Reestablishing the Connection between Ethos and Delivery in Digital Spaces

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Ethos has long since been a point of discussion and contention in rhetoric. In Ancient Greece rhetoric's association with its goal of persuasion carried with it a level of suspicion. It is the word persuasion that suggests there is an element of trickery, or underhandedness associated with rhetoric due to understanding, by its very definition, that its primary goal is to persuade. This weariness of rhetoric and those who practice it dates back to the earliest origins of rhetoric. Also discussed in rhetoric is delivery. In ancient Greece it may not be as explicitly discussed, or labeled as ethos, but it received similar attention. The similarities and link between ethos and delivery continues to play out in both the theory and application of rhetoric. This can be seen today in areas scholars in digital rhetoric research. As digital rhetoric grows as a field, scholars address more than the impact of communicating and writing in digital spaces, and begin to do research in areas that question the development of technology and our relationship with technology in various aspects of writing and communication, and our daily lives. This literature review will work to establish the connection between ethos and delivery in ancient rhetoric, as well as explore how the understandings and definitions of ethos and delivery in ancient rhetoric continue to exist within the field of digital rhetoric. In the conclusion of this paper I will argue for more work that links the ethos and delivery in ancient rhetoric that continues to influence scholarship in digital rhetoric and composition classroom pedagogy.

Ethos and Delivery in Ancient Rhetoric

In ancient rhetoric the purpose of character in practicing rhetoric is as important as it is criticized. Aristotle and Cicero present their understanding of ethos as a necessary part of successfully practicing rhetoric, or oratory. Before them the lack of expertise and questionable character/morals of practicing rhetors came under fire by Plato in his dialogue Gorgias. Isocrates saw ethos as the good character of the speaker, something that was ultimately cultivated in all

actions of the speaker prior to giving the speech. It should be noted that each work may not directly use the term ethos it is clear that they are addressing issues of character, trustworthiness, and credibility, which are heavily associated with our modern understanding of ethos.

In *Gorgias* Plato, through the speaker Socrates, gives forth a very unfavorable view of rhetoric, and any person that teaches and practices rhetoric. In the dialogue the speaker Socrates is very critical of the practice of rhetoric. One of his critiques of rhetoric in is the lack of expertise needed to practice rhetoric. In 459c (p. 24) Socrates addresses this when he brings to the attention of Gorgias that the rhetorician "never has to know the actual facts of any issue; instead he's equipped himself with a persuasive ploy," and it is that ploy which allows him to make members of the audience that are non-experts believe he knows more than any experts. This causes trouble for Socrates. He begins to liken this lack of expertise and knowledge needed to be persuasive as a reflection of the morality of the rhetorician. He views it as dangerous that a rhetorican "lacking expert knowledge of good or bad, morality or immorality, or right or wrong," can "make non-experts think he's more of an expert than an expert, even though he isn't" (p. 24). Without the knowledge or morality Plato, through Socrates, views the practicing rhetorician as untrustworthy. It is the skill of using rhetoric, and what he calls "persuasive ploys" that the rhetorician relies on to be successful in their persuasion as opposed to knowledge and truth. Plato in Gorgias does not use the term ethos, nor does he outright address character in the exchange in 459c, but he does bring up the general concerns of practicing rhetoric without good character, knowledge and trustworthiness, which are commonly understood as elements that make up a speaker's ethos.. It is viewed as a skill, and not an art. This specific criticism sets up the relationship between a successful rhetor and ethos, which may be referred to as credibility,

and/or trustworthiness. For Plato, the rhetor is not of the same level of trustworthiness because he does not need to be an expert. His speech is not made up of credible information.

Isocrates does directly address the speaker's character. In *Antidosis,* a speech interpreted as a defense, he speaks on the role and purpose of character. Isocrates practiced rhetoric, therefore his view of rhetoric is not a critical one. He expands on some of the abilities needed to be a successful in giving speeches. For Isocrates ethos is a source for and effect of practicing ethics. Men of good nature and character would receive praise. This praise would give them power, and this power, according to Michael J. Hyde (2004) is what Isocrates "associates such powers with a person's rhetorical competence" and that these powers are part of one's "natural capacity to use language to deliberate skillfully and artfully with oneself and others about the importance of matters and about the goodness of actions (xv). Character, for Isocrates, comes from the actions of the speaker before the speech is given. The speaker's actions and education help him to cultivate a good character. It is the "character of my life and conduct" that would separate him from the judgment associated with other Sophists, and negativity towards rhetoric. Like philosophers who see no reason to defend themselves, good character is enough to justify actions, because "the power to speak well," which a person of good ethos possesses, is part of what makes up "the surest index of a sound understanding of discourse." This understanding of discourse "is true and lawful and just" as is "the outward image of a good and faitful soul." (255). The power of the good character in addition to eloquence in speaking ability is the power that gives the practicing rhetor persuasive power. Here begins the connection between ethos and delivery. The good character of the man makes him trustworthy, but that coupled with speaking well is what results in ethos.

