



Don't Ruin Your Anthropology Collection: Using Data to Increase Representation in Small to Medium Collections

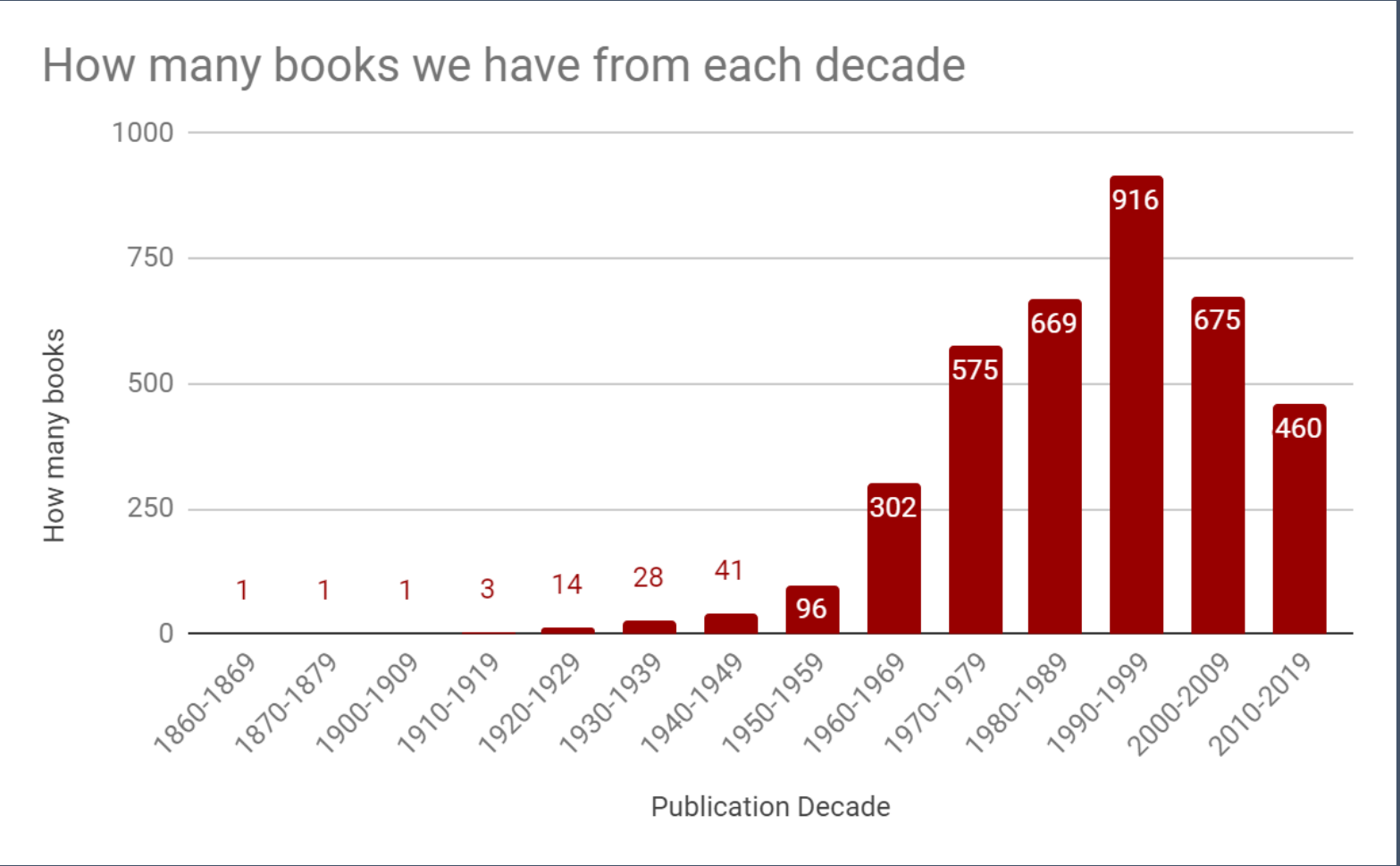
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Getting Started

1. Download a report of the call number range for your subject area, Anthropology is GN. This should come from your collection services librarians.
2. You will need a basic understanding of a spreadsheet program. I completed all of this in Google Sheets.
3. Include: call number, title, author, publication date, check out totals, and anything else your ILS system collects
4. Clean your data: this will vary by column. Make sure everything in the column is in the exact same format – spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. In my sheet, dates had a lot of variation.
5. There are 3,786 books in this example collection.

