

What I learned Interviewing The #PostgreSQL Community

Andreas Scherbaum

PGDay Lowlands 2025

Question

- How many community members like sailing?



PostgreSQL Person of the Week

- Since February 2020 I’m publishing interviews
- Not (only) about the well-known people in the community
- Website: https://postgresql.life/



Who am I

Andreas Scherbaum

- Works with databases since ~1997, with PostgreSQL since ~1998
- Founding member of PGEU
- Board of Directors: PGEU, Orga team for pgconf.[eu|de], FOSDEM
- Ran my own company around PostgreSQL for 7+ years
- Joined EMC in 2011
  - then Pivotal, then EMC, then Pivotal
  - working on PostgreSQL and Greenplum projects
- Joined Adjust GmbH in Berlin in 2020
  - Head of (around 1000) Databases, and a great team
- Now at EDB
  - Principal Engineer, WarehousePG

Get Social ...

- Mastodon: https://mastodon.social/@ascherbaum
- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/andreas-scherbaum-87b6663/
- ~~Twitter~~, Instagram: @ascherbaum
- GitHub: andreasscherbaum
- Blog: https://andreas.scherbaum.la/



Blog



Mastodon

Even more Social ...

- Social Media links for many community members:
  - https://postgresql.life/social/



More Events ...

- PostgreSQL Events Calendar
  - Thanks to: Laetitia Avrot, Boriss Mejias, Federico Campoli, Pavlo Golub, me
  - Events + Data (CfP, Website, Location, ...)
  - https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=NTdhMGEwM2E0OTI1NzAwYTFiZGZlZWYyMGNiYjM0MTMzMGFhMzQzM2ViZTY3OGU5ZDVjZDM0ZjYwNWEyZmQ5MkBncm91cC5jYWxlbmRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t
  - Or use the box on the right side of the postgresql.life website



Agenda

- What is this project
- ~~Technical details~~
- What did I learn – Data, Data, Data

What is this project

Where is that?



Where is that?

- Corte di cassazione
- Supreme Court of Cassation
  - Rome, Italy

Where is that?



Where is that?

- Castel Sant'Angelo
  - Rome, Italy

December 2019 – Running in Rome





The Romans are crazy!

#SPQR

Sono pazzi questi romani!

Recursive picture!



But what about the interviews?

- The idea started in Rome, end of 2019
- Devrim and Magnus helped me finding the right name
  - Lunch discussion in the HRC
- Back home in 2020 I started the technical details
  - And asked a few friends for interviews



Technical Platform

- Hugo (static blogging engine)
  - Content written in Markdown
  - With custom template
  - Layout extensions for things like conferences and extensions
  - Additional customizations for previews
- private GitHub repository
  - Custom pre-commit check for common errors
  - Auto-checkout to webserver

Interview platform

- Everyone receives a Google Doc with questions
  - Questions can be modified, left out or new ones added
  - Most people go with the default set
- At least one round of reviews, then preview

Publishing

- On Monday
- Postings on Planet + social media platforms

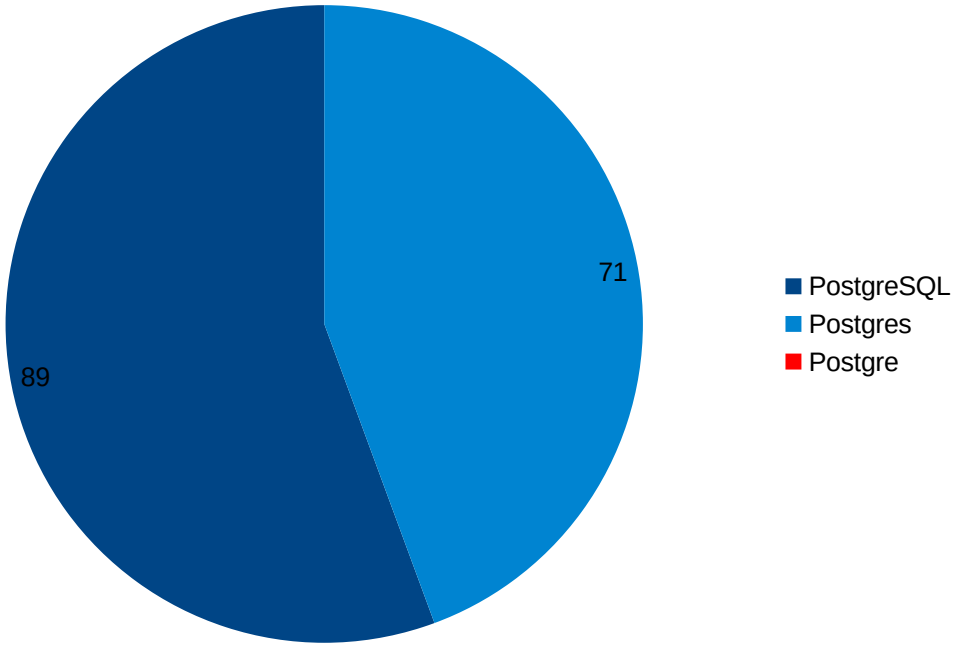


176
~~199~~
~~148~~
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"please add me to your LinkedIn network" after:2022-01-01 ---> 585