However, Aristotle's definition and application of ethos differs from Isocrates. Character, or ethos, comes about differently for the rhetorician in Aristotle's work *On Rhetoric*. Aristotle is not as critical of rhetoric as Plato, however does not praise it in the same way that Isocrates did. For Aristotle rhetoric is defined as "an ability, in each case, to see the available means of persuasion" (p. 38). Persuasion through character, for Aristotle, is the use of ethos in rhetoric. This persuasion can be accomplished through the person giving the speech. That is to say "the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence" (p.38). Aristotle goes on to explain that an audience is more likely to believe "fair-minded people" quicker and easier "on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt" (p.38). This is not established solely on the good character of the speaker, as Isocrates stated. For Aristotle the character of the speaker comes from the speech itself. Ethos comes from the speech and how the speaker delivers it to an audience. There are necessary ways in which to expand ethos by taking into account the audience that will hear the speech. The most authoritative form of persuasion is the character established in the speech. It is the character that is "distinctive" and "most persuasive" and it is the "deliberate choice directed to an end" (p. 74). It is necessary that the speaker understand not only ethos, but also how to establish his ethos for each audience.

Cicero's ethos differs from both, but in his definition of both rhetoric and ethos one can see the ways in which it was built upon previous notions and ideas about ethos, or character, and it's effectiveness in persuasion. In *De Oratore* Cicero expresses his views on rhetoric. For Cicero an orator must know as much as possible about all subjects, be of good character, and have natural abilities to give a speech. According to Cicero, "people's minds are won over by a man's prestige, his accomplishments, and the reputation he has acquired by his way of life." (p. 171).

This ethos comes from the actions of the speaker. These actions are not limited to his life outside of the speech, like Isocrates suggested, nor are they limited to just the speech. Ethos according to Cicero is also established in how you deliver the speech. For Cicero the orator is more effective when using a "gentle tone of voice," and "kindliness in the use of his words" (p. 171). The manner in which the orator speaks, looks, and acts help him to establish his ethos. If the orator acts in such a way that employs "thoughts of a certain kind and words of a certain kind, and adopting besides a delivery that is gentle and shoes signs of flexibility," then he will "appear as decent, as good in character," (p. 171) which make him a good man. Cicero's direct attention given to the importance of delivery connects it to the performance of giving a speech. This performance adds to the ethos of the speaker.

David A. Bobbitt (1991) explains in "Cicero's Concept of Ethos and Some Implications for the Understanding of Roman Rhetoric" Cicero understood the ways in which "ethos infuses all aspects of the speaker's craft, including style, delivery and arrangement, and that it cannot clearly be delineated from emotional appeal (p. 6)." Through these actions the trustworthiness, and ethos of the speaker are established. Abbot (1991) continues to demonstrate that Cicero's notion of ethos was deeper than Aristotle's, and that Cicero "observed that ethos functions not only in the speech proper, but is also a result of the reputation and personality that the rhetor brings to the speaking situation (p. 6)." Cicero's deeper understanding of ethos, its importance, and all of the ways ethos is formed continues to inform current approaches to studying, and comprehending ethos.

James Porter's "Recovering Delivery for Digital Rhetoric and Human-Computer Interaction" (2008) points out that "Cicero's treatment acknowledges the important relationship between performance (bodily, tonal) and persuasion" (p. 4). For Cicero, according to Porter, this

type of delivery was an "important component of emotional — and, therefore, persuasive — effect," (p.3). Quintilian had similar views on the importance of delivery. Porter notes that for Quintilian "delivery relates to persuasive force." (p. 4). He goes on to explain "a demeanor exuding modesty can be persuasive with judges in a legal matter, just as much as 'a toga sitting well upon the shoulder' but it only achieves the desired effect if the emotion is sincere," which places importance on the performance, but situates this type of delivery in ethos. The emotion must be honest to be most effective. Porter's article does not only summarize some of Cicero and Quintilian's work. In it he provides reasons to think of digital rhetoric as an area where "technical knowledge intersects with rhetorical and critical questions in order to assist discursive production and action." (p. 23). His work asks that we rethink composing in a system of technology. The understanding of how writing within a system, whether it's framed by technology, or cultural practices has value in both ancient rhetoric, and digital rhetoric.

