

Glossary of the Future

AUGUST 2011



The world of ideas is swirling ever faster and in such provocative directions. While there is *plenty* to sort through, the fun is in synthesizing all of this in order to see the connections, hunt for patterns and anticipate where things will go.

We're grateful to all of the inspiring people and events we've had the opportunity to learn from recently. In addition to leading forward-thinking strategic and event projects of our own, we've attended [TEDActive](#), [The Social Business Summit](#), the [UP](#) and [99%](#) conferences, [SXSW](#), [BRITE](#), [LOHAS](#), and [BlogWell](#). And continued our work producing [TEDxAustin](#).

Plenty of ideas have captured our attention and shifted our thinking and so, pulling out our "purple telescope", we're eager to share them here. Dig on in! We'd love to hear what you think.

- IDEAS WE LIKE
- IDEAS WE COINED
- CONNECT
- DECIDE
- WORK
- THINK
- GOOD

Social Business	ZMOT	Hyper-Specialization	Synthesists
Graphic Facilitation	ROWE	Co-working	Eudaimonic Happiness
Conscious Capitalism	Fourth Sector	Gamification	Collaborative "_____"
Twinsumer	Upcycling	Algoworld	Benevolent Branding
Dynamic Teams	Cultural Acupuncture	Informed Intuition	Translation Generation

Social Business

“The fundamental transformation in creating a living breathing company that connects, communicates and engages with its constituents.”

—JEFF DACHIS



Image via Fast Company

Several months ago we were invited to the [Dachis Social Business Summit](#)—one of four intimate global events designed to stimulate our collective thinking on this growing business paradigm. Inclusive of—though greater than just social marketing, social shopping and social commerce — is the idea that “social” behaviors will permeate all the work we do, both externally with customers and internally with our collaborators and managers. Imagine what is possible when we are able to remove whatever walls still exist with entirely new collaboration systems and tools such as [Convofy](#) and [Socialcast](#). This is just the beginning.

OUR FAVORITE SPEAKERS FROM THE EVENT
[JP Rangaswami](#), Salesforce.com Chief Scientist
[John Hagel](#), Deloitte Director
[Shiv Shingh](#), PepsiCo Head of Digital

Hyper-Specialization

The accelerating shift toward sub-dividing knowledge work into ever smaller, more refined pieces, often to be handled discreetly and then reintegrated.

As complexity grows and new tech tools emerge, the way we work is clearly changing. The [July/August issue of HBR](#) has a fascinating article describing the tremendous impact this will have on how many of us will choose our work, the systems supporting this shift (primarily in the marketplace but increasingly within organizations as well), the cost/time/breakthrough benefits this provides, and the need for entirely new skill sets this creates. And while we often think of this trend as it relates to tech/programming, the movement applies to a diverse range of industries - from science to law - with many more applications on the horizon. Have some thinking you'd like to outsource? Check out [Mechanical Turk](#) and [InnoCentive](#).



Photo from Flickr user Bo Backison

The recognition that increasingly “shoppers are ‘pre-shopping’ online – researching products and brands, reading reviews, watching videos, asking questions” – adding a new decision making phase before the customers even reach the shelves.

As our clever friend [Sam Decker](#) has taught us, the future of marketing is not about how much money we can extract from each customer, but how much participation we can encourage. Why? Because it's clear that shoppers inform and make many of their decisions way before the actual purchase transaction – and then actively share their choice with others afterwards. This is happening across all categories.

Unfortunately, however, according to the [HBR](#), a majority of our marketing dollars are still spent driving traditional awareness and consideration rather than leveraging the huge impact gained by engaging in what we call Participatory Marketing – the creation of compelling tools that enable customers to share their stories and opinions (ratings, reviews, suggestions, photos, etc) about their purchases. While Google has coined ZMOT, [Josh Bernoff](#) and [Ted Schadler](#) from Forrester Research give a good overview of how powerful this shift has become in their new book, [Empowered](#).

“Zero Moment of Truth” (ZMOT)



Image from Google

Synthesists, “T” Thinkers

The growing need for those of us with the desire and ability to absorb a wide range of new information to become the bridge builders between increasingly hyper-specialized thinkers.

