

Table 33. Alcohol use in previous year

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
4+ days/wk	169	21.10	21.10
3 or less/wk	250	31.21	52.31
< weekly	317	39.58	91.89
Never	65	8.11	100.00
Total	801	100.00	

Table 34. Cannabis use in previous year

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
4+ days/wk	30	3.74	3.74
3 or less/wk	23	2.87	6.61
< weekly	141	17.58	24.19
Never	608	75.81	100.00
Total	802	100.00	

Table 35. Methamphetamine use in previous year

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
4+ days/wk	2	0.25	0.25
3 or less/wk	5	0.63	0.88
< weekly	77	9.63	10.50
Never	716	89.50	100.00
Total	800	100.00	

Table 36. Other drug use in previous year

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
4+ days/wk	3	0.38	0.38
3 or less/wk	5	0.63	1.00
< weekly	196	24.59	25.60
Never	593	74.40	100.00
Total	797	100.00	

Table 37. Drug injection in the previous year.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
4+ days/wk	2	0.25	0.25
3 or less/wk	6	0.75	1.00
< weekly	25	3.12	4.12
Never	768	95.88	100.00
Total	801	100.00	

Socio-demographic profiles of the men using individual sites

After the collection of socio-demographic material men were asked to identify the frequency of use of gay community sites as either daily, weekly, monthly or annually. Additionally, men could nominate up to eight reasons for using each of the sites: political; sexual; recreational; romantic; social; support; as a volunteer or worker; and, medical. Men could nominate as many reasons as they wished for each site. The network visualisations produced from these data conclude this report.

The socio-demographic and behavioural profiles of the men who nominated using those 125 sites appear in Appendix 2 which is an electronic document that can be viewed and downloaded at www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs.

Network visualisations

Fifty-four network visualisations are presented. The squares represent sites (labelled with the site name) and the dots represent men (labelled with the man's code number). The size of the squares depends on the number of men naming them and the size of the dots depends on the number of sites men mentioned by name. A line between a dot and a square indicates that the man has indicated that he has some engagement with this site. This is also called a 'tie'. This could be any sort of engagement (as with the full network visualisation) or a specific type of engagement (as with the visualisation of medical engagement).

When you look at a network visualisation therefore, you can see the extent to which sites share members (men) and the extent to which men are engaged with multiple sites. You can also see the paths that information, like health promotion, could flow through from one site, through its membership, to another site to other men. A very dense network where there are a lot of interconnections allows information to flow quickly and through many alternative pathways. A less dense network with long chains and few shared memberships means that information will flow more slowly and because there are fewer pathways, is more easily lost. In terms of health promotion, this means that denser networks allow information (and other things like values, norms and social practices) to reach much of the network efficiently from a single point. Less dense networks present additional challenges to health promotion suggesting that information may need to be introduced through multiple sites and that there may need to be strong motivation for this to be passed along.

The first, showing the full network (Figure 1), is too full of information to be readily interpreted. However, it is clear that sites such as Joy FM, Midsumma, www.gaydar.com and the Laird Hotel among others are likely to be important.

It is also clear when we look at the reach and connectivity of these key sites that any health promotion material delivered through them will be well dispersed. The bridges between organisations are complex however and do not include all other organisations or give any meaningful guide to the frequency with which different organisations are used for different reasons.

The remaining fifty-three visualisations represent the full network partitioned a number of different ways. Firstly, we divide the network into reason for use: political; sexual; recreational; romantic; social; support; as a volunteer or worker; and, medical; and by frequency of use: daily, weekly, monthly and annually. In these visualisations, the lines indicate that the man has named that site for that particular use, the size of the squares indicates the number of men that have identified that site for that use and the size of the dots indicates the number of sites that man engages with for that use.

Understanding the network by analysing men's reasons for using different sites provides an understanding of the key sites engaged with for different purposes, and in this way provide clues to the future targeting of individual sites with relevant health promotion messages and materials. It does not tell us much about the characteristics of these men who make up these networks.

To better understand who the men are that use specific organisations for each of the selected reasons, we next looked at the data in terms of socio-demographic indicators. We have organised the data around seven key groups of men. These groups represent men who have been identified as risk groups frequently targeted by sexual health messages. The groups are: men between 16-29 years of age; men

between 30-49 years of age; men over 50 years of age; men who are not open about being gay; men who are open about being gay; HIV-negative men and men untested for HIV; and HIV-positive men.

Together the reasons for use and frequency networks and the network of these additional groups of men can be read together to give a more finely calibrated understanding of who actually uses the sites, organisations and networks of the gay communities in Victoria, why and how often. For reasons of brevity we have not produced socio-demographic visualisations for all time sequences or all reasons for community engagement. Instead, we have expanded only the monthly networks of three important areas: romantic engagement, sexual engagement and engagement with the community for reasons of support.

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Medical Networks

The daily medical network is the sparsest with only 27 ties (links between men and sites) with the weekly (137), monthly (98) and annual (86) networks being somewhat less sparse. A striking feature of the medical networks is the limited amount of bridging observed with the strongest being by the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre on the weekly network where it links the Carlton Clinic, the Prahran Market Clinic and the Centre Clinic (Figures 2-5).

It is clear from the visualisations that Melbourne Sexual Health Centre is the key bridge between the major centres that make up the medical networks of Victoria's gay and homosexually active men, although the bridging is sparse. In this way Melbourne Sexual Health Centre can be described as a "hub" from which sexual health information is shared between other major centres, and a site from which information is more likely to flow between centres than if those other centres themselves were the sole point of distribution. While the visualisations show that not all men are linked through Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and therefore health materials would best be distributed at all other medical sites for optimum reach, it also shows that the maximisations of scarce resources would best be achieved through their placement at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre as this is the primary hub of information sharing.

The similarity of the monthly and annual medical network maps reinforce the bridging from Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and show that medical networks are not vastly different according to time sequences.

