On the nature of

# Anonymous editors

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anonymous_Idea_cropped.jpg

# Outline

1. What’s an anonymous editor?

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2. How much do anons contribute?

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2. How much do anons contribute?
3. New results: Anons who register

# Part 1

What’s an anonymous editor?

# Anonymous

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*(of a person) not identified by name; of unknown name.*

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**User:EpochFail**

**User:128.101.33.82**

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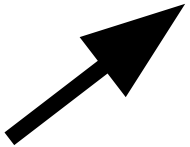

*This is a name!  But it's a bad identifier.*

# Registered editors

# Anon editors

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1:1 with a human*

# Anon editors

* almost always true.  Sometimes bots.  Also sometimes sock puppets.

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## Anon editors

1:1 with an IP address

- 1 human -> many IPs
- many IPs -> 1 human

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# Registered editors

1:1 with a human*

Persistent identity

- Credit
- Contact
- Personalized

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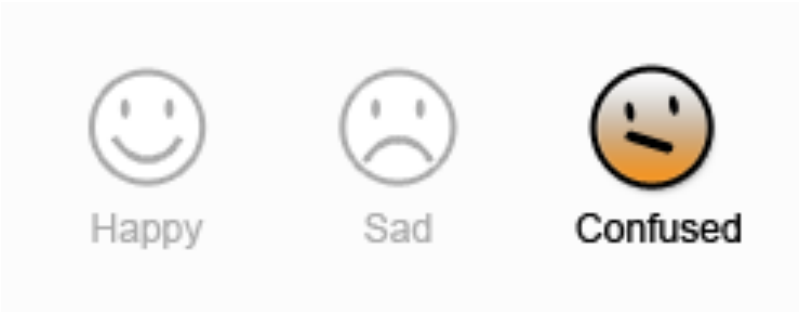
# Wat

Anonymous users are *less* private?



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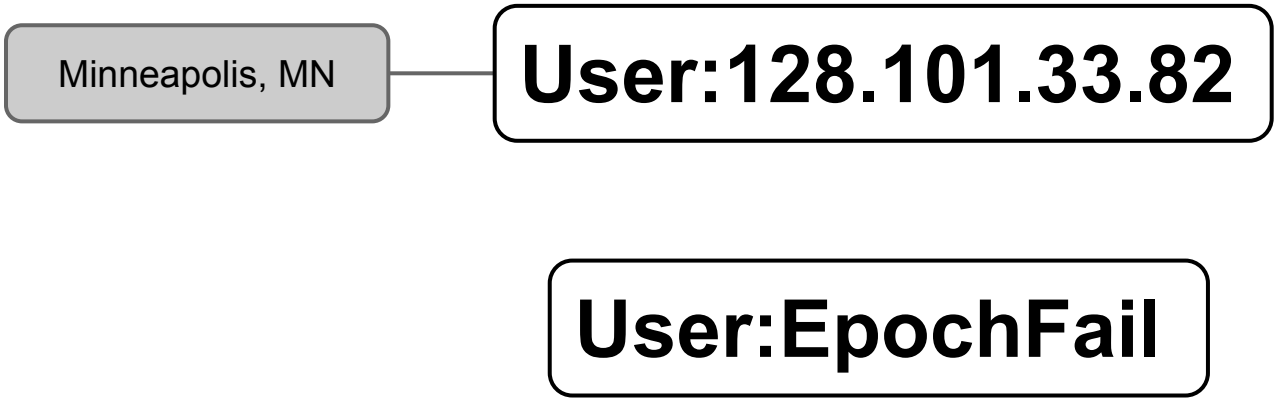
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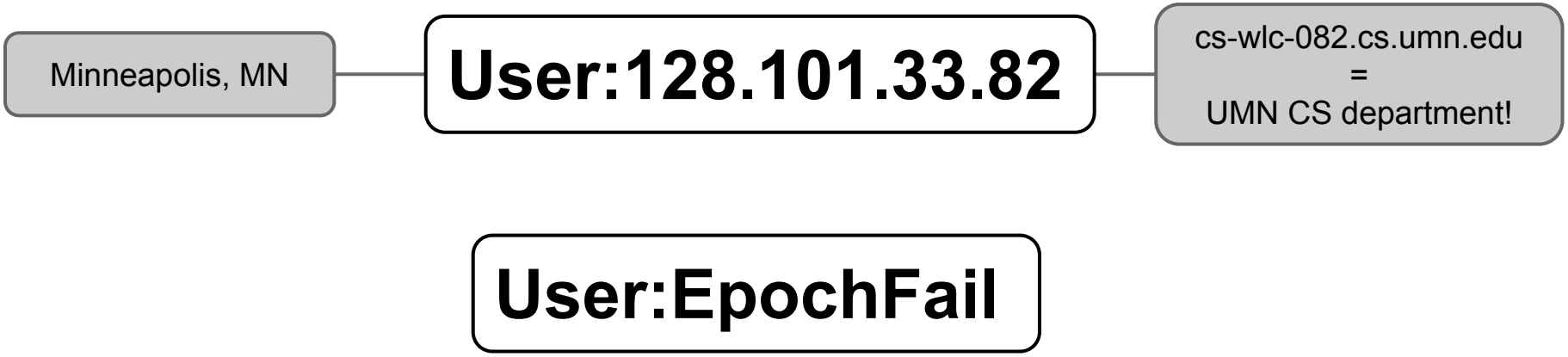
User:EpochFail


