](#))

I am totally embarrassed to request this, but... I'd absolutely love some blood elf leader threesomes (Lor/Rom/Hal). Bonus points if it turns out funny.

([Reply](#)) ([Thread](#))

(Anonymous)

2012-01-22 04:03 am (UTC) ([Link](#))

I'm on it, OP. Hold onto your hat.

You're going 3SOM'D.

([Reply](#)) ([Parent](#)) ([Thread](#)) ([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-01-30 12:57 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-01-31 01:05 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-02-14 02:07 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-02-25 11:05 pm (UTC)([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-18 09:39 pm (UTC)([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-19 03:00 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

(Deleted comment)

([no subject](#)) - (Anonymous), 2012-05-04 03:26 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

([no subject](#)) - [warcraftkink](#), 2012-05-21 08:37 pm (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 1/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-19 03:13 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 2/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-19 03:14 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 3/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-19 03:15 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 4/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-19 03:17 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Re: Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 4/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-29 05:05 pm (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Author!Anon here...](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-04-30 04:17 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 5/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-05-05 02:17 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 6/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-05-05 02:20 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 7/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-05-05 02:23 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 8/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-05-05 02:30 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Re: Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 8/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-09-18 08:52 am (UTC)([Expand](#))

[Re: Apprentice Trayanise Prepares an Elixir, 8/?](#) - (Anonymous), 2012-09-18 08:00 pm (UTC)([Expand](#))



Another thing the fandom community uses LiveJournal for is... anonymous memes. When you post on these... it's very important that you put a lot of information in your header. For a while LiveJournal got rid of headers.

[P-124]

“

LiveJournal was moving... into **design qualities feeling more like Facebook**, which to me always represented a profound misunderstanding of why people were on LiveJournal in the first place.

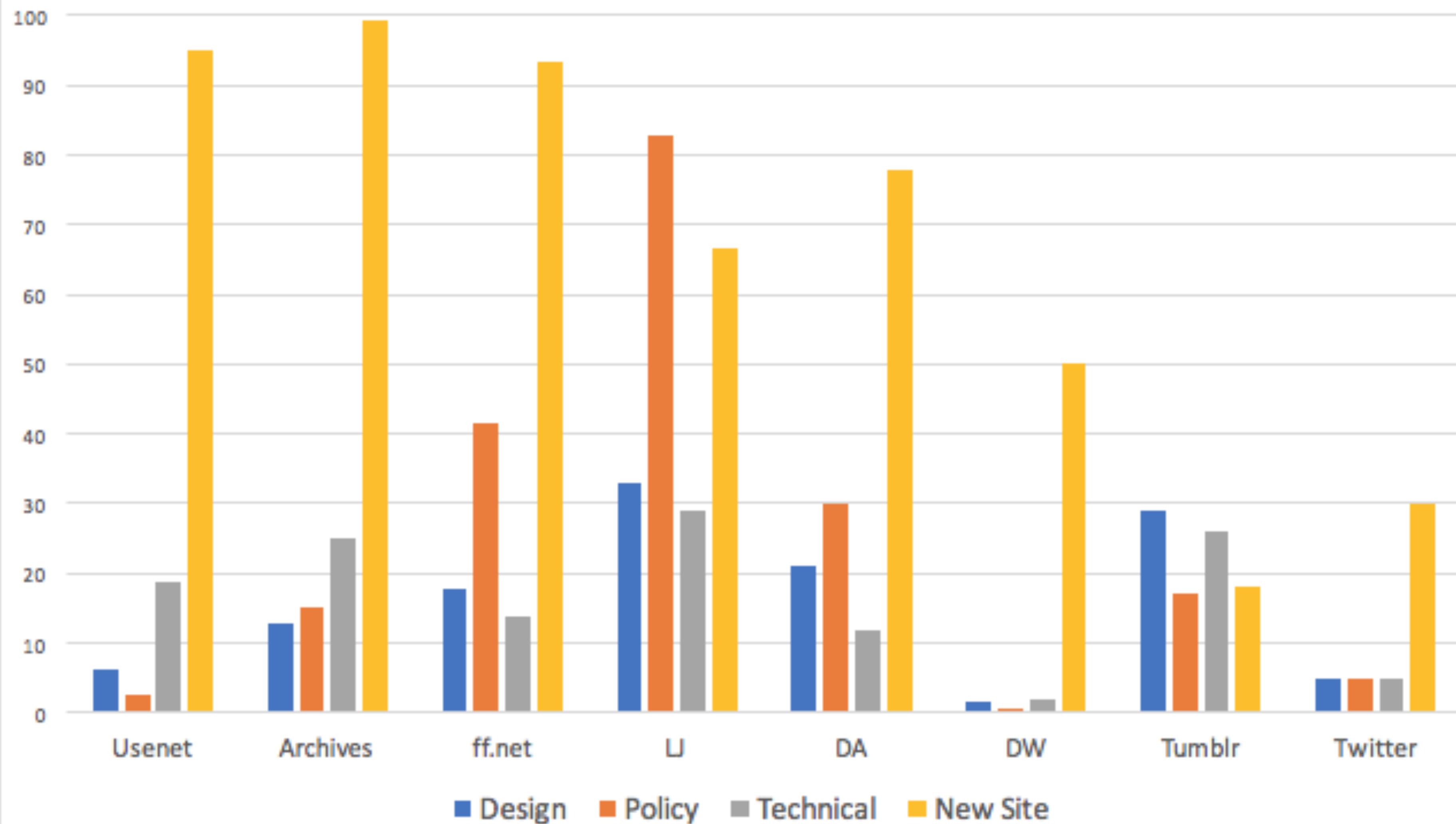
[P-12]

