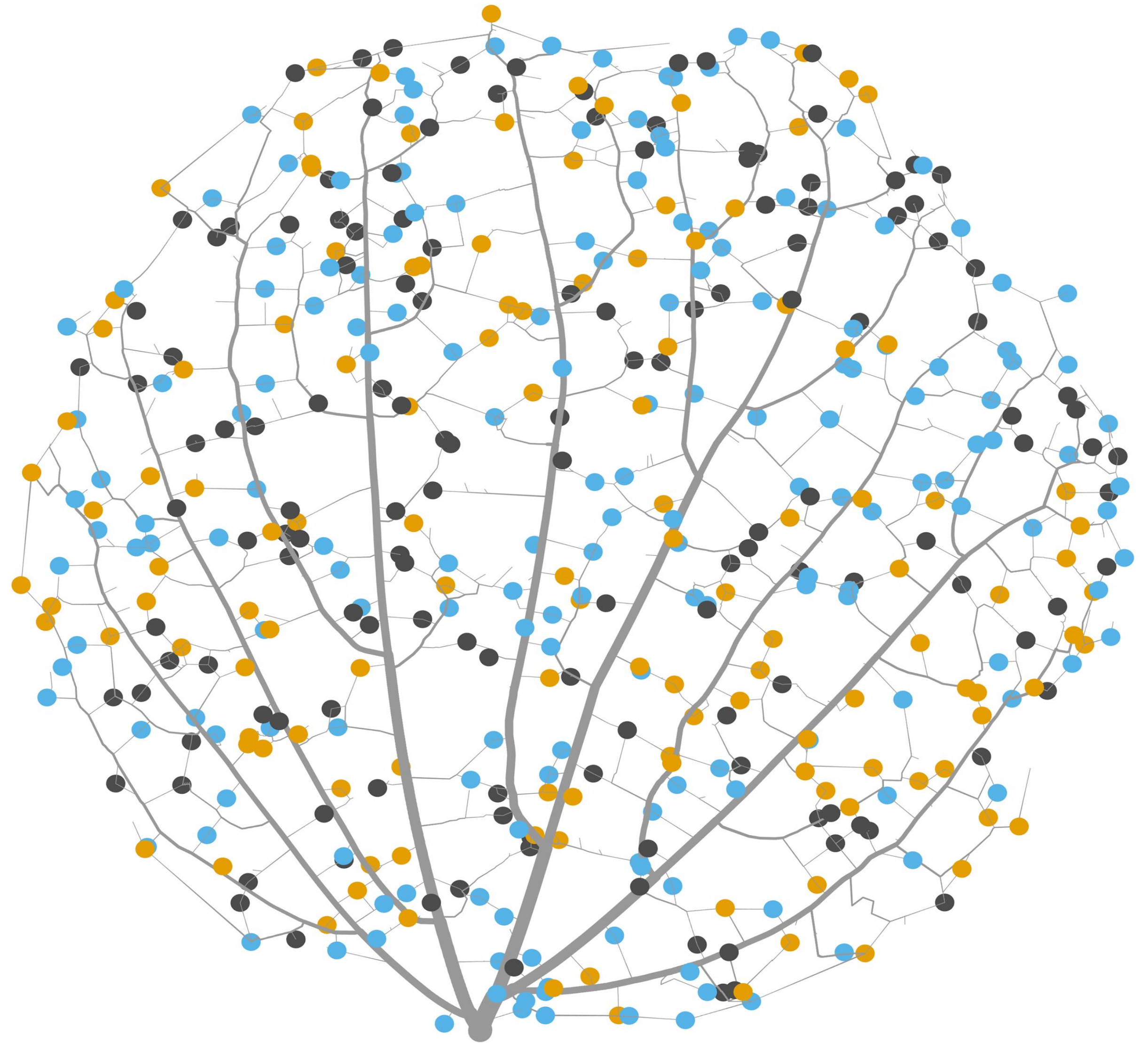


Testing Ideas for Flourishing Communities

CivilServant

J. Nathan Matias & Julia Kamin

CS natematias *Juliakamin(cs)*



Goals & Agenda

What can experiments do for Wikipedia?

