

# Game Over, Democracy?

**How tech monopolies are destroying free media –  
and how to save democracy**

Martin Andree,  
University of Cologne

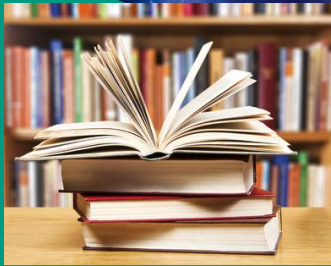


# 1989 – World Wide Web





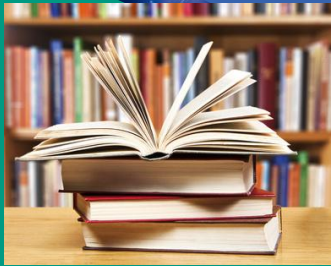
100%



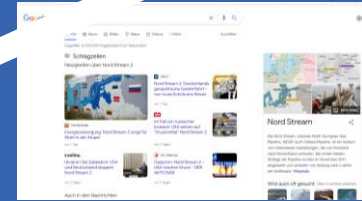
**Offline**

# Digital Transformation

Online



Offline



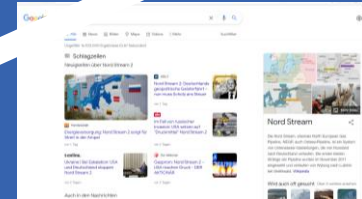
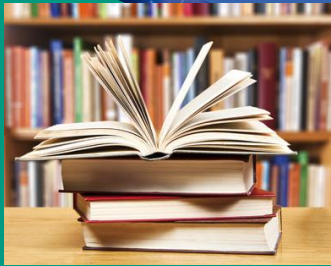


# 2020 / 2021 >> Tipping Point

Online

50%

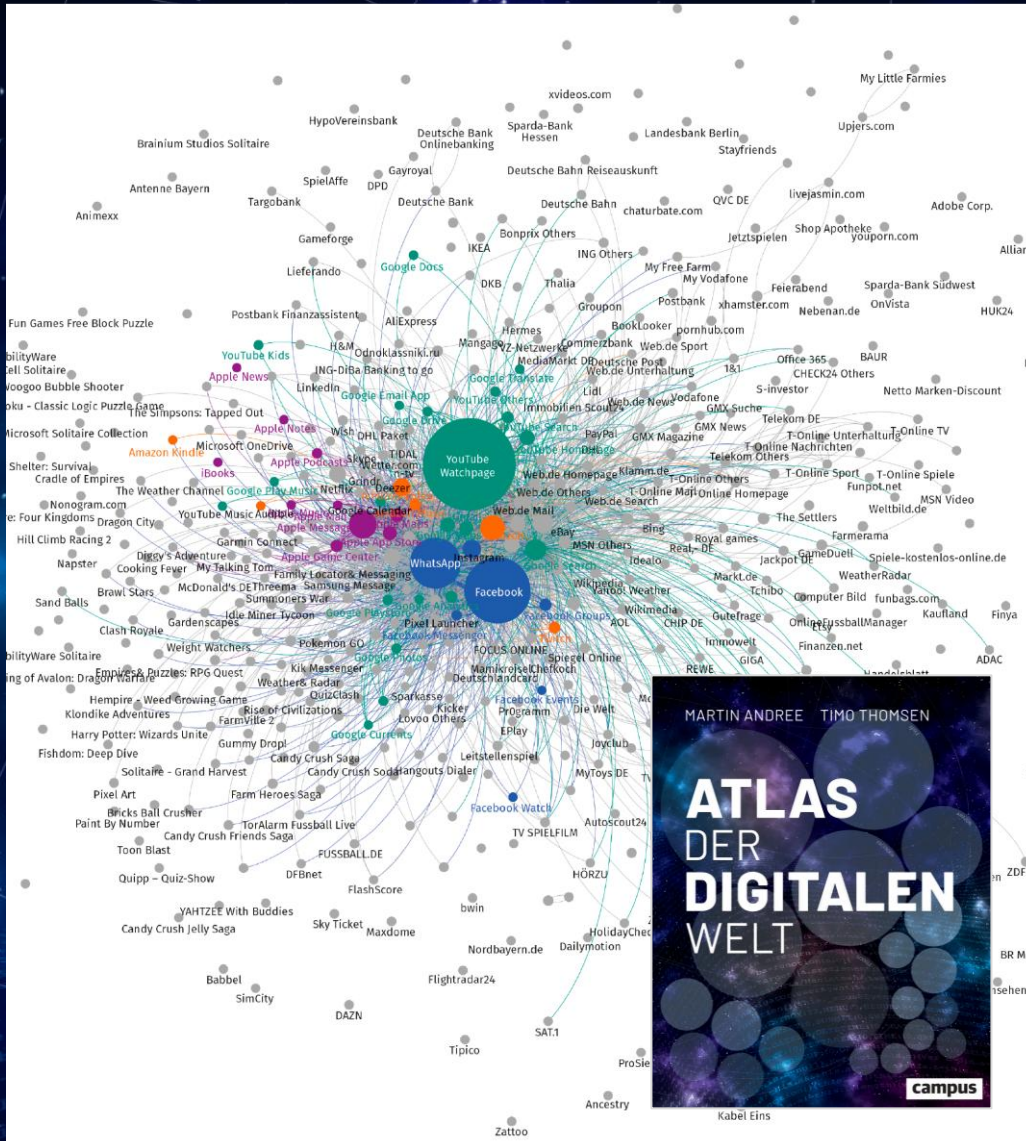
Offline





# Future digital world?



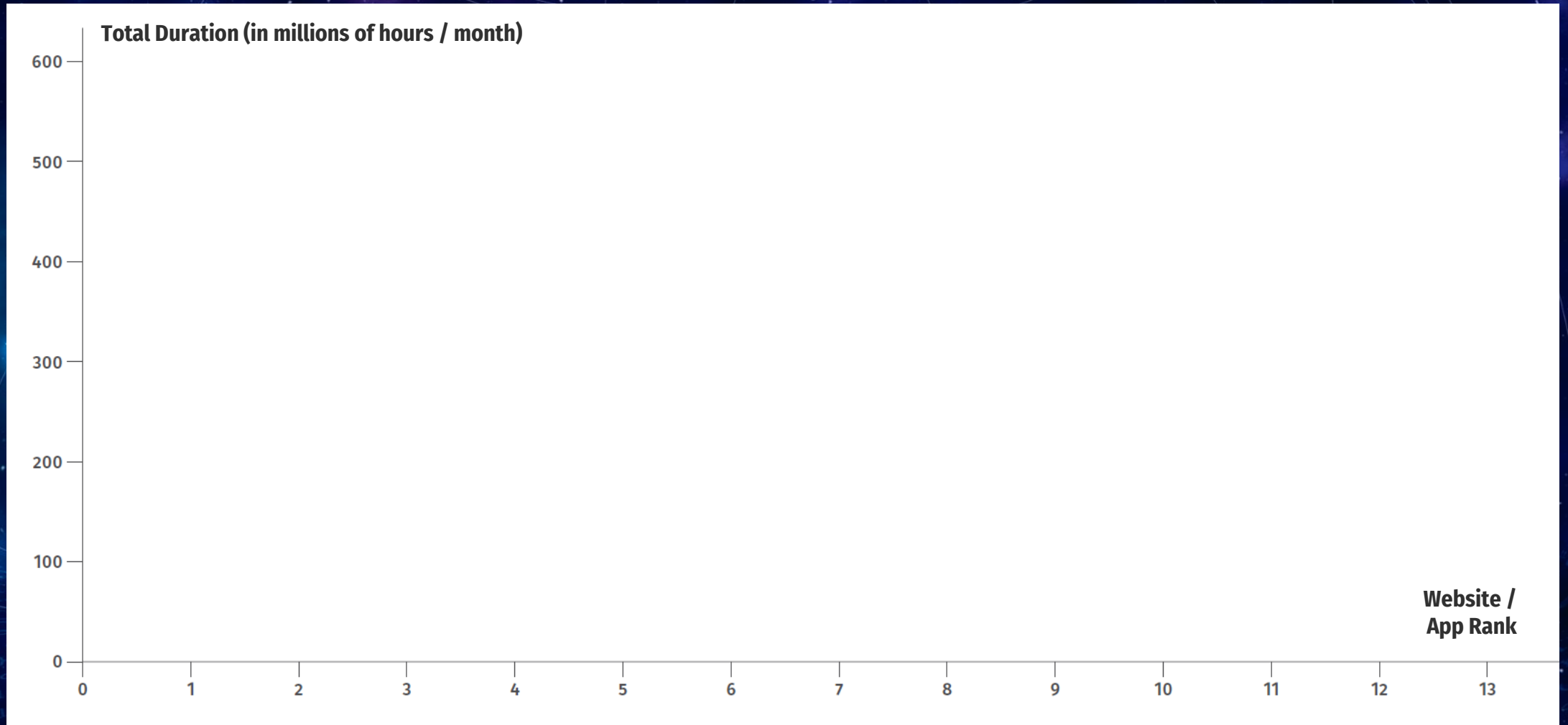


**TARGET:**  
**Data-based**  
**"baseline measurement"**  
**of digital media use**

**(real use, total market, Germany)**

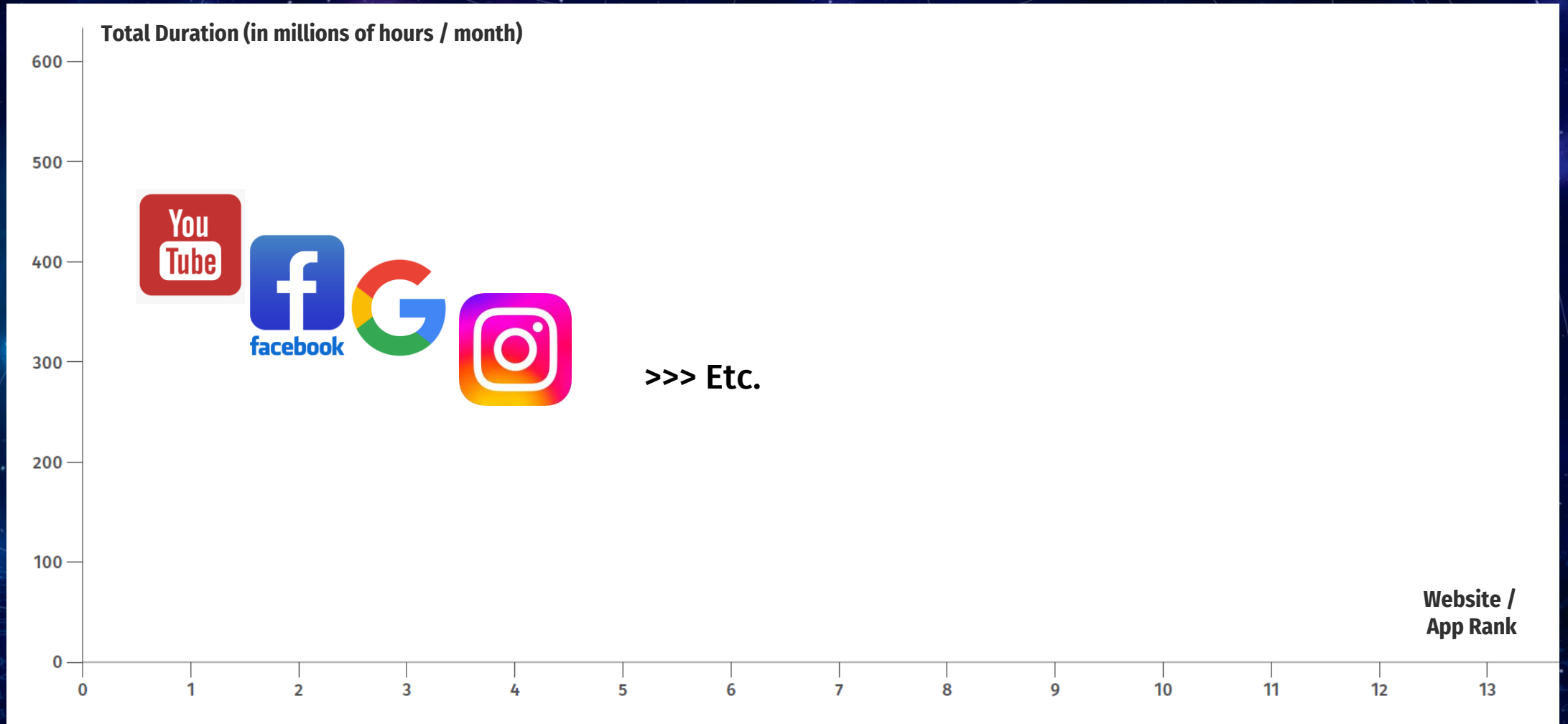
[www.atlasderdigitalenwelt.de](http://www.atlasderdigitalenwelt.de)