The move toward greater specialization is creating a countertrend and need for broad thinkers who can connect the dots. Two smart fellows wrote an article in World Future Society magazine that has been ringing in our ears. They describe the perils of solely mastering narrow specialties and believe there will be a growing need for the folks that can bridge the gaps between these silos and better facilitate inter-disciplinary thinking. A recent report on [Future Work Skills](#) describes this as a need for “T” shaped skills – possessing both a vertical area of expertise and a horizontal ability to connect with others. We couldn’t agree more and recently gave a webinar on the topic. If you would like to hear more, let us know. [And be sure to check out the story that first inspired us.](#)

A

C

B

1. Connect A to B (connect with others)
2. Connect C to D (area of expertise)

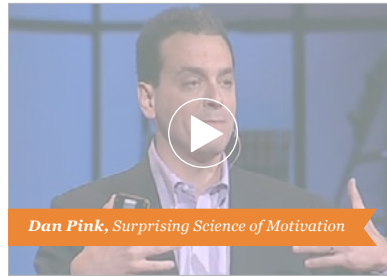
D

ANSWER = “T” Thinkers

ROWE

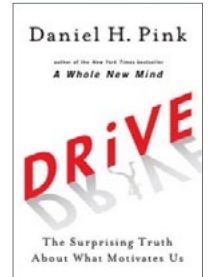
“Results only work environment”

Introduced to us by [Dan Pink](#) in his 2010 TED talk and most recent book, [DRIVE](#), it’s curious we don’t hear more about how companies like Best Buy and Capital One are shifting the way we work.



Dan Pink, Surprising Science of Motivation

Video from TED



They are moving from environments driven by outdated industrial etiquette to those which recognize the lines between personal and professional time are completely blended. Therefore focusing on results delivered vs time cards (metaphorically speaking) punched. And leading to more innovative thinking.

ROWE means replacing the calculus between PTO (Paid Time Off) and those late night/weekend/vacation hours of “Non-Paid Time Spent Working.” This is especially important as work becomes much less tethered to HQ – or any office for that matter.

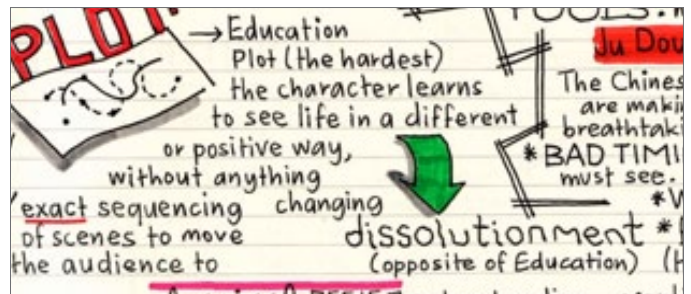
Graphic Facilitation/Viz Thinking/Doodle Revolution

The dawning recognition that we learn so much more when we can listen with our eyes as well as our ears.

Inspired greatly by our talented friend, [Sunni Brown](#), we’ve seen the power this tool has in bringing team thinking to a higher level and content retention to great new heights. For examples of this engaging work, [look here](#) and [here](#).



Doodles by Sunni Brown



Co-Working

Shared work environments catering to virtual, independent and/or micro-company knowledge workers.



Image via Center for Social Innovation

Walk in with your computer and a growing roster of brands are eager to provide an inspiring, affordable work space, T1 lines and an actual water cooler ready to spur spontaneous connections with like-minded folks -- among other community perks. Why? Well, as our work moves more virtual, distributed, and independent, it's clear that not all of us are eager to spend our days alone in our home offices or meeting associates in a noisy Starbucks. While co-working spaces have been popping up in hip urban centers for the last 10 years (mainly appealing to highly creative or technical tribes), the concept is catching on like wild fire. Expected to grow from around 800 today to over 2000 worldwide in a few short years, we are clearly at the front edge to what's to come – with so much room for innovation, inspiration and growth. Check out one of our Austin faves [here](#).

Eudaimonic Happiness Wellbeing-ness

A deeper sense of happiness derived by a sense of purpose and mission as contrasted to hedonic pleasures that are ephemeral and need to quickly be replaced.



