

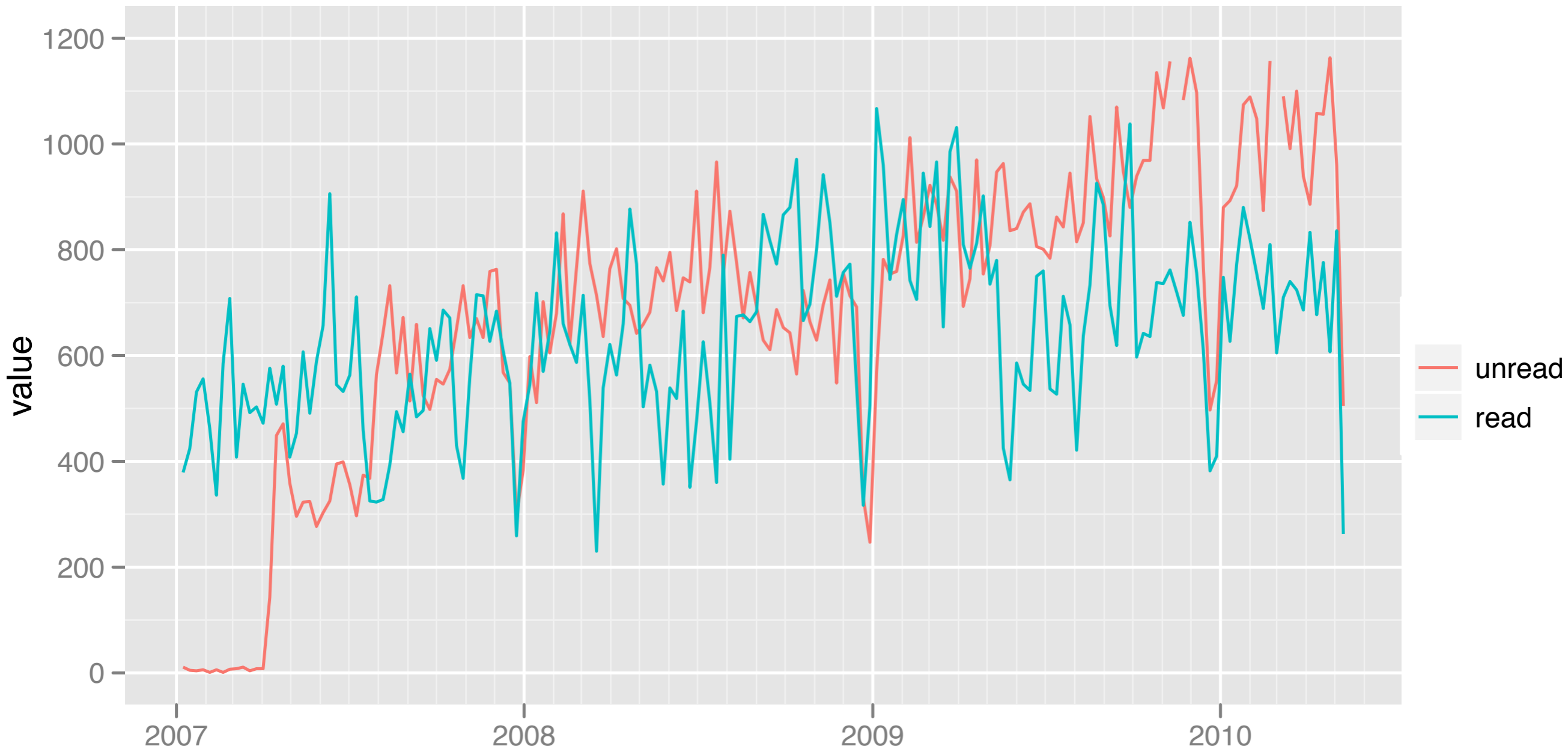
Inbox Zero

A practical philosophy for managing email overload

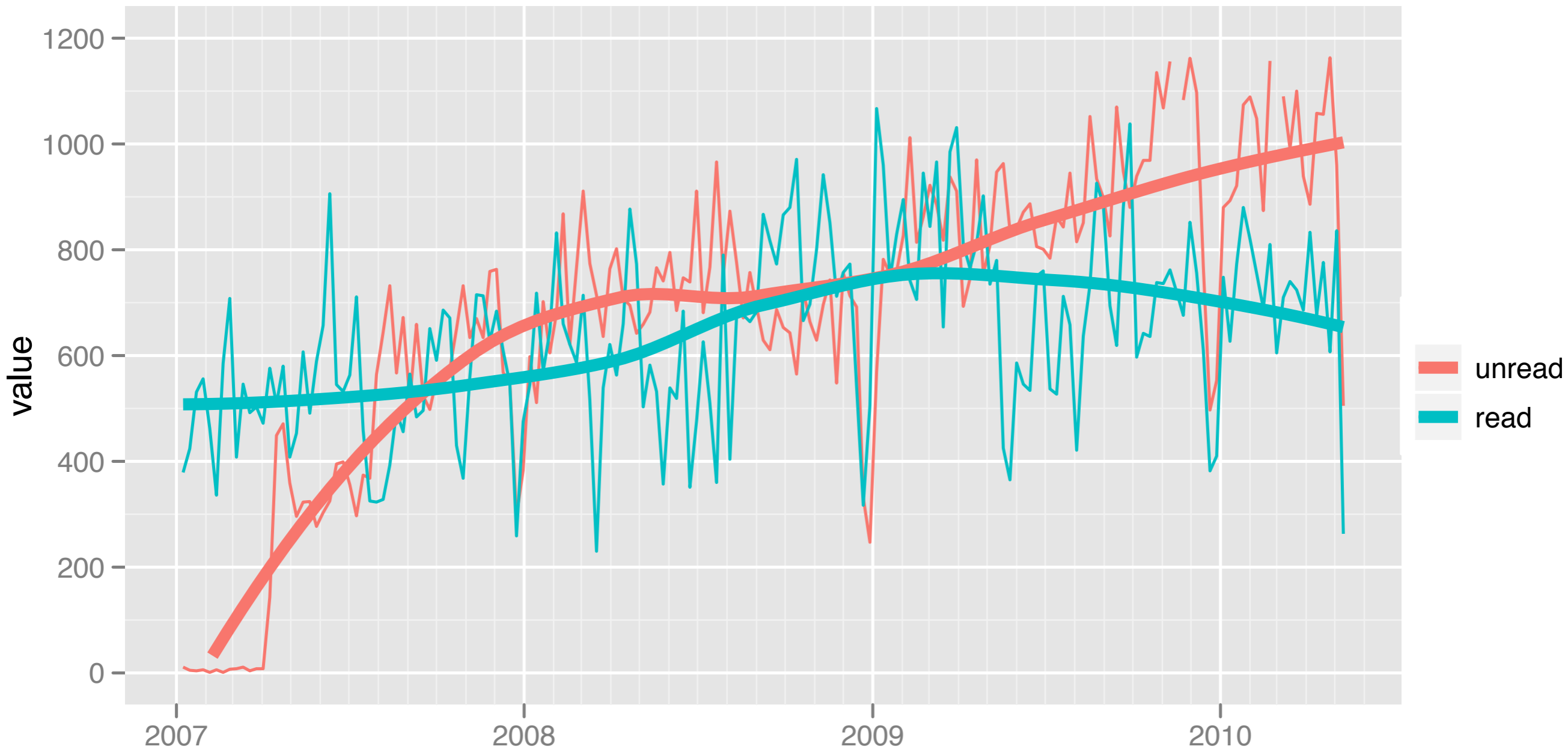