Figure 2 Medical daily

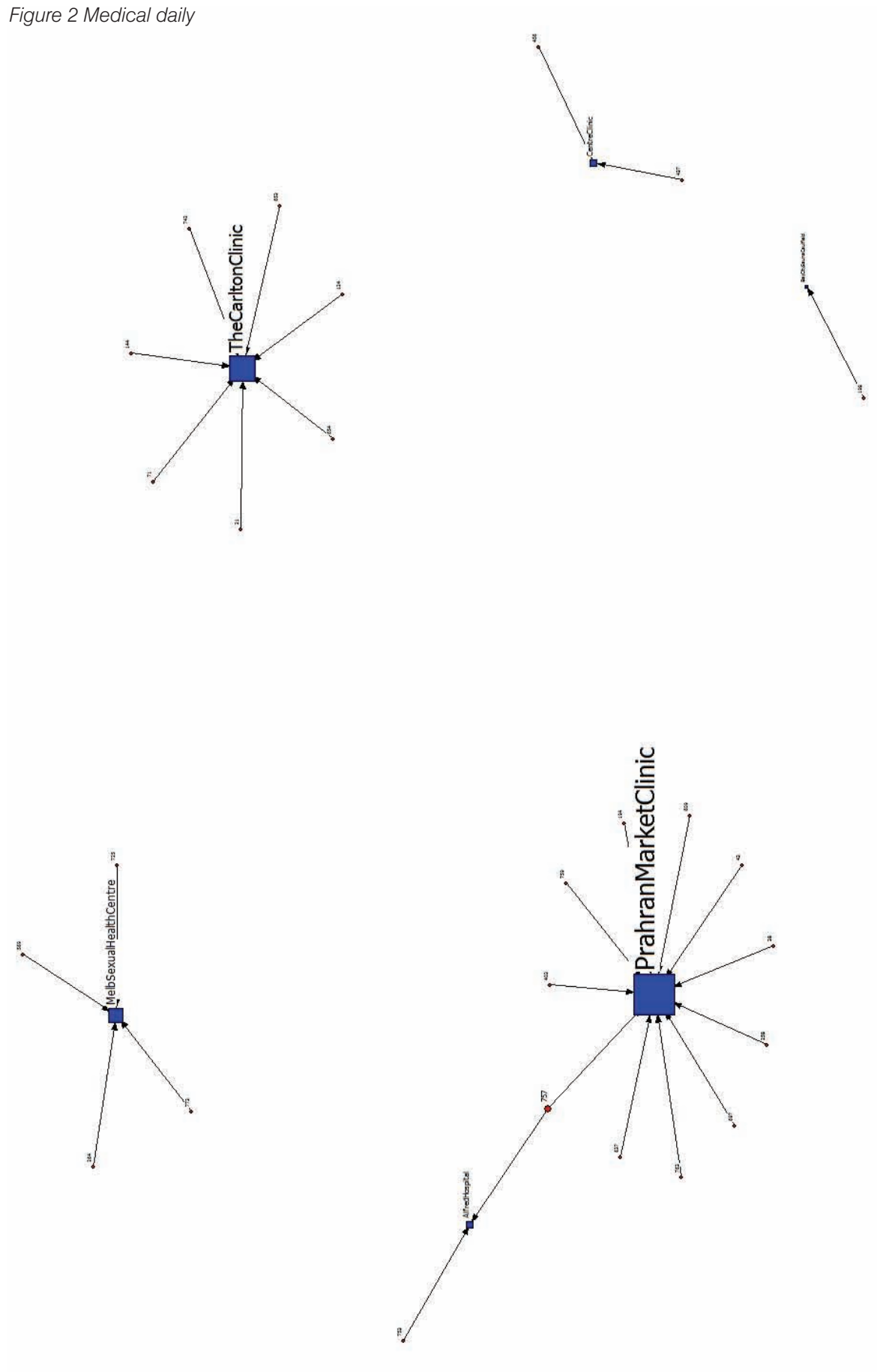


Figure 3 Medical weekly

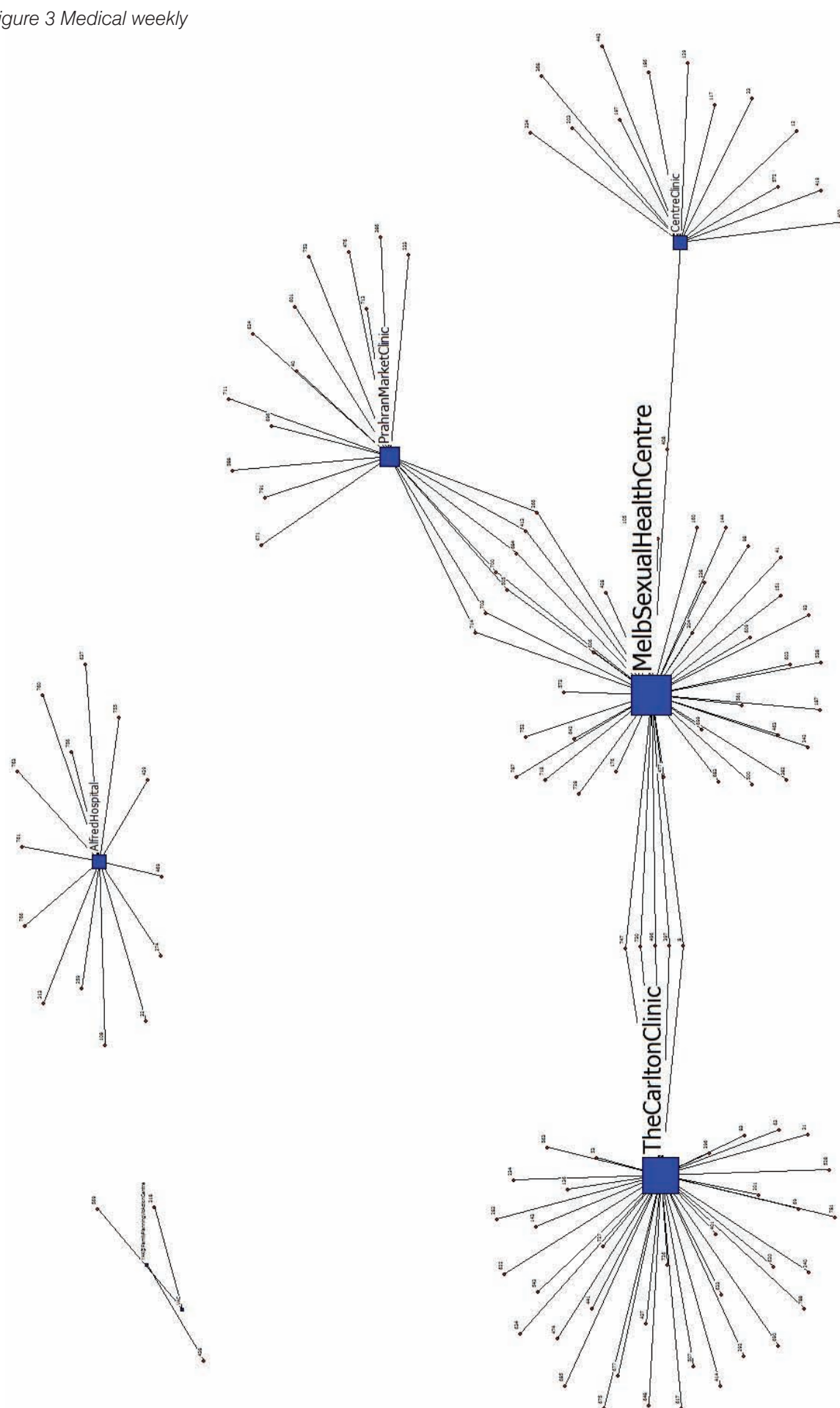


Figure 4 Medical monthly

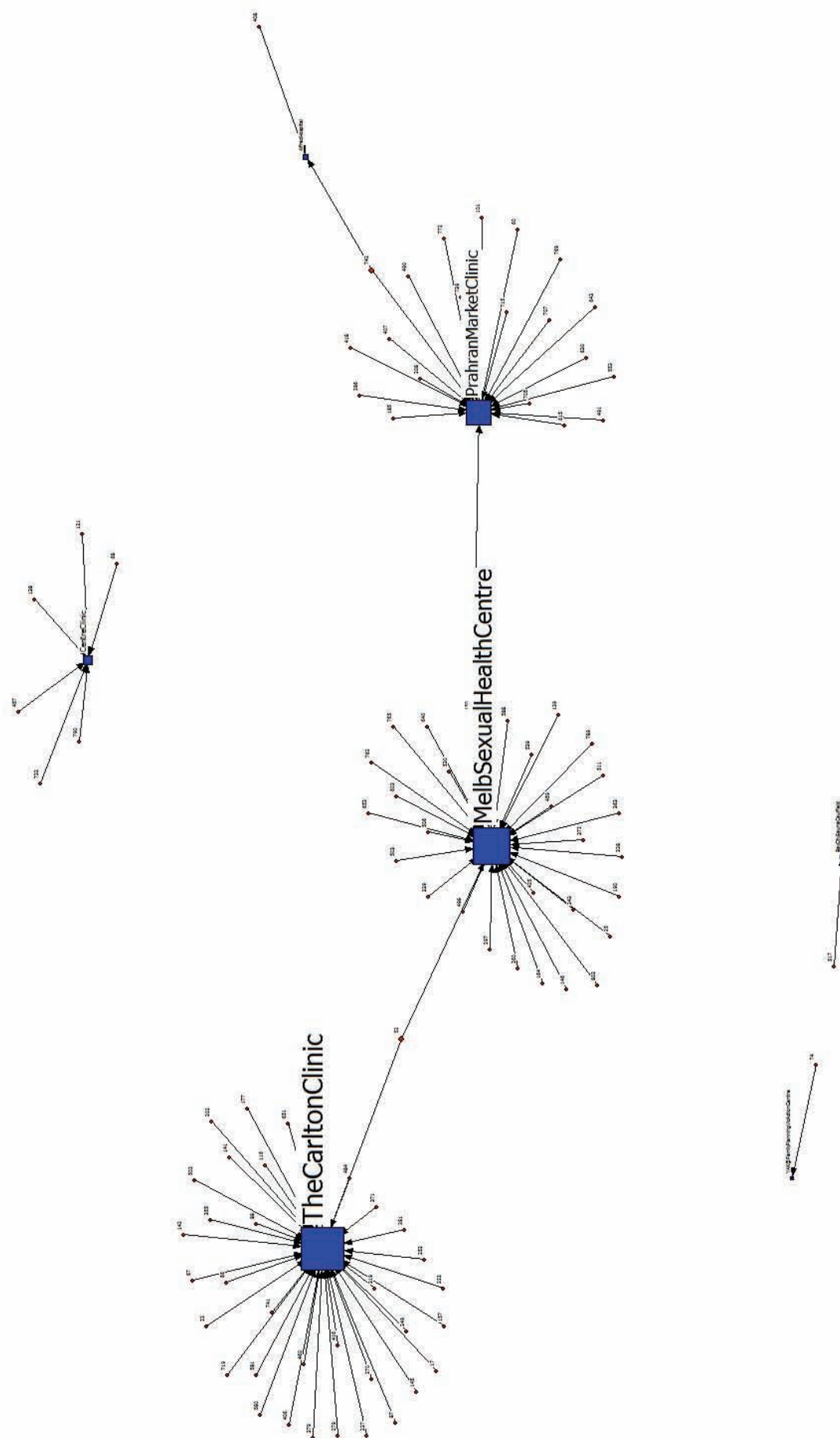
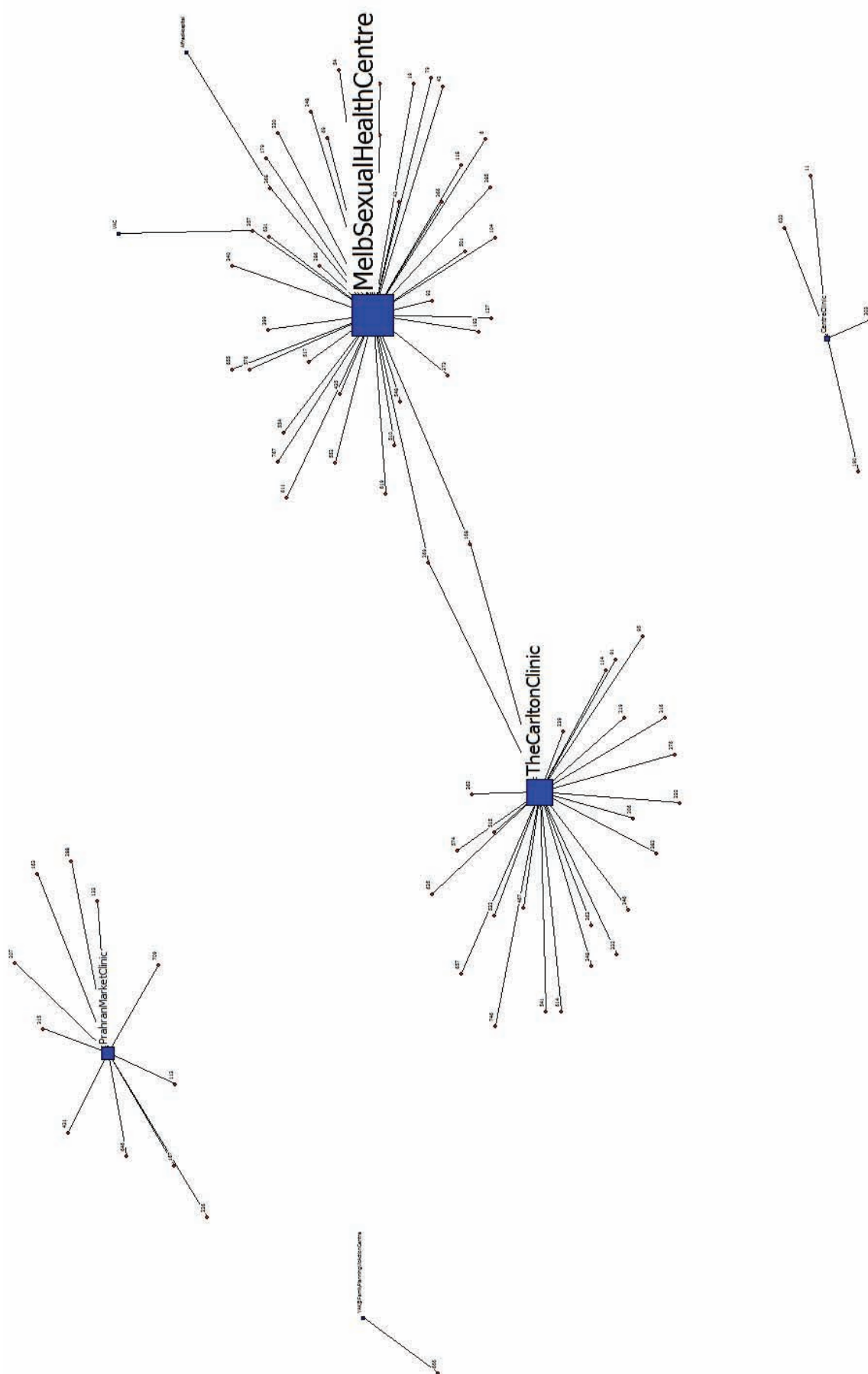


Figure 5 Medical annually



Political Networks

The daily political network has 95 ties and is almost entirely dominated by Joy FM. The weekly (169) and monthly (166) show the increasing importance of print media over broadcast media. However, the annual political network (242) demonstrates the importance of events such as Midsumma and the Pride March (Figures 6-9).

Not surprisingly the dominance of different sites in relation to time sequencing reflect the types of technologies and attachments that are engaged with on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis. It is clear from the maps that political engagement on a daily basis occurs through Joy FM, on a weekly basis through the print media and annually through the large GLBTI festivals.

Mobilising petitions or engaging people in political rallies throughout the year, for example, would therefore best be done through Joy FM and the print media over smaller organisations which don't have the same reach. The visualisations show that when we move to an annual basis the large festivals are a good investment. The Midsumma Festival and Pride March are the best opportunity organisations have to annually engage large numbers of men who use these sites for political reasons. Organisations recruiting for annual surveys, engaging prospective members or distributing health promotion material would clearly do well to invest in these sites.

