

How to explore the data?

Tiny Use Cases as a methodology for data-based media studies

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Outline of the presentation

1. Introducing the **Tiny Use Case** workflow methodology
2. What we've learned through our TUCs
3. Perspectives for Japanese media studies with the JVMG knowledge graph

Introducing the Tiny Use Case workflow methodology

General idea for the Tiny Use Case (TUC)

- Pioneered by the **diggr** (Databased Infrastructure for Global Games Culture Research) research project team
- Inspiration from **agile** software development principles
 - Cycle of continuous incremental innovations and assessments
- Each TUC is **3-4 months** long
- Each TUC confronts the data with a **specific question/aim**

The purpose of TUCs

- Exploring of the **data's usability and adequacy for research**
 - **Limits, quality** issues and **fit**
- **Empowering** the researcher
 - Needs of the researchers in relation to the **frontend**
- Finding a **common language**
 - Bridging disciplinary boundaries between library and computer science on the one hand, and humanities and social science on the other

Pitfalls of the TUC process

- “not so tiny after all!”
 - **Overambitious** use cases are the biggest threat
- **Vagueness is the enemy** of data
 - **Inadequately defined** use cases (remaining undetected)
- The rabbit-hole of data exploration
 - Or, **how to close** a use case

Examples of Tiny Use Cases

1. Investigating Japanese **Visual Novel Characters**
2. Testing one of the points from Hiroki Azuma's "**Otaku: Japan's Database Animals**"
3. **Exploring recurring patterns in character creation** in visual novel games
4. **Examining the concept of media mix** by looking at networks of co-appearing characters
5. Do **character personality traits** follow ideas about the connection between **blood type** and personality?
6. **Census of characters** in Japanese visual media