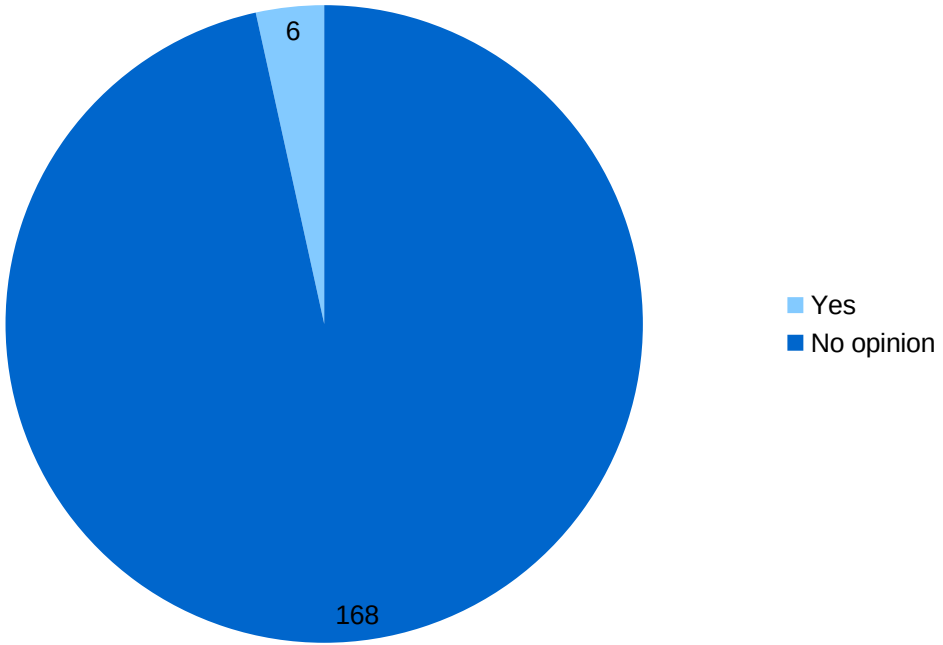
Data, Data^2, Data^3, Data^n

Elephant in the room



I am tired of “Postgreee”.
Let it be simply Postgres.
-- Ivan Panchenko

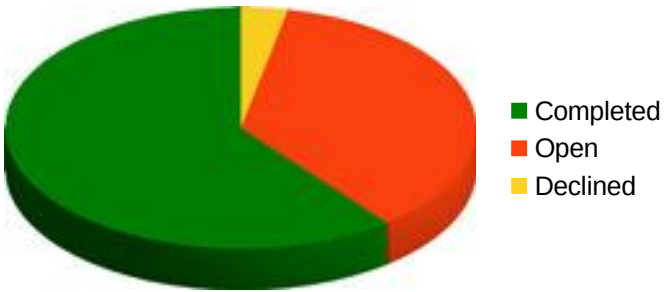
Rename the Elephant?



Then there's the name.
I submit it's one of the worst names in (or out of) software.
-- John Naylor

Interviews

- People in my list: 595
- Interviews started: 232
- Interviews completed: 208
  - Interviews published: 207
- Interviews open: 124
- Interviews declined: 11



Sequential scan over all interviews.
-- Corey Huinker

Where do the names come from?

- As part of the interview, everyone can recommend new names
- Also anyone can send an email with names
  - mailto:interview@postgresql.life
- Recommendations so far: 324

Question

- Which person is recommended 12 times for an interview?