# Digital media use



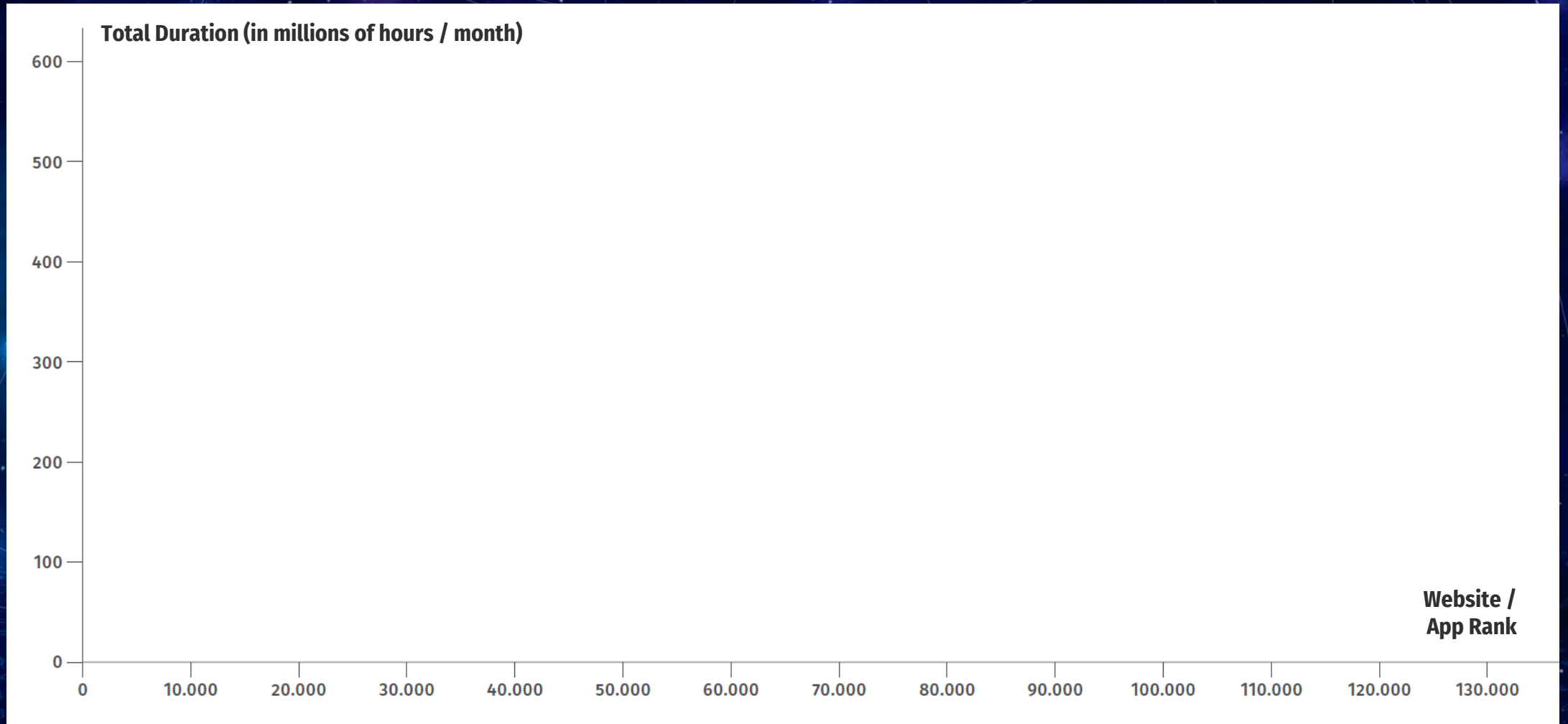


# Digital media use



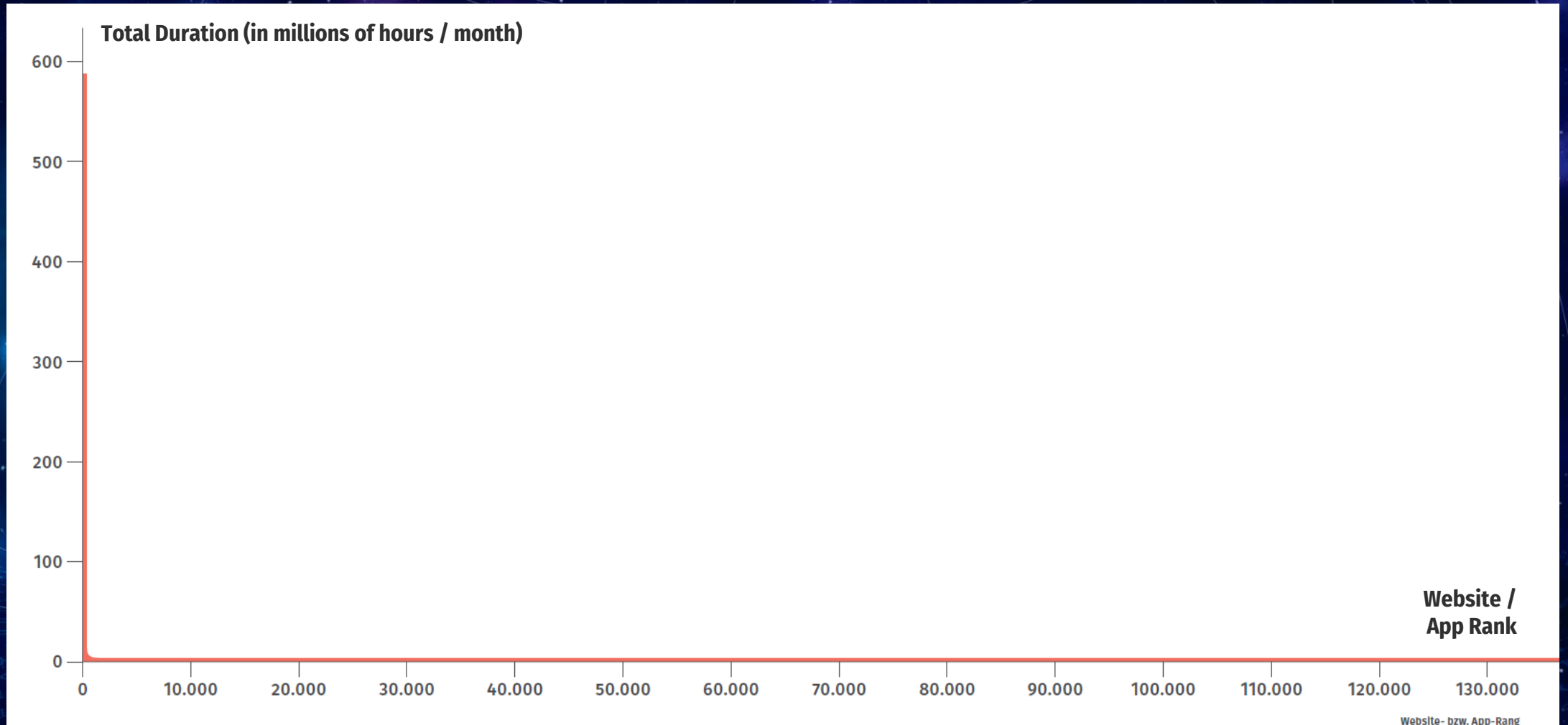


# Digital media use



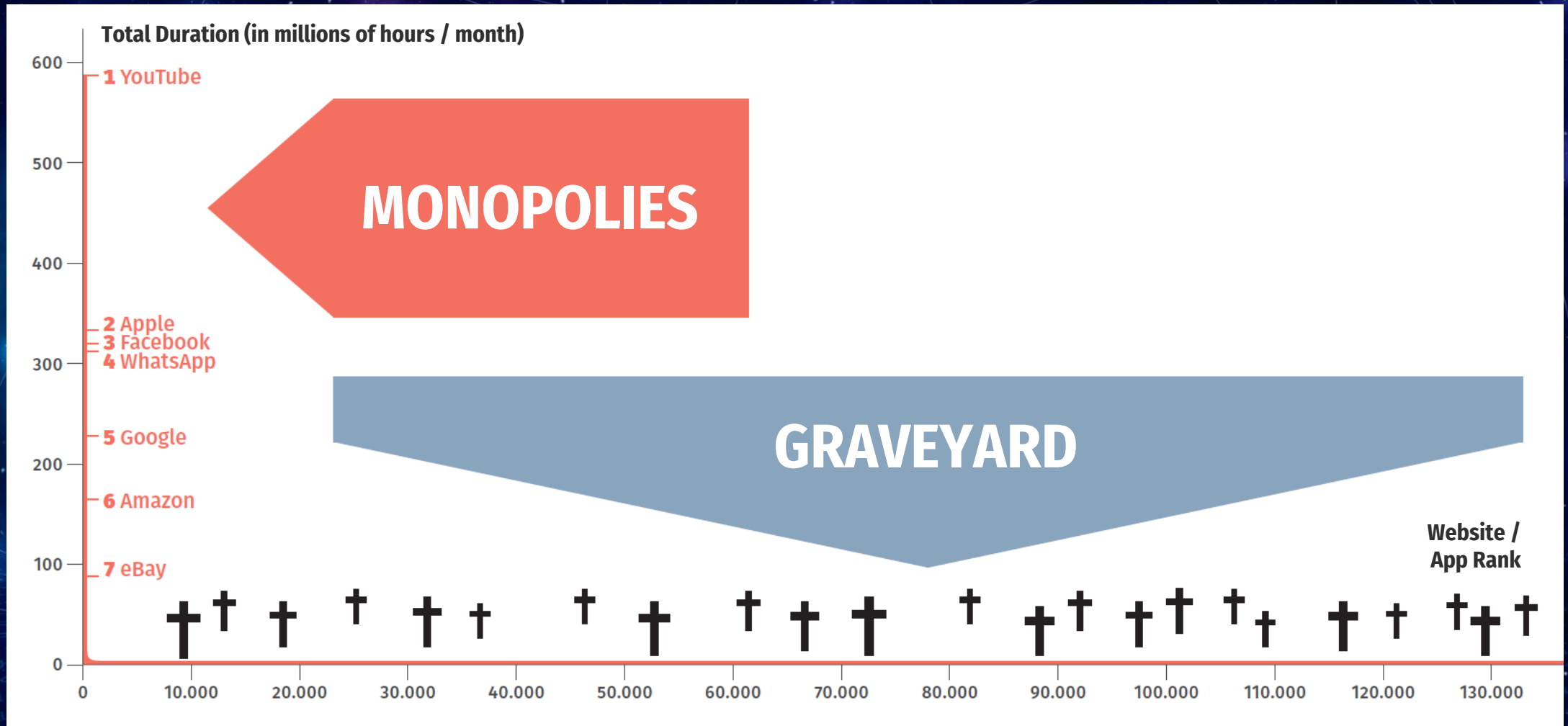


# Digital media use





# Digital media use



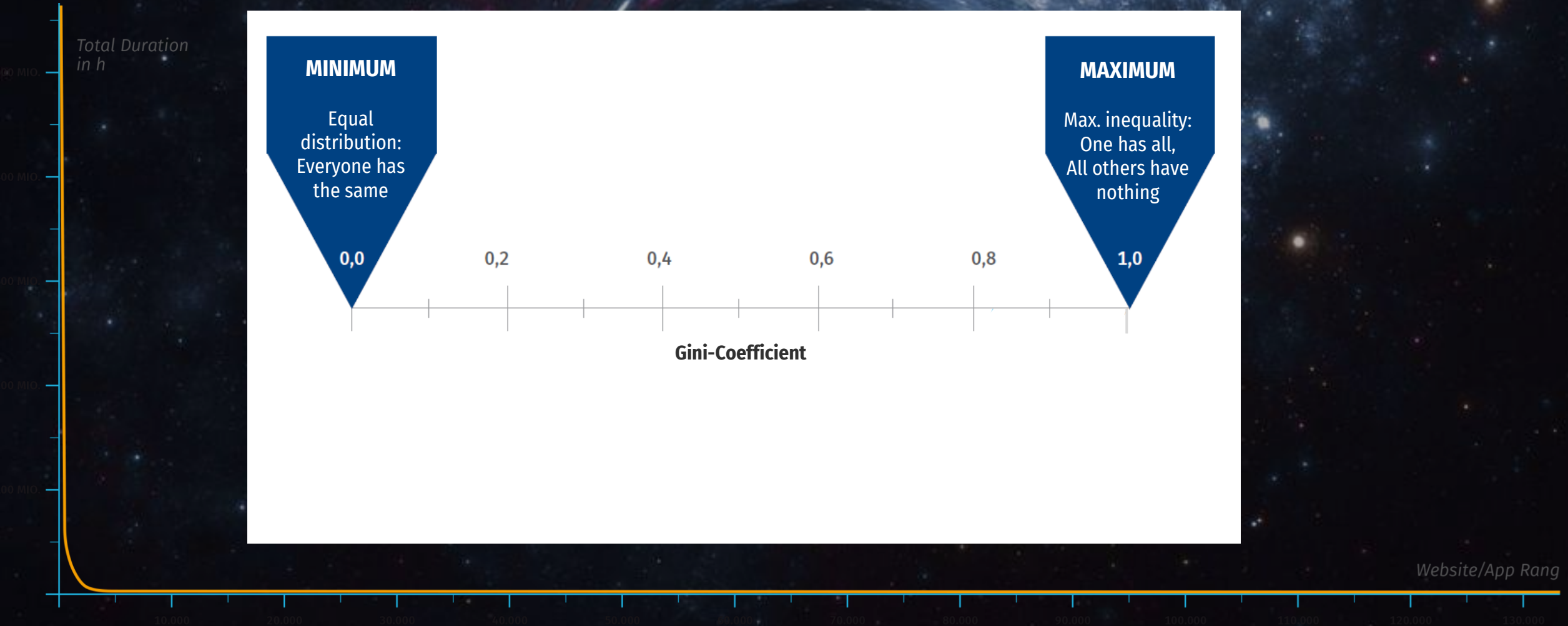


# Traffic - concentration?



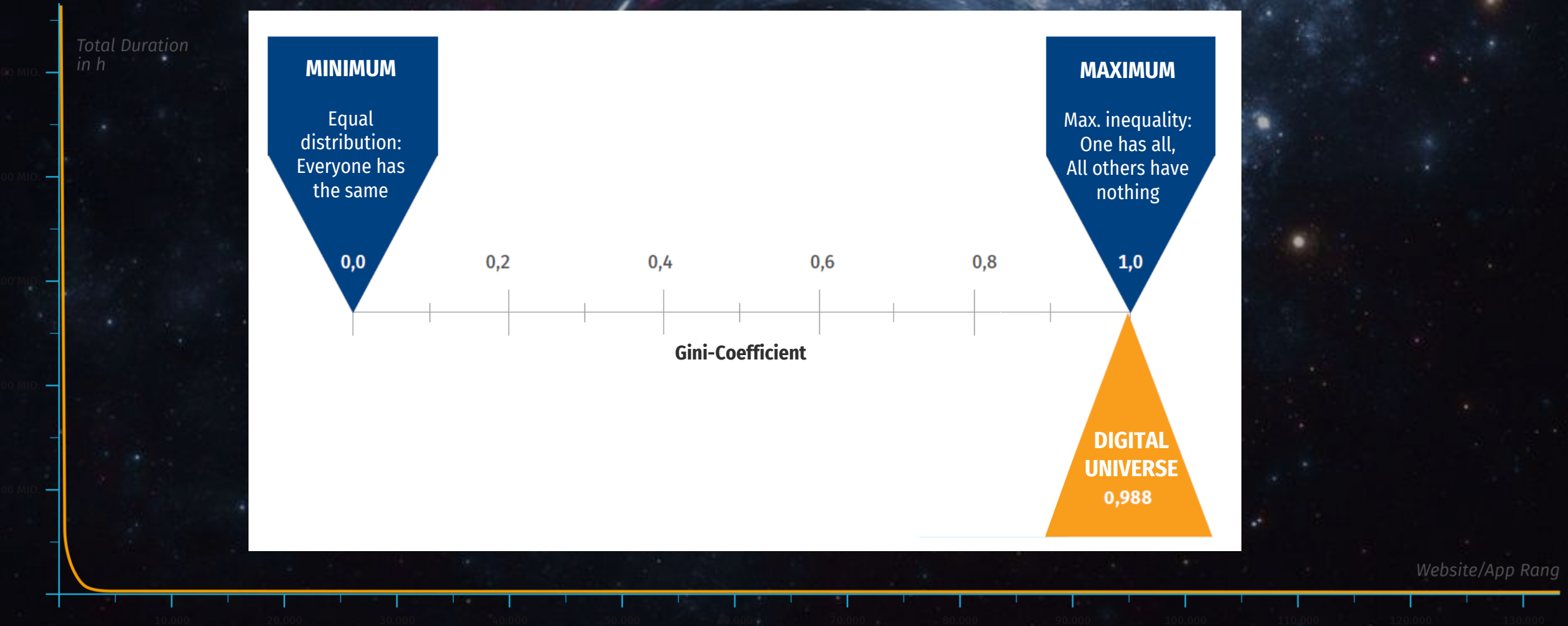


# Traffic - concentration?



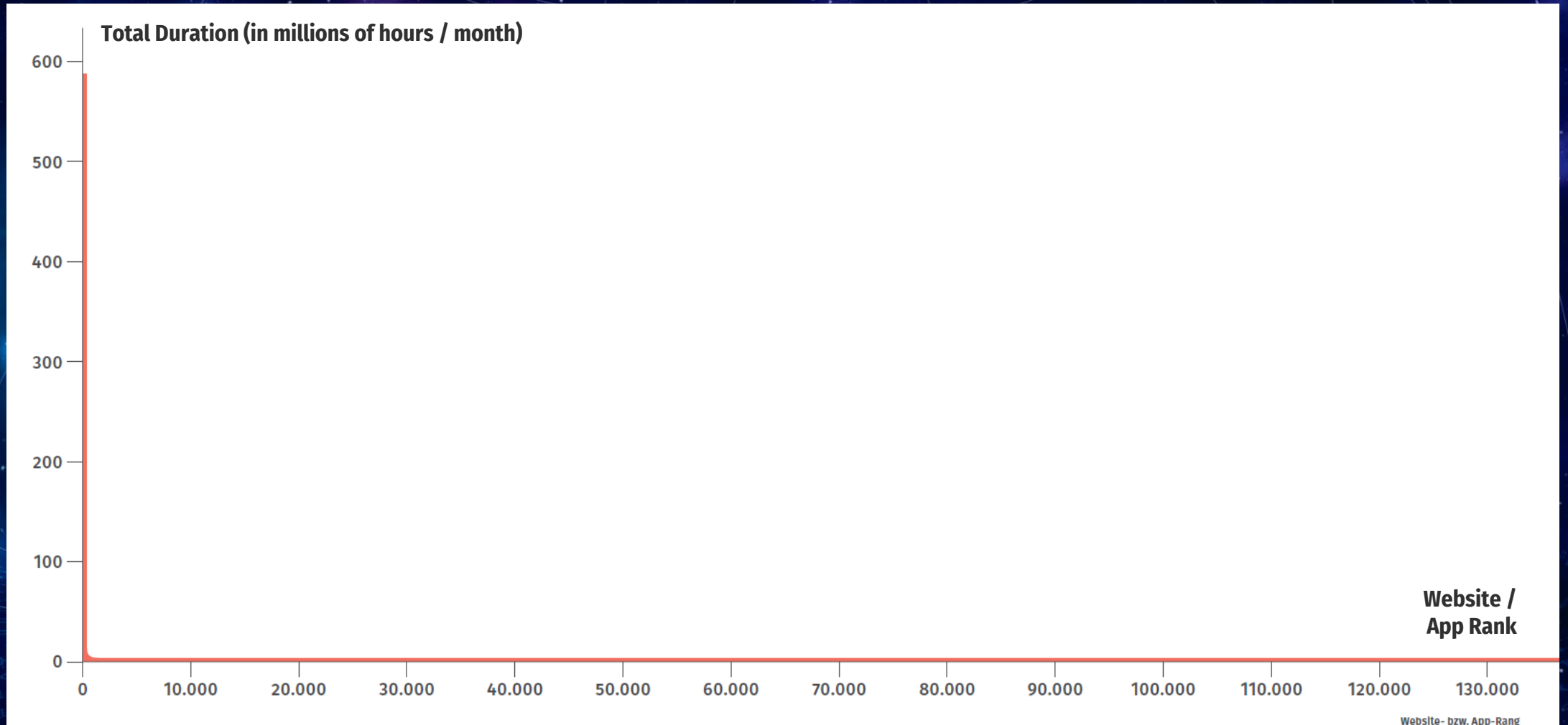