Figure 6 Political daily

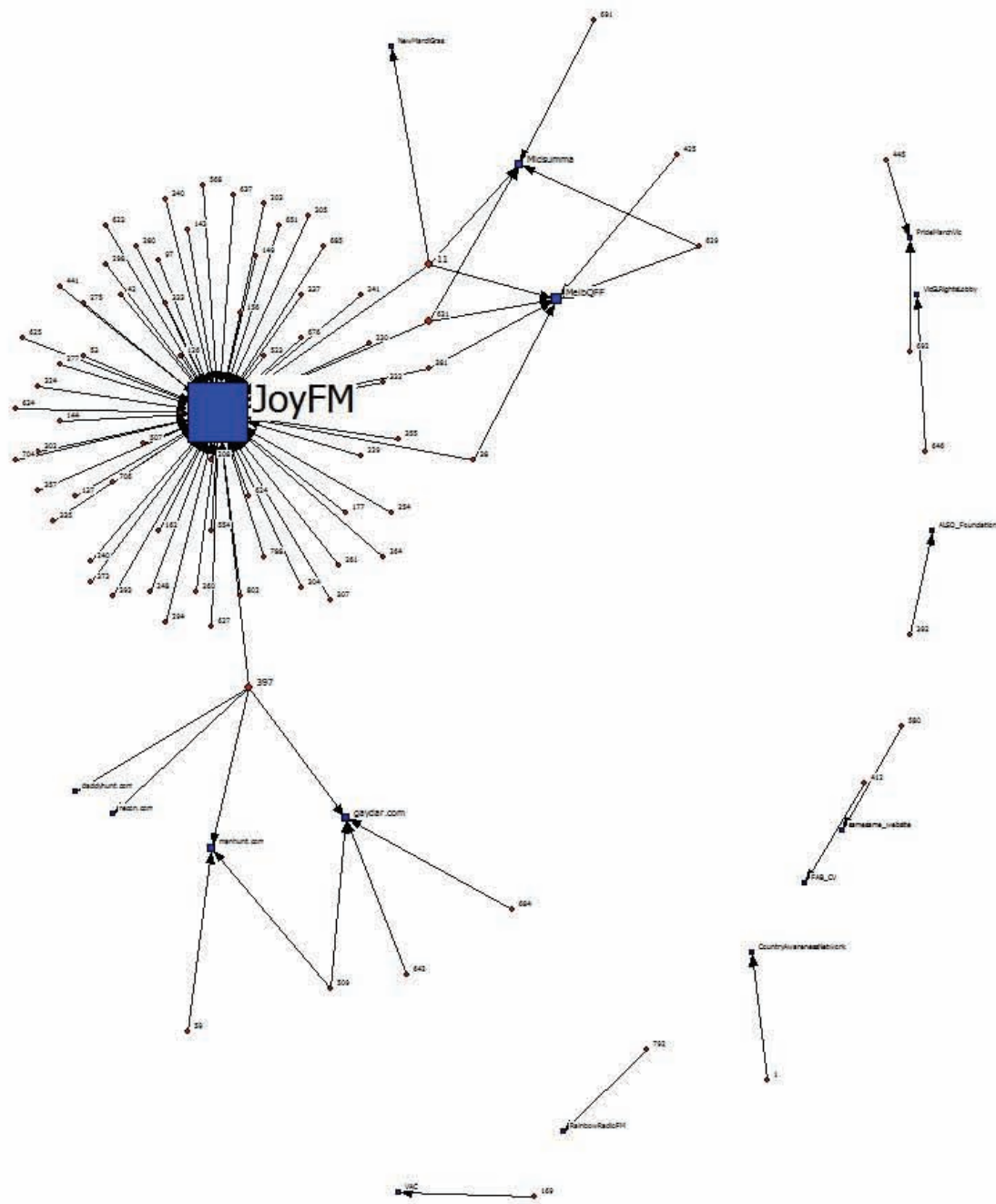


Figure 7 Political weekly

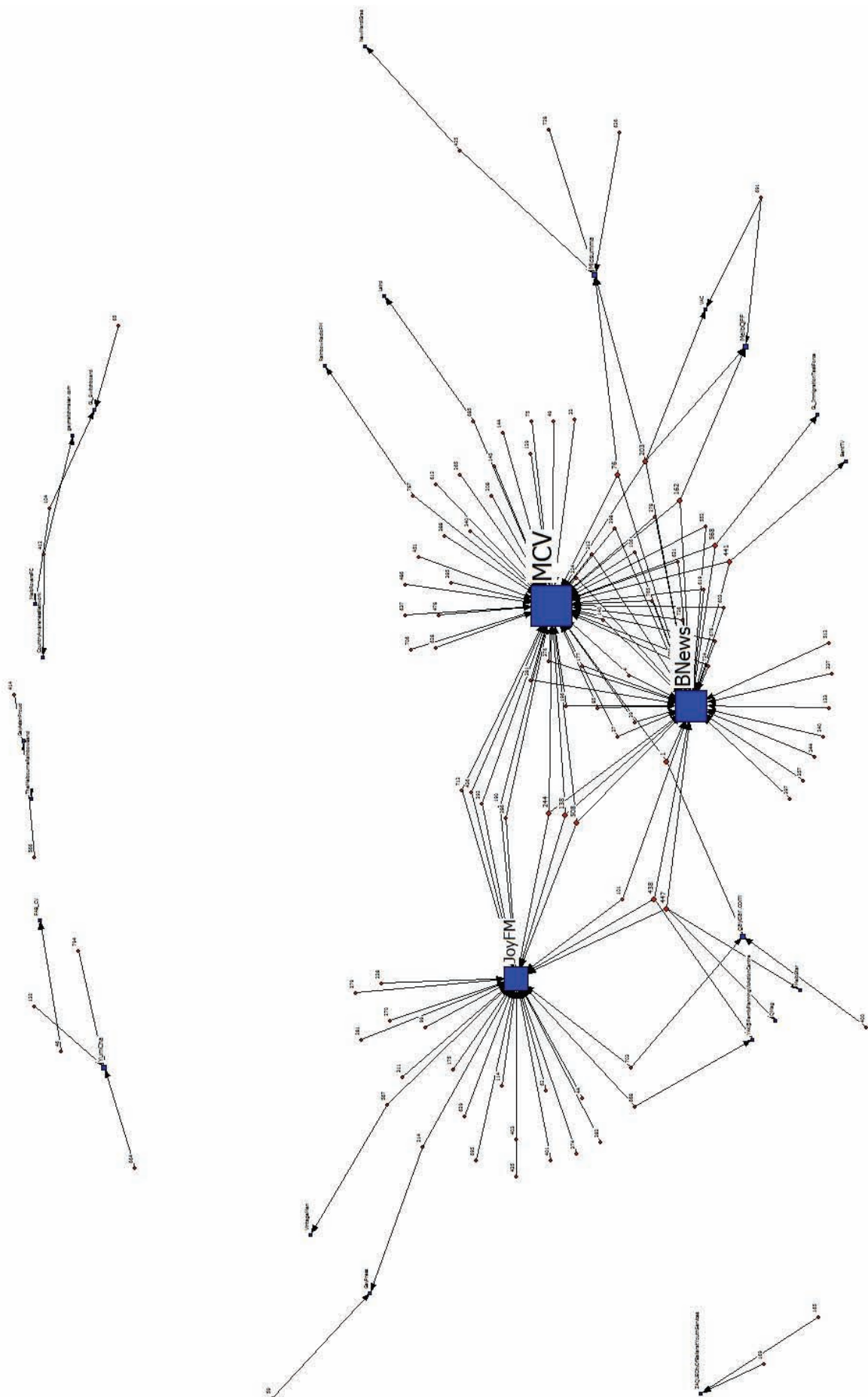
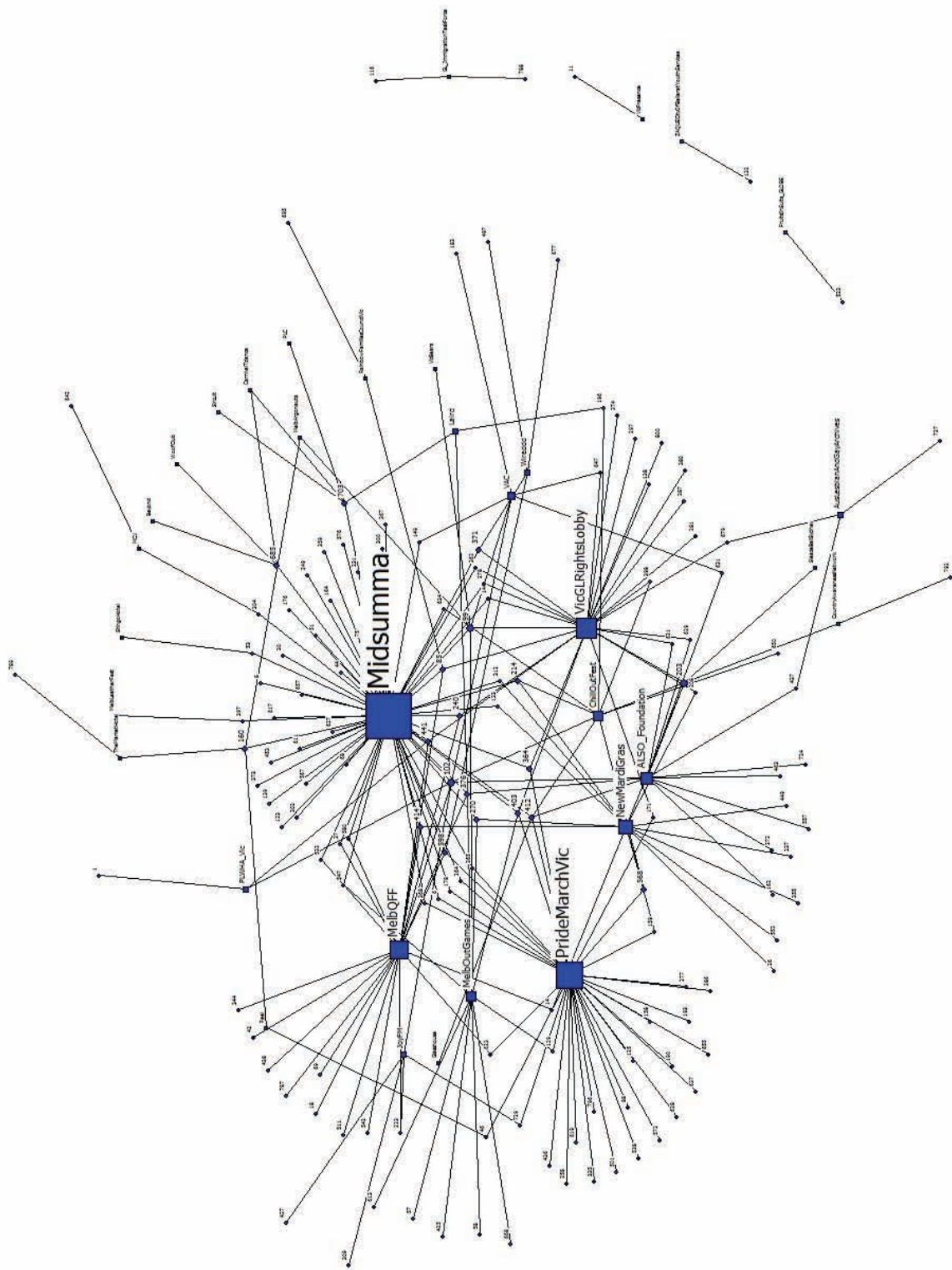


Figure 8 Political monthly

Figure 9 Political annually



Recreational Networks

The daily recreational network (361) is largely dominated by Joy FM although gay chat sites such as www.gaydar.com and www.manhunt.com also feature. The weekly recreational network (697) is very similar to the daily network. The monthly network (997) sees the emergence of physical sites such as the Laird and Peel Hotels with news media such as BNews and MCV gaining some prominence. The annual recreational network (1115) is dominated by the Midsumma and Queer Film festivals (Figures 10-13).