Minneapolis, MN
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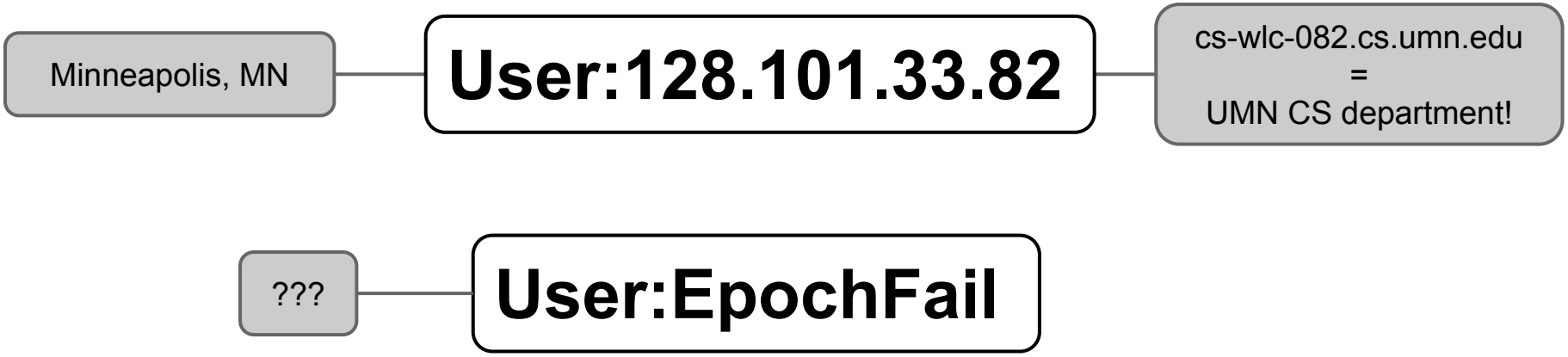
cs-wlc-082.cs.umn.edu
=
UMN CS department!
User:EpochFail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cs-wlc-082.cs.umn.edu
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UMN CS department!
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Minneapolis, MN

**User:128.101.33.82**

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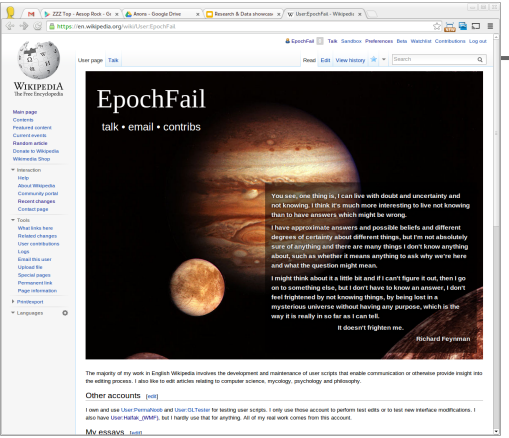


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- Responsible for somewhere between 3.7 and 23% of Wikipedia.

# Part 2

How much do anons contribute?

# By comparison with registered users

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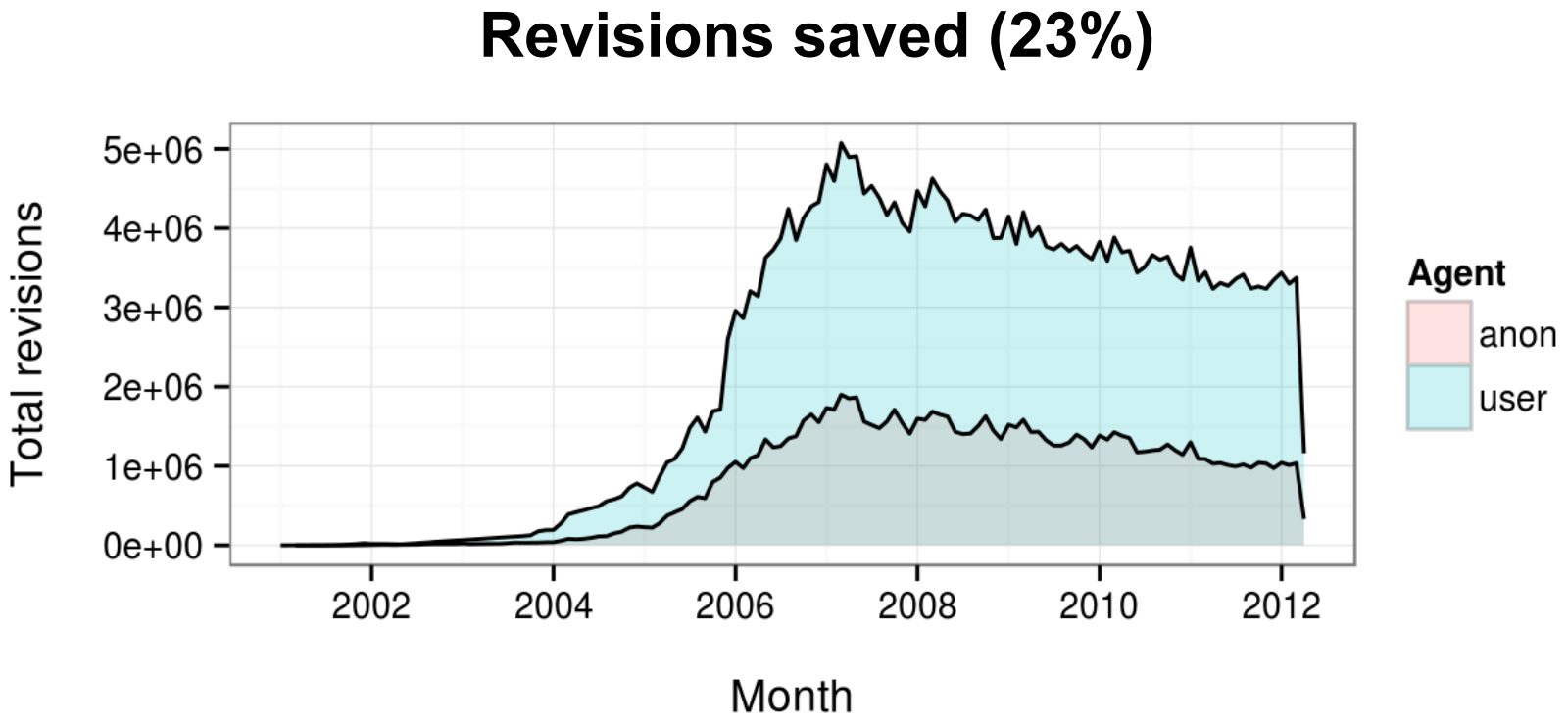