“

Despite the fanfiction sect on LiveJournal they were like, ‘**Well, these are the changes we’re making. Deal with it.**’ So, a lot of us migrated to other platforms.

[P-19]

Platform-Based Reasons for Leaving a Platform



“

[FanFiction.net] went dark... and then when they came back they were like ‘we went down to do database work that **deleted everything explicit**’ and we’re no longer hosting that.

[PS1060]

“

I left LJ during one of several rounds of crises in which people’s work... was being deleted/removed/accounts closed in large swathes for **"inappropriate content"** or whatever the policy term was – too much sex, basically.

[P-S62]

“

AO3 came out and was not censoring you and said **“You can post whatever you want. We don’t have to like it, but you can post it.”** That was a huge contribution to why people started flocking to AO3.

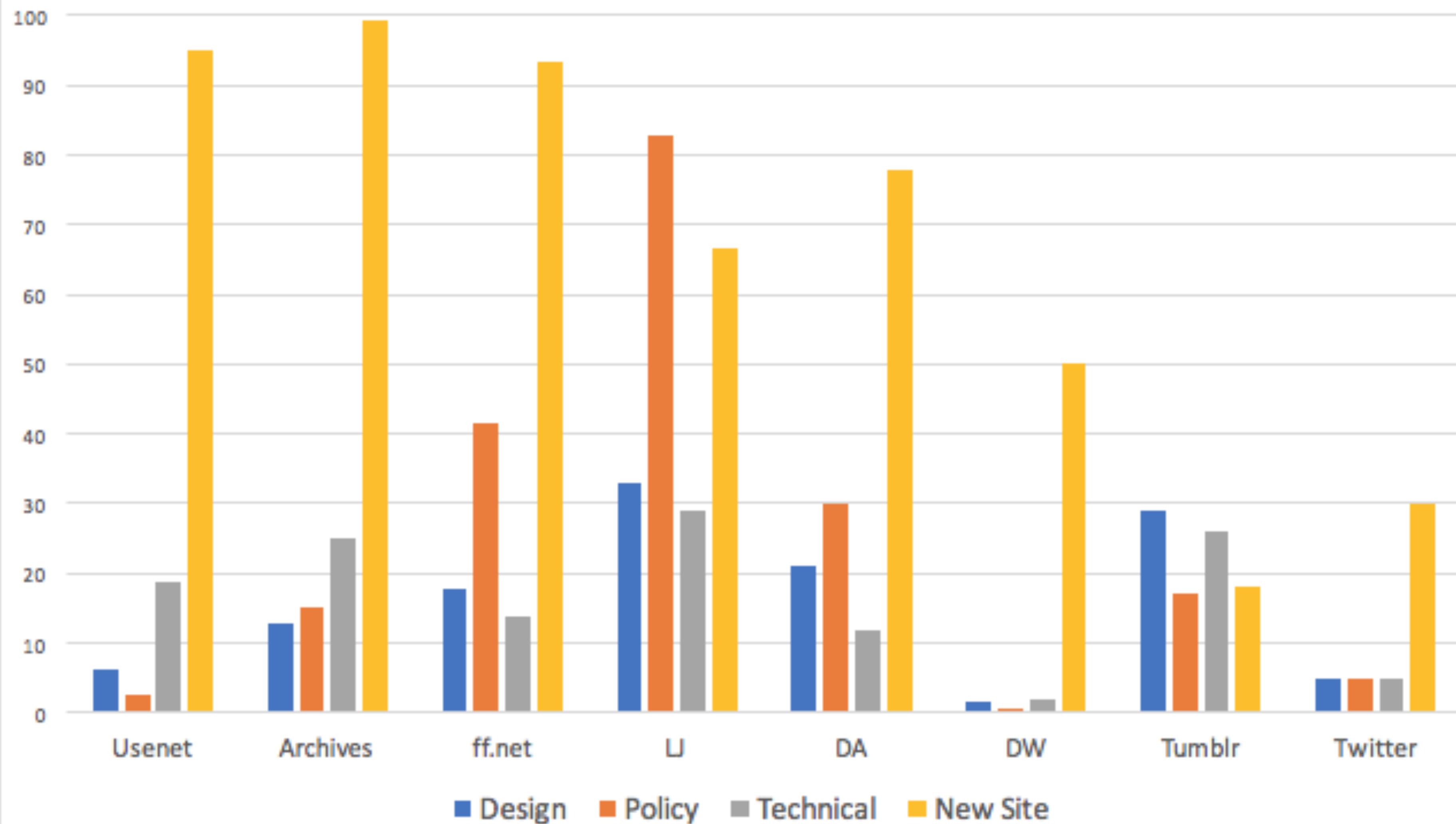
[P-111]