# Traffic - concentration?

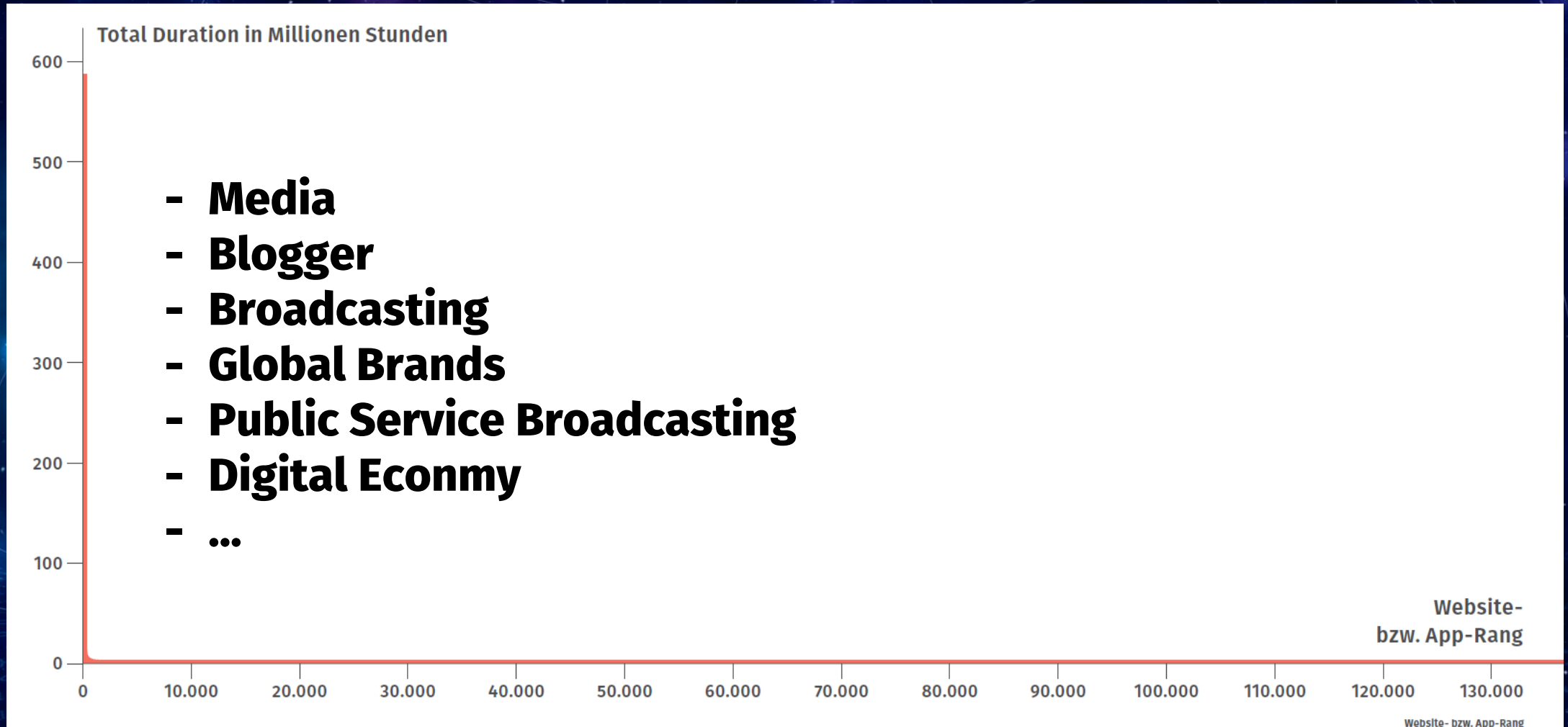




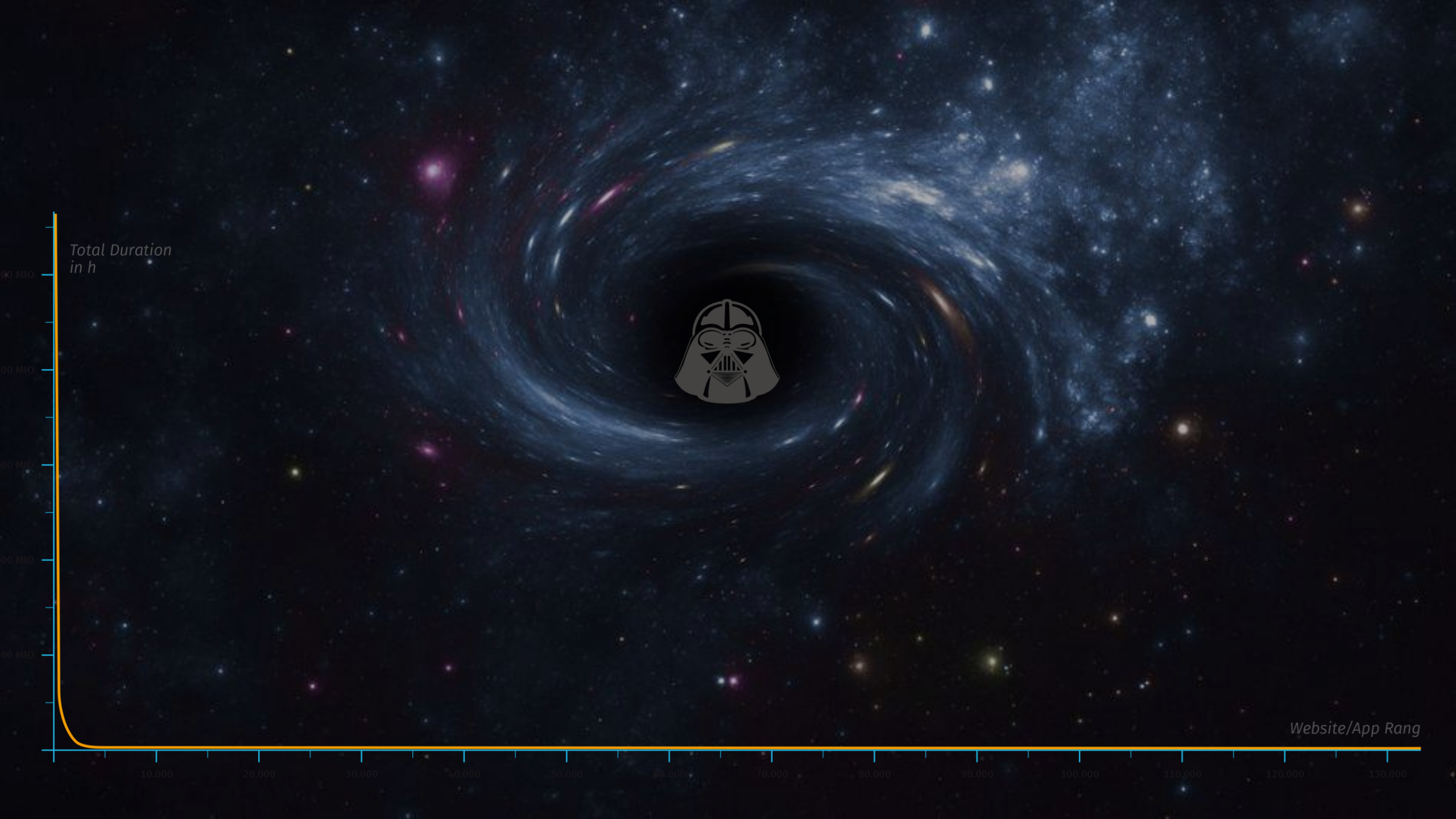
# Affected ...



# Affected ...



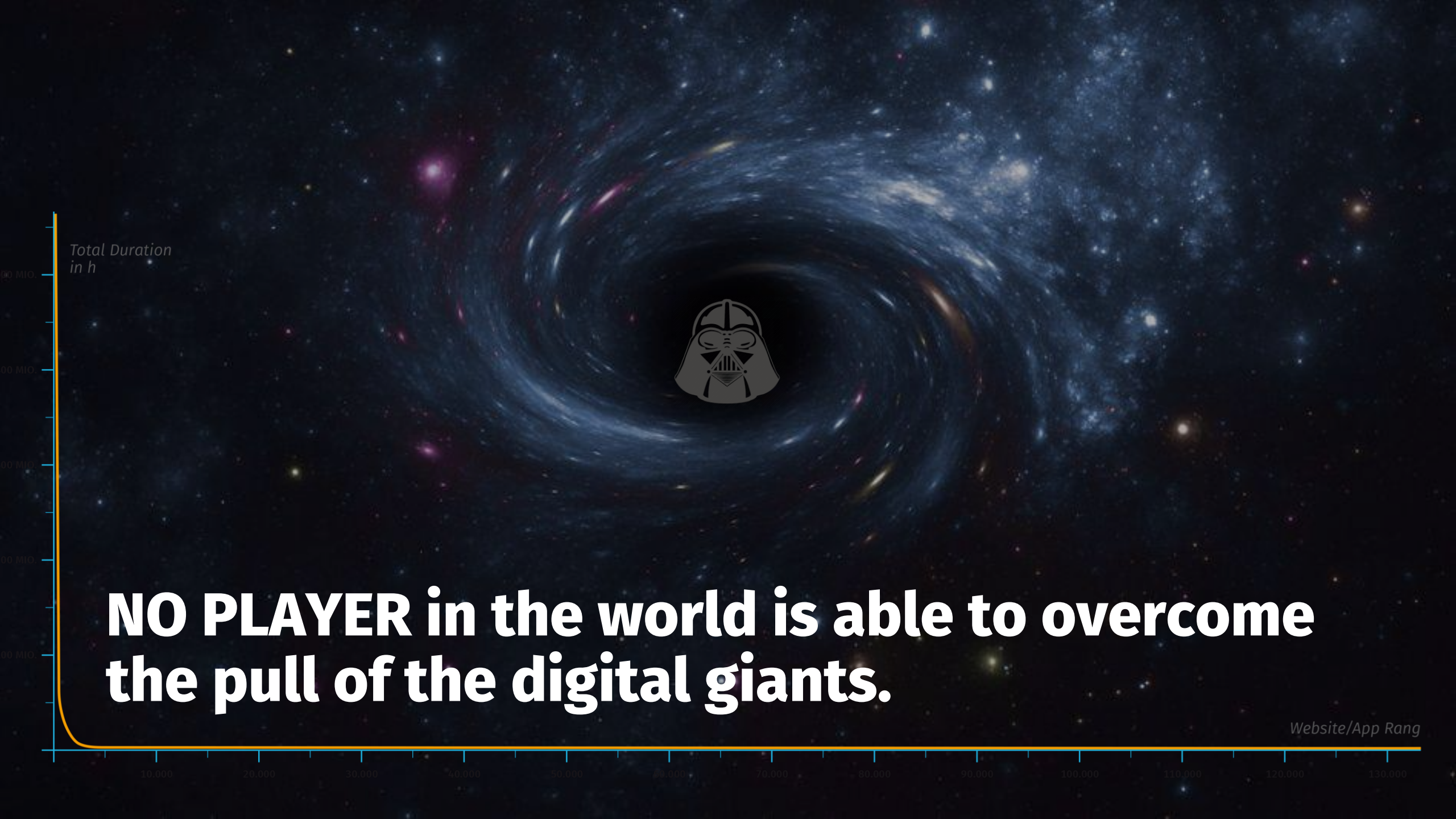




Total Duration  
in h



Website/App Rang

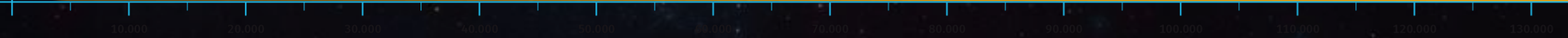


Total Duration  
in h



**NO PLAYER in the world is able to overcome  
the pull of the digital giants.**

Website/App Rang







Total Duration  
in h

**Fair and free competition has been abolished  
in the digital markets**

Website/App Rang



**Forget about it.**





# How has Big Tech eliminated competition?

1. Network effects
2. Closed standards
3. Elimination / dimming of outlinks
4. User-generated content without fees
5. No responsibility for content
6. Monopoly abuse / expansion of monopolies