Tom Lane

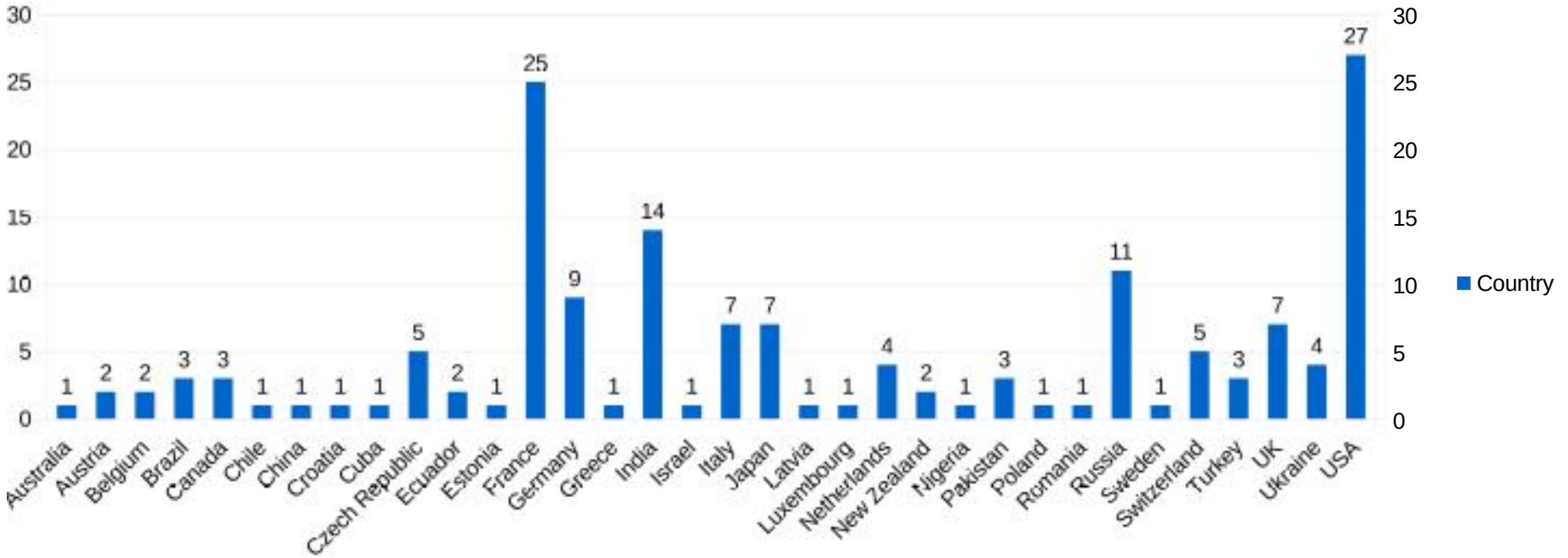
- Tom politely declined



Where do people come from?

- Guess the top 3 countries!

Where do people come from?