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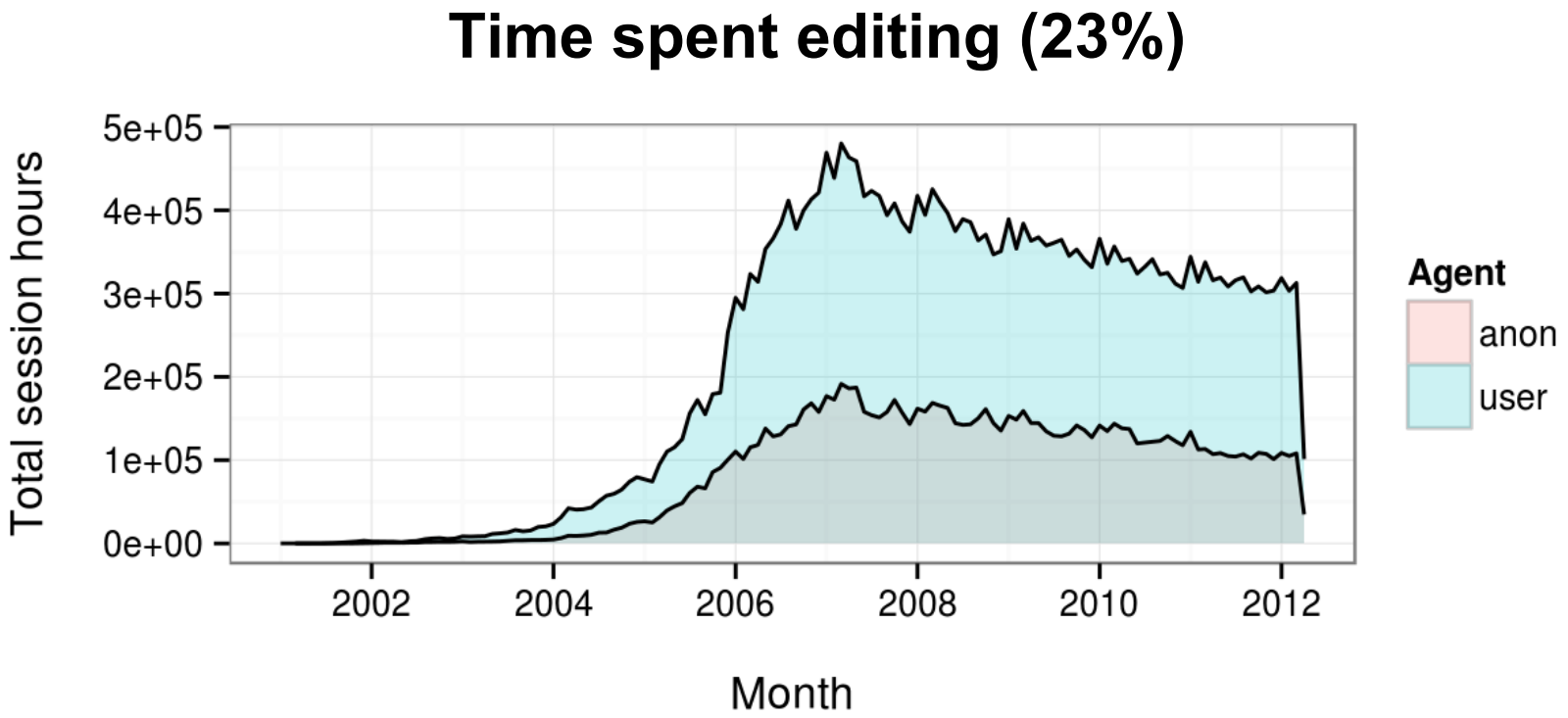
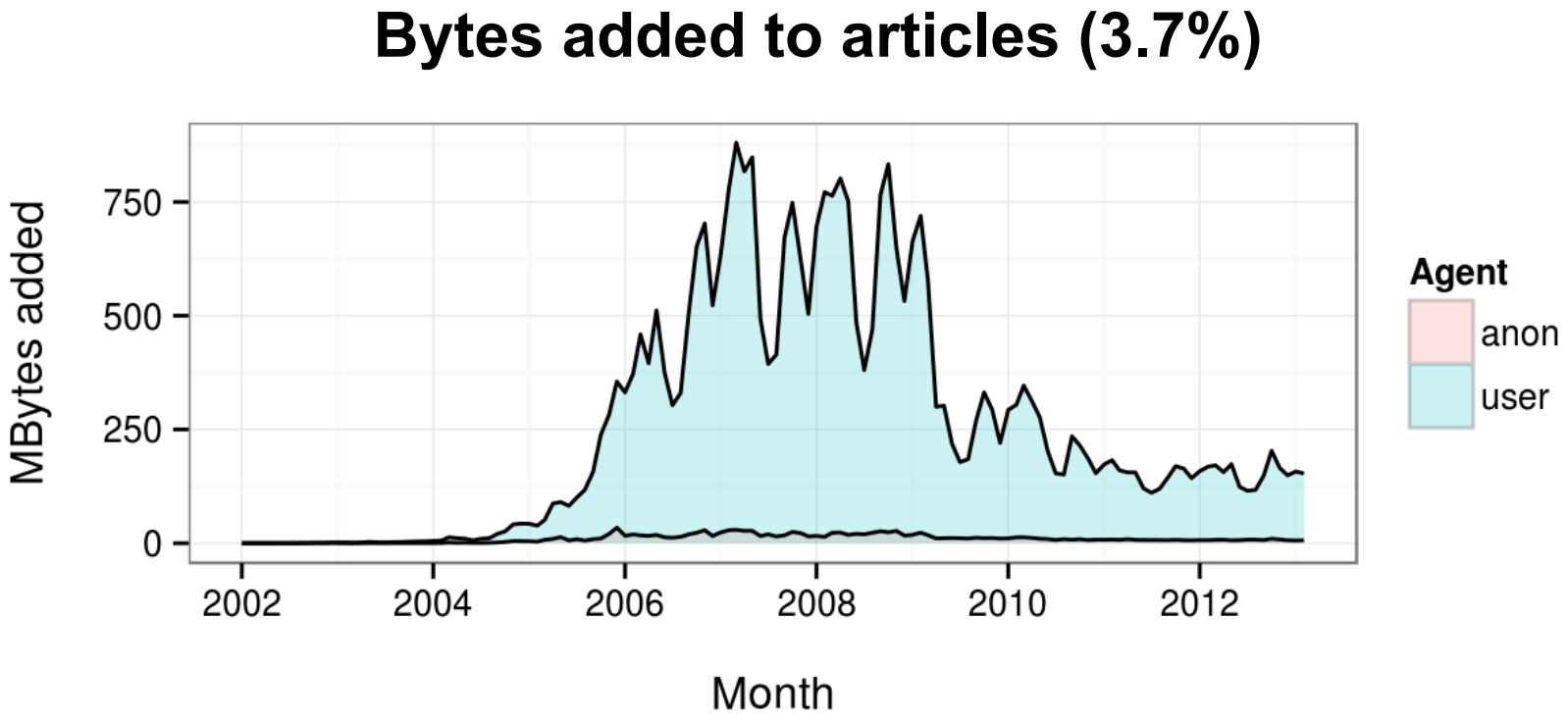