The recreational networks are similar to the political networks in that they engage technologies used in the timeframe of each variable. The key difference to the daily political or medical networks we have looked at so far, however, is the emergence and importance of online gay chat sites. It is clear that a significant part of daily and weekly recreational engagement with gay communities is through the internet and radio. Both these sites therefore offer opportunities to connect with the men who use them on a very regular basis. Flash banner advertising on internet gay chat sites is one resource which can be utilised and is likely to have reach across the communities. Sexual health campaigns that utilise Joy FM, www.gaydar.com and www.manhunt.com are likely to be seen by men using a range of other internet sites as there is bridging between the sites and back to Joy FM. Engaging sexual health concerns through everyday technologies like the internet and radio is an obvious opportunity. While this research did not specifically ask about the use of mobile phone services in the context of gay community networks, the prominence of other everyday technologies would suggest the mobile phone may currently be an underutilised way of interfacing between gay men and the (sexual) health sector.

It is not until the monthly recreational maps that physical sites such as Laird, Xchange, the Market and Peel Hotels begin to have importance. Along with the print media these sites offer the opportunity to engage men who may not use internet gay chat sites or listen to Joy FM on a daily or weekly basis. Another point worth noting is that the daily and weekly recreational activities of radio listening or cruising on the internet frequently take place in isolation. The physicality of the monthly recreational sites may provide health promotion opportunities which engage men when they are socialising together. This is similar for the annual recreational network which is dominated by Midsumma and the Queer Film Festival. Any of these popular physical settings may provide novel opportunities to engage gay men in health promotion activities while they socialise in the pub/club or festival scenes.