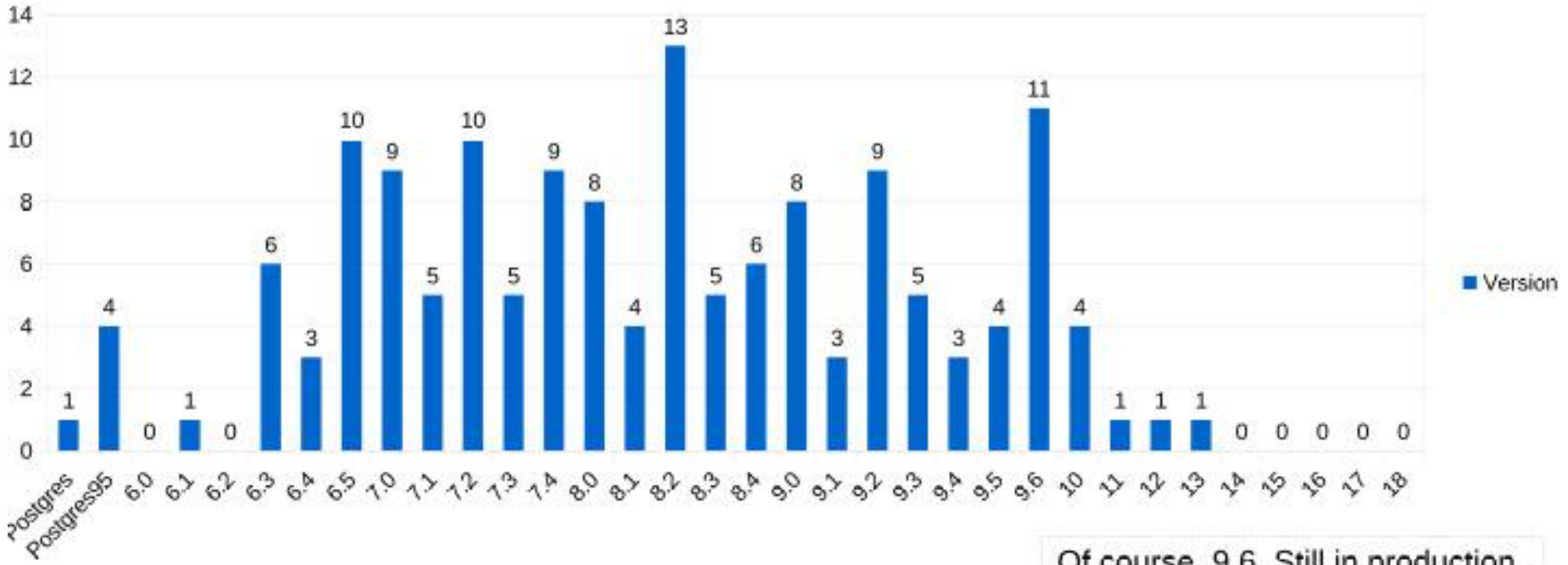


Getting involved with Postgres has changed my life.
-- Ilaria Battiston

Where do people come from?

- USA: 27
- France: 25
- India: 14
- Total: 34 countries (out of 159 interviews)