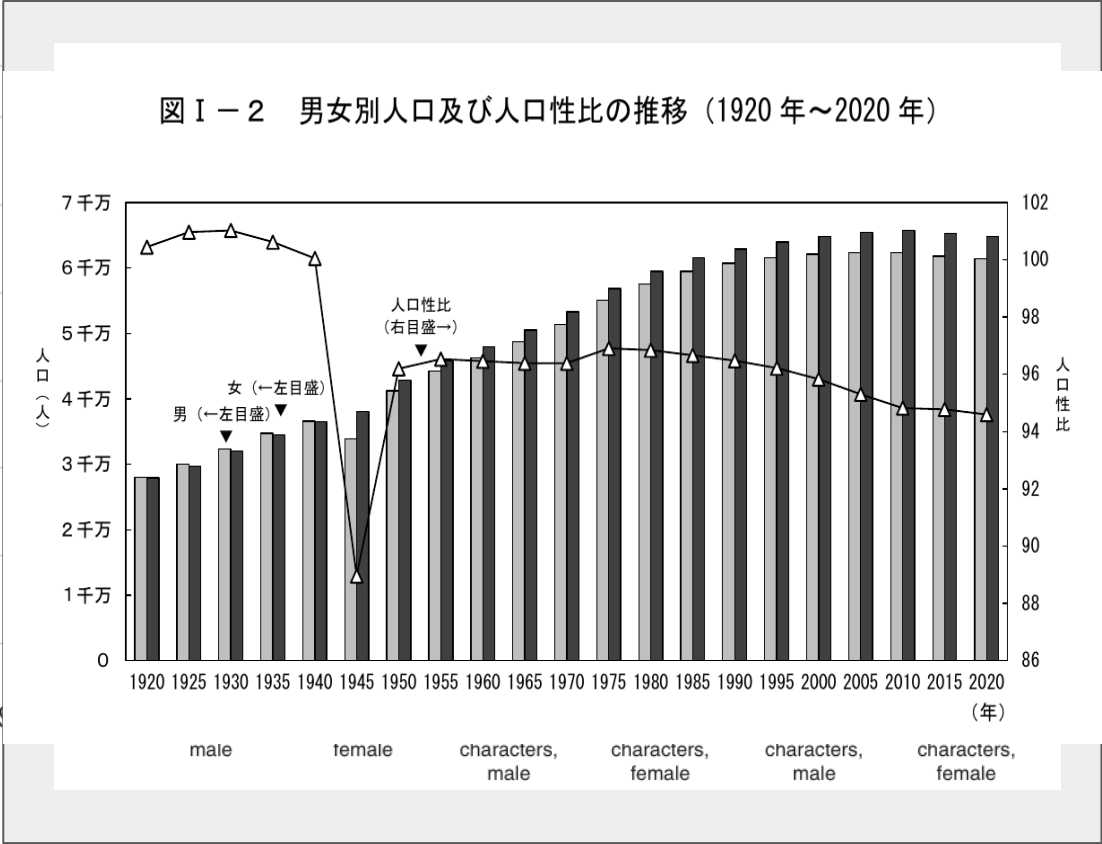
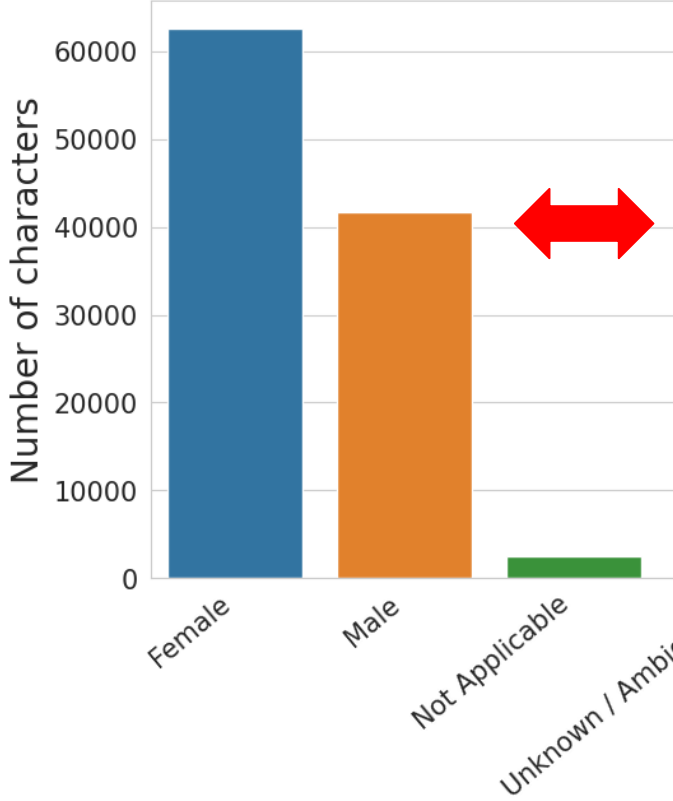
Lessons learned from our TUCs

- Research **potentials**: What is the data good for?
 - Corroborating prior findings, generating new hypotheses, identifying connections across data sources
- Scope: Limits to the **available data**
- Logical: Limits to the **types of questions** that can be asked
 - Strong need for careful and creative problem formulations and adjustments
- Literacy: Working with data is **not intuitive**
- Technology: **Graph data vs. Excel table, hardware limits**