Figure 10 Recreational daily

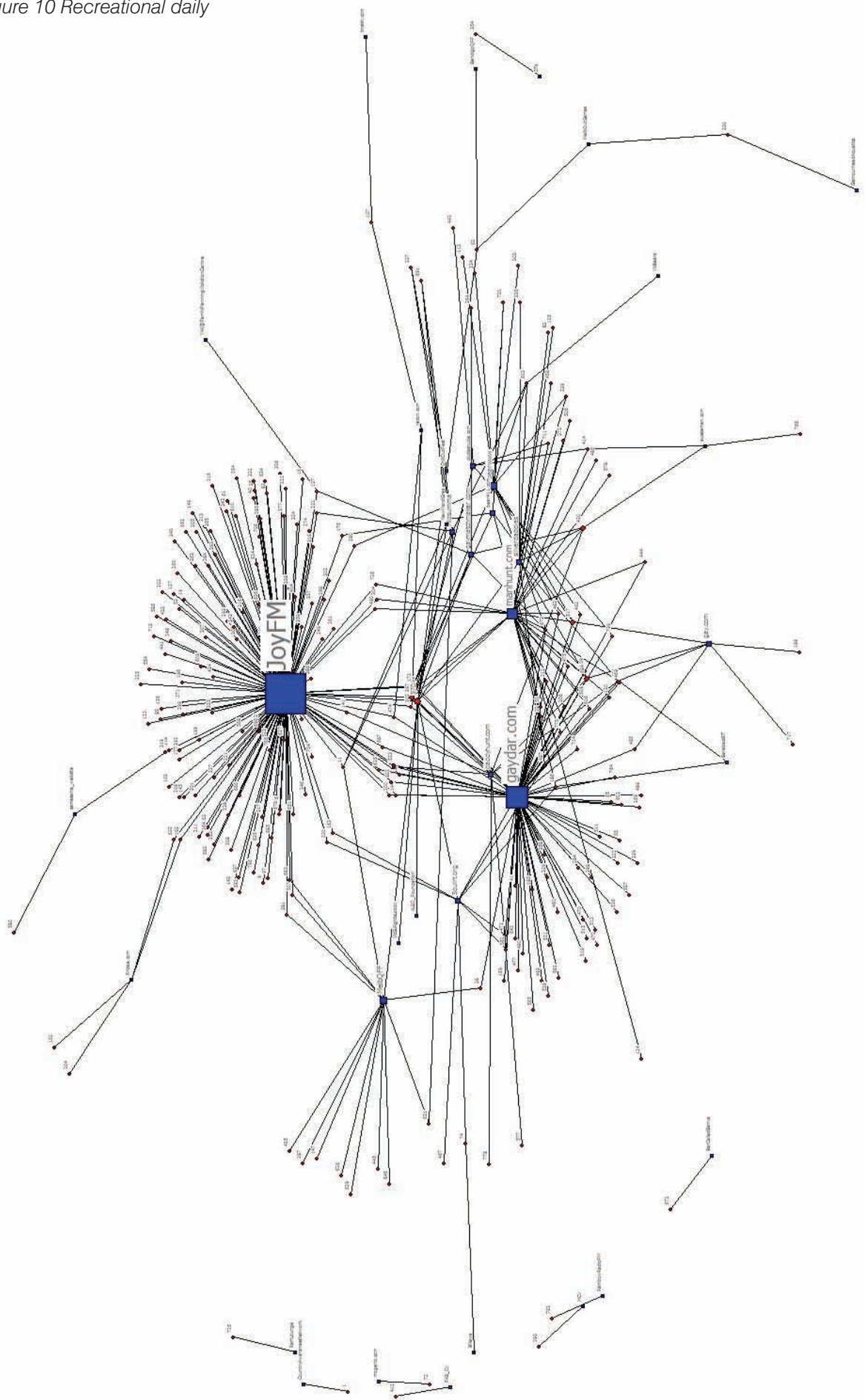


Figure 11 Recreational weekly

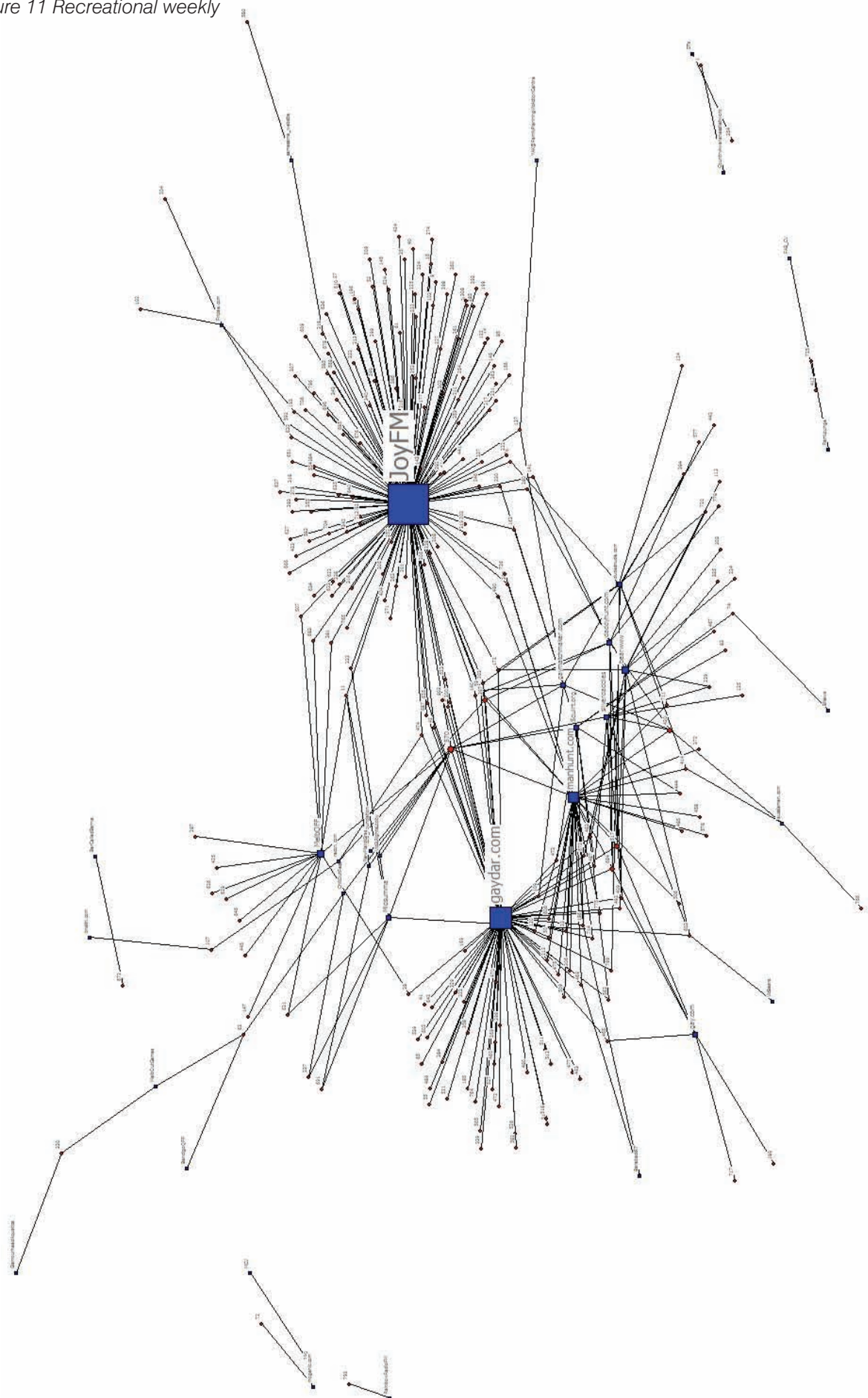


Figure 12 Recreational monthly

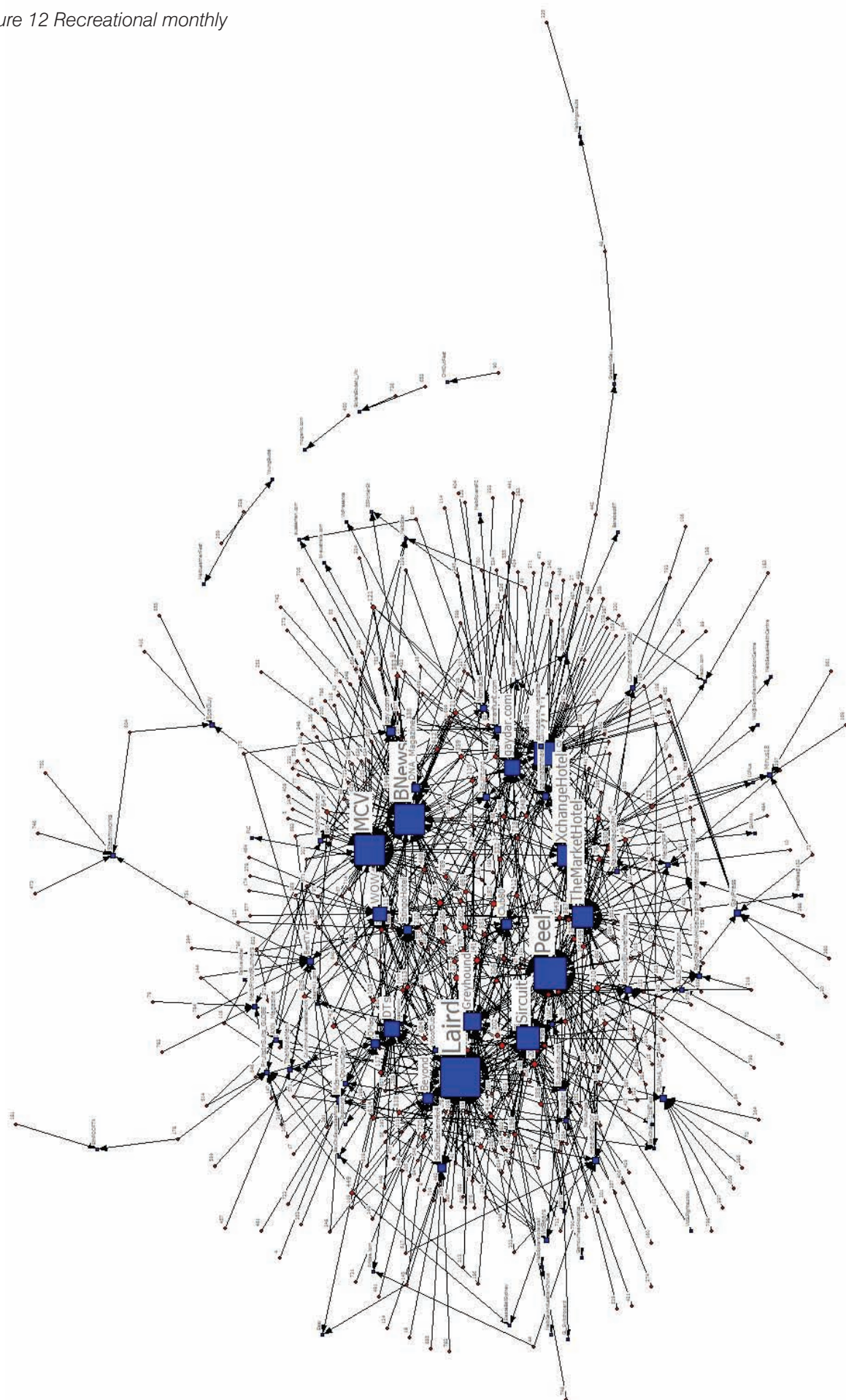
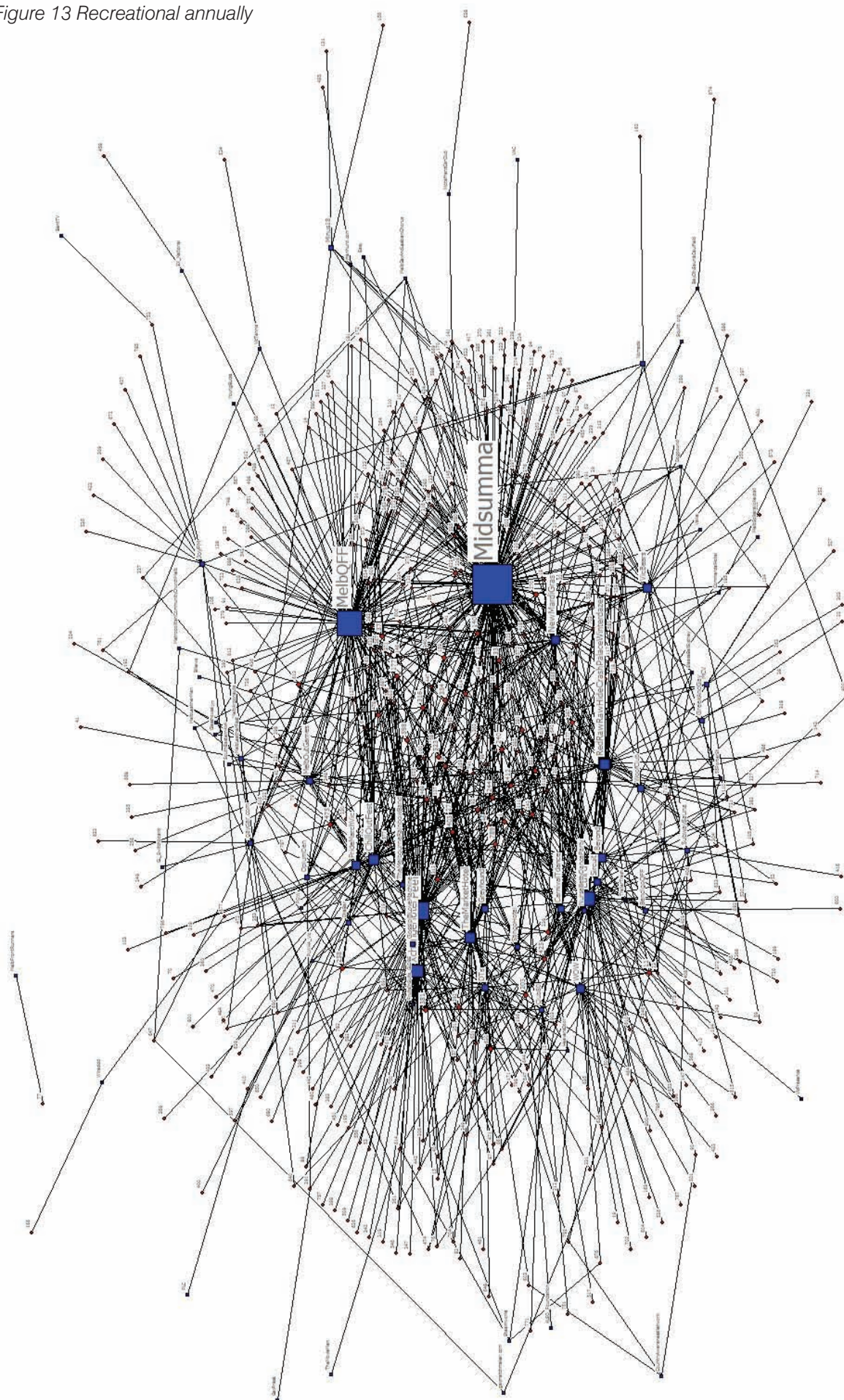


Figure 13 Recreational annually



Romantic Networks

The daily romantic network (120) is dominated by www.gaydar.com and to a lesser extent www.manhunt.com. These two are present in the weekly romantic network (253) but it is dominated by Joy FM. As with the recreational networks, the shift to a monthly timeframe for the romantic network (253) brings into play the print media. The monthly romantic network (222) maintains the importance of print media but also highlights the continued presence of online sites. The annual romantic network (143) includes a range of bars and hotels along with annual events such as Midsumma, Chill Out and the Queer Film Festival (Figures 14-17).

The continued importance of online sites like www.gaydar.com and www.manhunt.com to the daily networks of the men who use Victoria's gay communities reinforces their potential as key sites for health interventions. These interventions may take the form of banner advertising, online surveys or online outreach from health promotion organisations, just to name a few. Regardless of the form, it is clear that health promotion messages delivered through virtual gay sites have the potential to be viewed with a frequency not shared by the other physical sites or networks.

The importance of online gay chat sites continues through all the romantic networks; however this is taken over, but not replaced, by physical sites like clubs, pubs and festivals as we move into the monthly and annual networks. The many different sources men use across the timeframe of a year to participate romantically in the community signals the necessity of mixed method approaches for addressing men at different phases of their lives and in different contexts. Men in the "honeymoon" phase of new relationships for example - a time shown to be a risk factor for the acquisition of HIV - may be usefully addressed through nostalgic notions of romance – going to the Fair day - or through the more contemporary ideas of romance to be found in a brief encounter organised on the internet.

Next we looked at these networks according to age of the men who comprised them (Figures 18-20). For all three age ranges (16-29 years (53); 30-49 years (110); 50+ (31)) MCV is an important site, although it is clearly more dominant in the older age ranges with the 30-49 group being dominated by the MCV and Bnews and 50+ group being overwhelmingly dominated by MCV. The romantic networks of the 50+ group is characterised by a more sporadic and discontinuous pattern than the other two groups, although there is some connection between the 50+ men who use the SOPVs (Subway Sauna and Ram Lounge) the larger gay venues (Xchange, Market and Peel Hotels) and internet chat sites (www.gaydar.com and www.manhunt.com). To reach this age group campaigns would need to engage with the more prominent gay sites as well as the individual SOPVs and specific special interest groups like Men for Dinner and Metropolitan Community Church.

The 16-29 age bracket makes greater use of www.gaydar.com for romantic purposes than the older age groups. Not surprisingly members of this group participated in Minus 18, although these young men were not well connected to the central romantic network of this age group made up of men who used MCV, www.gaydar.com, www.manhunt.com, www.recon.com, www.barebackrt.com and the Xchange and Market Hotels.

The degree of openness about being gay did not significantly impact the density of romantic networks (see Figures 21 and 22). For both the group of men less open about their sexuality (107) and the group of men open about their sexuality (115), the GLBTI print media is more important than internet sites or gay venues. One noteworthy difference is that those less open men nominated Joy FM significantly more

frequently for romantic networks than the more open men did, suggesting a route for engagement with less 'out' men. SOPVs (both the larger and smaller venues) also featured prominently in the romantic networks of the men less open about their sexuality.

The last two romantic networks to be explored are those of HIV-negative and untested men (207) and HIV-positive men (15) (Figures 23 and 24). Both the shape and density of these network visualisations vary enormously, although the print media is again prominence in both visualisations. The HIV-negative and untested men nominated many more sites than the HIV-positive men and these sites showed an interconnectedness not reflected in the romantic network of HIV-positive men.