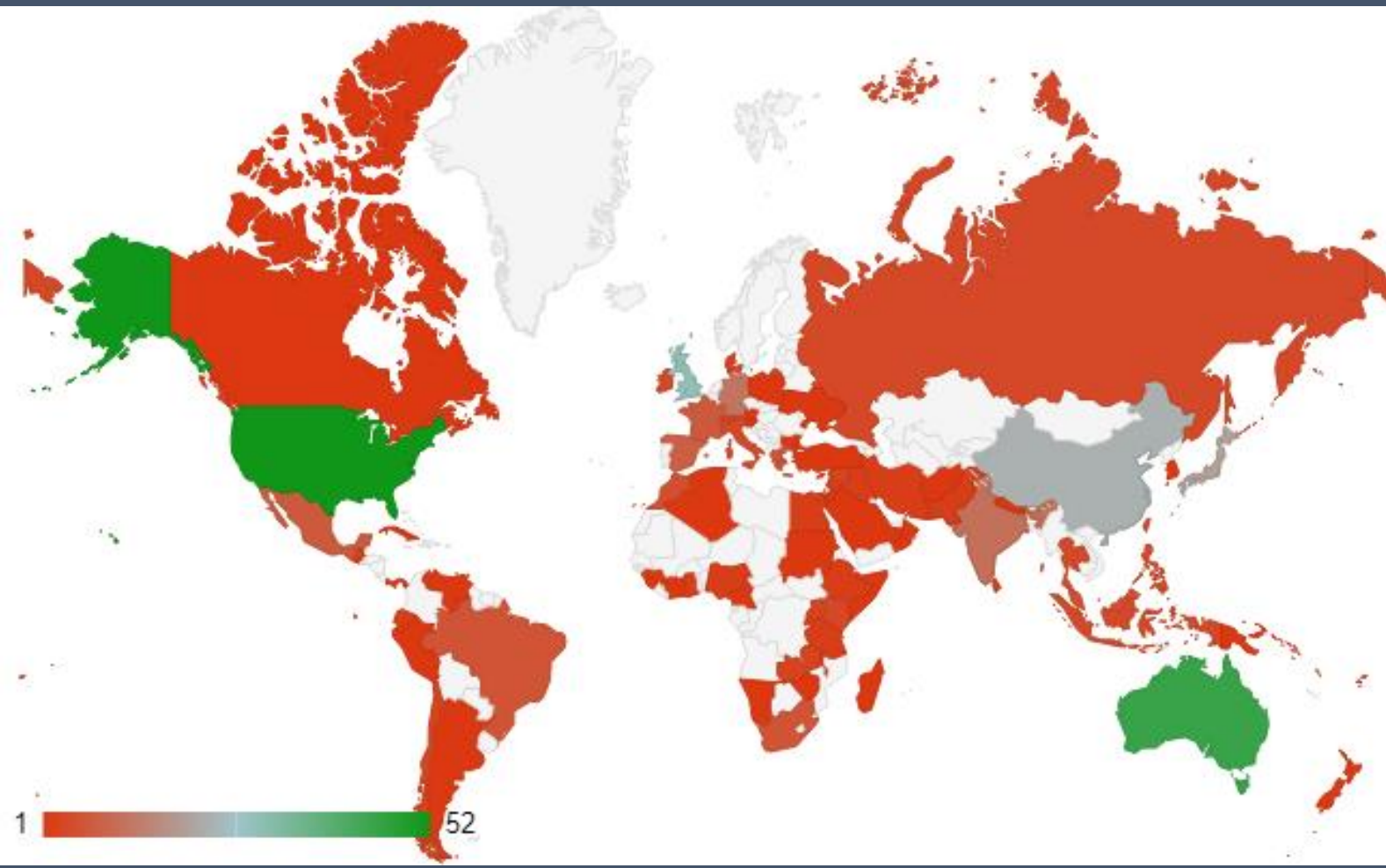
How well are different decades, countries and gender of the author* represented?

*Gender isn't as easy to identify if you want to do it well. I made assumptions based on the gender norming of first names. If you wanted to be more sure, you could take a smaller sample and check each author individually.



This looks like it matches pretty well with the economy and technological trends of the recent decades.