How to design a simple experiment

How to think about research ethics

Design simple experiments Together

Introduction to Experiment Design & Ethics

Develop Experiment Ideas In Groups

Review Ideas, Challenges, and Solutions

Can symbolic rewards increase newcomer retention in German Wikipedia?



WIKIPEDIA
Die freie Enzyklopädie



Gallus, J. (2016). Fostering public good contributions with symbolic awards: A large-scale natural field experiment at Wikipedia. *Management Science*, 63(12), 3999-4015.



Portal SCHWEIZ · SUISSE · SVIZZERA · SVIZRA



The Award „Edelweiss with Star“ honors on a monthly basis a selection of those users who have made their first contributions to the German-language Wikipedia in the previous month.

[Awardees](#) who continue their engagement can receive two further awards besides the original award: "Edelweiss with two Stars" and "Edelweiss with three Stars".

The award recipients shall be considered as representative for all those new users who have constructively contributed to our common project. Welcome!

Idea and Realization

With the Edelweiss-Award, a group of authors of the [Portal Switzerland](#) wishes to honor new users and their valuable contributions to the German-language Wikipedia. They deserve our gratitude and our recognition.

The idea for such an award emerged from the [Wikipedia roundtable in Zurich](#). After that, the award "Edelweiss" was for the first time bestowed in July 2012. The suggestions that were made after the first round of bestowals were intensively discussed and carefully integrated into the present award concept on consecutive roundtable meetings.

In case of questions, suggestions or criticism, please feel free to directly contact one of the users present at the roundtable meetings (for instance, [7 user names]). We are eager to preserve the positive spirit of this award and to abstain from dragging new users directly into discussions.

Edelweiss with Star

Out of more than 4,000 candidates who were for the first time active in the German-language Wikipedia in May 2015, we have awarded the following users in early June.

XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ
XYZ	XYZ	XYZ	XYZ



Note. "XYZ" is a placeholder for the pseudonyms of the award winners, which are displayed there.