Amidst all the excitement about Happiness/Positive Psychology, this past spring the [WSJ ran an article](#) that examined what really drives “happiness” and concluded that living our lives with a clear sense of purpose brings a much greater sense of well-being (and better health) than when we satiate our appetites with short term pleasures. A wonky term, to be sure, but striving for Eudaimonic happiness is an idea worth spreading. And it seems UK Prime Minister David Cameron is a fan, too, as [Great Britain](#) has just completed what will be an on-going audit of the country's sense of well-being, designed to shift the cultural success yardstick all together. Bravo!



Images via Wall Street Journal



Photo via The University of Winchester

Conscious Capitalism

A clear shift in business practices that calls for moving from maximizing shareholder interests to those that encompass all “stakeholders”.

As Harvard's [Umair Haque](#) explains it: “Conscious Capitalism represents a shift in strategy... rather than addressing the negative consequences of the current form of capitalism, people are now attempting to prevent them by inventing a new form of capitalism...” In recent years we have seen (and heard) quite a big shift in the discussion of business practices that focus on more than just the bottom line. Phrases like “triple bottom line” and “people, planet, profit” have become more mainstream thanks to the leadership from corporate giants like Wal-Mart and Whole Foods, who are proving these practices pay off. [B-Corps](#) is a community of “certified” businesses dedicated to these practices—not only paying mind to their cultural, environmental and socio-economic impact, but actively seeking solutions through their business model. The movement is fueled not only by increasing consumer demand, but also hard proof (ie. operational savings) that you can indeed make money by doing good. Looking for inspiration? Spend some time with: [Ray Anderson/Interface Carpets](#), [Sunny Vanderbeck](#) and events organized by [Conscious Capitalism.org](#).

Fourth Sector



A shift beyond the traditional three economic sectors (government, for-profit business and non-profit social enterprise) in which social purposes are integrated with business methods to create an emerging Fourth Sector.

As values shift and new business practices take form, many emerging organizations are finding themselves somewhere in between these three traditional economic structures — balancing both social impact with some form of ROI. Hence the term “The Fourth Sector” which is fueled by trends such as conscious capitalism, micro-finance, patient capital and social entrepreneurship. Examples of these pioneering organizations include: social entrepreneurs, faith based businesses, blended value organizations, sustainable philanthropies, and others. However, as noted on fourthsector.net, “a fully developed supportive ecosystem for Fourth Sector enterprises (legal structures, capital markets, technical assistance, etc.) is not yet in place.” *The New York Times* wrote a great article on the subject back in 2007.

Gamification/ Game Theory

The growing, often tech-enabled, opportunity to encourage desired behavior via a reward incentivized game.

We mentioned Jesse Schell’s fascinating talk in our last report, and since then it seems this desire to apply a “game layer” is birthing ideas such as [Macon Money](#), a community-wide social game that supports local businesses and fosters personal connections in Macon, Georgia and [SCVNGR](#), a location based game with a series of fun “challenges.” Technologies like RFID tags and nano-sized chips that can be imbedded to collect information everywhere and anywhere are changing, um, the game. Expect ever more clever applications—some more serious, like using advanced auto technology to reward teen drivers who make safer turns—to others that just make life (and work) more fun. Here’s one that makes us smile: [Granada Dog Food](#), an interactive billboard that disperses dog food when a passerby checks in via Foursquare.



Collaborative “ _____ ”

Fill in the blank with any other word that makes you happy and you will be right on. Examples?

Collaborative Commerce—the increasing need to involve/invite/incentivize our customers to be a part of the buying experience. A sector of social business, this is all about the opportunities created when our customers get to share in the process of promoting what we have to sell, soliciting others to help them make a more confident decision and potentially becoming distributors themselves.

Collaborative Consumption—the heck with buying, let’s all just share! This growing trend to “live lite” and share more is creating some unique new business ideas. We encourage you to read [What’s Mine is Y\(our\)s](#) for more inspiring information on why and how we will “purchase” differently. This trend is also fueling the evolution of several provocative payment/exchange markets. More on that one next time around.

Collaborative Platforms—created as loosely aligned but passion-fueled folks seek each other out in order to do work or solve a problem that is much greater than an individual or small group can do alone. Provocative examples: [Patientslikeme.com](#), and [GalaxyZoo](#). Each with the potential of creating “collaborative advantage” as [Common](#) (Alex Bogusky’s new brand) describes.