“

[Using AO3] was like seeing joy. They **didn't exclude fandoms** based on crappy author behavior (Anne Rice fandom), they were created by adults, with great design principles...

[PS1060]

Platform-Based Reasons for Leaving a Platform





I started to get anxious when **archives started disappearing** or their owners disappeared and there was no way to get content down from them... it's dangerous to have everything on one site.

[PS1060]

YAHOO! GEOCITIES

Final notice: GeoCities is closing.

Dear Yahoo! GeoCities customer,

We're writing to remind you that Yahoo! GeoCities, our community, is closing on **October 26, 2009**.

On October 26, 2009, your GeoCities site will no longer be able to access your GeoCities account.

What You Need to Do

If you'd like to move your web site, or save the images online, you need to act now by choosing one of the 1

“

I started to get anxious when **archives started disappearing** or their owners disappeared and there was no way to get content down from them... it's dangerous to have everything on one site.

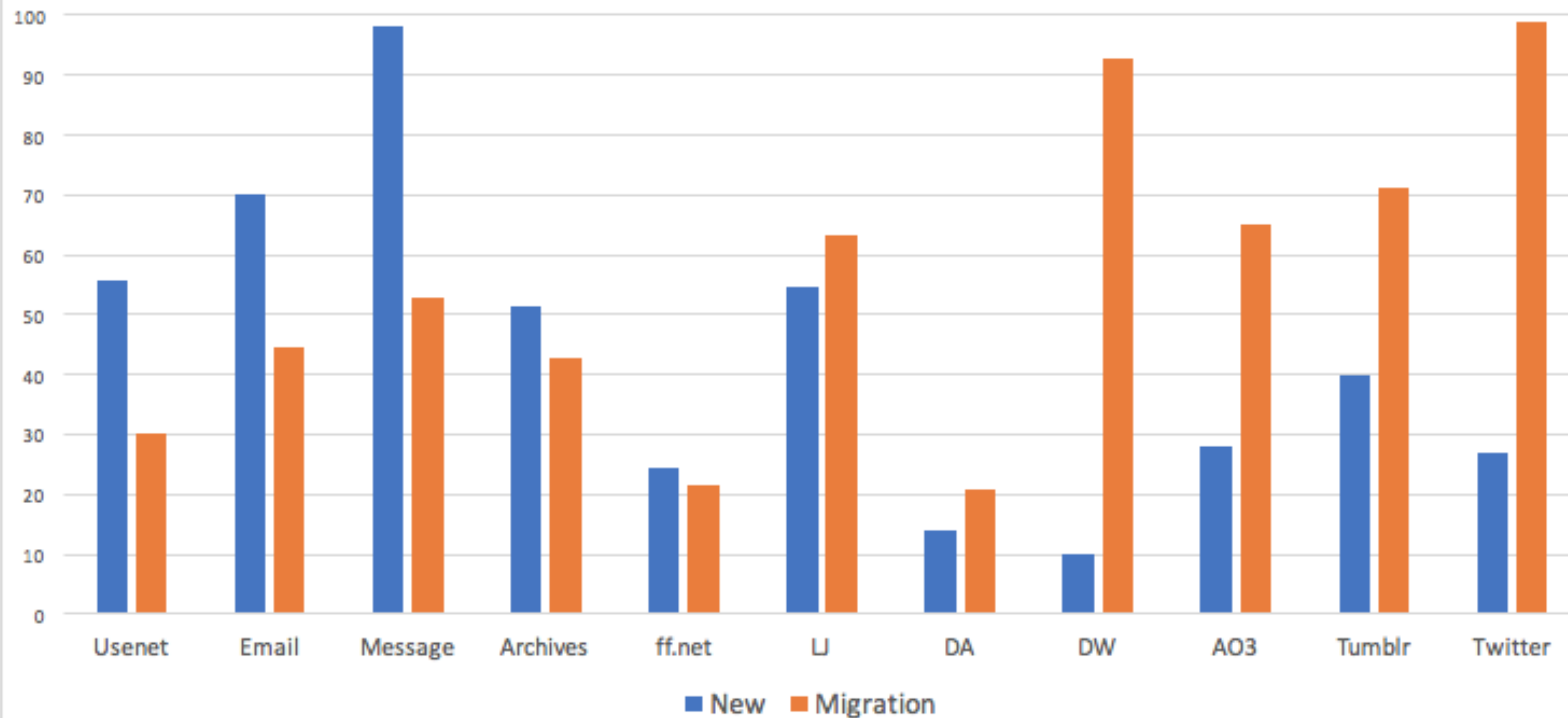
[PS1060]

“

They couldn't make it all disappear. The Geocities exodus wouldn't happen again, because **the servers would belong to us.** It wouldn't matter because no one could buy it out from under us.

[P-S709]

Community-Based Reasons for Joining a Platform



“

[Leaving FanFiction.net] was partially that the aggregate age there was lower than on LJ... FanFiction.net **didn't quite feel like my audience and my community anymore** due to age- difference purposes.

[P-S329]