The **census** as an example for potentials, questions of scope, and limitations

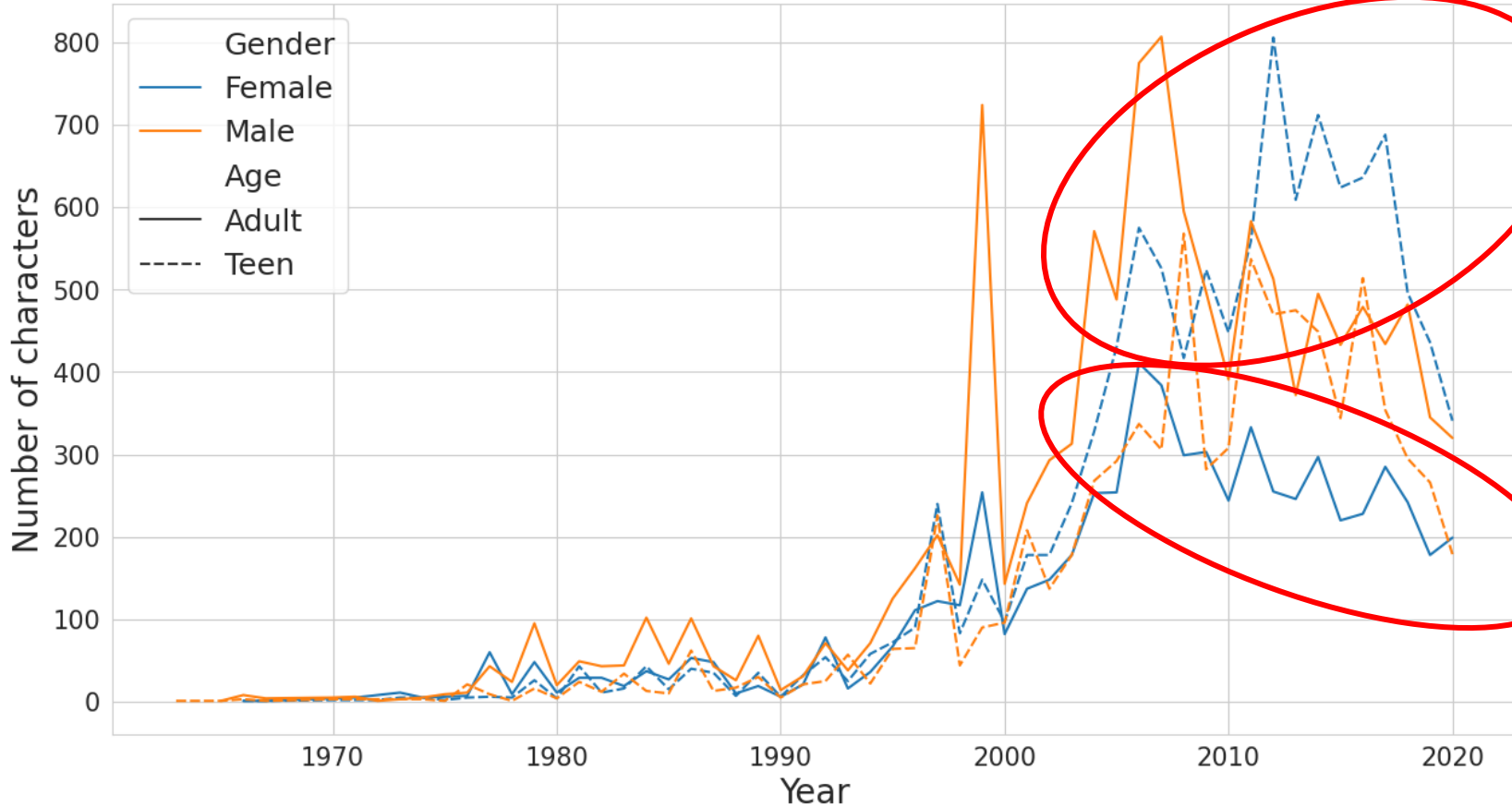
- Who **populates** Japanese visual media / anime?
- ACDB as a rich resource for measuring character populations