# Gateways: Self-Preferencing of Traffic

Total Duration  
in h

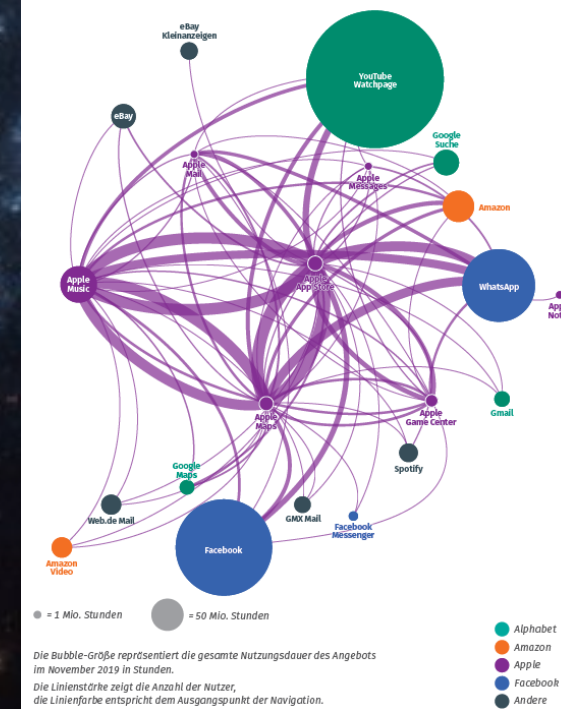
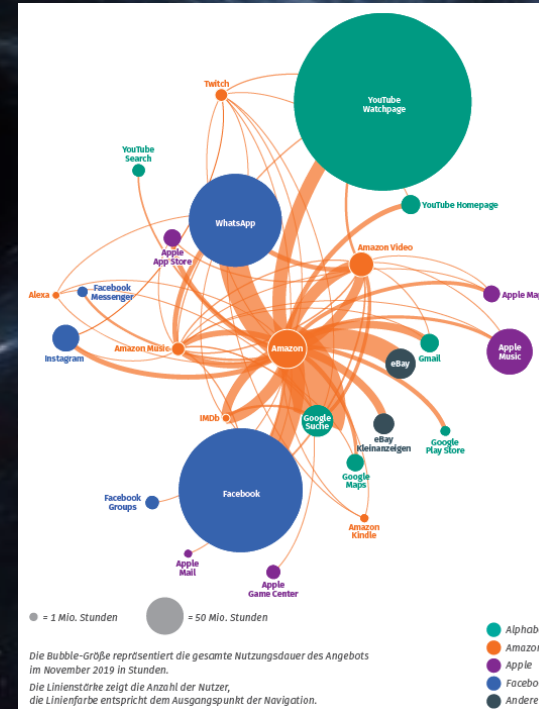
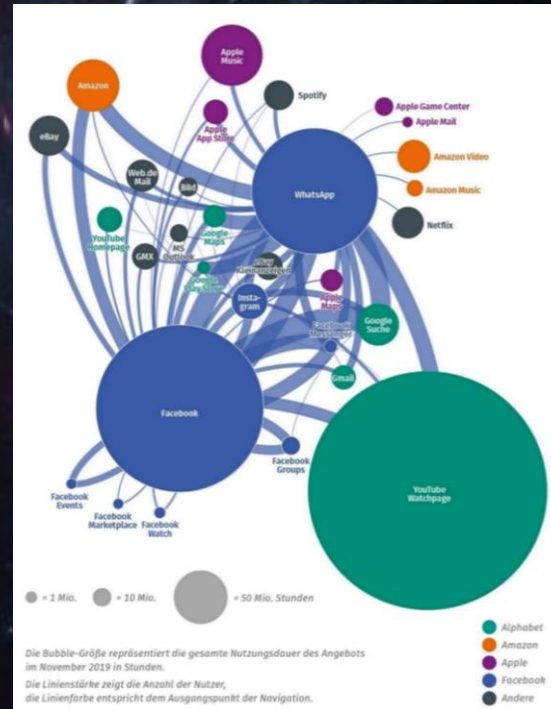
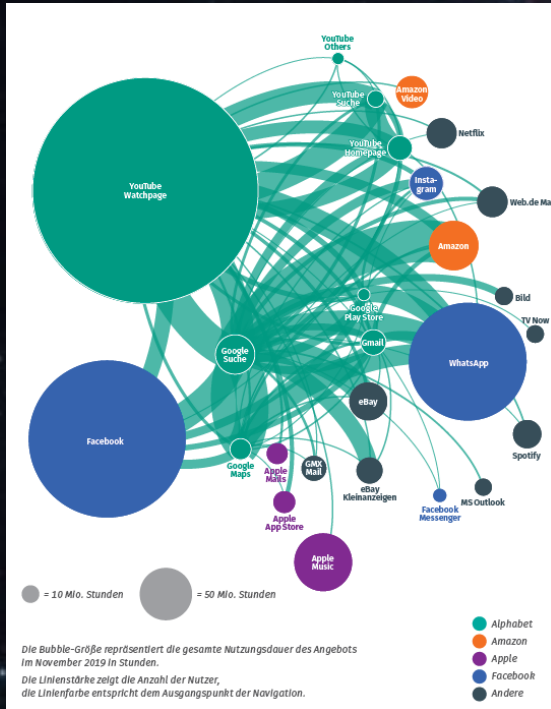
500 Mio.

400 Mio.

300 Mio.

200 Mio.

100 Mio.



Website/App Rang

10.000

20.000

30.000

40.000

50.000

60.000

70.000

80.000

90.000

100.000

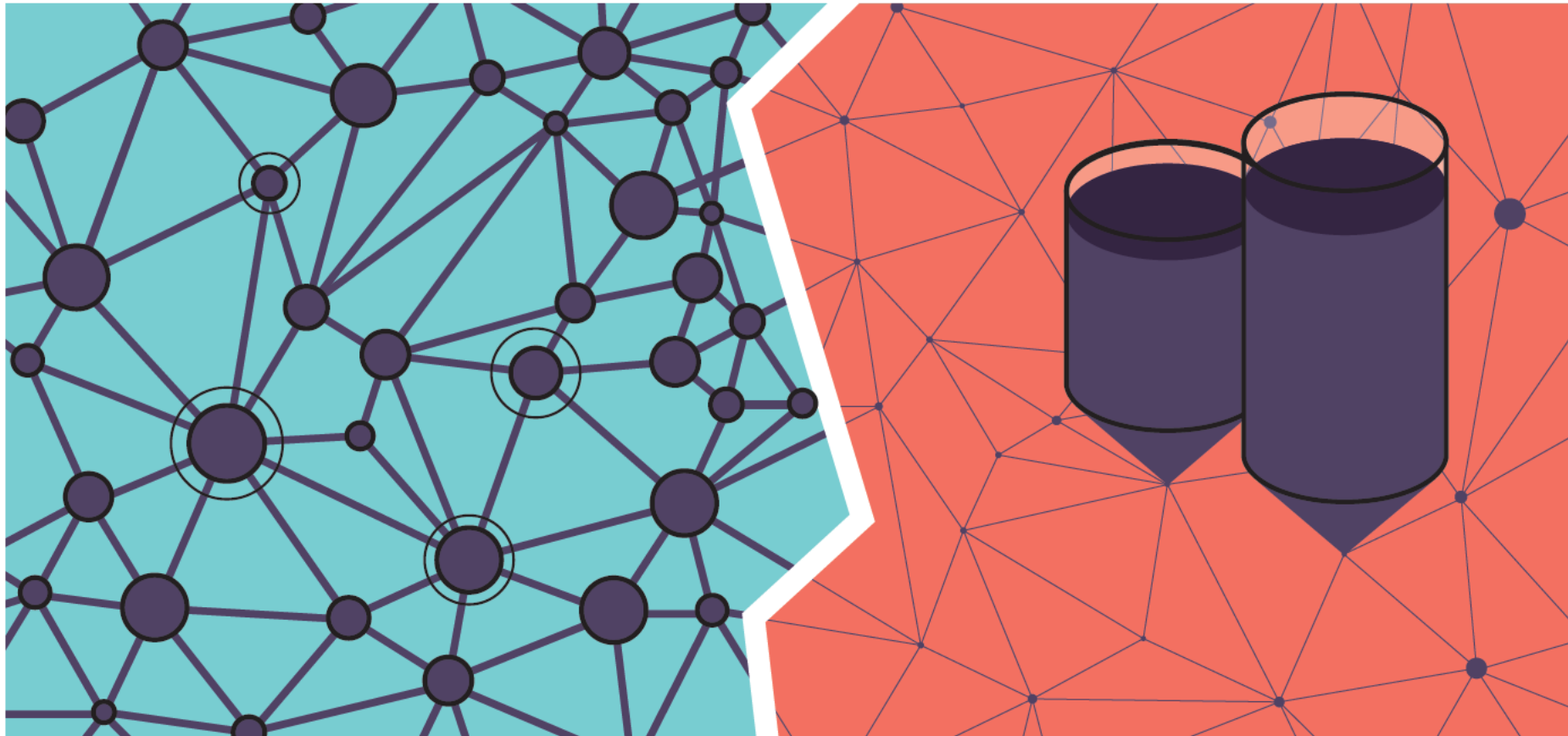
110.000

120.000

130.000



# The Free Internet is Dead.





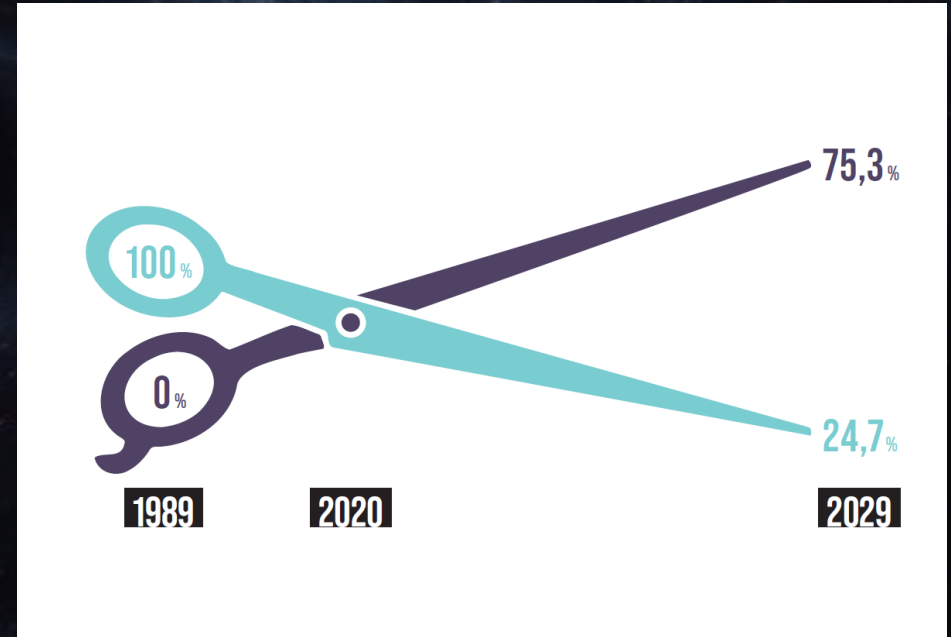
# Concentration booster: Generative AI





# Transformation, forecast

- Time period: ca. 5-10 Years
- No easy legal solutions
- (Reason: insufficient anti trust legislation!!!)