Hadley Wickham

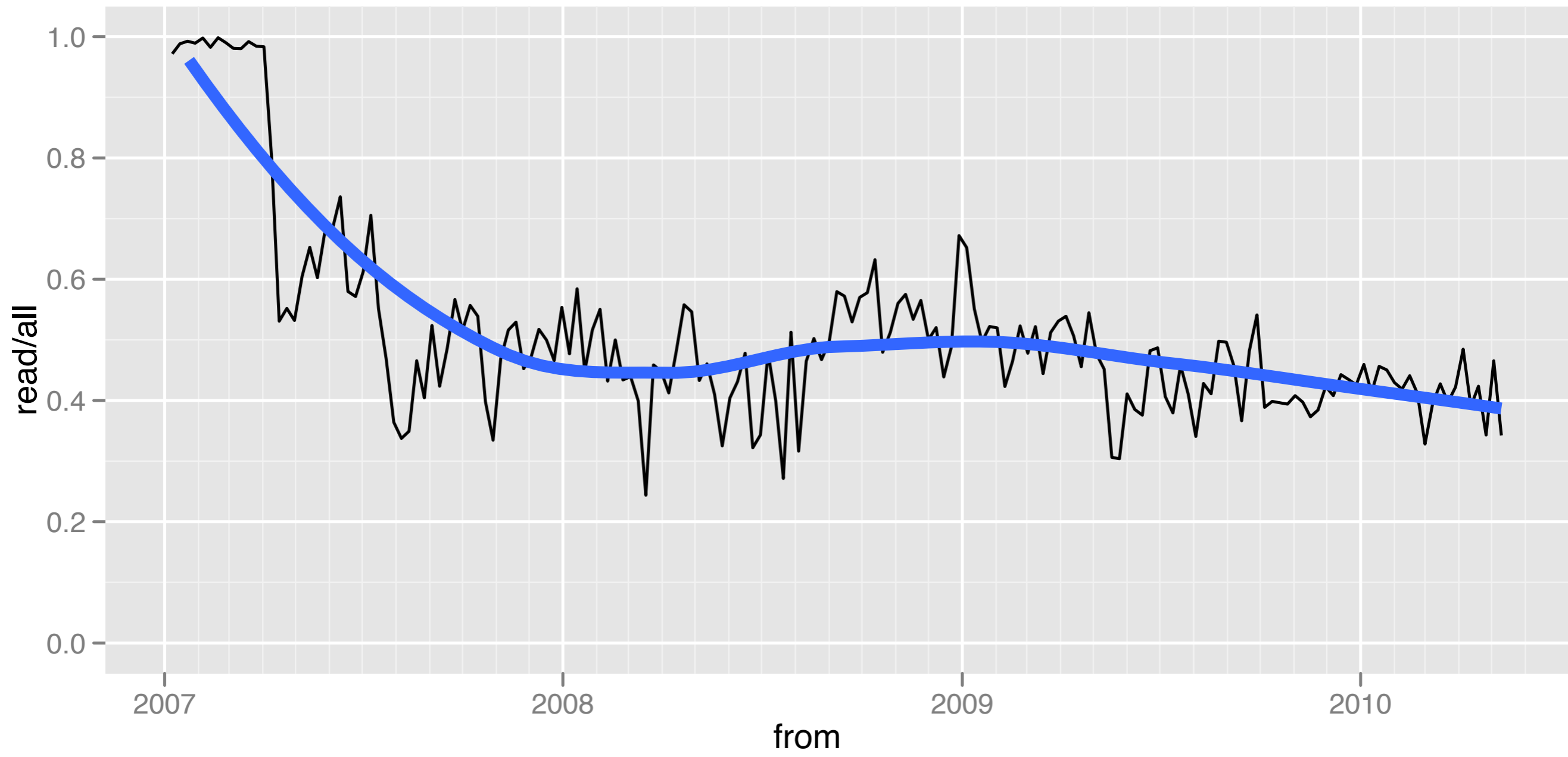
1. Why? My email
2. Inbox zero
3. Minimal responses
4. Filters for gray mail