Collaborative Enterprise—an emerging organizational framework that aims to harness the innovative talents of knowledge workers in structured systems that “encourages people to continually apply their unique talents to group projects—and to become motivated by a collective mission, not just personal gain or the intrinsic pleasures of autonomous creativity”. According to a [recent HBR article](#), “a growing number of organizations—including IBM, Citibank, NASA, and Kaiser Permanente—are reaping the rewards of collaborative communities in the form of higher margins on knowledge-intensive work”. Doing so apparently has the potential of “reducing error rates by 75%... and achieving a 10% annual increase in productivity” while also “making products more innovative and technologically sophisticated”. Sweet!

Twinsumer

Seeking advice from consumers we don't know but who share our values and tastes.

Taken straight from Trendwatching.com, this is such a handy way of describing the increasing faith we have in choices others have made or recommendations they share as we try to cope with information—and opportunity—overload. Built directly into interest-based communities such as **Afar Connect**, taking a short quiz (or giving access to your facebook profile) connects you instantly to the experiences and advice that are profiled just for you.

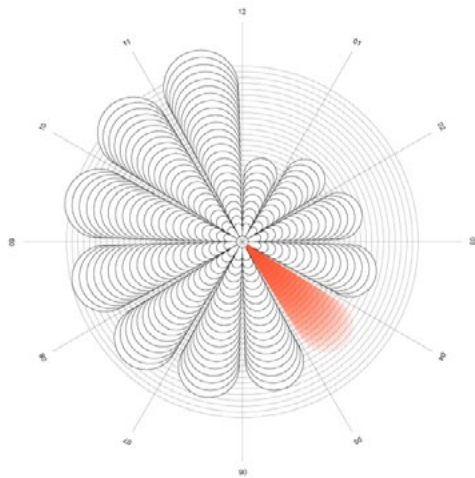


Image via Ray Ham

So this term is new on the horizon, but we expect it to catch on quickly. An “Algoworld expert”, Kevin Slavin spoke at last month’s TED Global conference in Edinburgh, Scotland and shared a daunting perspective on how deeply these mathematical sequences are invading our lives—from determining what movie we’ll enjoy on Netflix to the coded patterns that play the stock market (and, by the way, to the news that we each individually are fed). As we begin to better understand these complex relationships, expect terms like “cultural physics” to break into the mainstream. And consider that, as Kevin points out, it’s no longer just Humans vs Nature... but Humans vs Nature vs Algorithm! Yikes.

Algoworld

“The expanding space in our lives that’s determined and run by algorithms.” —KEVIN SLAVIN

Upcycling

The brilliant way of describing the act of turning one person’s discard into another person’s treasured find.



From buying used **jeans** to turning plastic bottles into **playground** surfaces, the idea is that we aren’t simply “re-cycling”, but rather we are extending the life cycle of the original object. Given the growing horror of **trash island** in the middle of the Pacific ocean, we especially love throwing this word around. And it fits in with a growing trend to reevaluate and more deeply consider our consumption overall.



Photos from Readymade, Ataahua, and Marfa Brand

□ Benevolent Branding/ Branding 4.0



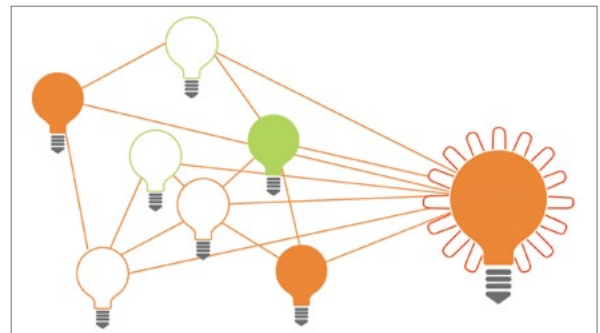
An evolution in branding in which the focus is on solving a societal or cultural problem that is bigger than the immediate scope of the product or service itself.

Sound audacious? Well, here's our logic: for years we've been talking about Values-centric branding (that which is rooted in the deepest beliefs of a company or organization) and it's exciting to see this idea catching on more broadly among all kinds of gurus and business advisors. And now, given an escalating consciousness, we believe there is an even more powerful branding upgrade ahead as the growing awareness of Need is prompting an equally encouraging response from those most resourced to make a difference: Business! And the conduit to delivering these solutions with integrity and passion is Brand; 4.0 Brands will create not just evangelists and advocates but will actually call to us at a deeper level and inspire us to do better, be more and contribute more generously as fellow tribesfolk. Classic examples are [Tom's shoes \(and glasses\)](#) and Pepsi's [Refresheverything.com](#). Even Coke has a new benevolent marketing idea: a [sustainable billboard](#) in the Philippines that actually cleans the air around it. We're eager to hear about more!