# Consequence 1

**Editorial  
media lose  
their financial  
basis.**

## ANALOG MEDIA



### PLURALISM



## DIGITAL MEDIA



### TOP MONOPOLISTS 80-90%

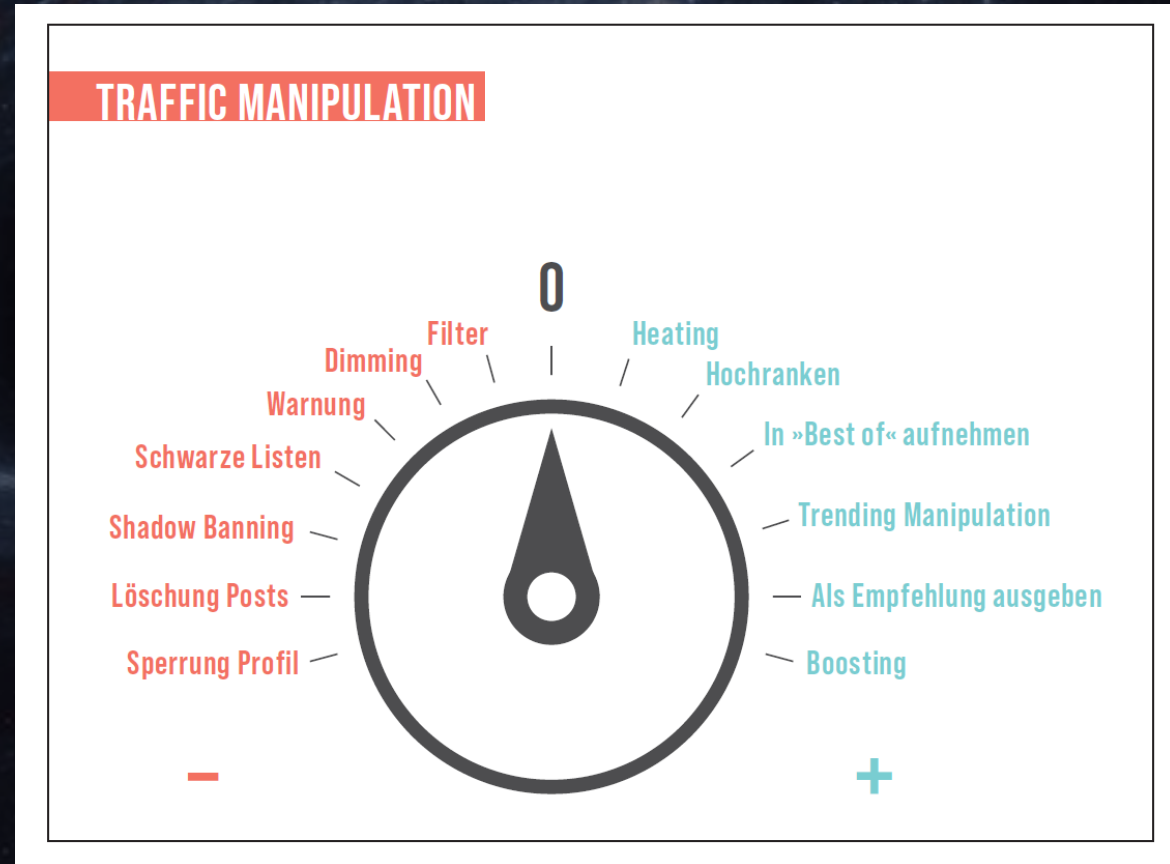


ALL OTHERS: 10-20%



## Consequence 2

**US platforms  
will control the  
political public  
sphere**



# Game Over, Free Media?

- Independence
- Pluralism / diversity
- Independence from the state
- Journalism / editorial offices
  - a.—Privately financed
  - b.—Publicly funded



# Game Over, Free Media?

- ~~Independence~~
- ~~Pluralism / diversity~~
- ~~Independence from the state~~
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  - a. ~~Privately financed~~
  - b. ~~Publicly funded~~

Constitutional  
???