Experiments

Provide different interventions to different groups and compare the outcome

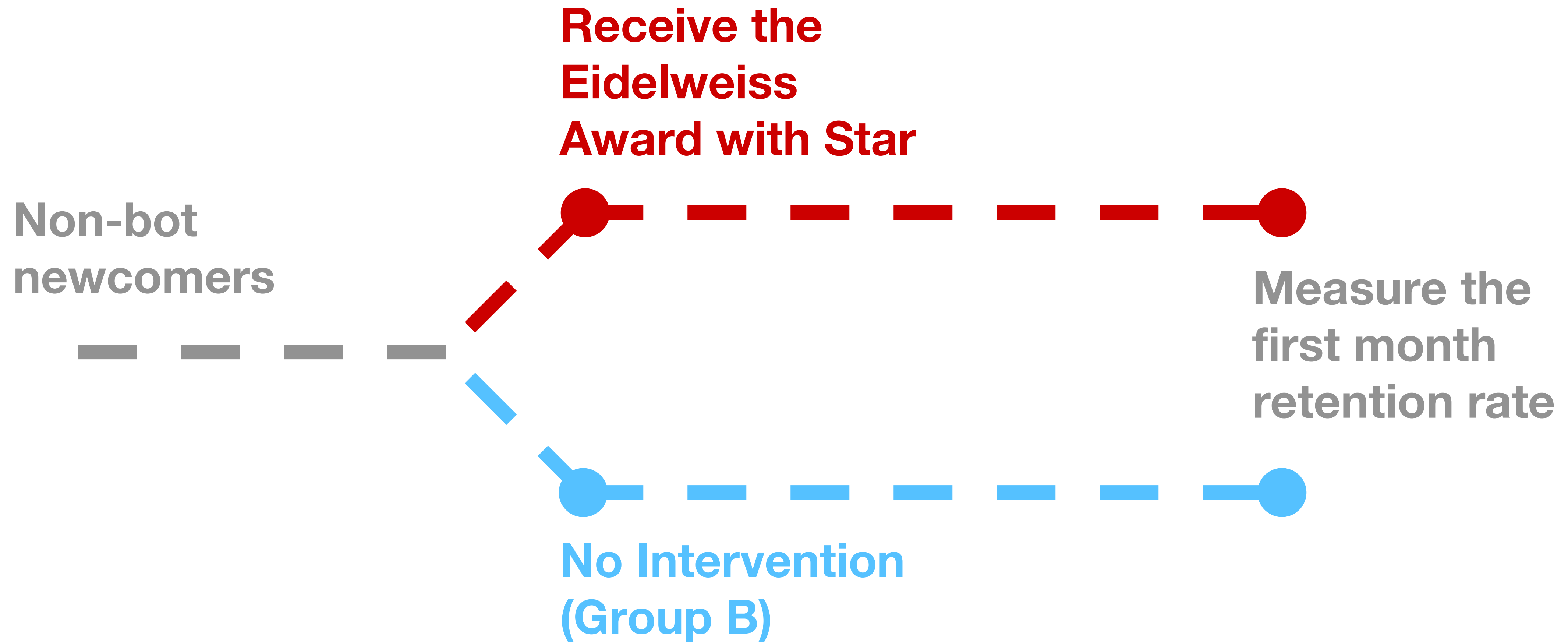
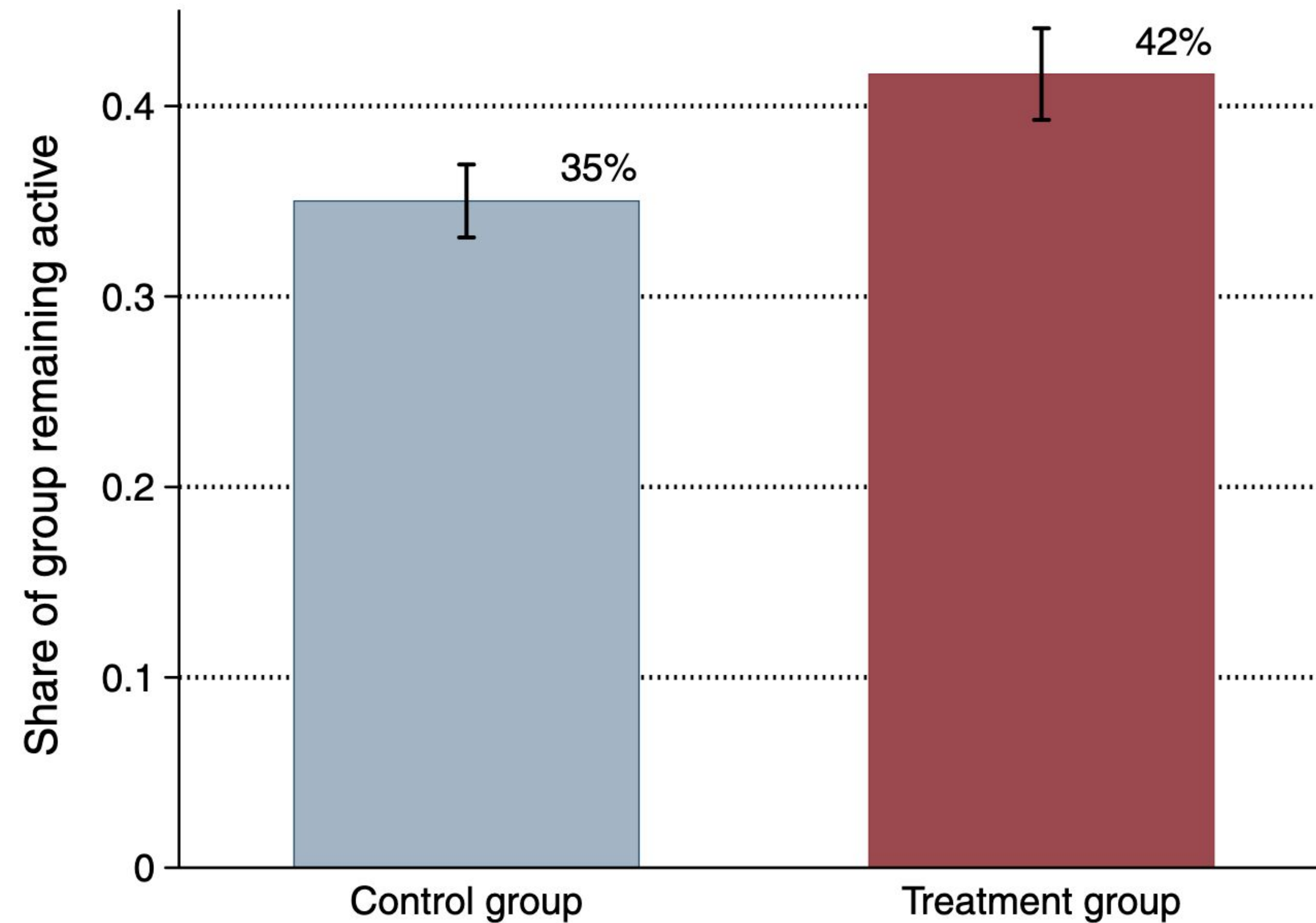