Census: Distribution of all ACDB characters by gender

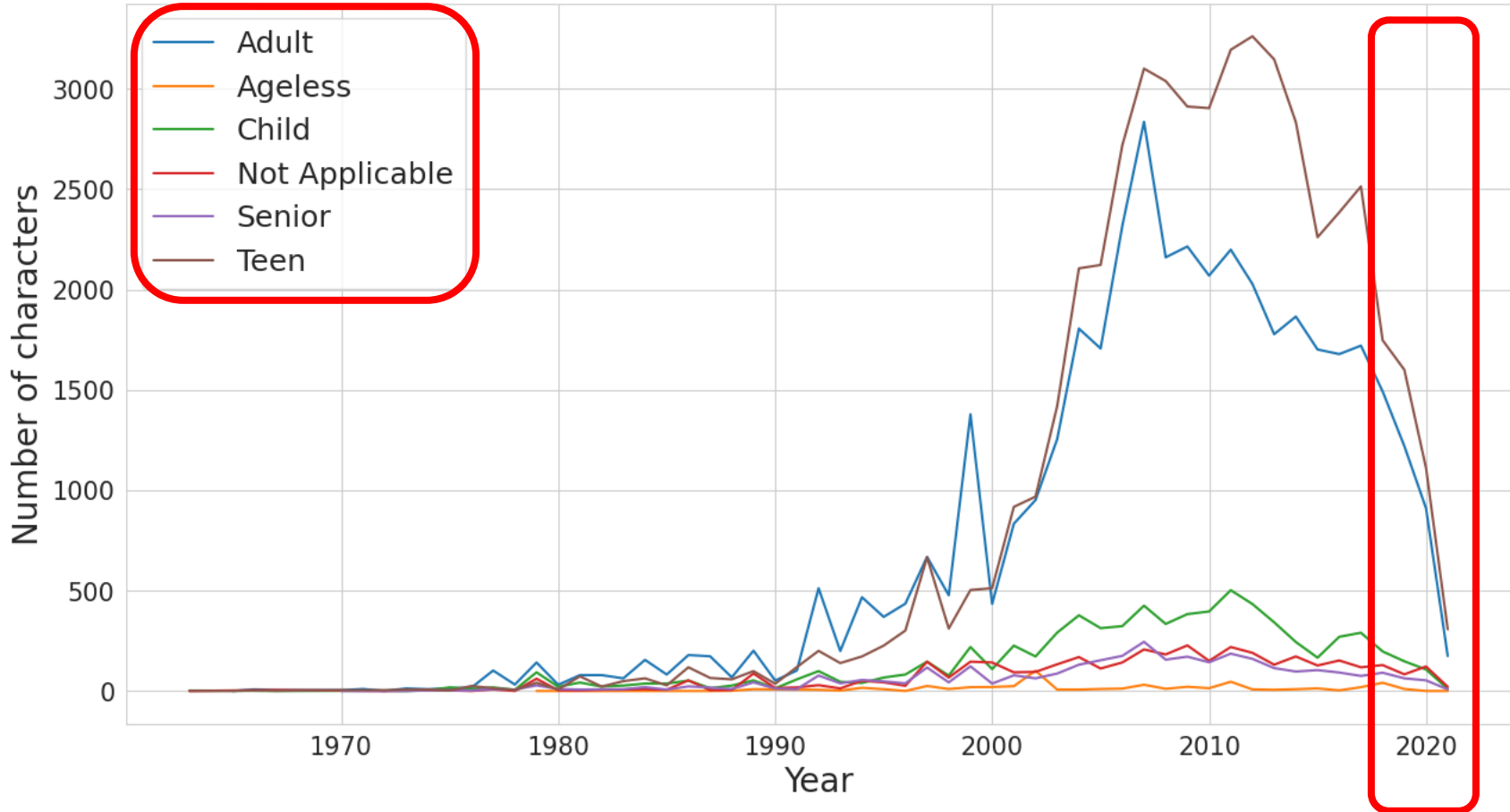


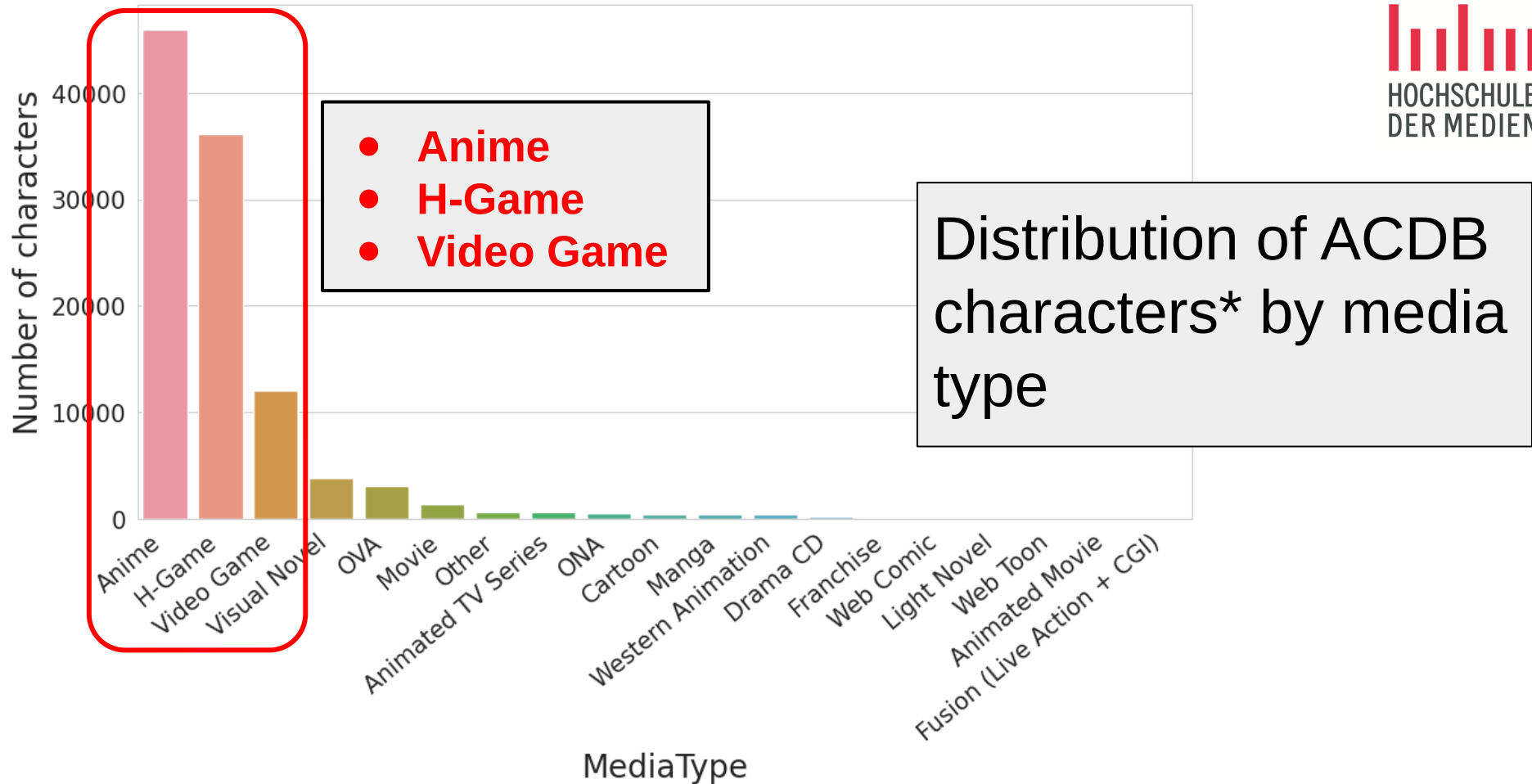
Gender

The anime population: gender and age



Distribution of all ACDB characters by age and year





* Removed characters with publication year 2021 and/or with missing media type.

Strategies for overcoming limitations

- Check for biases, but how?
- Connect to other data resources
- Do manual labor: “the complete list”

not so tiny use case any more...

Thank you for your attention!

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Visit our project website:

<https://jvmg.iuk.hdm-stuttgart.de/>

Visit the JVMG database:

<https://mediagraph.link/>