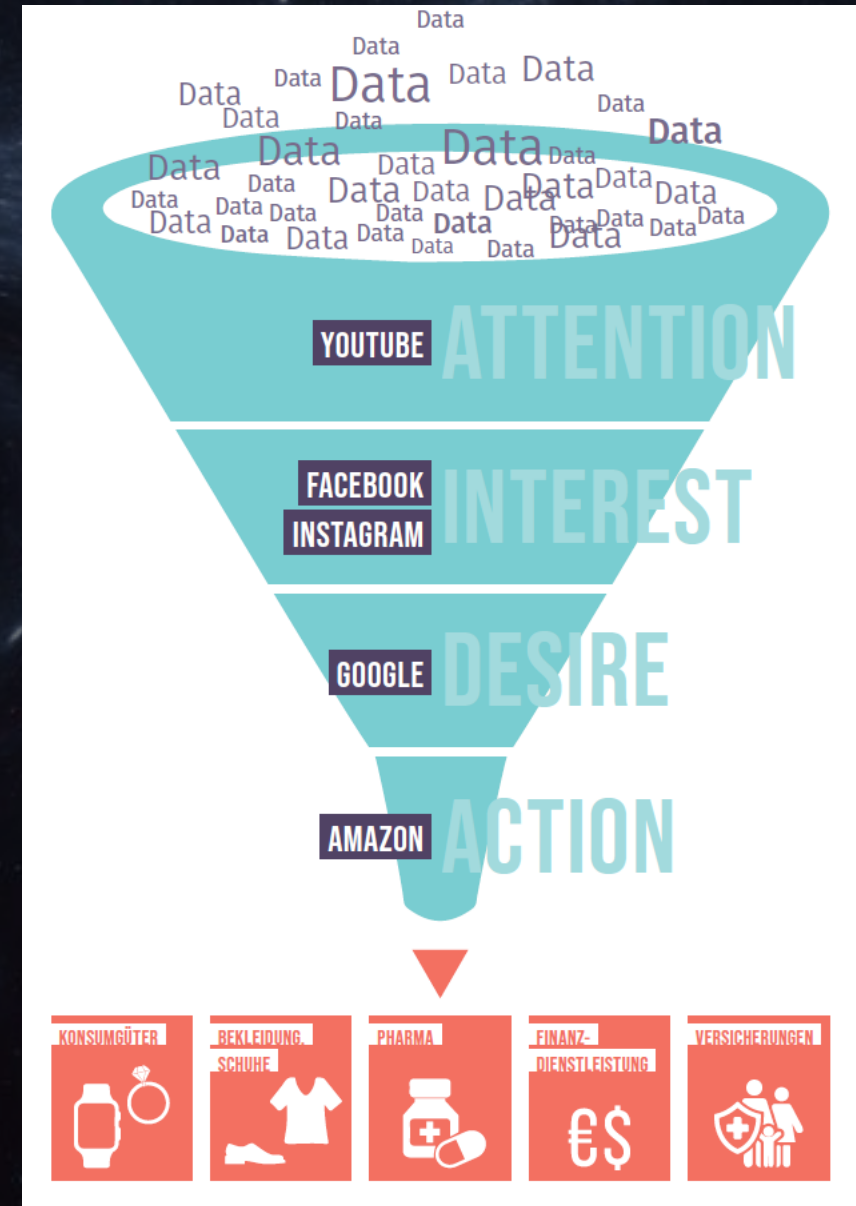


**It's not only about Democracy.**



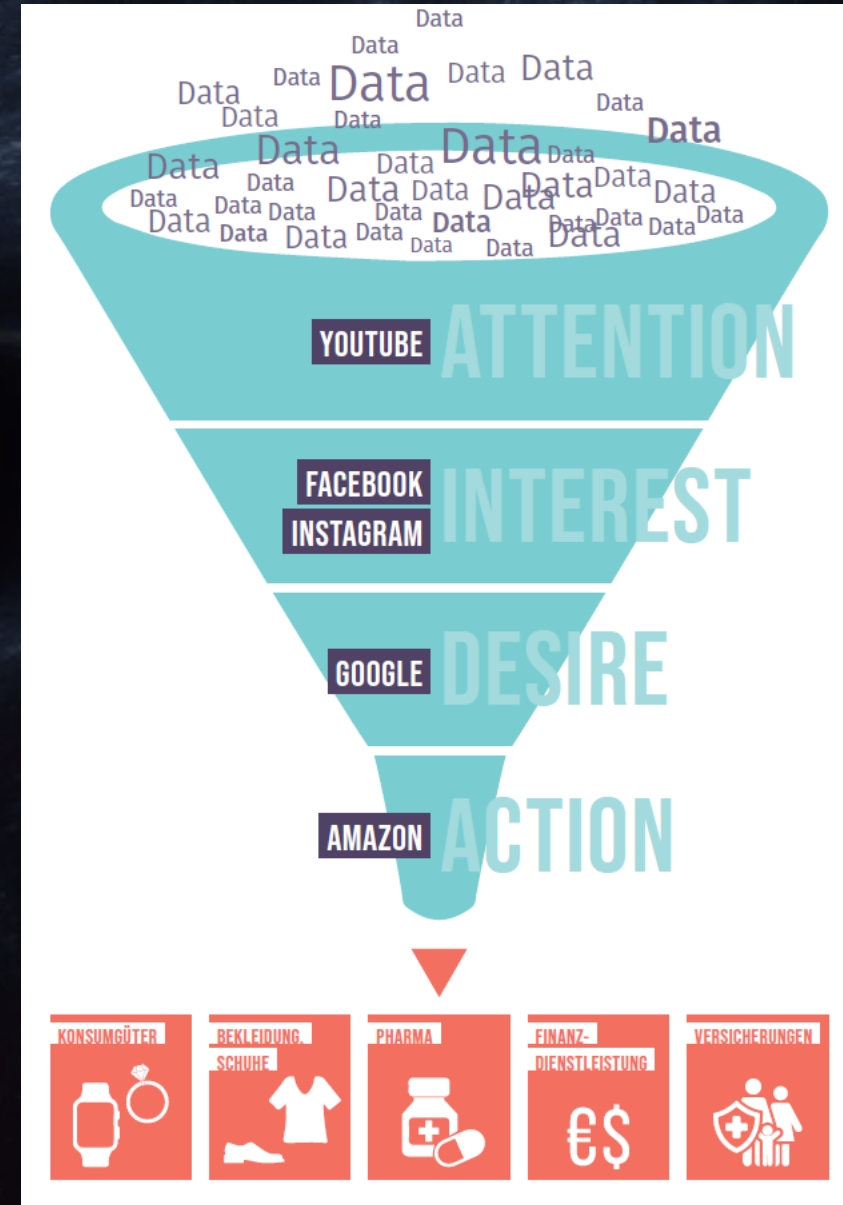
# Consequence 3

**Tech  
monopolies  
control the  
digital  
economy**



## CONSEQUENCES BRANDS / MANUFACTURERS / ADVERTISERS

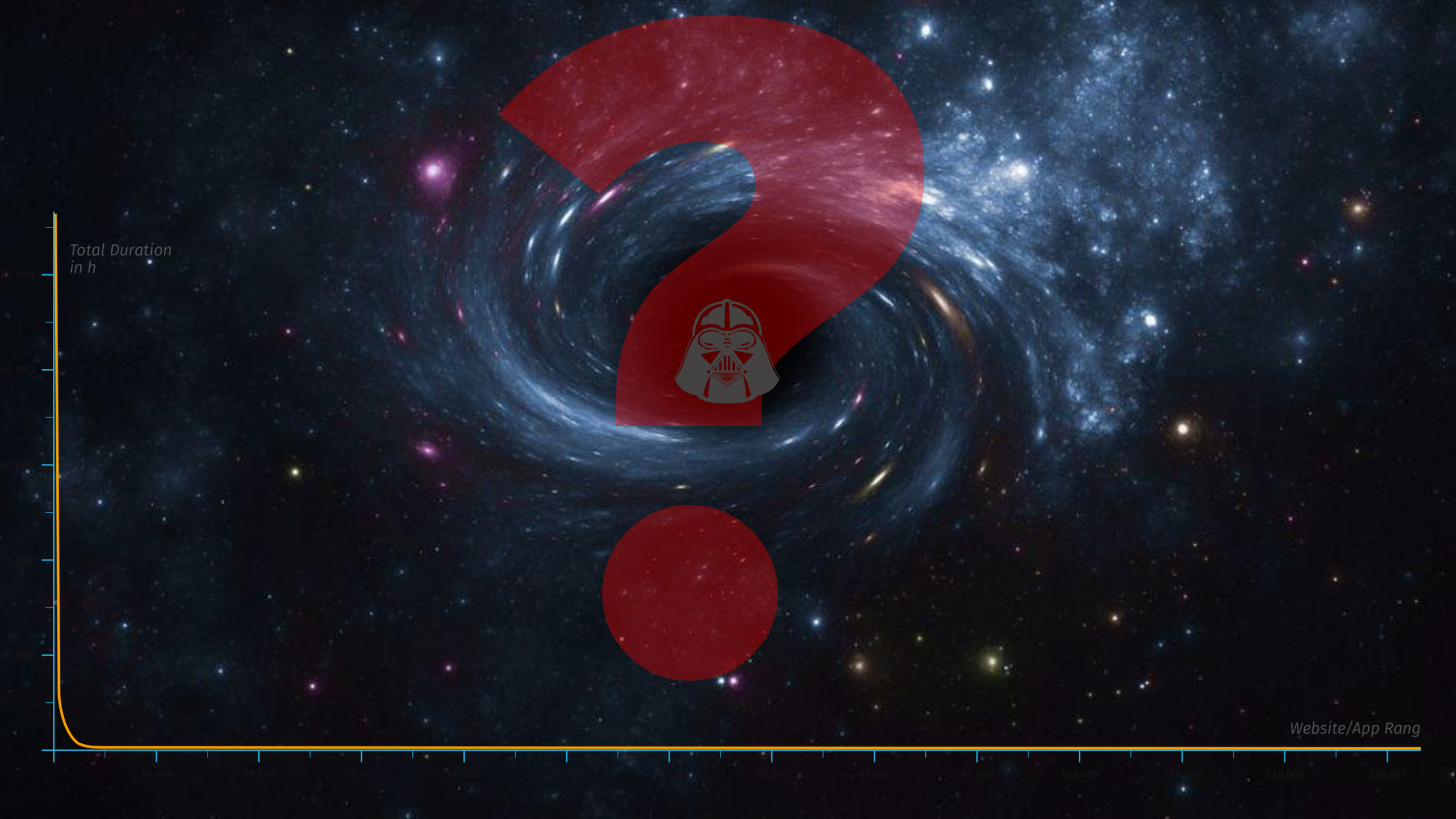
1. Low success Content Marketing (cf. Brand Websites)
2. Funnel-Monopolies: Massive incremental cost for ad spend / intransparency
3. Amazon dependency
4. Big Tech own brands
5. Failed D2C Acquisitions





# Non-Compliance with Democracy

- Aggressive tax avoidance
- Hate speech / fake news
- Data surveillance
- Cooperation with US secret services
- Manipulation and blackmailing of journalism / science
- Intentional violations of the law
- Precarious working conditions
- Manipulation of elections
- ...



Total Duration  
in h

100 MIO

80 MIO

60 MIO

40 MIO

20 MIO

10.000

20.000

30.000

40.000

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80.000

90.000

100.000

110.000

120.000

130.000

Website/App Rang



# Ideology of the Internet

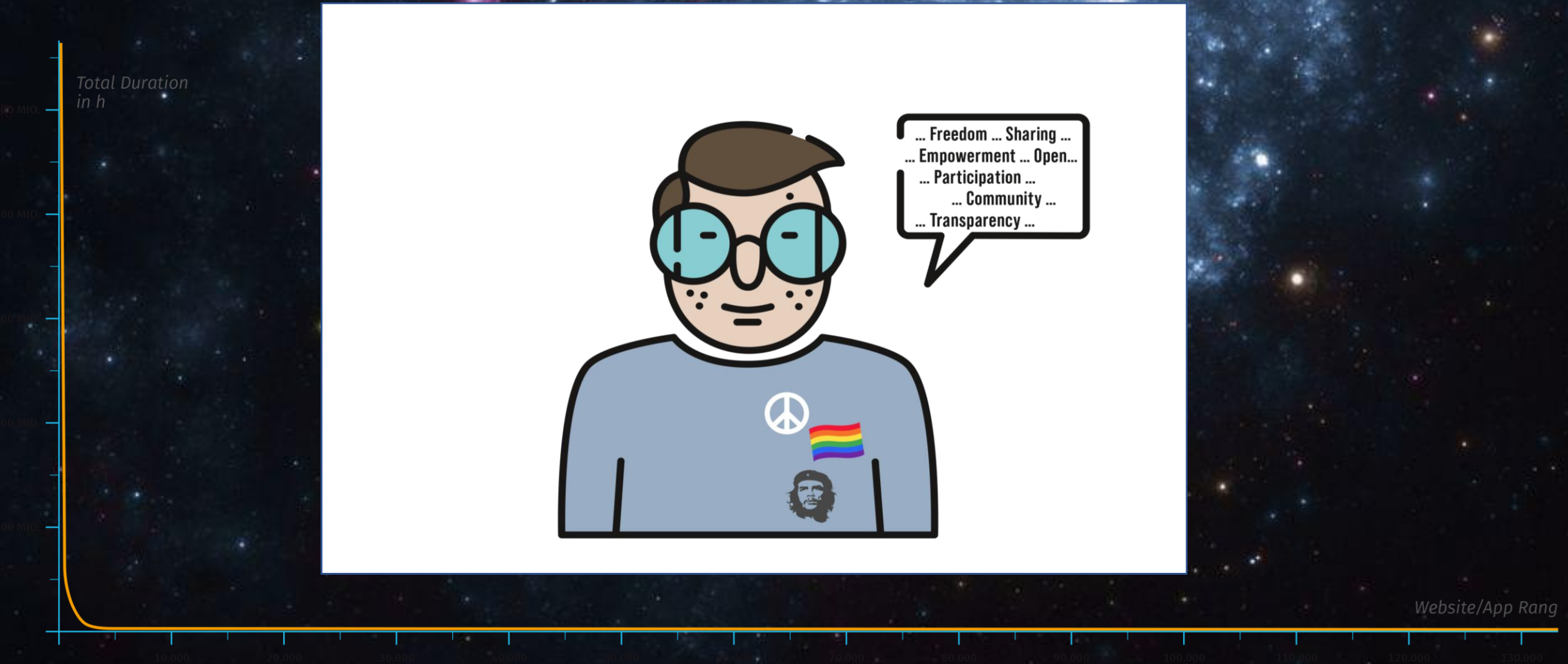


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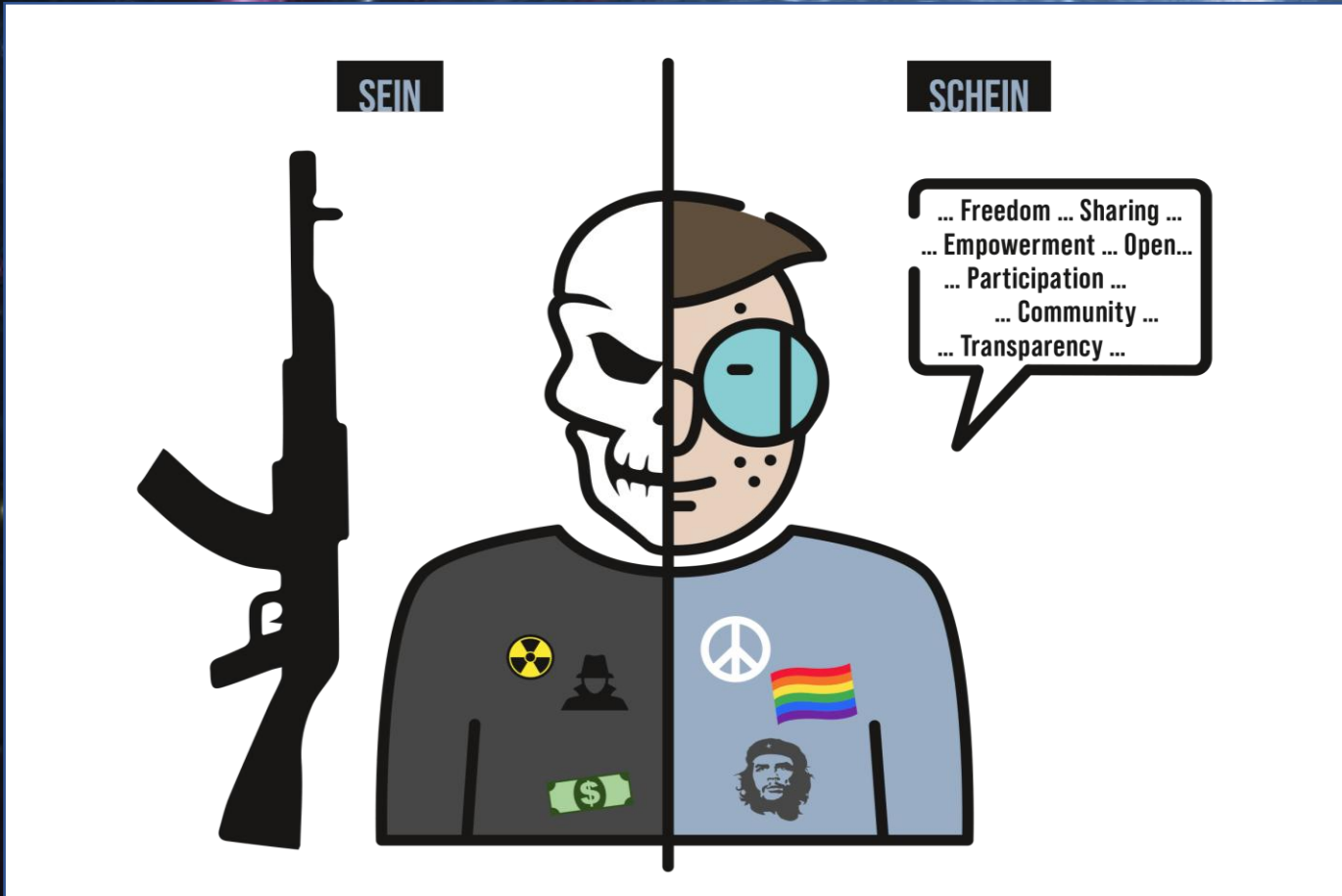