See https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/R:Edit_session

# By comparison with registered users



# In summary

- 23% of revisions and time spent editing
- 3.7% of content

# Part 3

New results: Anons who register accounts

# Registered user timeline

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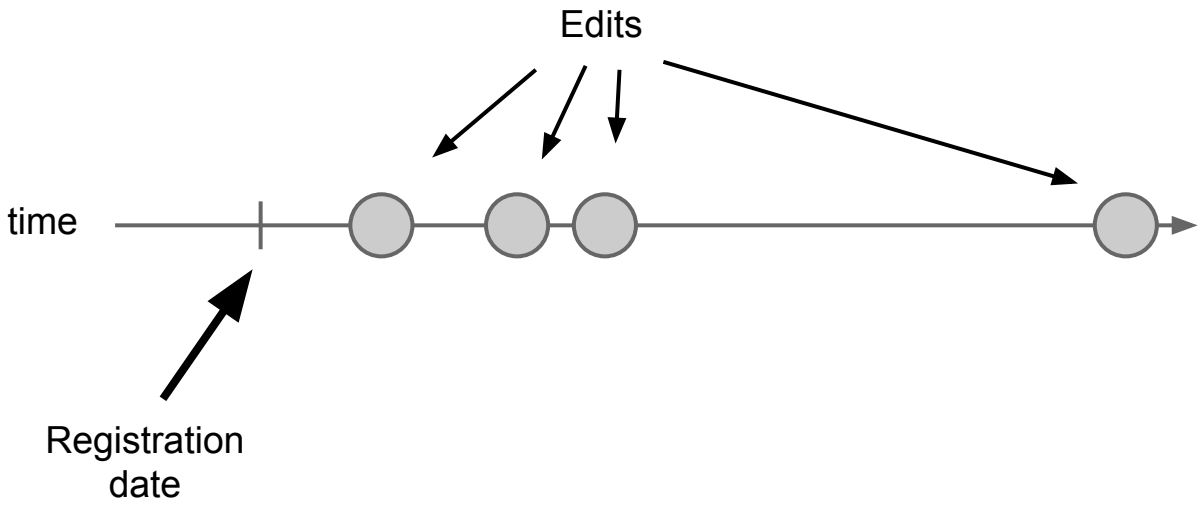

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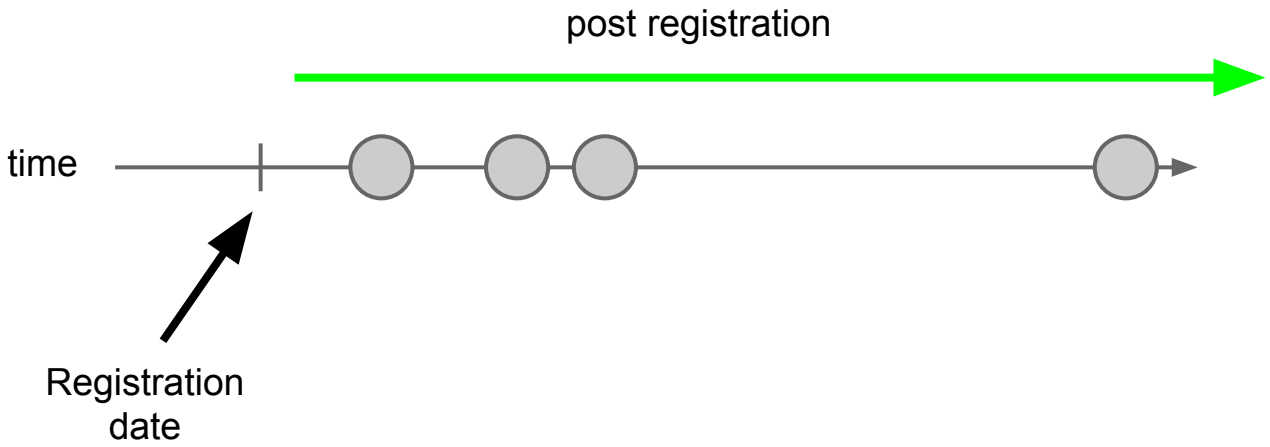