You can see the print books going down after the 90s with the economic downfall of 2008 and increases in ease of access and availability to e-books and electronic journal articles.

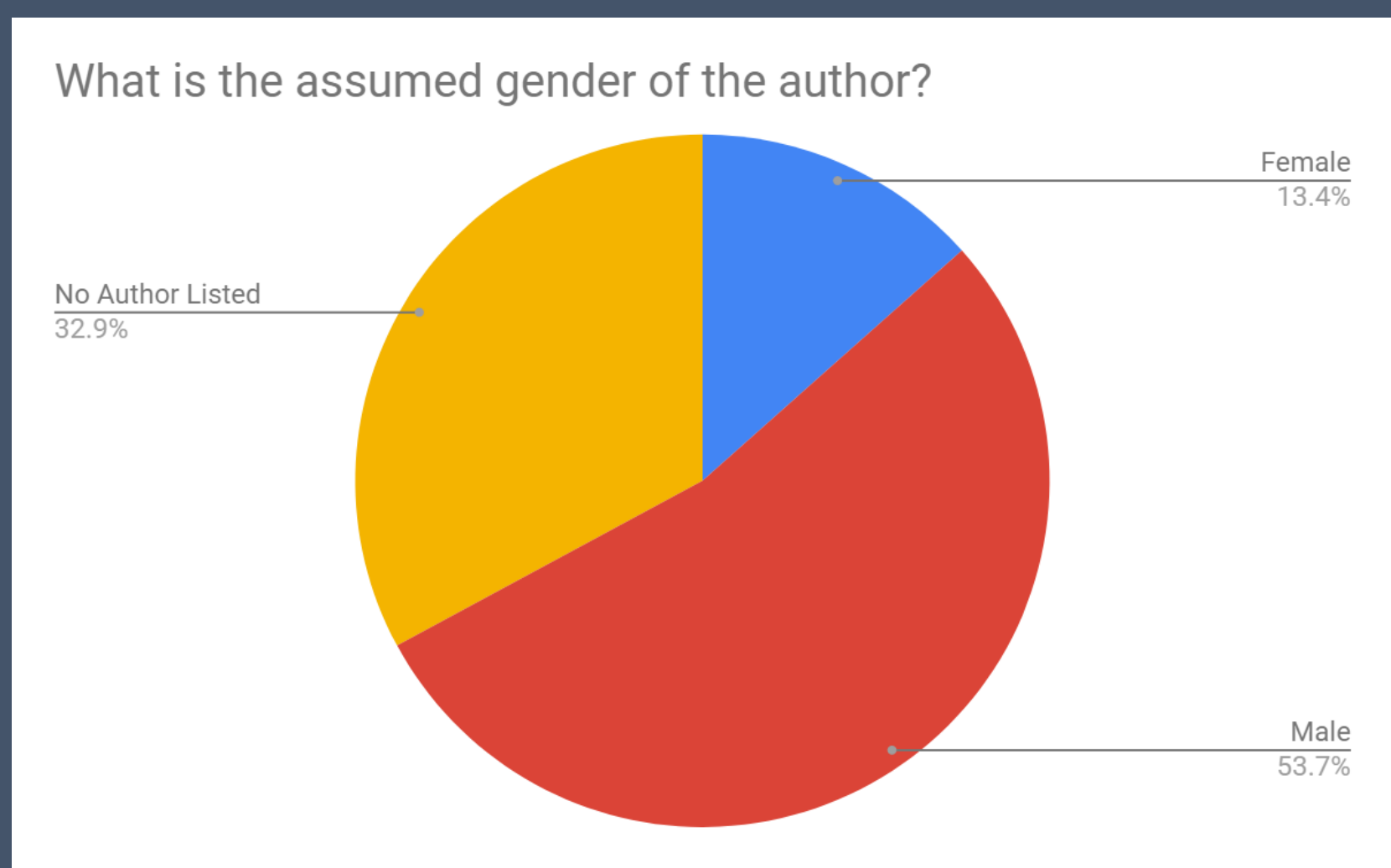


Why countries?

Your collection will have some sort of common theme/keywords in the titles. Anthropology also had cultures, continents, and geographic areas. Countries were the easiest to code and appeared in the most titles.

So it looks like we have a lot of books about the US and Australia.

Does that match the subject areas of the Anthropology classes and research focuses of faculty?