# Ideology of the Internet



# Ideology of the Internet



Total Duration  
in h

Website/App Rang

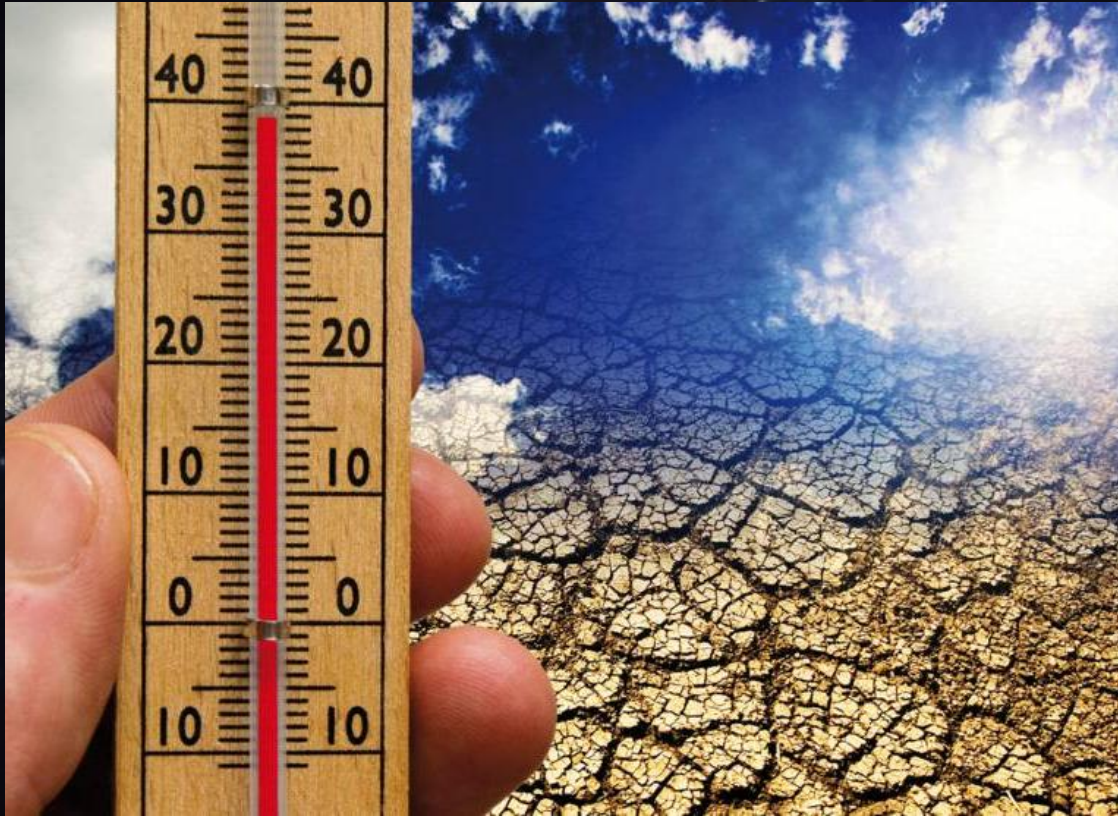




**HOW CAN WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM?**



# Huge problems - difficult to solve





**Our problem can be solved quickly  
and at ZERO cost**

# It would be easy to free the Internet

1

**Freedom for Outlinks  
on platforms**



2

Open standards for  
platforms  
Content/interoperability



3

Economic separation of  
transmission path and  
content



4

Upper limit of 30%  
market share also for  
digital media



5

Ban on monetization of  
punishable content





# It would be easy to free the Internet

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Freedom for Outlink design on platforms



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**Open standards for platforms / interoperability**



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Economic separation of transmission path and content



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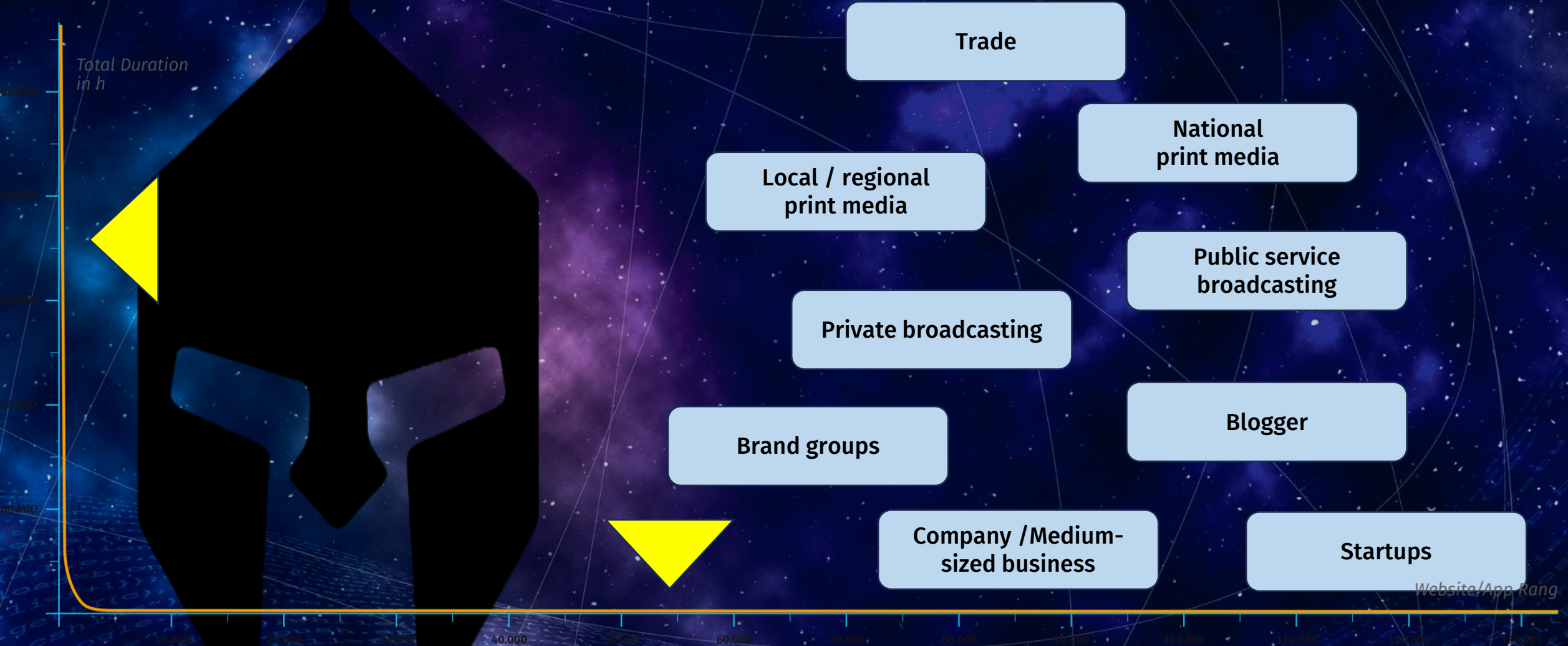


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criminal content



# Everybody is suffering







**BIG TECH / PLATFORMS**



**TRUMP / US GOVERNMENT**

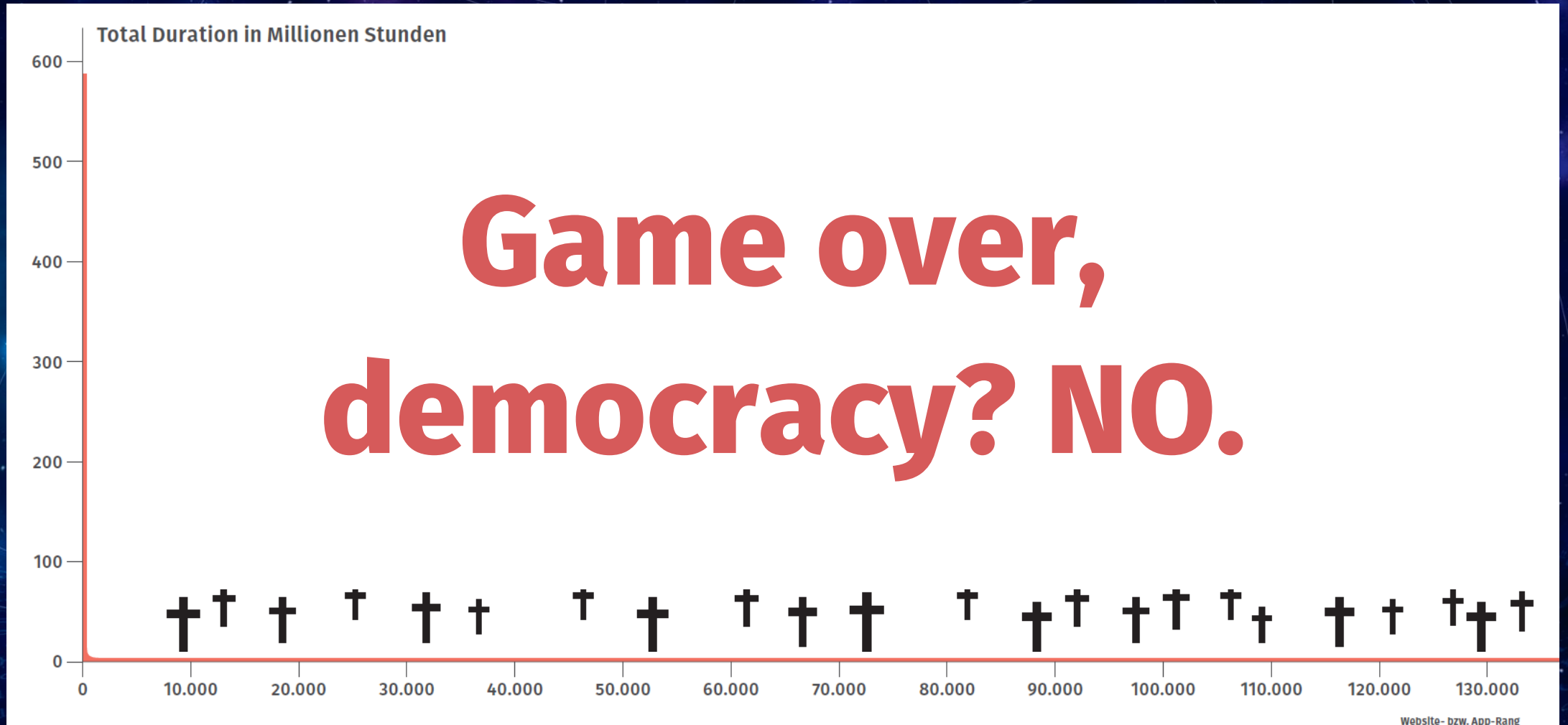


**PUTIN**



**EUROPEAN POPULISTS**

# How do we explain this to our children?





# Are we not getting it?





NEW YORK POST

BREAKING NEWS

Trump DOJ ignores court order to make Adams corruption case documents public

TECH

Gen Z grads say their college degrees were a waste of time and money. AI infiltrates the workplace

By Marissa Matozzo

Published April 21, 2025, 4:16 p.m. ET

seekers with fake postings

Troubling trend


FOX 26 HOUSTON

82% aller CFOs schwören auf Automatisierung. Sie auch? →

TRAVEL LEMMING

Home / Perspectives /

Google is Using AI to Censor Thousands of Independent Websites Like Mine (And to Control the Flow of Information Online)

Nate Hake

Updated May 27, 2025

GIZMODO

Google Quietly Removes 'Written By People' From Suggestions for Website Owners

The Verge

Google is getting even worse

The Verge

Menu +

TECH / META

Mark Zuckerberg just declared war on the entire advertising industry / Zuck's vision for infinite creative would wipe out the way the whole ad stack works.

golem.de

IT-NEWS FÜR PROFIS

TICKER FORUM VIDEO ...MEHR

KÜNSTLICHE INTELLIGENZ

Google trainiert KI auch, wenn Urheber es nicht erlauben

Die KI-Funktionen der Google-Suche verwenden Inhalte von Urhebern und Verlagen auch dann für das Training, wenn diese es ausdrücklich untersagen.

5. Mai 2025, 17:30 Uhr, Mike Faust

180

Comments (180 New)

Die für Googles KI-Übersicht gesammelten Daten werden trotz Widerspruchs für Trainings verwendet.

19:30

Google

kann man eingelaufene woll...

Alle Videos Bilder News Web Bücher

Überblick mit KI

Ja, man kann einen eingelaufenen Wollpullover in vielen Fällen retten: Essig

Ein Schluck Essig in lauwarmes Wasser geben und den Pullover eine Stunde einweichen lassen. Anschließend vorsichtig ausspülen und mit einem Föhnhaushalt trocknen lassen.

(Bild: Google/Montage: Golem.de)

nia / The Verge; Getty Images

Nilay Patel is editor-in-chief of The Verge, host of



# Let's act - NOW

[www.bigtechmustgo.com](http://www.bigtechmustgo.com)



- Visit website (also English)
- Recommend / share website
- Buy book (28€ - fees are donated!!)
- Recommend / share book
- Visit events ( check website!)
- Discuss it with friends and acquaintances

**Let's act - NOW**

[www.bigtechmustgo.com](http://www.bigtechmustgo.com)

**Thank you  
very much**



**Martin Andree, University of Cologne**