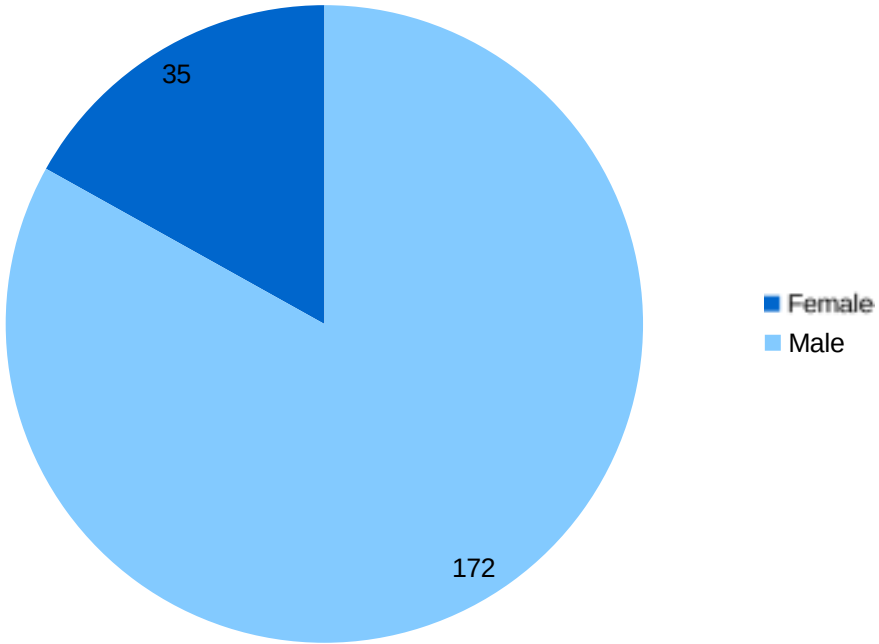
First used PostgreSQL version



Read the interview with Elein Mustain

Of course, 9.6. Still in production.
Need to upgrade soon.
-- Michael Goldberg

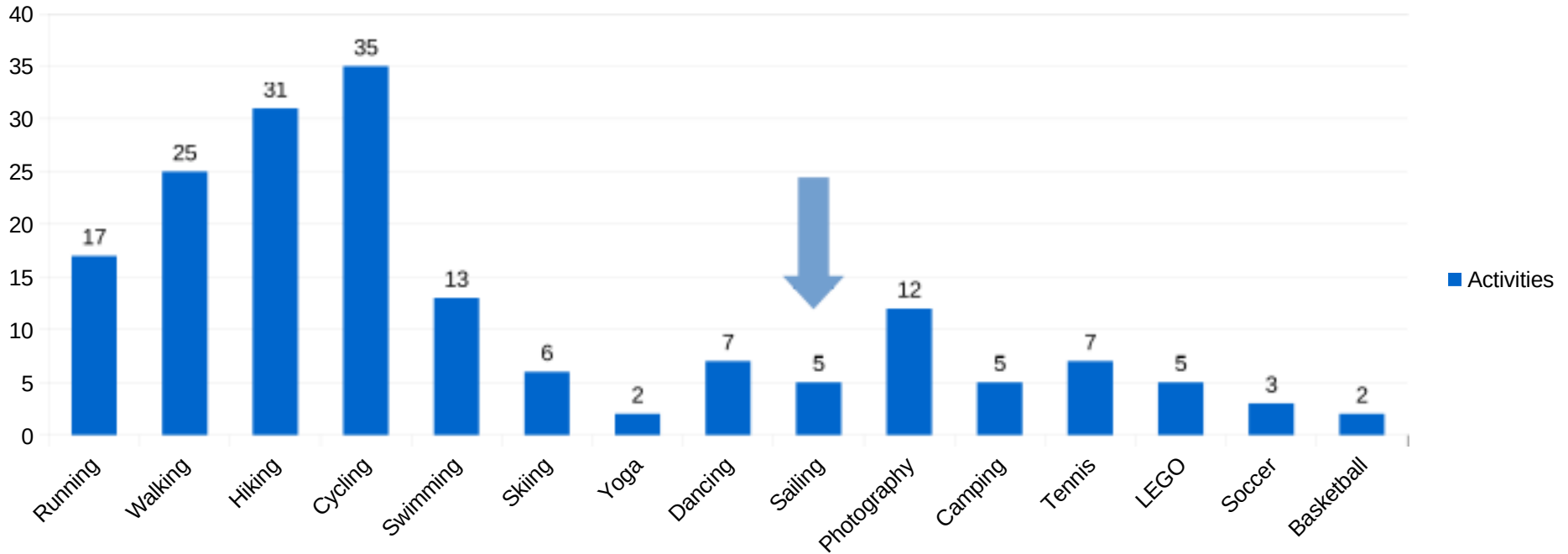
Diversity



I would say that we don't have a diverse community.
-- Louise Grandjonc