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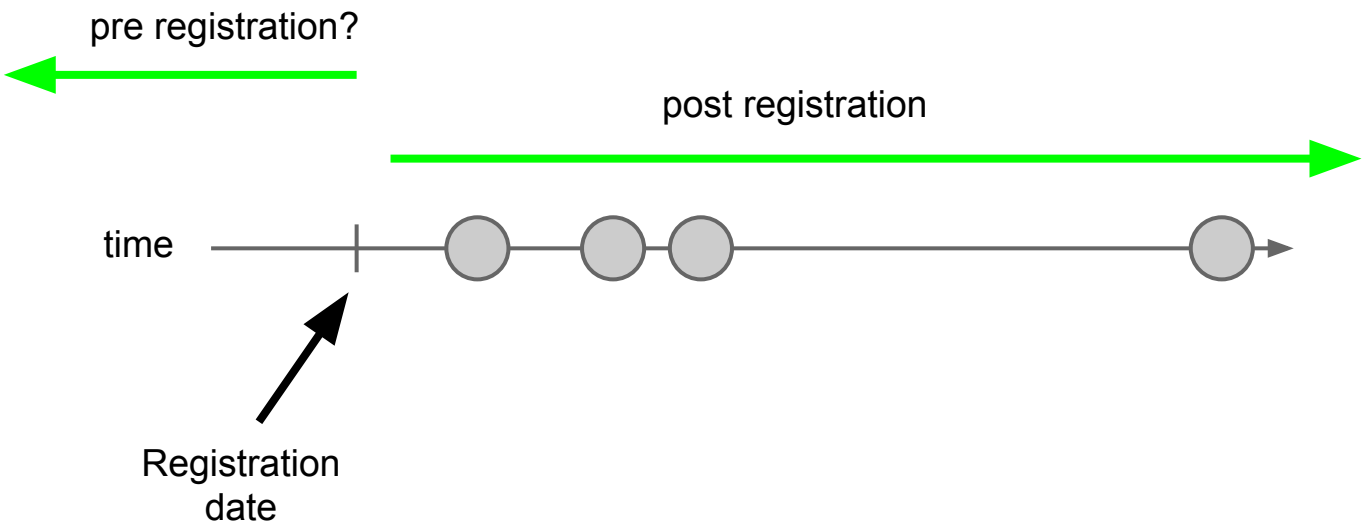

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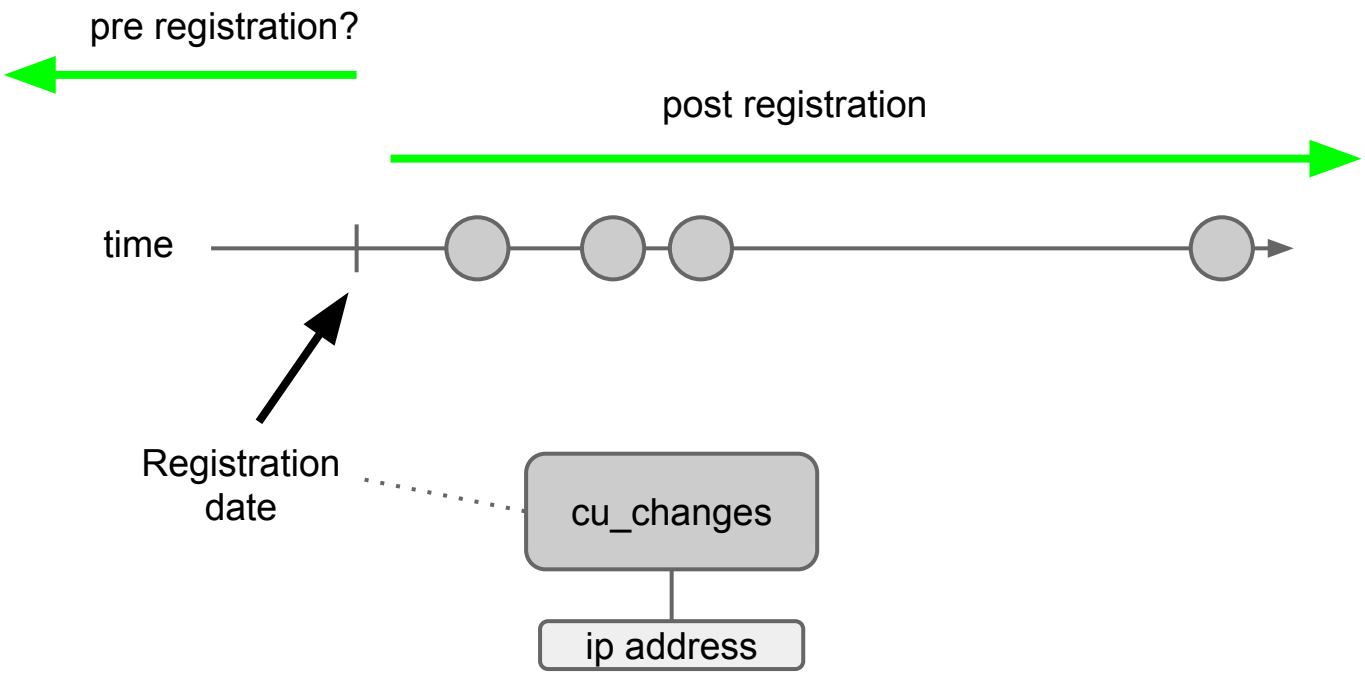