Figure 15 Romantic weekly

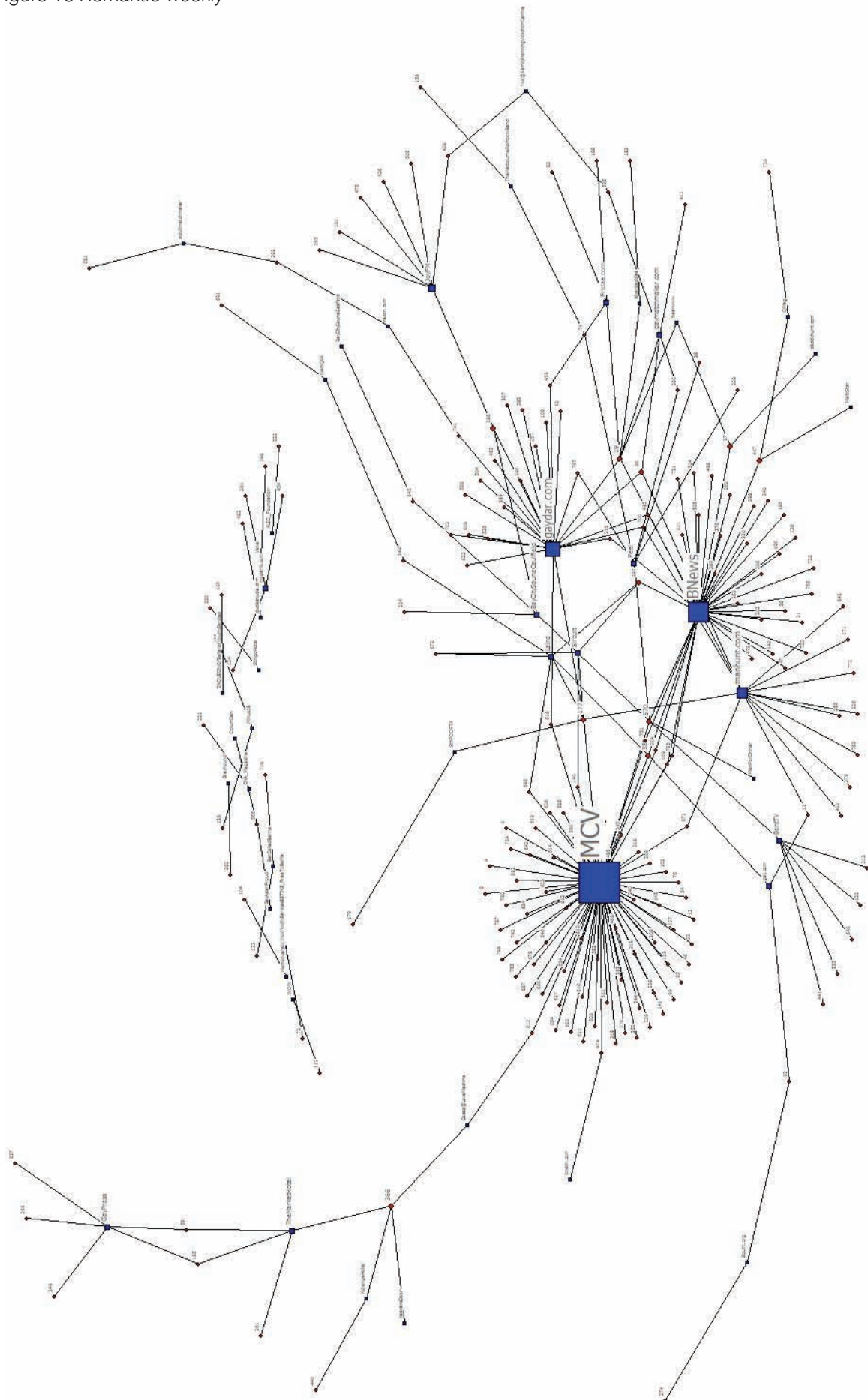


Figure 16 Romantic monthly

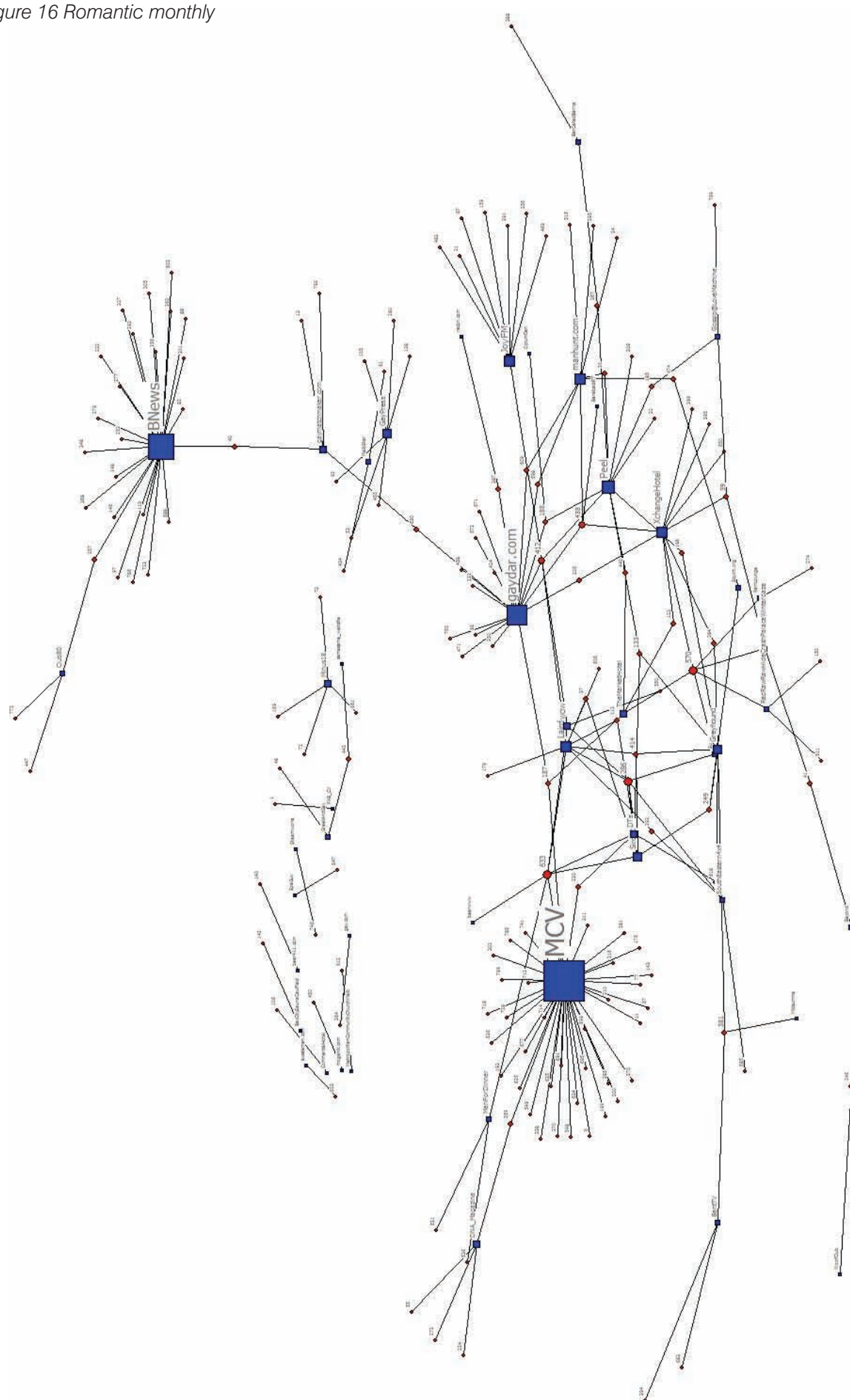
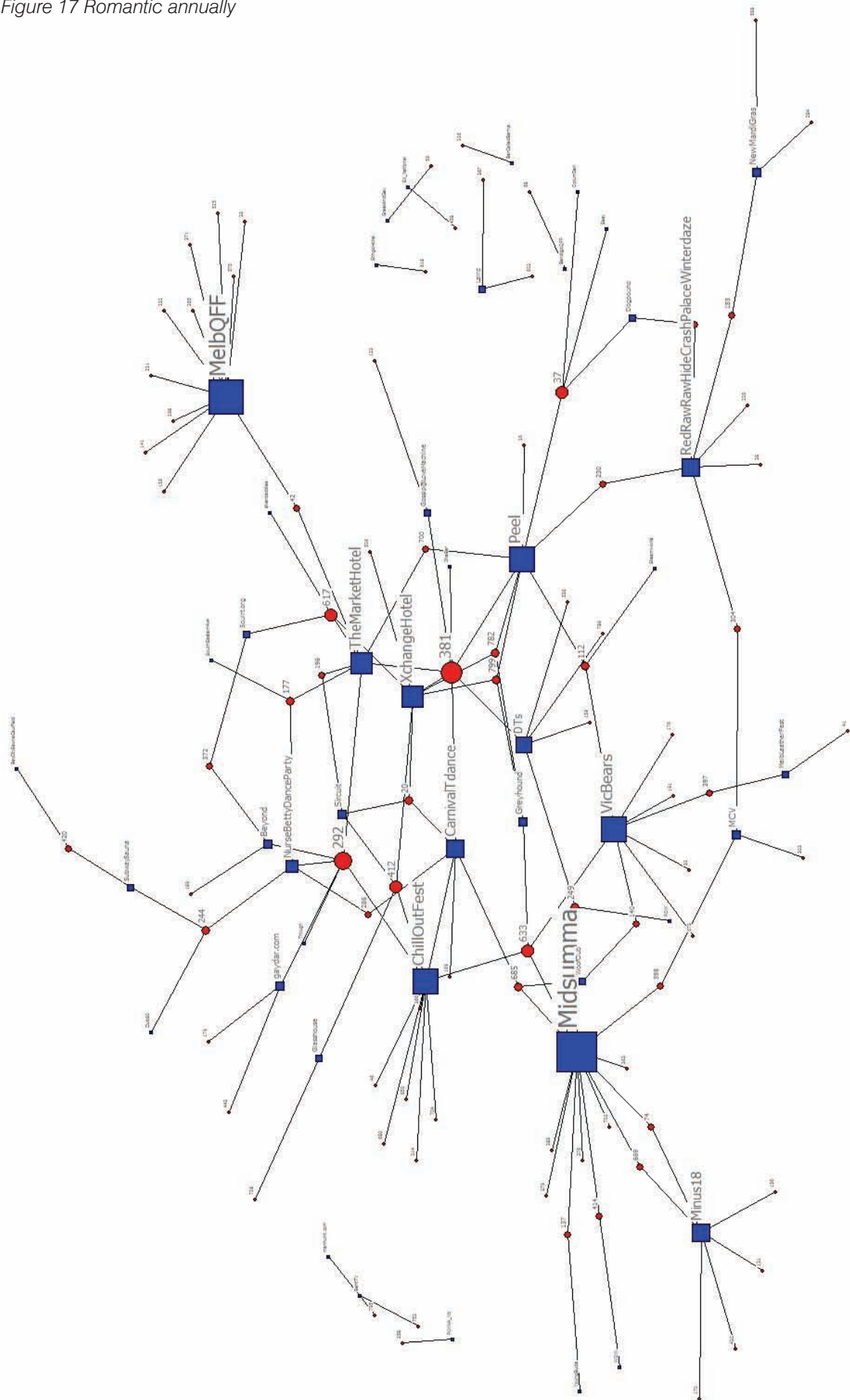


Figure 17 Romantic annually



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Figure 20 Romantic monthly 50+ age group