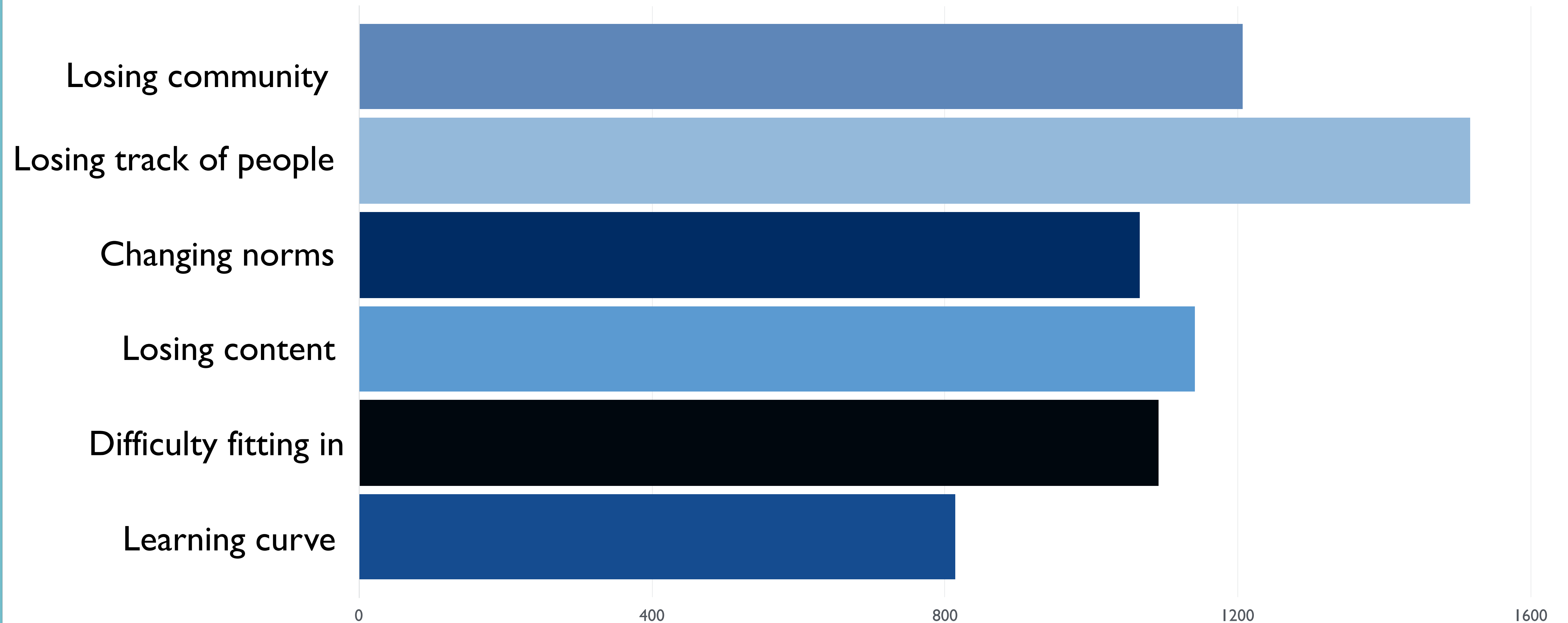
“

I moved [to Tumblr] at a low time in my offline life, so my main memory was a sense of relief at seeing active fandom folks who I hadn't met and were making new things. **It was like finding my people all over again.**

[P-S675]



Did you experience these issues when moving to a new platform?





Regardless of whether the platform change is positive or negative, **you end up with some content getting lost...** If certain fan content is very important to you, you have to save it yourself, because you can never be 100% sure the link isn't going to suddenly stop working one day.

[P-118]



Older fans seem less willing to attempt moving to new platforms, particularly when the **interface is significantly different from what they are used to.** So successive platform changes seem to leave older fans behind.

[P-S99]

“

Usenet's decline was a lot like watching a shopping mall slowly go out of business. Like, when it's still open, but a lot of shops are leaving, and the ones that stay see less and less activity, and **there's less and less to keep you returning**, and it just gradually succumbs to entropy.

[P-S956]

“

I think it's definitely **fragmented communities** a lot. I don't know where to find the communities I had on LiveJournal.