* Best guess

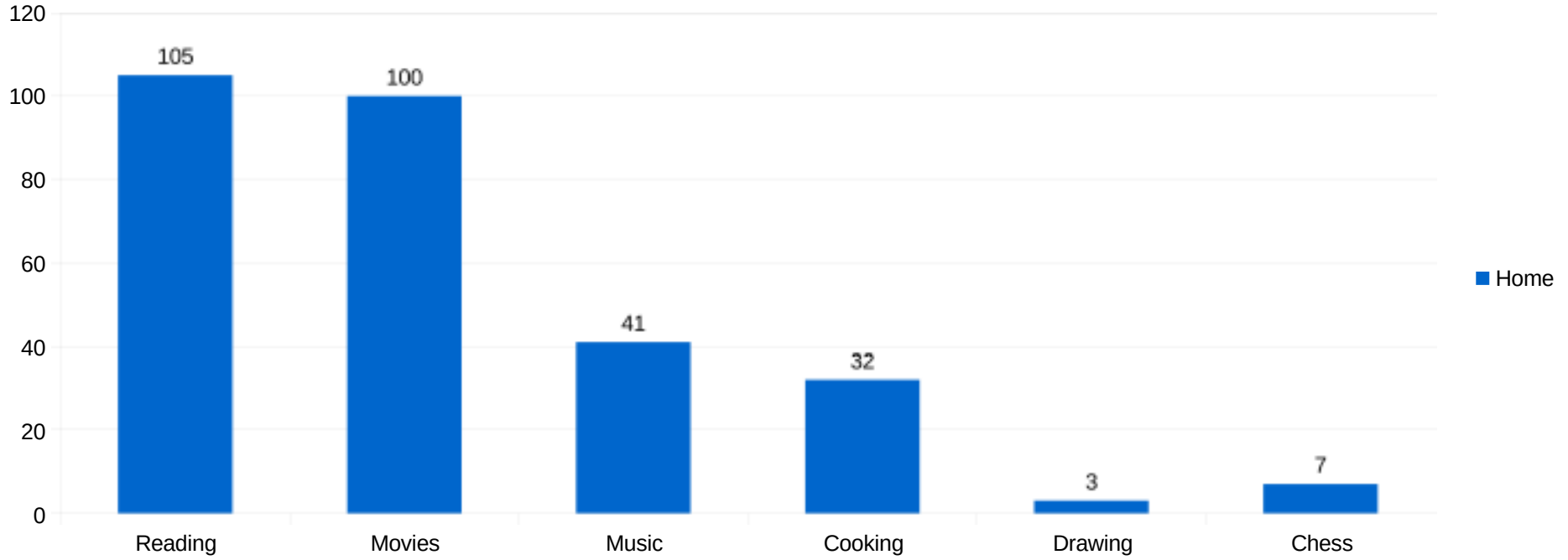
Other activities



I hate running.
-- Fabien Coelho

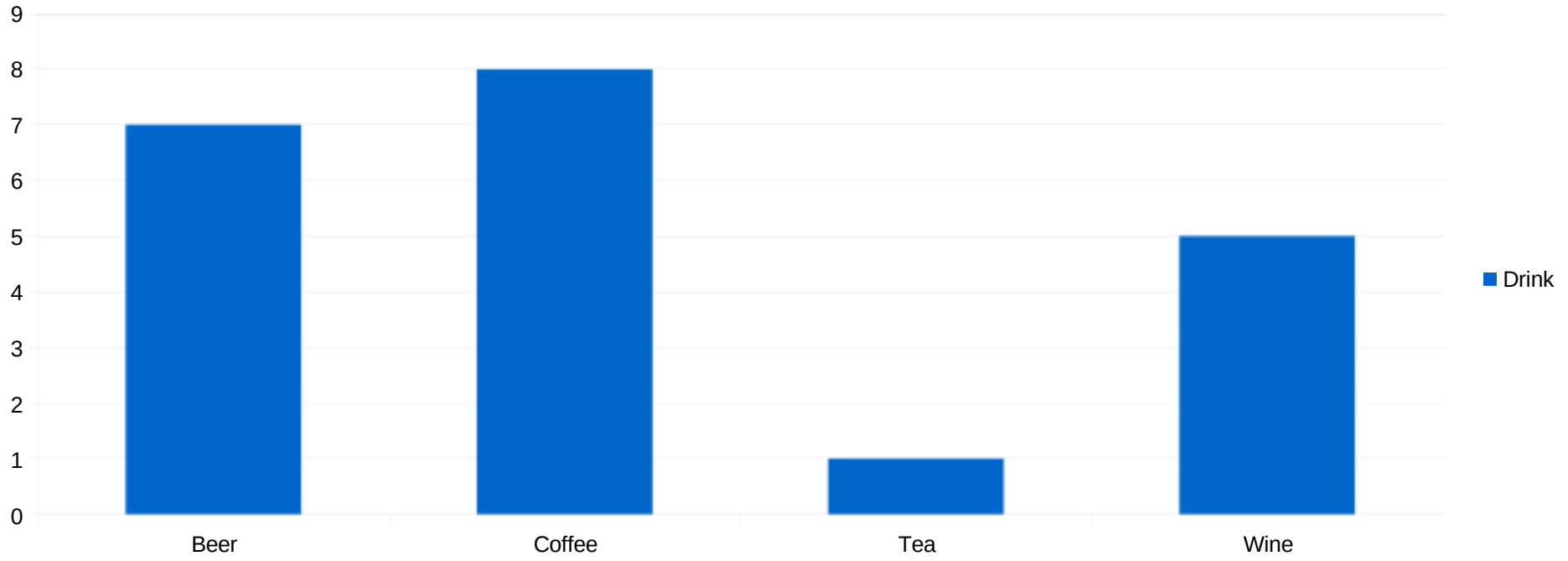
Activities at home

If at a PostgreSQL conference you notice a strange person hanging around with a chessboard, chances are high that it's me.
-- Dmitry Dolgov