Figure 1. (Color online) Mean Retention Rates



Notes. Focusing on first month after awarding date. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence intervals.

**What is an
Experiment?**

**How Can Your
Community Design
an Experiment?**



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We work together with communities
to **discover effective ideas** for
change and to **test the impacts of
digital technologies** in society

**How can (language)
Wikipedia better
welcome newcomers?**

Who actually signs up
for Wikipedia?

What is the newcomer
experience?

What factors are
associated with
contribution over time?

What support do
newcomers need?

What interventions
increase newcomer
participation?

**Interviews &
Ethnography**

Surveys

Data Analysis

**Community
Discussion**

Design

Experiments

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Community Discussion

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Experiments

Experiments ask **what-if questions**
and **test ideas for change**

Experiments

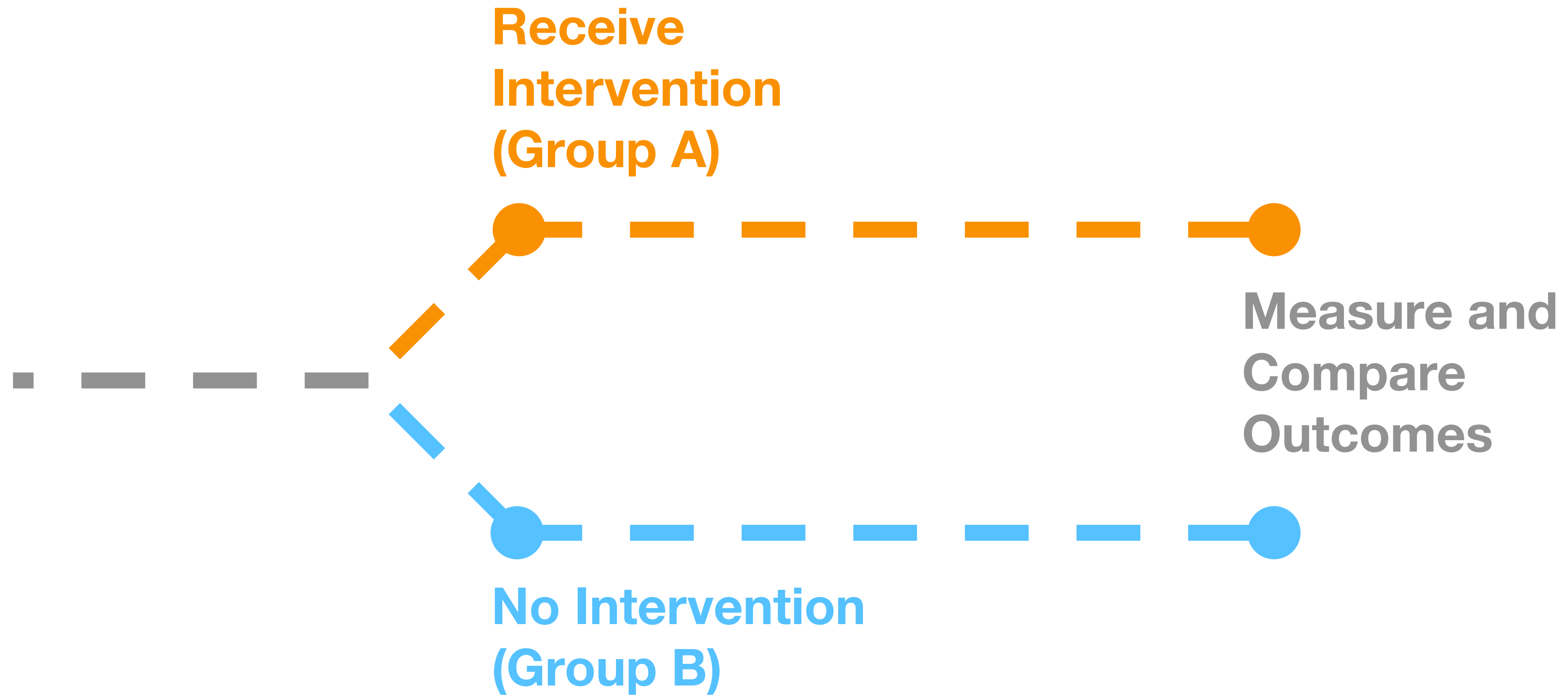
Test ideas
for change

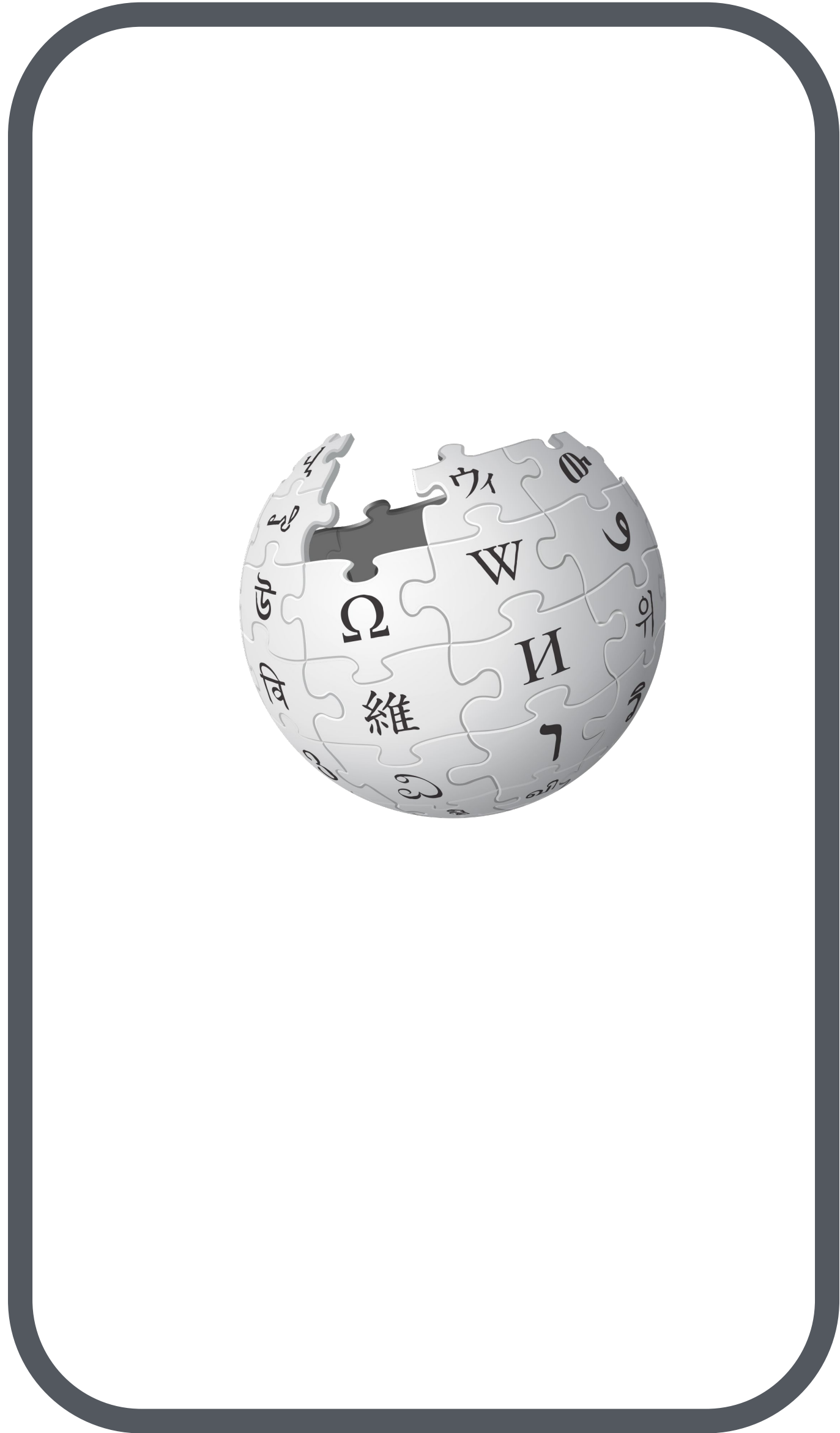
If new Wikipedians are given an award, how will that increase retention?

If more experienced editors thank newcomers for their edits, will that increase retention?

Experiments

Provide different interventions to different groups and compare the outcome





**CivilServant
Datastore**



**CivilServant
Software**



How can your community design an experiment?

Goal:

Intervention:

Unit of Assignment:

Measure(s):

Goal

What do you want to see change in your Wikipedia?

Who

What

We want

people who have just joined a Wikipedia

people who aren't joining a Wikipedia

to increase the quality of their contributions

to contribute more to Wikipedia

to keep contributing over time

Experiment Design

Goal: We want people who have just joined a Wikipedia to keep contributing over time

Intervention:

Unit of Assignment:

Measure(s):