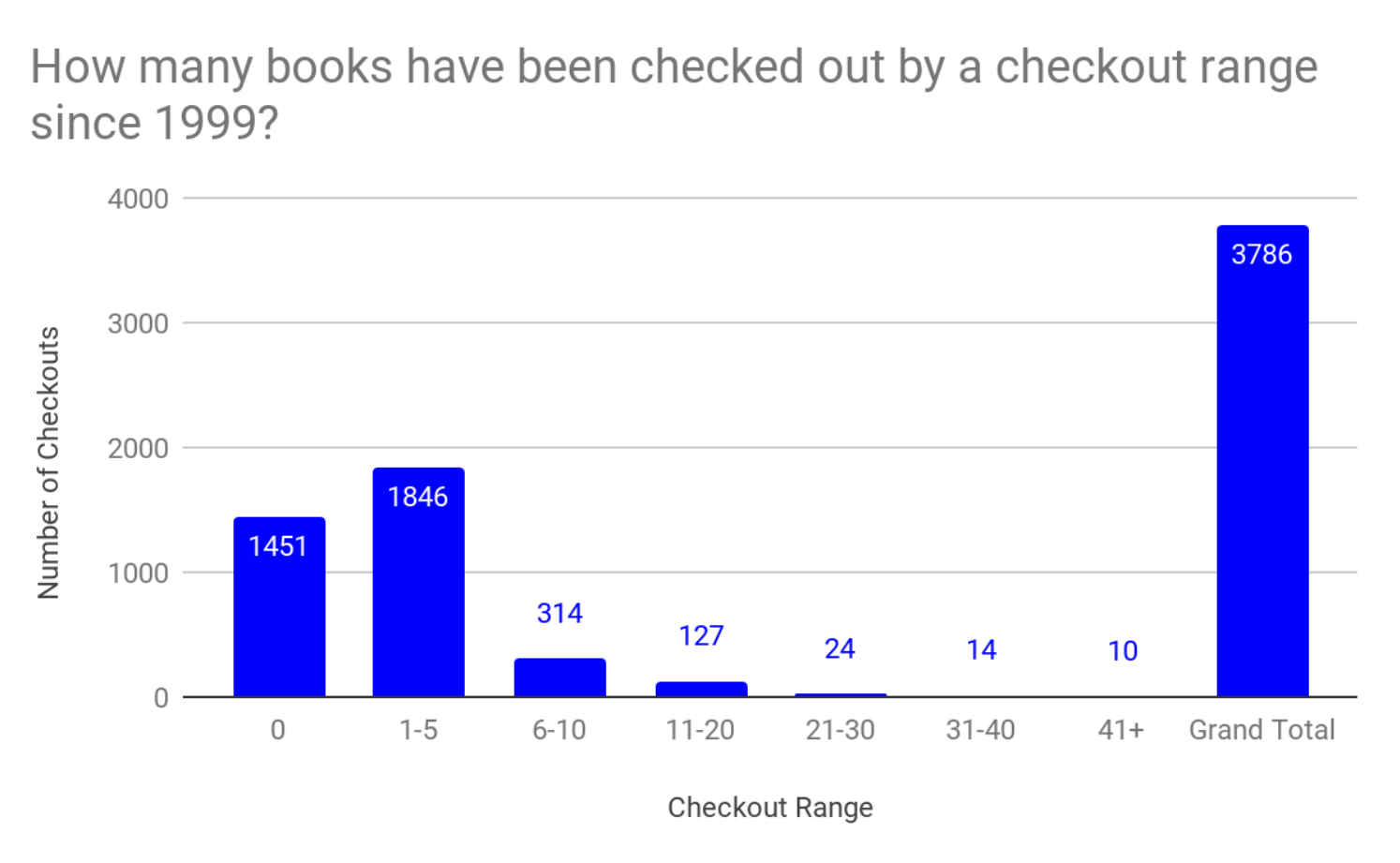
I did not account for any LGBTQ due to the size of the collection, but a random sample could be informative if the information is publicly available.

Books with no author listed were mostly edited volumes.

Either way, the collection is overwhelmingly male.