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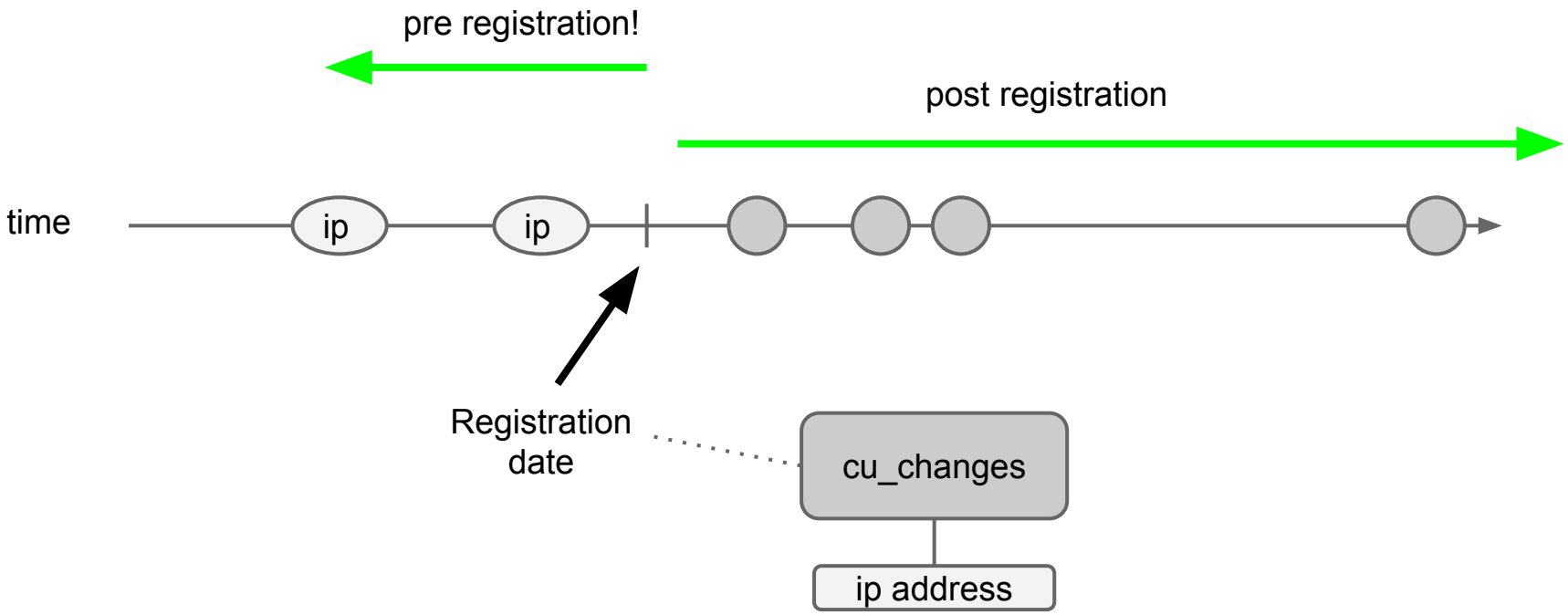

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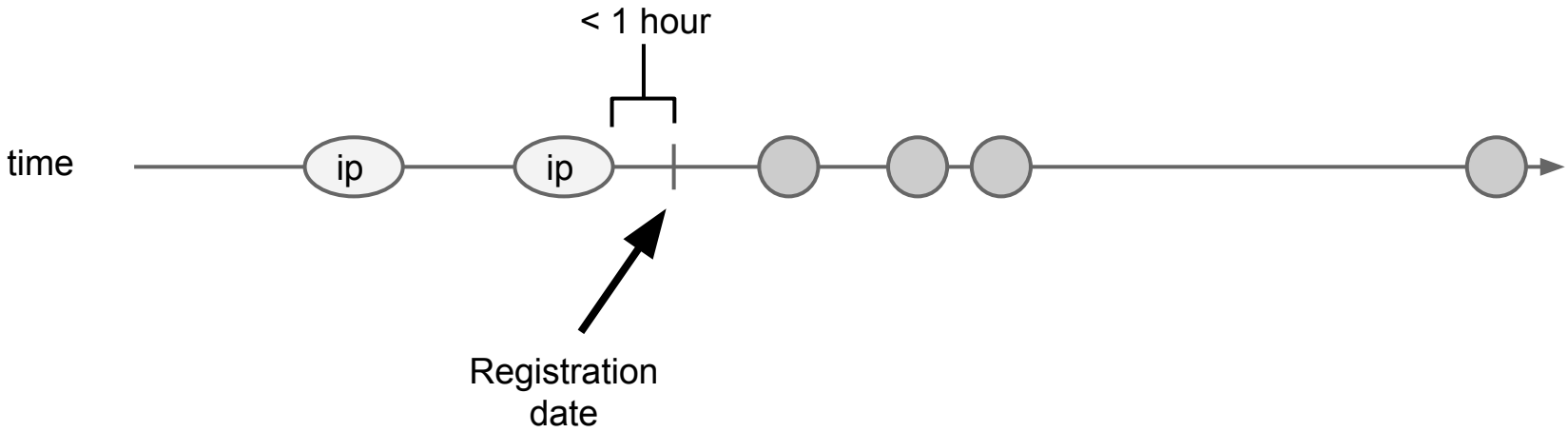

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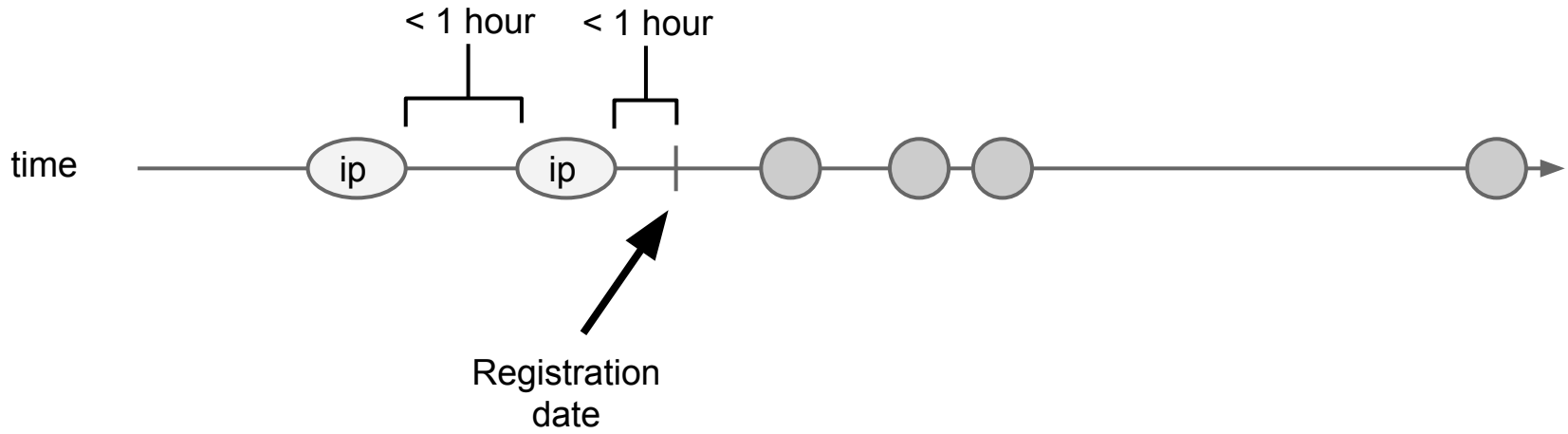