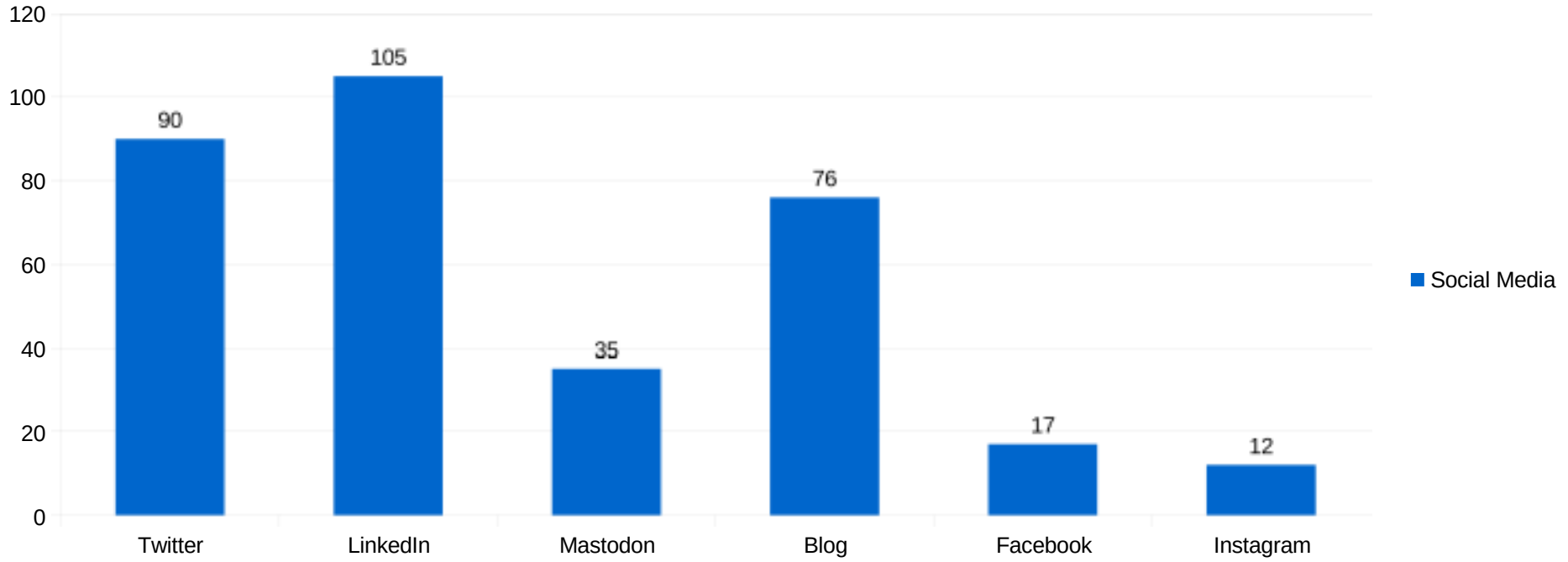


Favorite drink

Which would be harder for you to give up: coffee or beer? - You can take your coffee. Just let me drink some beer with the famous Devrim steak. That's all I ask! :)
-- Pavlo Golub



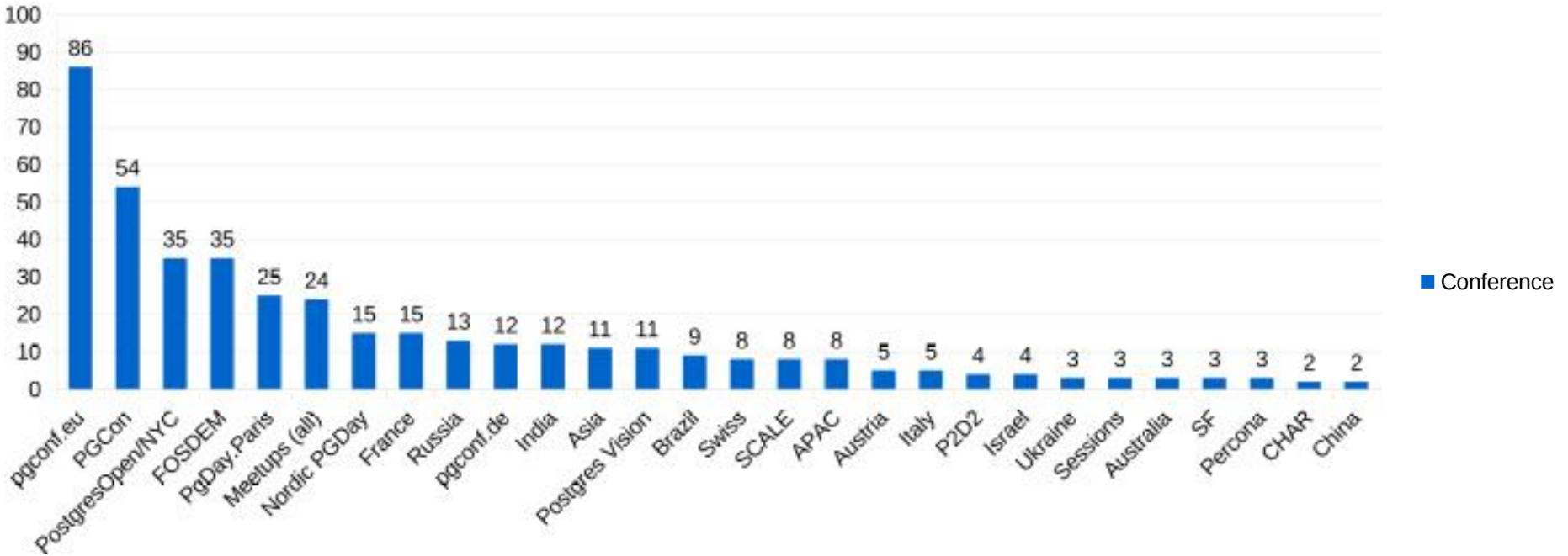
Social Media



Question

- What is everyone’s favorite conference?