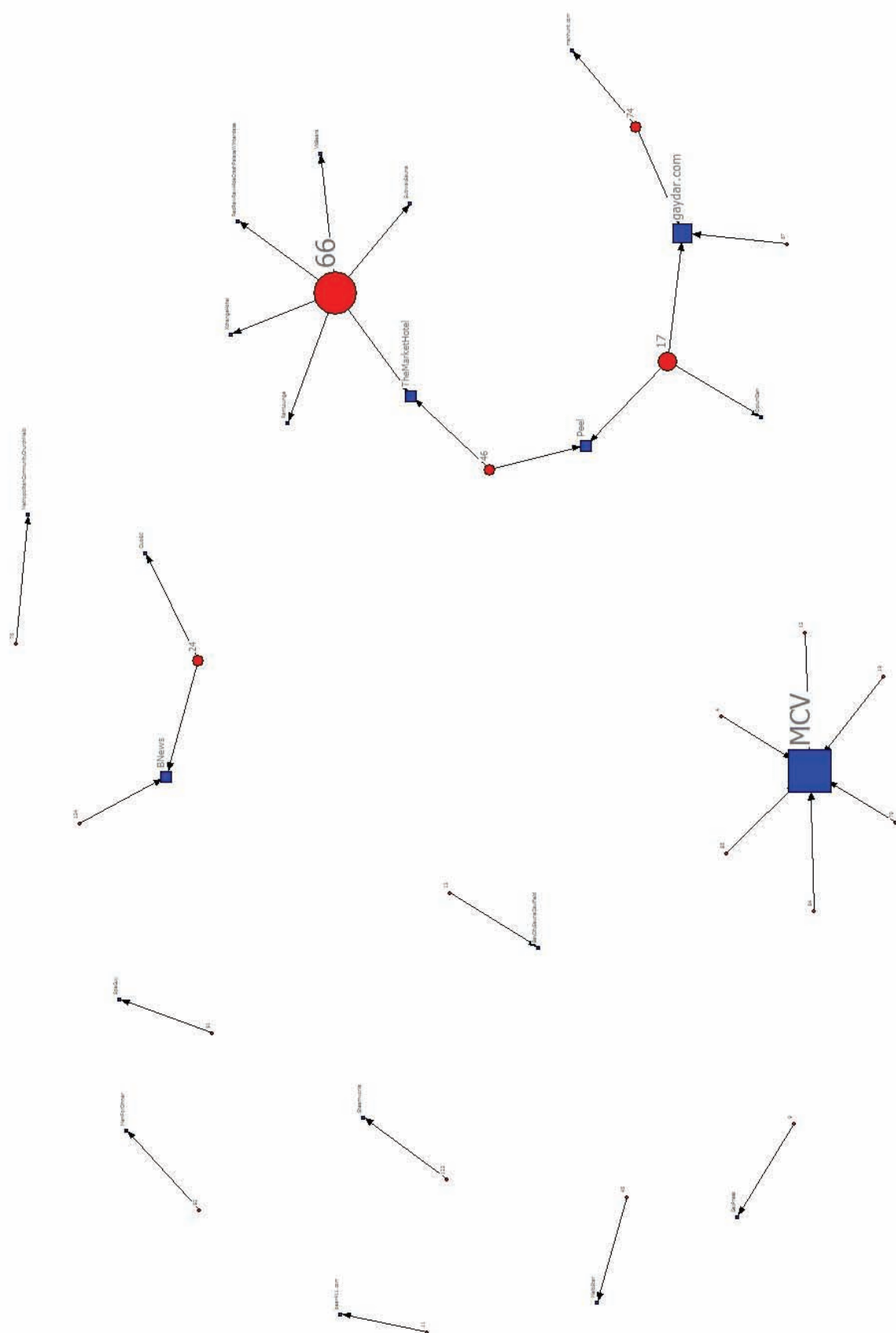


Figure 21 Romantic monthly less open about sexuality

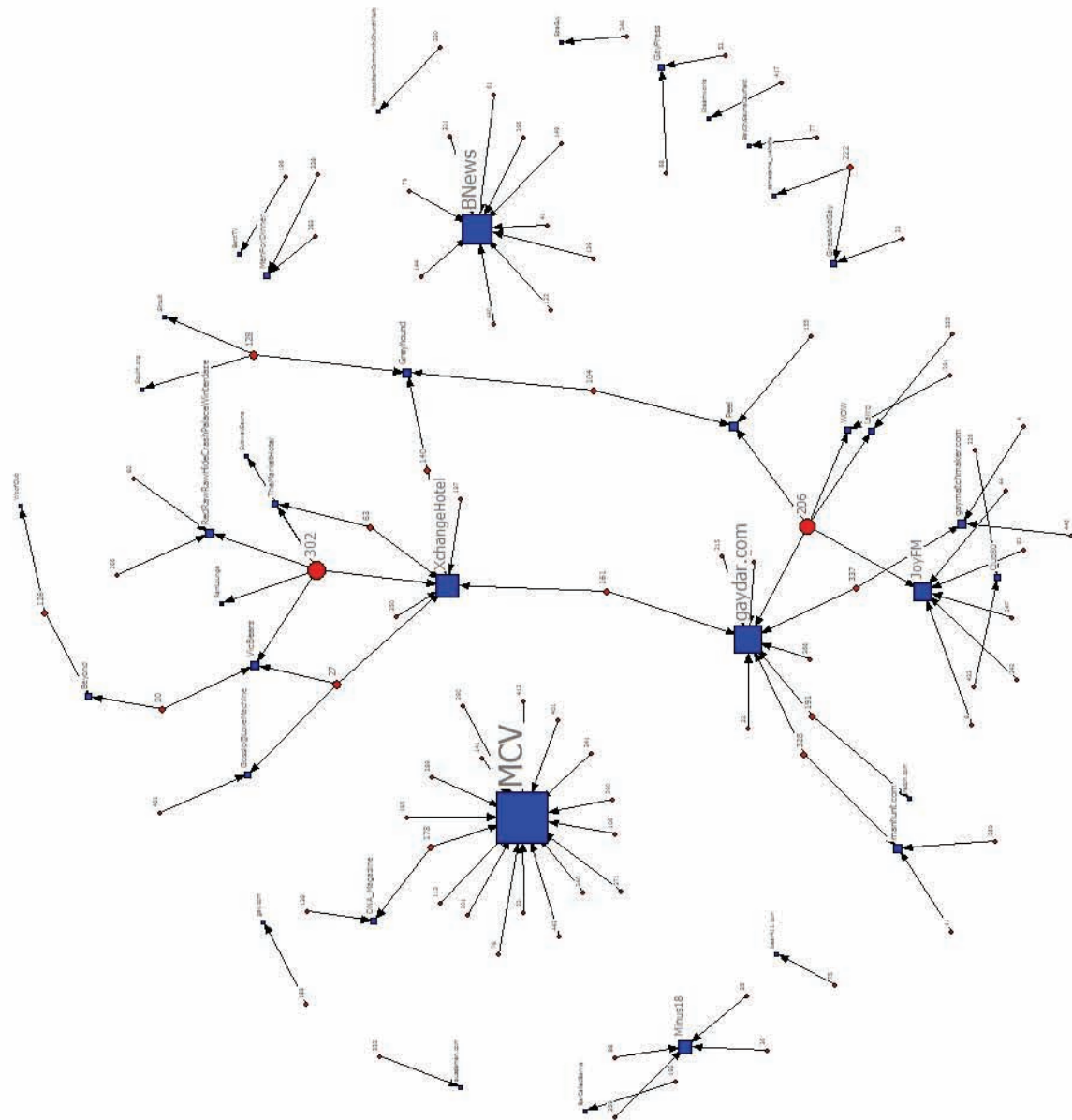


Figure 23 Romantic monthly HIV-negative or untested

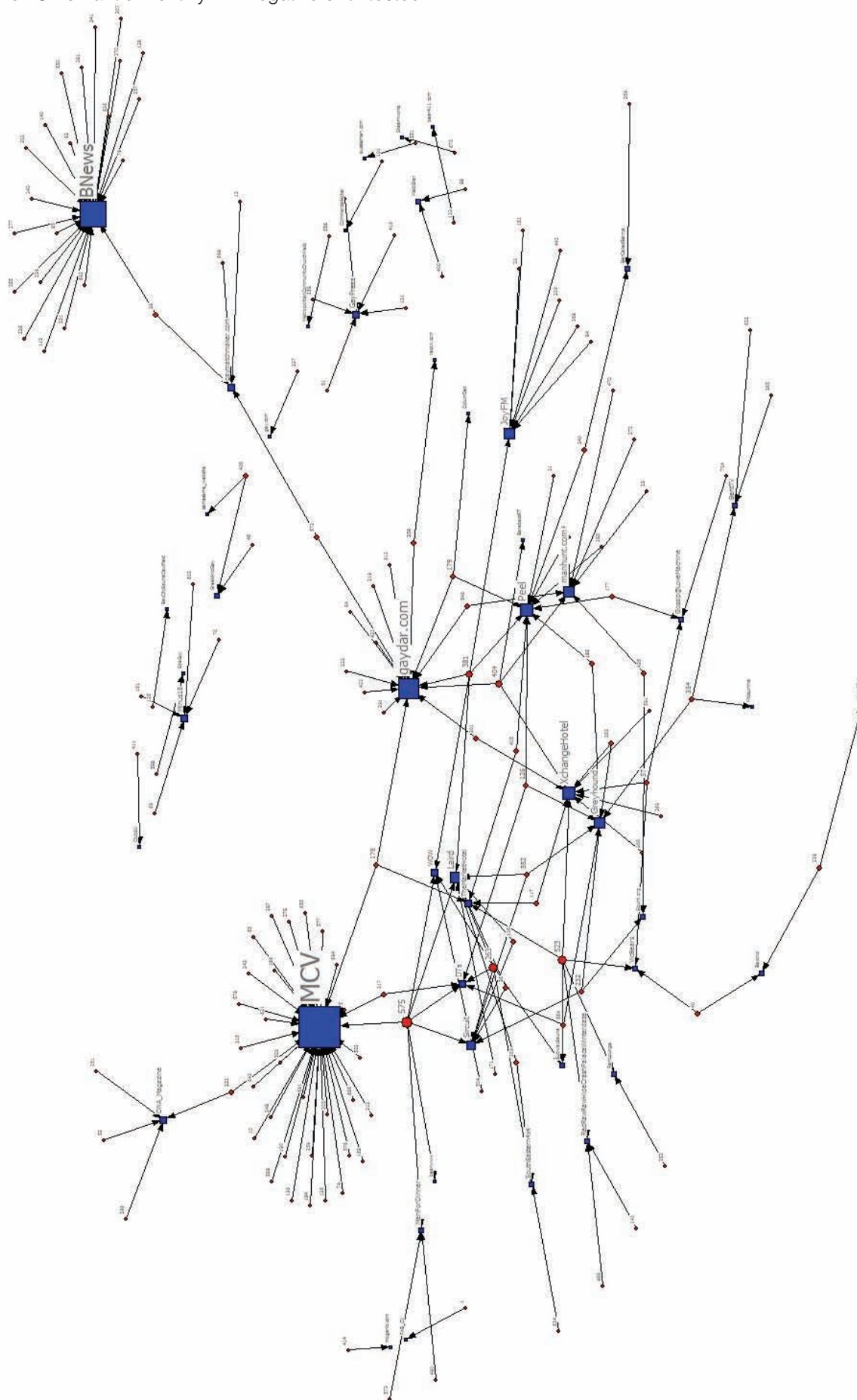
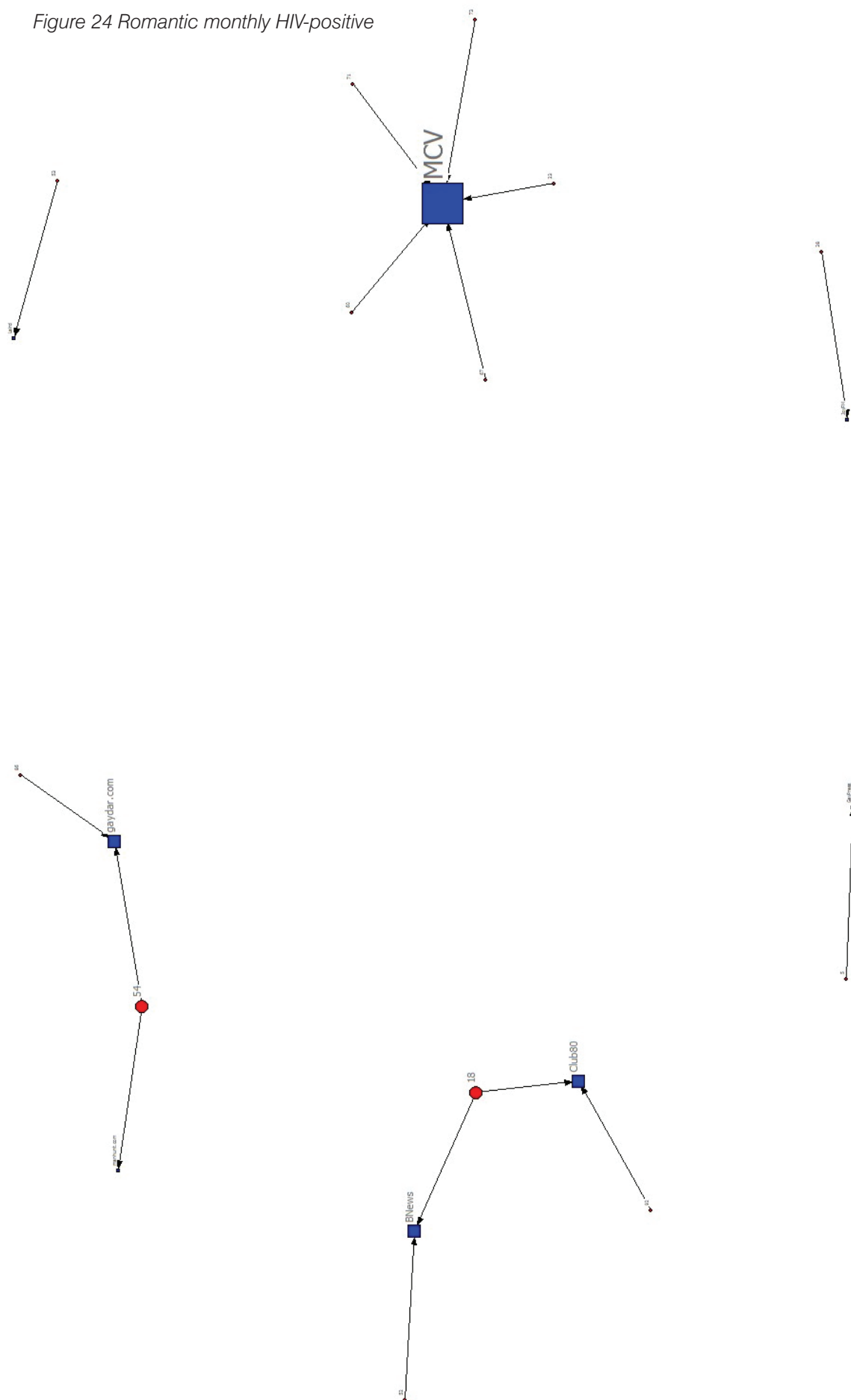