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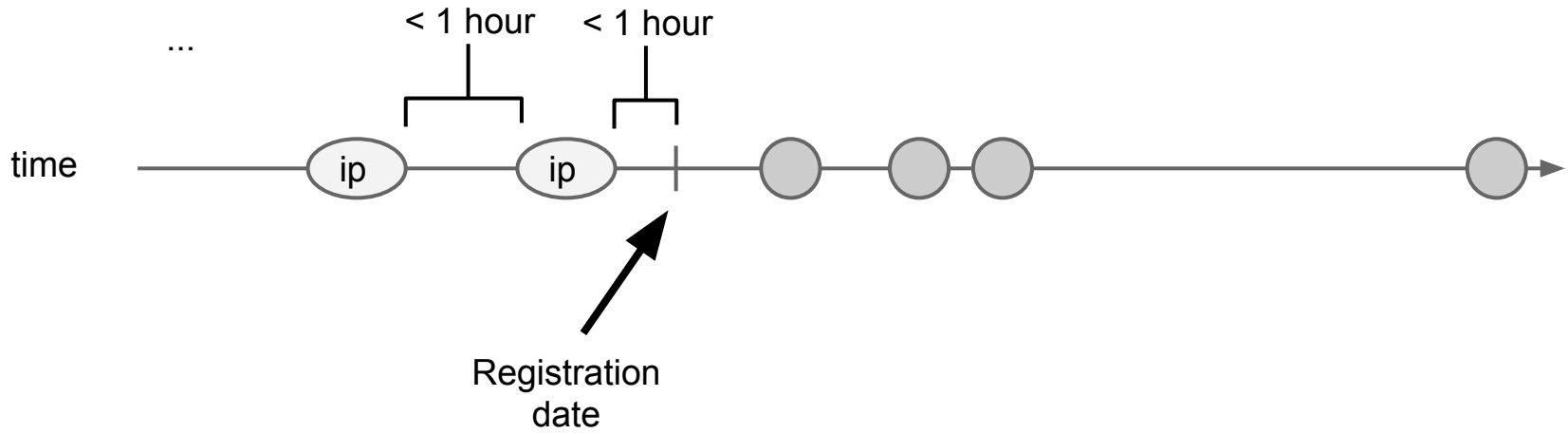

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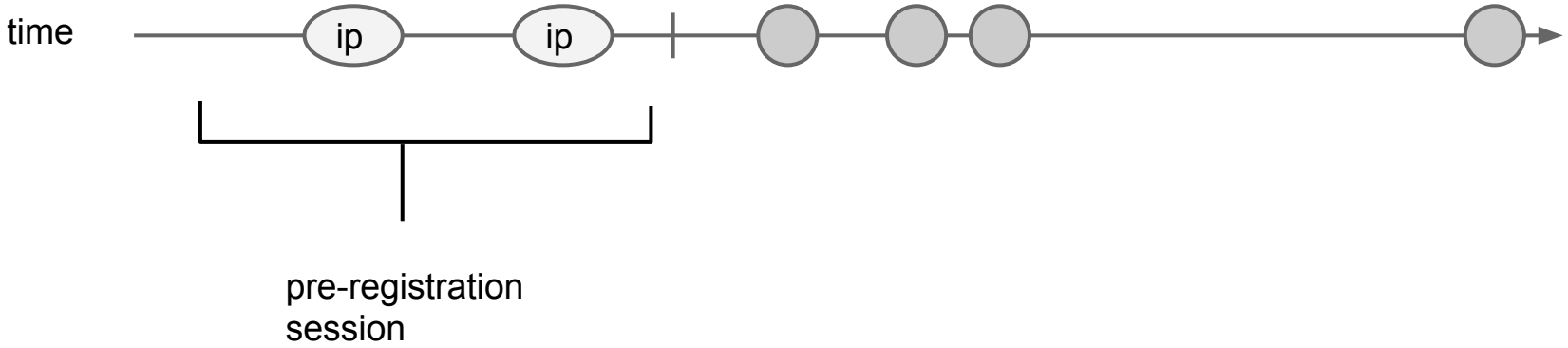

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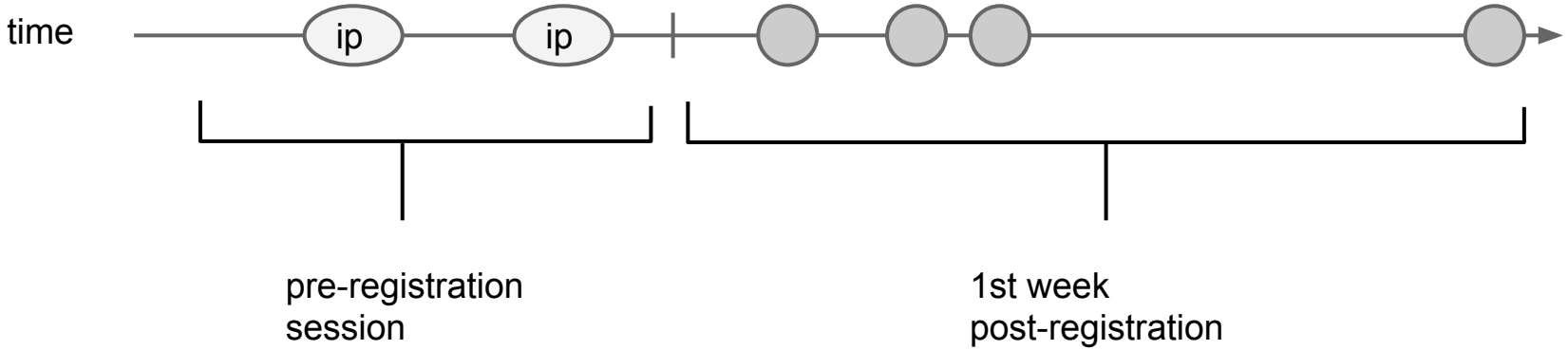