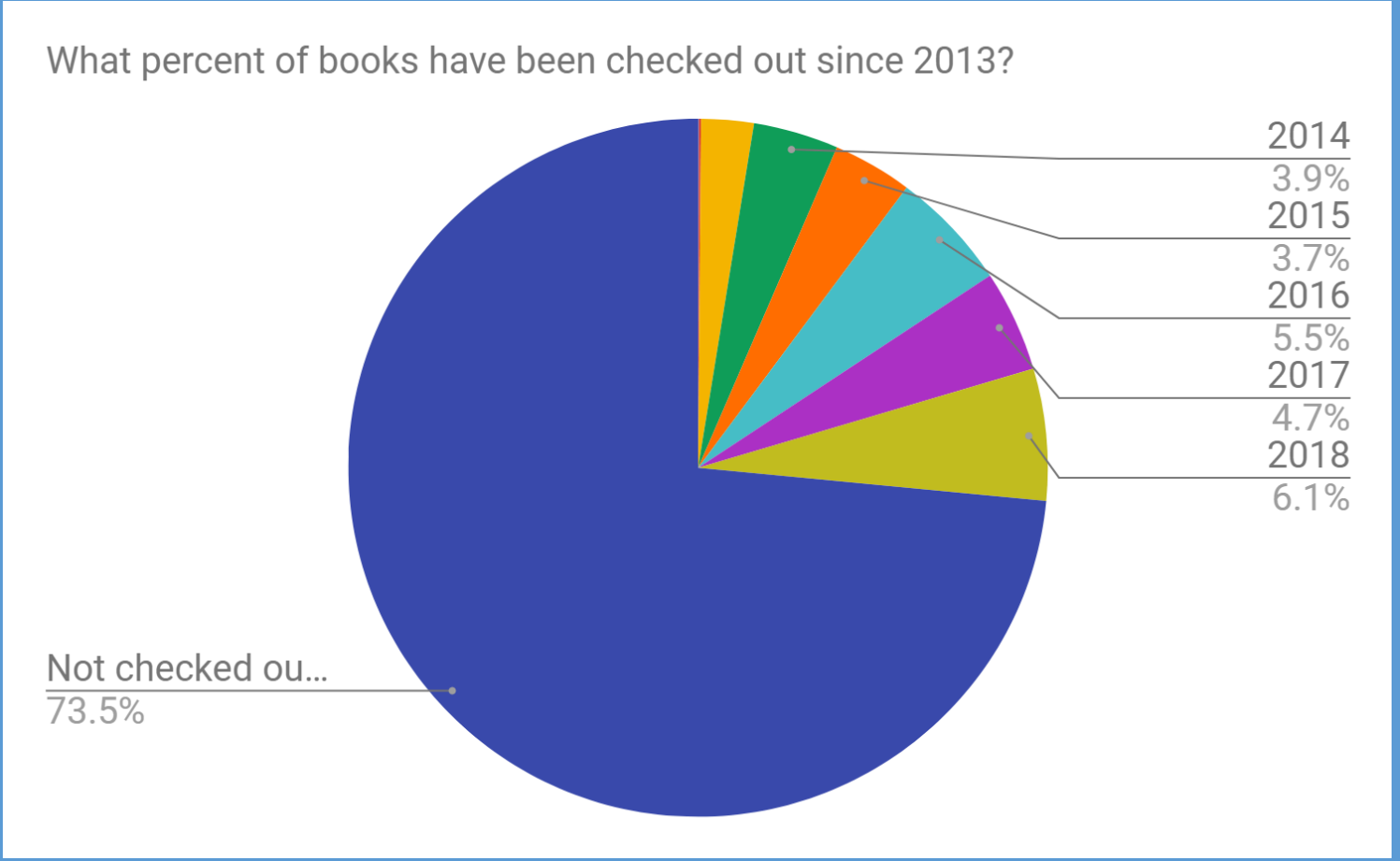
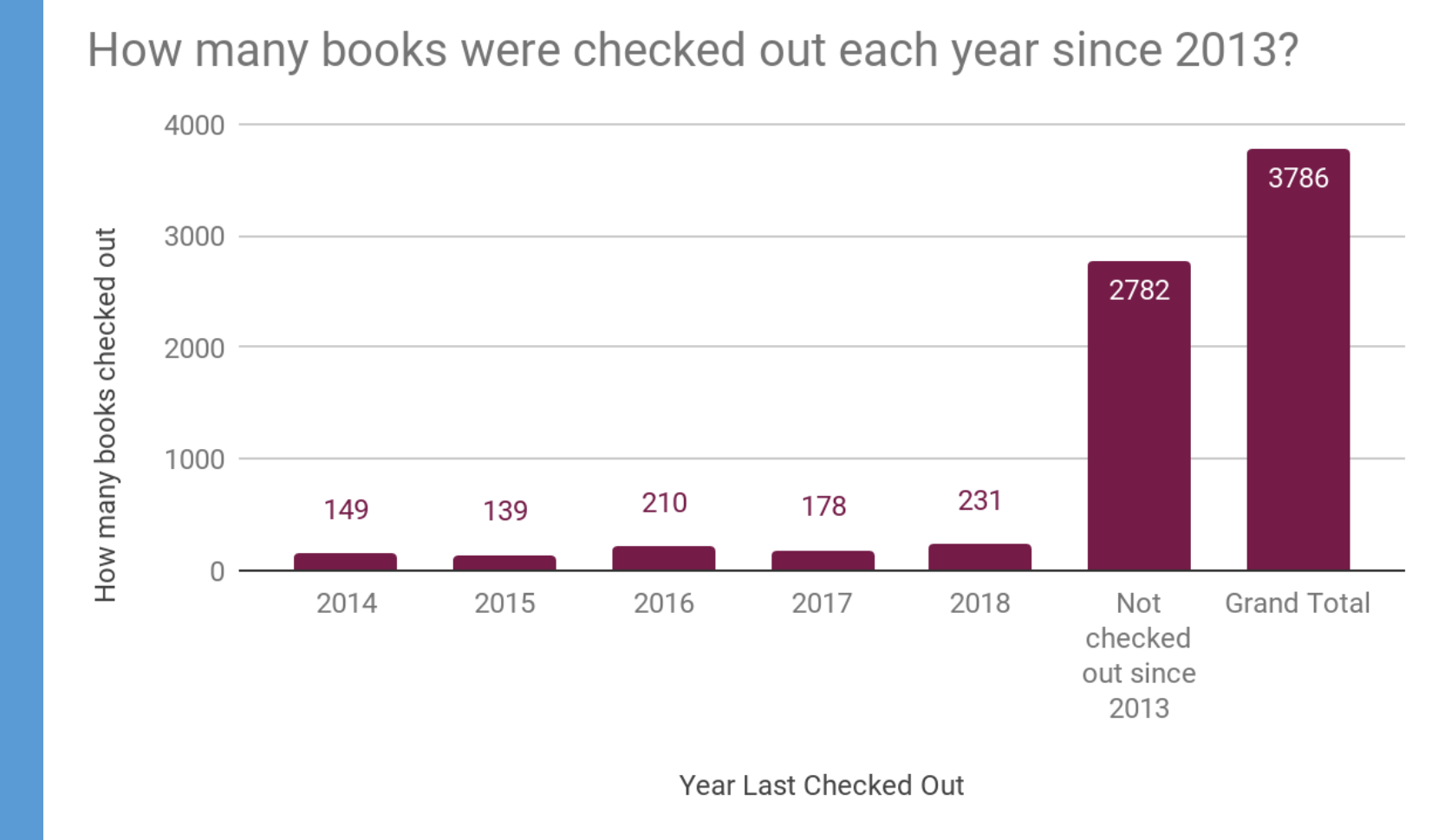
Is this representative of the field of authors who are publishing? Are voices missing?

But wait! How many of these books are being checked out?



Okay, so that covers the last 20 years.

What about checkouts in the last 5 years?



Only 2-6% of the collection is being checked out each year? And this number doesn't account for course reserves, so it's probably even less!

Essentially: The Anthropology collection isn't being touched.

WHY!?

1. The collection is old – only 12% is from the last decade
2. Students aren't sure what kind of information is available in a book
3. Students are busy and
 - a. Books take longer for students to acquire than searching online
 - b. Books are too long to read

If I diversify it, will they come?

Probably not yet:

- Do more outreach promoting the print collection
- Display books more
- Question why academic book covers so uninviting?!
- Make sure metadata makes books findable in your search system
- Find out if student research topics match books in

Further Analysis

1. Do a smaller sample and look for racial/ethnic/cultural identity
2. Ask faculty and students about their opinions of using and requiring books.
3. Ask faculty for lists of student bibliographies in their courses and analyze them
 - See if students are using any books
 - See what kind of sources students are using
4. Align book purchasing to courses being taught,

How can you use data from your collection?

Further Reading

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