Figure 24 Romantic monthly HIV-positive



Sexual Networks

The daily sex network (334) is almost exclusively dominated by online sites. The weekly network (453) is very similar and it is not until we get to the monthly network (688) that physical sites emerge such as Club 80 and Wet on Wellington, although www.gaydar.com remains a significant presence. The annual sex network (558) is similar to the monthly network although the relative importances of some venues change (Figures 25-28).

The sexual network visualisations show that sex is sought and negotiated across a vast range of settings. On a daily basis online sites like www.gaydar.com and www.manhunt.com dominate the networks, followed to a lesser degree by sites like www.squirt.org, www.recon.com, www.bear.com and www.daddyhunt.com etc. All up there were seventeen different online adult sites used by the men who participated in this project. The daily networks show that men who use the internet to look for sex do so frequently and are therefore a group who have the potential to be targeted on a very regular basis.

The dominance of the internet recedes in the monthly sexual networks where the physical venues become more prominent. This is amplified in the annual maps with venues playing a key role. The continued prominence of the venues in the annual sexual network is interesting as, other than the annual medical network, this is the first time the large GLBTI festivals does not dominate the annual network map, suggesting the festivals are used less than other sites for sexual purposes.

As these visualisations show, the men in this study did not nominate all sexual network sites equally. Therefore it is clear that sexual health interventions need to target a variety of contexts and utilise a variety of media. It is also clear that although the internet is a very fast and immediate way of contacting people, it cannot be solely relied upon for the diffusion of sexual health messages. There are too many men who use less popular gay chat sites or do not use them at all for any certainty of internet dissemination to be expected. Even though there is much linkage between the sexual networks produced in this study there are still some men who have very sparse attachments to the sites that make up the sexual terrain of Victoria's gay communities. The research shows that if only two or three major sites were chosen for the dissemination of a sexual health campaign, the diffusion through the communities would be uneven and protracted.

In summary, people using the internet to look for sex do so frequently and people who are using the venues to look for sex do so occasionally. This finding mirrors other research – the Melbourne Gay Community Periodic Surveys 2002-2009 for example – which show that pubs, clubs and sex-on-premises venues are used less frequently when men look for sexual partners.

The monthly sexual networks vary across age groups (Figures 29-31). At first glance the most obvious difference is that the 30-49 group (362) networks are far denser and less discriminating in their site use than the networks of the groups who were younger (130) or older (99). The venues of Melbourne's north side (Wet on Wellington, Sircuit, Peel and Laird Hotels and Club 80) feature prominently for this group and are well connected, suggesting health promotion resources may filter through these venues without needing to be distributed equally through all the venues in this geographic area.

Wet on Wellington and other physical sites are prominent for all three age groups however younger men make greater use of www.gaydar.com and www.manhunt.com. The sexual networks of this group are less centralised than those of the older men and suggest a need to strategically disperse health information across a range of sites. Not surprisingly, the men who use Minus 18 are not well connected to the sex

venues or cruising sites and reflect the tendency for this age group to have sexual networks less well connected with those using over 18s venues.

The 50+ groups use internet sites less than the other age groups and make greater use of a variety of SOPVs. Bay City Sauna Caulfield and Club 80 are prominent for this age group. As can be seen in all three age related maps, a few of the most prominent sites attract a large proportion of men but not all men use these popular sites, so while messages can be usefully and economically filtered through key venues, there is still a need to reinforce sexual health messages through engagement with the less well connected venues, media and internet sites.

The monthly sexual networks of men less open about their sexuality (371) did not vary markedly to those of the men more open about being gay (317) (Figures 32 and 33). Both networks have similar symmetry and illustrate the importance of Wet on Wellington, Club 80 and www.gaydar.com. The Laird and Peel Hotels, Sircuit and Subway Sauna also feature prominently for both groups.

As with the romantic networks, the difference between the sexual networks of HIV-negative and untested men (574) in comparison to HIV-positive men (51) are striking (Figures 34 and 35). The differences in density between the two networks are, of course, due in part to the different numbers of men making up each network. The continuous ties between the sites that make up the sexual networks of HIV-positive men are another feature. The sites making up these networks are more connected than the sites of HIV-negative or untested men, and Club 80 seems to be crucial in the sexual networks of HIV-positive men. Less prominent in this network is www.gaydar.com and other internet sites. Not surprisingly then, the monthly sexual networks of the HIV-positive men who participated in this study make greater use of physical sites like pubs, clubs and SOPVs.

After Wet on Wellington, www.gaydar.com is the most popular site in the monthly sexual networks of HIV-negative and untested men, and therefore both are key sites for targeting health promotion to these men. Taken as a whole, the above data can help in the production of health promotion material which is organisation or site specific.

Figure 25 Sex daily

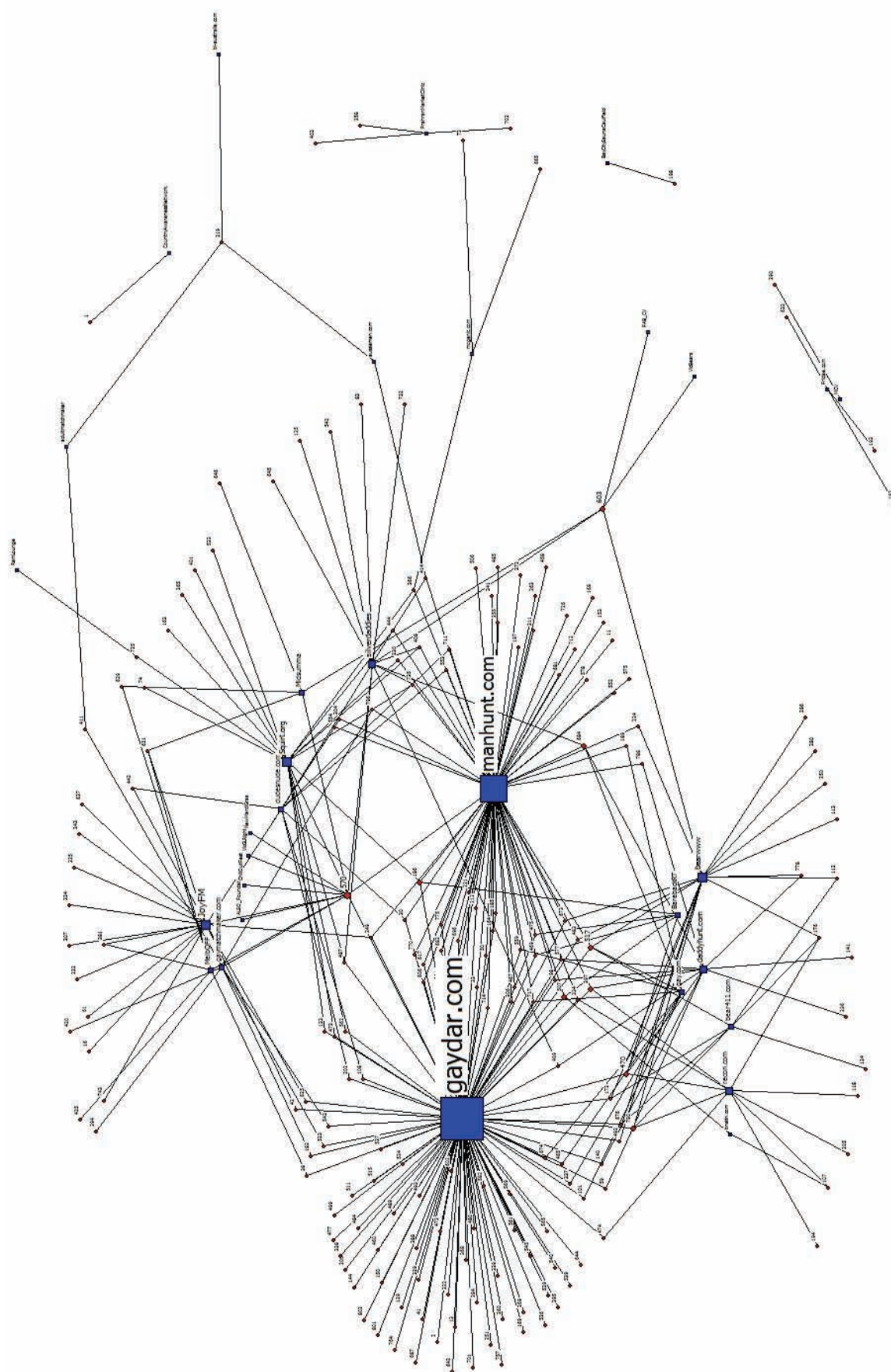


Figure 26 Sex weekly