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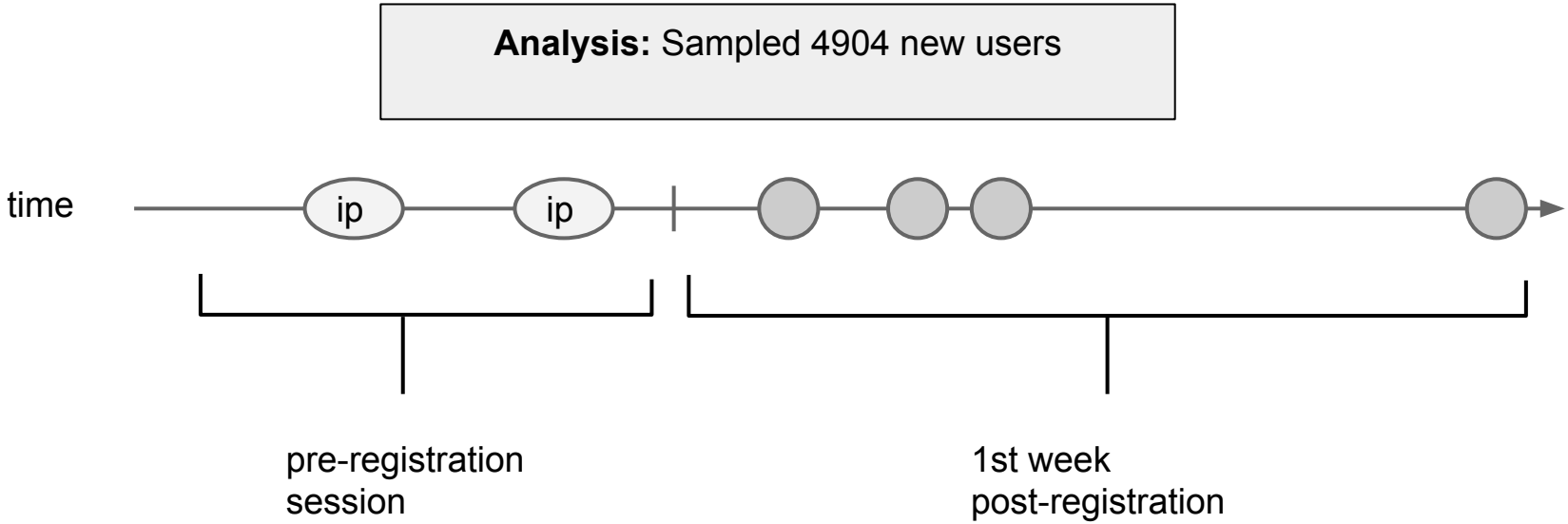

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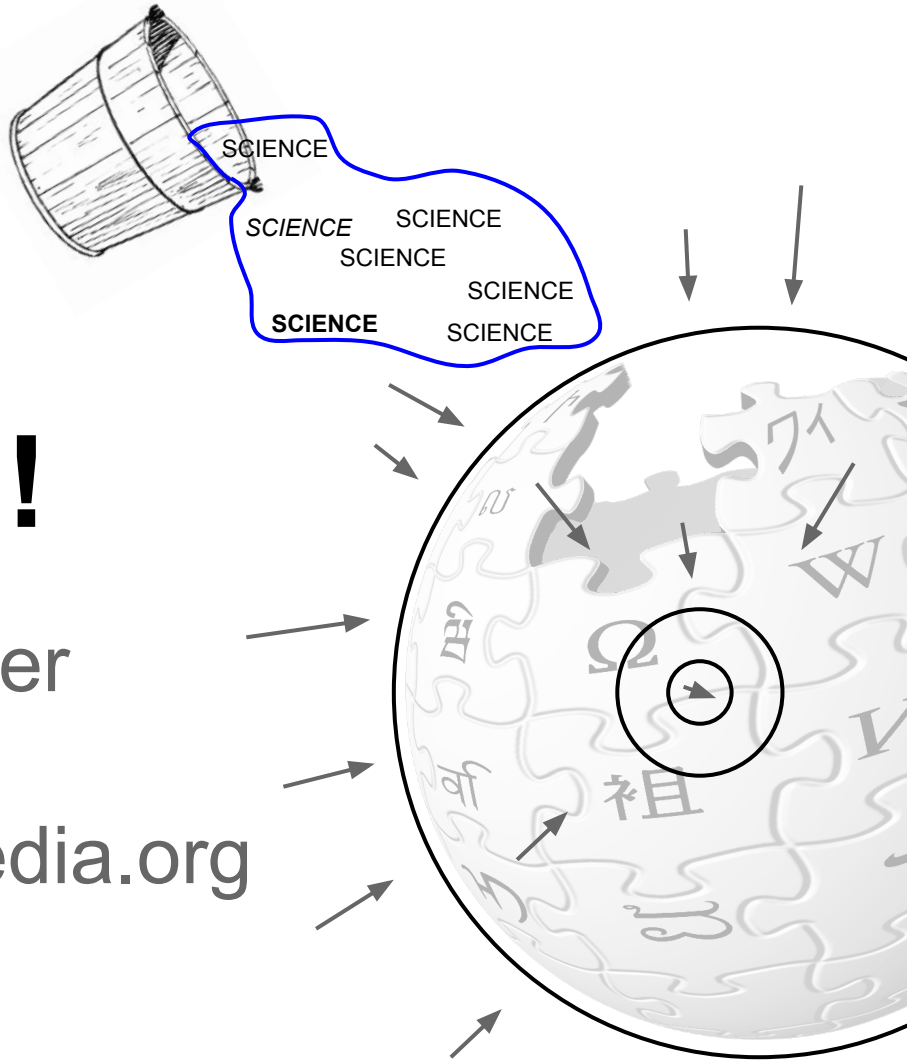
- 6% more productive (excl. pre-registration)

# TL;DR:

Editors who edit anonymously right before registering an account are our **most productive** “new editors”.




# Thanks!

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(halfak)
ahalfaker@wikimedia.org