5. Delete, delete, delete
6. Email dashes

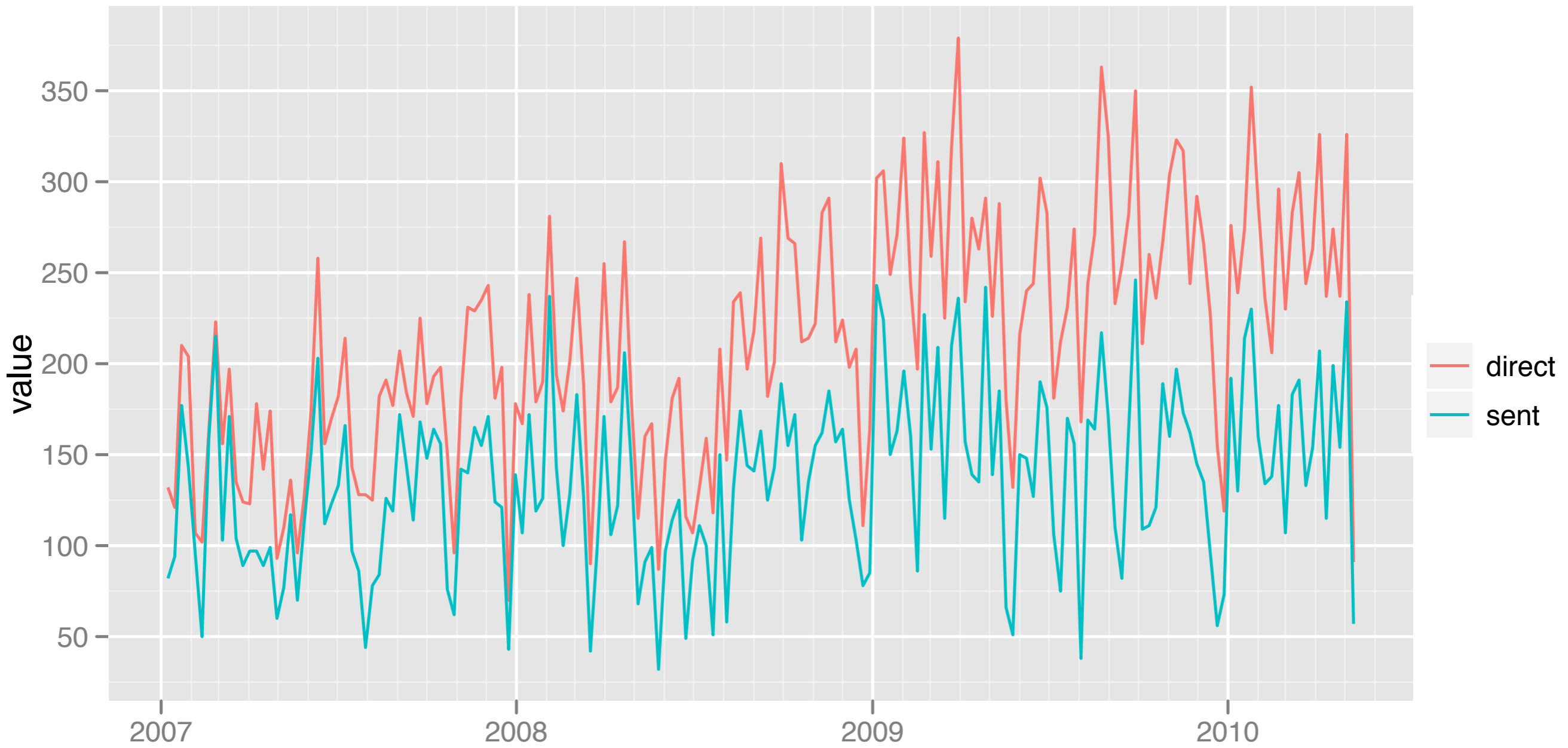
How many of you
feel overwhelmed by
your email?