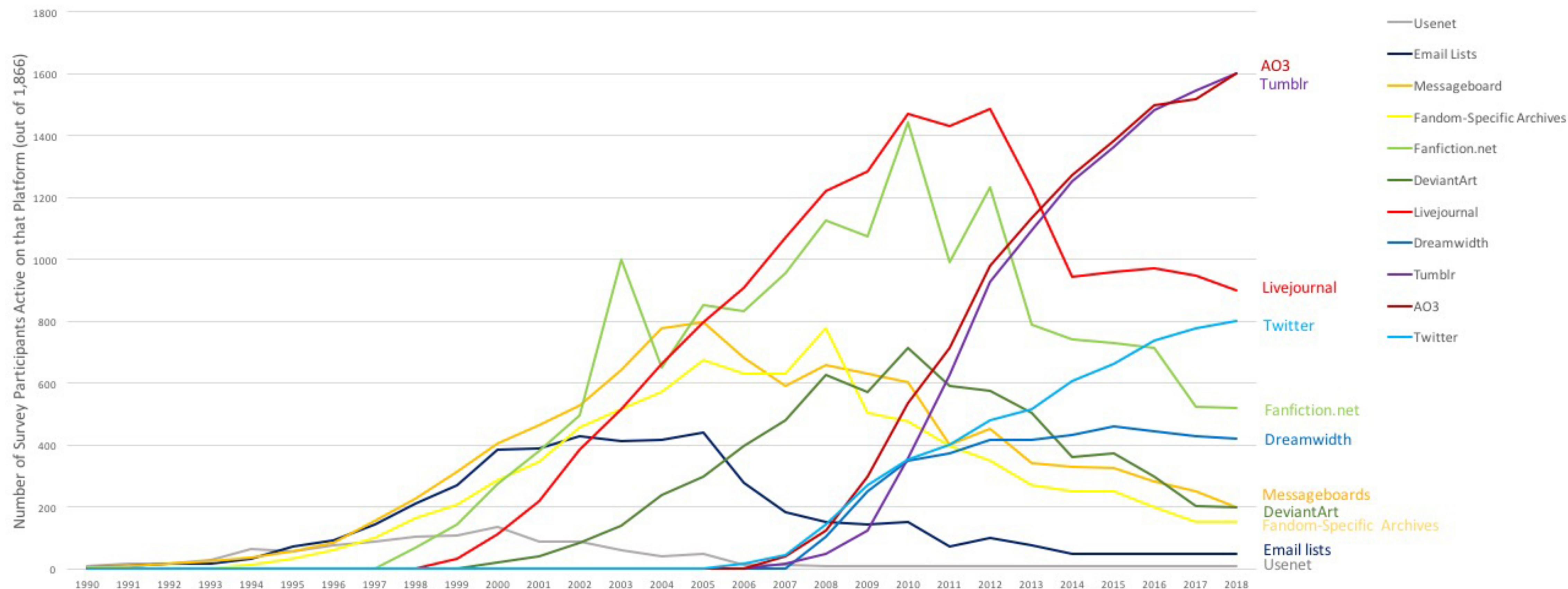
[P-468]



I am also always curious how Tumblr became the fertile ground for **social justice discourse** now so intimately connected to fandom is a byproduct that can be tied specifically to Tumblr.

[P-1874]

Fandom Platform Use over Time



“

God, I hate Tumblr. It is terrible for conversations. You can reblog and reply, but there's no guarantee the original poster sees your reply. **I HATE TUMBLR. DIAF TUMBLR** [P-S361]

“

I HATE TUMBLR. I think that's almost de rigeur for fandom olds, though, isn't it? I mean, we've been bitching about Tumblr since it started, and still do. [P-S275]

“

I hate tumblr. Seriously I would never use it but so many people I follow do and it's the only way to keep up with them. [P-S510]

“

I hate [Tumblr] but there's nothing better. [P-S1346]

“

I spent from 2012-2016 hoping that fandom as a collective was going to **leave Tumblr** for an alternative platform, basically any alternative. [P-S1415]



In order for a migration to occur, there must be *both* a compelling reason to leave *and* a viable alternative option.

WhatsApp privacy backlash: Facebook angers users by harvesting their data

Facebook Tinkers With Users' Emotions in News Feed Experiment, Stirring Outcry

Revealed: 50 million Facebook profiles
harvested for Cambridge Analytica in
major data breach

FACEBOOK 11 hours ago

**Mark Zuckerberg takes out full-page
newspaper ads to say 'sorry' for Cambridge
Analytica scandal**

By Nicole Darrah | Fox News

Facebook Security Breach Exposes Accounts of 50 Million Users

Migration would be more painless if we designed to support...

- ◆ Platform overlap and ecologies
- ◆ Loss prevention
- ◆ Resettlement
- ◆ Preservation of norms and values

Ask me about...

- ◆ **Governance and norms in fandom**
- ◆ **Privacy norms in fandom**
- ◆ **Research ethics for fandom**
- ◆ **Fandom as LGBTQ+ support space**
- ◆ **Fandom as empowerment through technology**

Thank you to collaborators!

Brianna Dym, Amy Bruckman,
Shannon Morrison, Jessica
Feuston, Ben Shapiro



“An Archive of Their Own: A Case Study of Feminist HCI and Values in Design” (Fiesler et al., CHI 2016)

“Growing Their Own: Legitimate Peripheral Participation for Computational Learning in an Online Fandom Community” (Fiesler et al., CSCW 2017)

“Future of Fandom” issue of TWC: “Owning the servers: A design fiction exploring the transformation of fandom into ‘our own’” and “Generations, migrations, and the future of fandom’s private spaces”