Favorite conference

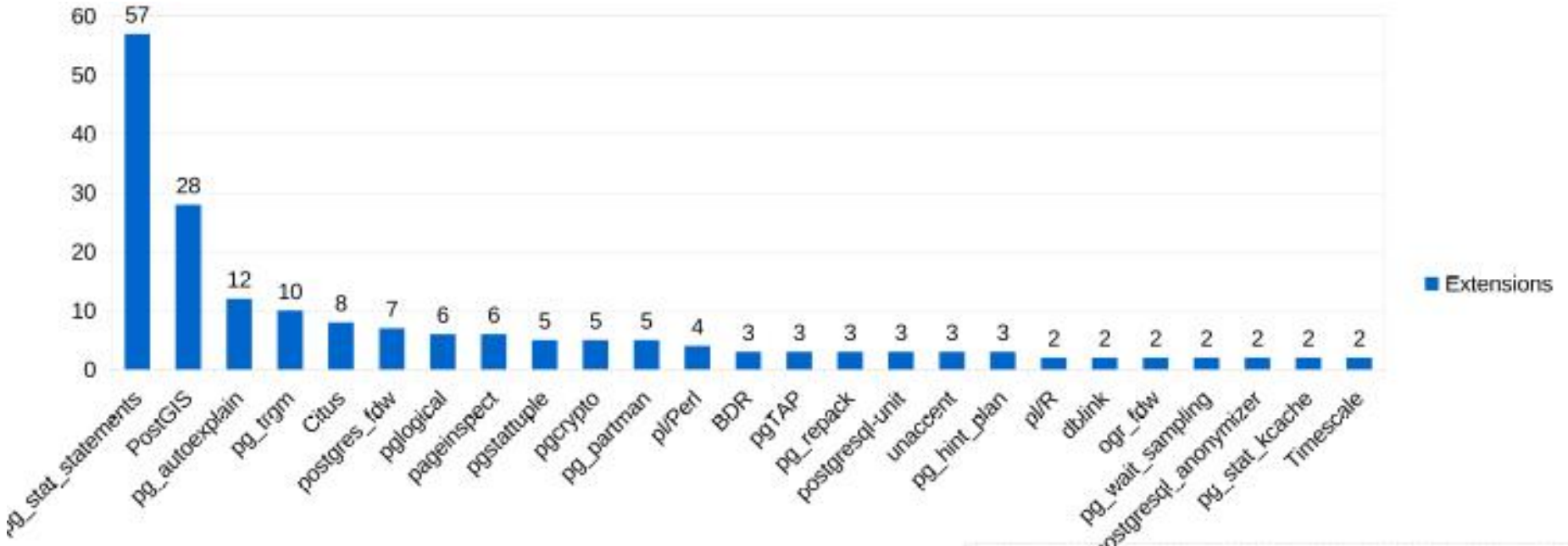


34 conferences mentioned in total!

Question

- What is everyone’s favorite extension?

Favorite extensions



62 extensions mentioned in total

What is the most annoying PostgreSQL thing: extensions, versions, dependencies.
-- Paul Ramsey

Make a living from PostgreSQL

- Out of 208 interviews
- 133 people have a PostgreSQL career

> Postgres is fun! Not many people are paid well for doing what they love. I'm one of the lucky ones who are.
> -- Andrew Dunstan

> I am trying this crazy attempt at making a living out of writing code I want to give away for free
> -- Daniele Varrazzo

Does PostgreSQL have a future?

- Out of 208 interviews
- 142 say that PostgreSQL has a future
- The others did not answer the question

> Do you think PostgreSQL will be here for many years in the future?
> I hope. Unless there is no database written in javascript, this world is safe. 😁
> -- Pavlo Golub

Business/private use cases

- Is PostgreSQL good for business/private use cases:
  - Business: 125
  - Private: 119

For both. You can also make PostgreSQL your side project!
-- Oleksii Kliukin

“Just use Postgres” is a mantra that I’ve heard from developers over and over
-- Claire Giordano

Last question!

- Does PostgreSQL need a Multi-Master implementation?

Multi-Master

- Does PostgreSQL need a Multi-Master implementation?
  - Yes: 7

A long awaited feature by many customers is native HA and multimaster replication.
-- Stéphane Schildknecht

A dynamic multimaster would be a dream come true for almost all projects I have been working on the last 10 years.
-- Mladen Marinović

Summary

- There’s more interesting data
  - And not enough time!

Walnuts do NOT belong in brownies!
-- Greg Sabino Mullane

Questions?



Questions (already answered)

- Why no ice cream data?
  - No one provided data in their answers :-(
- Can I get the slides?
  - Yes, on my website (blog).
- I’m from Marketing, can I get the data?
  - Lol, no. Please read the interviews.
- Can I suggest someone for an interview?
  - Yes, please. Send me an email.

The End


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