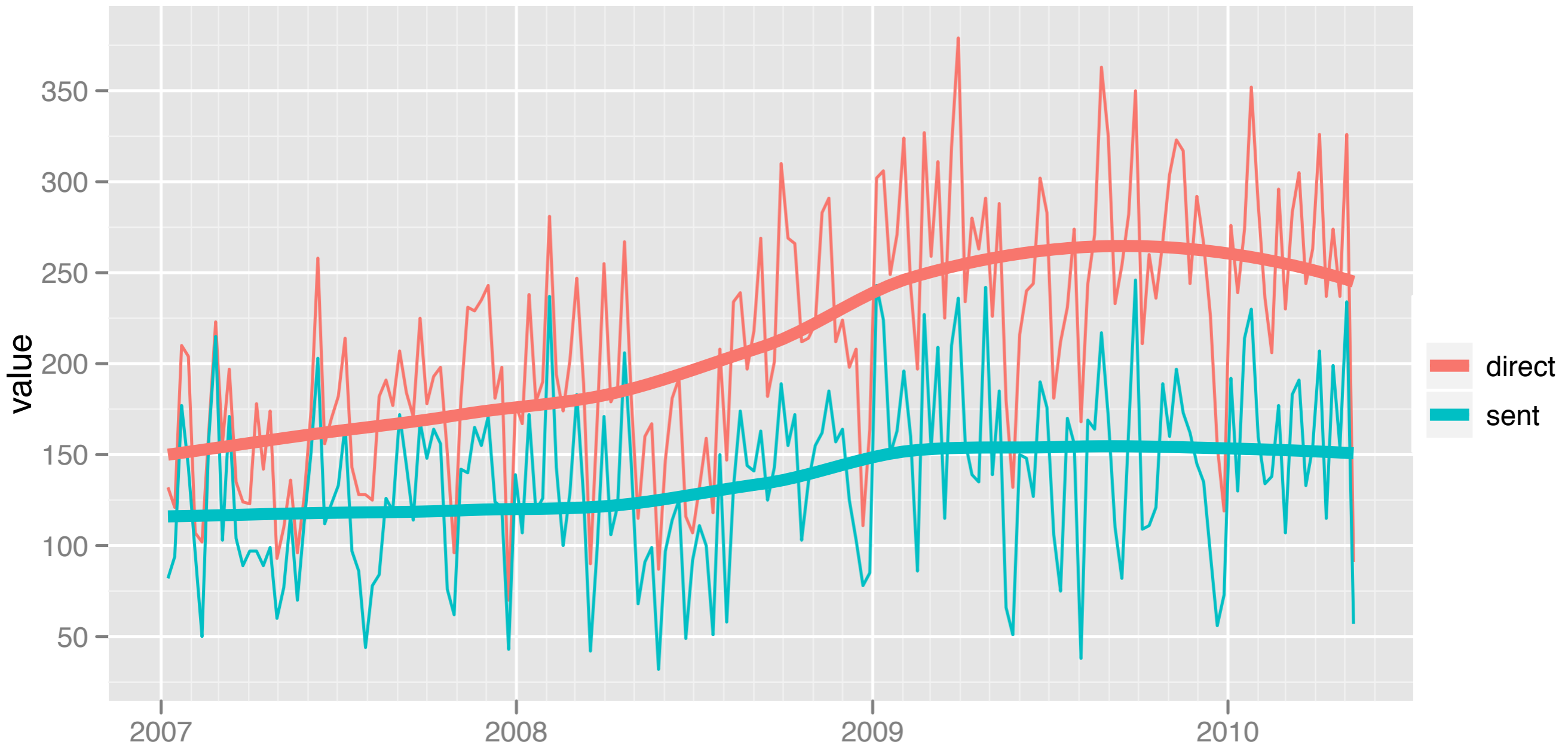


232,000 emails
120,000 unread!









Inbox Zero

<http://www.43folders.com/izero>

Merlin Mann

There is no way you will ever be able to respond to — let alone read in exquisite detail — every email you ever receive for the rest of your life. If you take issue with this, just wait six months, because, believe me, we're all getting a lot more email (and other sundry demands on our attention) every day. What seems like a doddle today is going to get progressively more difficult — even insurmountable — unless you put a realistic system in place now.

Your time is priceless
(and wildly limited)

You need an agnostic system for
dealing with mail that isn't based on
nonces, exceptions, and guilt.

[The] ultimate goal is for you to spend
less time playing with your email and
more time doing stuff.

Key concepts

Regularly empty your inbox

Minimal response

Delete, delete, delete

Filters

Email dashes

Inbox Zero

Your inbox is not your to do list!
(or it shouldn't be)

“The truth is that you probably can take the average email inbox – even a relatively neglected one – from full to zero in about 20 minutes. It mostly depends on how much you really want to be done with it. The dirty little secret, of course, is that you don't do it by responding to each of those emails but by ruthlessly processing them.”

Response does **not** need to be proportional to request

“In an environment where attention is the economic equivalent of cash, you aren’t doing people any favors by sending gothic novels. And taking your cues for etiquette, propriety, and efficiency on a message-by-message basis will quickly land you in a very bouncy room with a fresh box of crayons.”

“Do you still need this?”

“I don’t know”

“Good idea. I’ll add it to my to do list.”

“Here’s a link that might be what you’re looking for...”

[Delete]