□ Dynamic Teams

Pulling together the best fitting talents on a project by project basis—regardless of location.

Here's the scoop: folks always ask us who's a part of our company. We've found the best way to describe how we—and many other innovative companies such as [Co:](#) increasingly work these days—is by building alliances and collaborations with some of the smartest people (often specialists in a particular area or category: see "hyperspecialization" above). And as our lives increasingly extend online and we have new tools to collaborate with each other from all corners of the globe (see "Social Business"), it is easier than ever to find the best minds to accomplish a wide range of goals and objectives. This elasticity is a resource efficient way to manage the success of varying projects. It's making more nimble big corporations while allowing smaller organizations to focus on innovative thinking (vs heavy infrastructure). Interestingly, it seems employment law has some catching up to do in this area as IC's (independent contractors) become an increasingly important component of every business model.



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Our observation that cultural change is driven by seemingly small, seemingly unrelated points of impact that together contribute across a wide spectrum of experience to radiate new ideas and create a collective shift in what we believe and what we want.

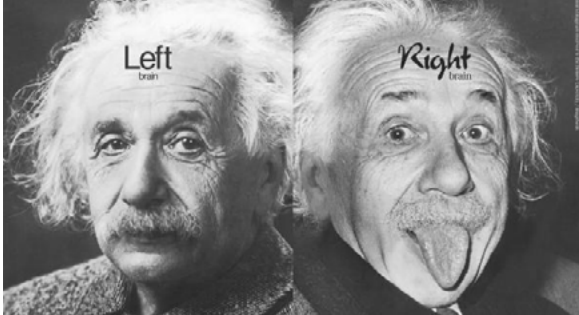
Consider ideas like "triple bottom line" and "slow food" – how did they find you? More specifically, consider the current gluten-free movement: we learned the perils of gluten over 11 years ago and since have consistently watched this understanding grow due to the work of "out there" alternative healthcare practitioners, celebrities like Jenny McCarthy, health bloggers + scientists, food manufacturers and critically important: moms!

Next up? The [health implications of your beauty and skin care products](#) (envision that what you put on your skin, your body "drinks"). And the [poison of sugar](#) – not just on weight and obesity, but its toxic effects on our blood chemistry and thus contribution to illnesses of all kinds. Yep, we suggest you hurry and slather on drug store lotion and down that secret bag of Sour Patch Straws while you can revel in the ignorance that will soon be shattered by a cultural acupuncturist who loves you.

□ Cultural Acupuncture/Cultural Acupuncturist

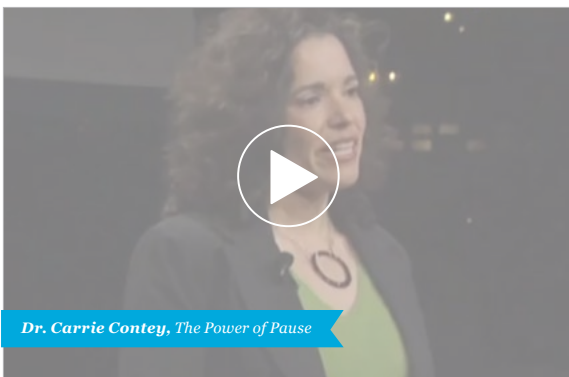
□ Informed Intuition

Feeding our brain in a way that allows our well-informed left side to spur an insight or deeper understanding in our right side and enable us to take a faster and more confident leap forward.



There's an escalating debate around whether we should trust our guts or rely on the mountains of data now available. We instead believe these two wisdoms feed each other, and now more than ever. With the amount of information growing exponentially, it's challenging to believe we really "know" it all (even the term "guru" is losing it's popularity); and so we're becoming less confident making decisions. Consider it this way though: info overload also means we actually do know a lot more (even just by scanning our twitter feeds). And then appreciate that our brains are very capable of synthesizing this information and our experiences to make really smart leaps. This is especially true if we stay open to new, unfamiliar ideas and a wide range of opinions and sources.