Intervention

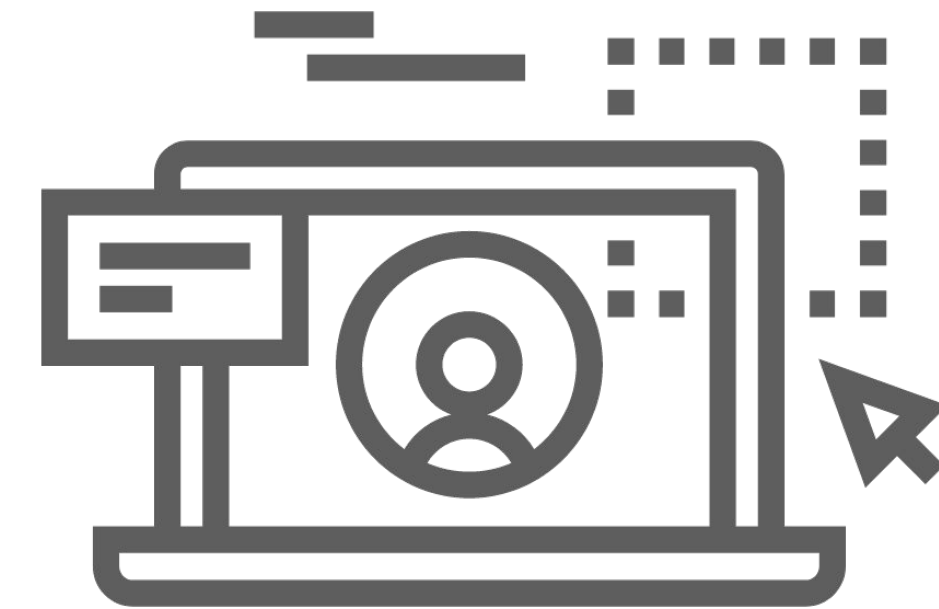
What could you do to implement your theory of change?



Social



Policy & Process



Software & Design

Intervention

What causes some people to contribute to Wikipedia longer?

Offer support after conflict or harassment

Provide branding & identity they can show their friends

Send thanks to tell newcomers how you value their contributions

Experiment Design

Goal: We want people who have just joined a Wikipedia to keep contributing over time

Intervention:

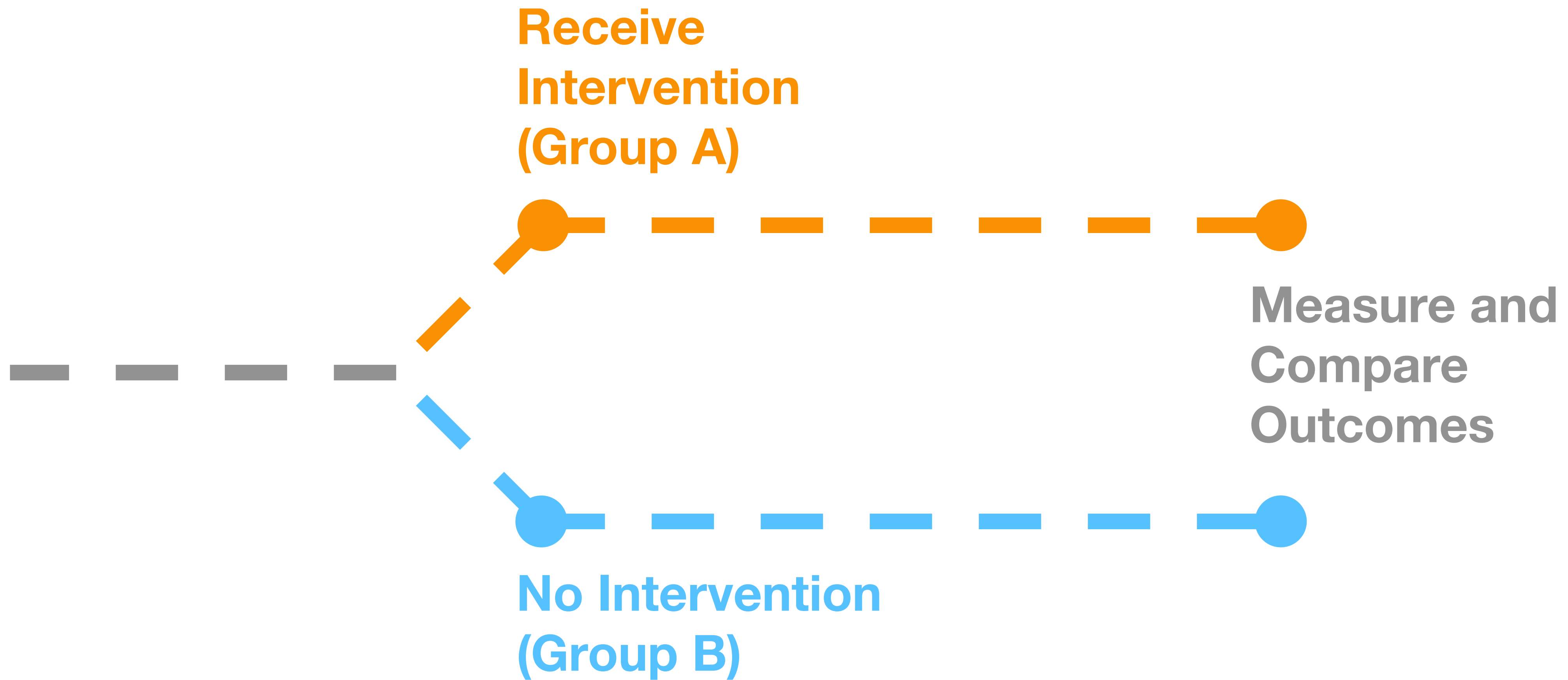
Wikipedians send thanks to newcomers to inform them about how Wikipedians value their contributions