This notion of a system influence writing and communication practices also exists in non-western rhetoric. Carol Lipson's "Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric: It All Comes Down to Maat," researches the ways in which the concept and system of MAAT influenced the writing of the ancient Egyptians. The system of MAAT refers to "truth, justice, or order, " but Lipson translates MAAT as "what is right" (81). This understanding of MAAT refers to the "premise that humans must not disturb the balance state of creation, but instead must respect and live in accord with the cosmic harmony and natural order" (81) as introduced by Lipson. Lipson claims that MAAT influences the writing done in ancient Egypt, as it must always be in accordance with the key concepts of practicing MAAT. All of the writings could not upset the natural order, MAAT, and reflect deliberate choices made by the authors to appeal to MAAT. The ethos of a writer came from following MAAT, and their delivery of the writings would also fall within the system of

MAAT. MAAT refers to the "premise that humans must not disturb the balance state of creation, but instead must respect and live in accord with the cosmic harmony and natural order (81)." All writing must be in accordance with the concepts of practicing MAAT. Therefore, all of the writings could not upset the natural order, MAAT, and reflect deliberate choices made by the authors to appeal to MAAT. Writing within the system of MAAT continues to blur the lines between ethos and delivery. A writer and speaker use MAAT to know how to appeal to their audience. Composing within a system, and making use of the affordances and limitations of that system did not only exist in ancient Egypt. Current scholarship in digital rhetoric also addresses the impacts of writing and communicating within an established system.

Defining Digital Rhetoric and Incorporating Digital Rhetoric Research in the Composition Classroom

Composing within a system, and making use of the affordances and limitations of that system did not only exist in ancient Egypt. Current scholarship in digital rhetoric researches the intersection of writing and technology. Specifically investigating the impact of writing and communicating within a digital space. Defining digital rhetoric is as tedious as defining rhetoric. No universal definition exists. Like ethos in ancient rhetoric, and modern rhetoric, defining digital rhetoric depends upon the person's understanding of the goal of digital rhetoric.

Carolyn Handa's book *The Multimediated Rhetoric of the Internet: Digital Fusion* defines digital rhetoric as:

"simply (or maybe not so simply) traditional rhetoric applied visually as well as textually. It is not another form of rhetoric. We do not switch from digital to traditional rhetoric. All of the components we are accustomed to discussing in traditional rhetoric, especially

having to do with style and arrangement for the purposes of conducting logical, discursive, persuasive arguments, are elements that can occur visually" (p. 18). This definition attempts to link traditional rhetorical practices to those in digital spaces. Doing so tends to give more attention to the elements of persuasion due to the fact that this definition keeps in line with Aristotle's definition of rhetoric.

Zappen (2005) in "Digital rhetoric: Toward an integrated theory" attempts to differentiate between traditional and digital rhetoric. He defines digital rhetoric as "traditional rhetorical strategies function in digital spaces and suggest how these strategies are reconfigured within these spaces" (p. 319). Zappen situates his understanding of digital rhetoric within the digital space the writing and communication take place. This definition thus occupies itself more in the realm of the technology used to write and communicate than the strategies used. There is the suggestion that the strategies may be used differently in a digital space.

Doug Eyman in Chapter 1 of *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice* (2015) makes a connection between digital rhetoric and visual rhetoric, based on "the sense that a focus outside of the tradition of written and spoken argument broadens the available opportunities to apply rhetorical theory to new objects of study." Eyman continues by linking visual and digital rhetoric by writing that "visual rhetoric also draws on theory from art and graphic design as well as psychology (gestalt theory), bringing rhetoric into these spheres even as they contribute to the overall rhetorical methods," and that since digital rhetoric includes visuals "it can align itself with these fields, as well as other technical fields—such as computer science, game design, and Internet research—that don't usually take up rhetorical theory." This approach continues to incorporate and promote interdisciplinarity.

Eyman's definition of digital rhetoric also accounts for the performance of composing

and distributing, using a method of delivery that is not only based on speaking or writing, The implications of digital spaces suggests a reliance on the visuals used and perceived, that also find themselves closely related to methods of delivery. This attention to the visual and delivery is similar to Ian Bogost's *Persuasive games: The expressive power of videogames* (2007). His work in procedural rhetoric pushes scholars to move beyond the view that the technologies we use are simply tools available to us. He puts procedural rhetoric under the umbrella of digital rhetoric because of the "practice of using processes persuasively," due to the nature of the digital spaces we compose in, and inhabit, it is impossible to separate any understanding of digital rhetoric from the processes we engage in to accomplish communication.