As Stanford Grad prof + author, **Bob Sutton**, recently wrote: "My view is that intuition and analysis are not opposing perspectives, but tag team partners". Amen! The trick is to also give our curious brains some downtime to integrate it all. When you do, it's amazing to see what you know (though may not be able to explain how) and to welcome surprisingly fresh ideas. The more we trust it, the better the outcomes. (Note: here's a related and popular TEDx talk on the **Power of the Pause**).



Dr. Carrie Contey, *The Power of Pause*

Image via Mercedes Benz ad, Video from carriecontey.com

□ Translation Generation

The recognition that many of us unconsciously (still) spend a sizable chunk of time and energy comparing and relearning the way we do things now from the way we used to.



So lets take a moment to imagine that many of us began our careers in offices without voicemail, powerpoint, excel, social networks, mobile phones, flex-time -- or even computers! We didn't edit movies on our laptops, play games or have 24/7 conf calls with folks in far flung countries. Nor did we optimize exactly when to buy a plane ticket, store our music collections in the cloud, consider the pro/cons of hybrid engines... or do much work at midnight! It's not just about changing technology, but also the sheer pace at which we keep recalibrating life and work. Clearly, we could go on and on and on. And while most of us enthusiastically embrace all that is available to us now (and would fight to the death if you took away our DVRs or app-laded smartphones), its still true that we have spent a hellava lot of time these past two decades trying to keep up with really big changes. So it's fair to take a brief ('cause everything is faster now) minute to think about how challenging it can be to learn a whole new cultural and technological "language". And to reassure ourselves (ok, this one is kinda personal) that while our oldest child's home movies were shot with an analog camera and the youngest's with a digital, we'll still somehow figure out a way to host a family video night one of these days.

We'll also continue to be open to what is coming around the bend, test out strategies to manage what can feel like constant overload and be grateful to the companies and brands that make us feel empowered, successful and truly on top of our game. We can also take comfort that most agree we are still on the front edge of this big shift and that things will get easier as our work schedules flow more seamlessly with our lives, our ability to collaborate becomes more fluid and technology becomes more intuitive. Speaking of which, have you tried **Google+** yet?

Photos from Etsy and Apple

Our Parting Thought...



“Bites, Snacks and Meals”

As Nick Bilton brilliantly points out in his book, [I Live in the Future; this is How it Works](#), the deluge of data and insight that we are all hit with each day has spawned new consumption strategies. Somewhere between total overload and total denial lies our ability to discriminate and seek out new information in these different sizes.

Yes! And so we've served up all three in this report so that you can digest just as you like. And encouragingly, we expect the shelf-life for each of these glossary terms to be pretty long, so it's worth grabbing a meal.

Bottom line, while there might be some terms or ideas we personally are very familiar with, these days we can't take for granted that all in our circle share the same understanding. And similarly, when a new idea is presented, we shouldn't be embarrassed if we haven't heard of it—or worse yet, turn away and see it as irrelevant to the task we are trying to master at the moment. As the sheer amount of information continues to mount, we're all becoming more specialized in what we do and what we know. Therefore, it's also critical that we balance this learning with a continued appetite to embrace the new. And that we find ways to spread the ideas and thoughts that most inspire each of us.

A heaping thank you to key collaborators on this report: Beth Stone for refining these definitions with me, Jen Spencer for sharing her hunger for new ideas and Chelsea Fullerton for finding ways to make all this information look so pretty.

And of course, thanks to you for sharing this with us. When you look over this collection, it's amazing to see how much is changing—and where. The way we work, shop, play and decide are undergoing radical changes. And while the pace can feel daunting, the currents toward more consciousness and greater collaboration are fueling bold (but oh so rational) ideas with the mojo to create much more relevant solutions and better ways of living. The way we see it, the future = endless potential. Just remember to pause.

We're eager to hear what you think about these—or any other ideas you think we all should consider. You can always find us at www.playbiginc.com. And be sure to check out our [new inspiration blog](#)—packed with the ideas and examples that inspire us each week. We hope to see you one of these days soon -- let's grab a “huddle”

ALL THE BEST,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Nancy", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Nancy Giordano, CEO *Brand Futurist*
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