Unit of Assignment:

Measure(s):

Unit of Assignment

Where can you vary an intervention for comparison?



Unit of Assignment

Where can you vary an intervention for comparison?

Individuals

Send some people Thanks but not others

Cohorts

Send some groups of Wikipedians Thanks but not other groups

Articles

Make the Thanks feature available for some articles but not others

Wikipedias

Turn on the Thanks feature for some Wikipedias but not others

Important: good experiments need a large enough sample of units, usually in the hundreds or thousands

Experiment Design

Goal: We want people who have just joined a Wikipedia to keep contributing over time

Intervention: Wikipedians send thanks to newcomers to inform them about how Wikipedians value their contributions

Unit of Assignment: Individual Wikipedians

Measure(s):

Measurement

How will you measure
the outcome that matters?

**Observe
Behavior**

Wikipedia Data: how long someone contributes to
Wikipedia (survival/retention)

Ask People

Survey: How much do they believe that other people
value their contributions?

Experiment Design

How will you measure the outcome that matters?

Goal: We want people who have just joined a Wikipedia to keep contributing over time

Intervention: Wikipedians send thanks to newcomers to inform them about how Wikipedians value their contributions

Unit of Assignment: Individual Wikipedians

Measure(s):

- Survival/Retention
- Belief that others value their work

Questions

Research Ethics, Collaborative Design & Community Consent

Research Ethics

Protecting individual participants

Collaborative Design

Supporting and protecting the community

Community Consent

Ensuring that research is accountable to the community

Principles of Research Ethics: Protecting Participants

Benefits: will this study benefit participants & society?

Risk: are the risks from this study:

- routine
- duration: reversible / long-term

Do **benefits outweigh the risks**?

Procedures to protect subjects

- **Consent** and **Debriefing**

Collaborative design: supporting & protecting the community

Maximize *benefit*

Ensure experiment is **valuable**..

- Goals that matter to the community
- Interventions that are practicable

Ensure experiment is **good**...

- Understand how the community works (avoid "gotchas")

Minimize *risk*

Minimize short-term harm

Ensure experiment respects the **integrity of the community**...

Community Consent

How? Depends on community...

- Village Pump
- Project / chapter with trust of community

Community can agree

- Benefit outweighs risk for community
- Benefit outweighs risk for individuals

Form groups of 3-4 with people next to you

1. Pick an experiment to design

2. Complete front & back of experiment card

3. If time, work on 2nd experiment

Describe Your Experiment Idea

Goal:

Intervention:

Unit of Assignment:

Measure(s):

How can you ensure integrity and consent of community?

What might be one risk to the community and how would you minimize?

What is the best way to ensure you have consent of community?

(Optional) Name _____ Username _____ Email _____

Share Your Ideas

Discuss Challenges

Questions

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