<http://www.43folders.com/2006/03/13/email-cheats>

The nuclear holocaust of responses:

<http://tinyurl.com/nfdlzh>

Delete!

Most minimal response is none.

“Just remember that every email you read, re-read, and re-re-re-re-re-read as it sits in that big dumb pile is actually incurring mental debt on your behalf.”

Be brutally honest - if you're not going to do anything with the email delete it now.

Filters grey mail

“noisy, frequent, and non-urgent items which can be dealt with all at a pass and later.”

facebook, comments, university/
department memos, newsletters, mailing
lists

Good catch all: contains **unsubscribe**

<http://www.43folders.com/2006/03/13/filters>

1300/3500
(5/day!)

bannerpcard@rice.edu, carlyn@rice.edu,
cchat@rice.edu, cmtcomment@rice.edu,
giving@rice.edu, payroll@rice.edu,
registrar@rice.edu, sandra@rice.edu,
sallie@rice.edu subject:(weekly message),
alldpts@rice.edu, list:"k2i-members.rice.edu",
list:"mailman.rice.edu"

allfaculty@stat.rice.edu, faculty@stat.rice.edu,
statdept@stat.rice.edu, colloquium@stat.rice.edu,
undergrad@stat.rice.edu

from:(statements@wageworks.com)

from:(TIAA-CREF_eDelivery@tiaa-cref.org)

Patricia Wallace, a techno-psychologist, believes part of the allure of e-mail—for adults as well as teens—is similar to that of a slot machine. “You have intermittent, variable reinforcement,” she explains. You are not sure you are going to get a reward every time or how often you will, so you keep pulling that handle.”

Email dashes

Don't have your email open all day.
Schedule times when you respond to emails.

You can tackle emails a lot faster when you batch them up.

Lack self control (like me)? Try an internet blocker: <http://macfreedom.com/>

<http://www.43folders.com/2006/03/15/email-dash>

More reading

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/linda-stone>

<http://www.alistapart.com/articles/habit-fields/>