Bogost differs from Eyman in that he focuses on the process users go through to communicate, and not the visual elements that assist delivery. Bogost attempts to expose the process that makes the technology assist us in composing, much like the scholarship in digital rhetoric that wishes to expose technology that is otherwise hidden. Bogost is not concerned with the visual in the same way Eyman is, because the process to him is more important than the visual. The procedures give the writer the power to write in the digital spaces, therefore his ethos comes from the practices, and not the delivery. Delivery under Bogost's definition of digital rhetoric is attributed to the performance of working within, or through the procedure. Porter (2008) argues against this procedural view of digital rhetoric. He argues:

> "techne of digital rhetoric required here must be of two types: (1) Productive how-to knowledge — i.e., the art of knowing various technological options, and knowing how to use them to achieve various rhetorical effects. (2) Practical judgment, ethical phronesis,"

which asks that scholarship understand the human implications should be considered as well. This is not done from viewing the process and procedure. Porter believes that this "productive knowledge about making and practical knowledge about doing (and the ethics of doing) should work in conjunction to guide writing/communication practice" (p. 25). Here there is a combination of the digital rhetoric research that focuses on the implications of the technology and its impact on humans' writing. This differs from Bogost's work because it leans more on the human as the actor, than the exchange between the human and the machine.

Scholarship in digital rhetoric influenced and/or informed by Bogost tends to begin to break way from Aristotle's rhetoric, and the result of that pushes digital rhetoric in other directions. As digital rhetoric focuses on the technology, and not the rhetorical strategies it ventures into other theories and fields. Cressman (2009) in "A Brief Overview of Actor-Network Theory: Punctualization, Heterogenous Engineering & Translation" gives an overview of actor-network theory (ANT). In doing so he writes about the attempt to "open the black box of science and technology by tracing the complex relationships that exist between governments, technologies, knowledge, texts, money, and people" (p. 3). This pushes the field of digital rhetoric to view the technology, often the computer or the word processor when applied to composition classes, as an actor in the network. This again moves digital rhetoric closer to engaging with, and thinking through the role and purpose of the technology, before addressing how it impacts writing.

Lori Emerson (2014) in *Reading Writing Interfaces: From the Digital to the Bookbound* calls attention to the blackbox technology in iPads and iPhones, which influence how students read and write. The interfaces of these devices are viewed as "magical," and presented as "something that allows us to perform magic tricks" (11). Understanding that an invisible

technology exists behind an interface approaches delivery from a different perspective. Delivery shifts from a one-way transaction. The technology behind whatever device used to write, or communicate also has a method of delivery, and the ethos associated with it stems from its ability to work as expected.

Digital rhetoric scholarship approaches this other perspective in the form of research the glitch. In "The Rhetorical Question Concerning Glitch" Casey Boyle describes glitch scholarship as "models for expanding our current, critical approaches to rhetoric, especially as those practices concern mediation" (p. 12). Glitches expose what design and interface work to keep hidden, and this makes their technological delivery transparent. Boyle pushes for the result of the glitch to become an assignment in composition classes, because it "seeks not to error-check but to produce error" (p. 22), which allows for students to engage with the technology that is now exposed, and disrupt conventional methods of delivery and ethos.

At times the field of digital rhetoric concerns itself with a large amount of theory. The potential problem stemming from this occurrence results in how to merge this theory with the practice of applying it in the form of composition classroom curriculum. With several different definitions of digital rhetoric informing the theories implementing them can cause complications. Does curriculum reflect scholarship in revealing the black box technology and the active role of the technology as discussed in work with ANT? Or, should it reflect the practical nature of helping students develop skills in communicating in digital spaces?

Baron (1982), in "Pencils to Pixels" establishes the link between technology and the classroom when he states that the computer "promises, or threatens to change literacy practices, for better or worse, depending on your point of view" (p.7). Developments in technology account for new literacies to be learned, but agreeing upon how to do that is tricky at best.

Yancey (2004) in "Made not only in words: Composition in a new key" declared the field to be

in a most important moment, and urges the field to move away from only composing and

teaching composition that consists of alphabetic text. Yancey states "the screen is the language

of the vernacular" (305), and despite this not being a new assessment in 2004, she proclaimed

that "we are digital already." Around the same time Stuart Selber also addresses where

curriculum should go in *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*. Selber argues "if students are to

become agents of positive change, they will need an education that is comprehensive and truly

relevant to a digital age" (234). This comprehensive education differs from the traditional

approaches associated with alphabetic text. It is no coincidence that following these strong

statements in support of moving away from alphabetic text, and relying upon interfaces and

digital spaces for communication that some in digital rhetoric focus more on the technology than

the persuasive practices.

The NCTE Statement--"Multimodal Literacies and Technology" addresses some of these

concerns, paying special attention to delivery, but not to ethos. The NCTE statement supports the

multimodal assignment by proclaiming, "all modes of communication are codependent. Each

affects the nature of the content of the other and the overall rhetorical impact of the

communication event itself" (NCTE). The modes reflect the attention given to delivery. The

visual nature of delivery within these modes account for the inclusion of design in the discussion,

which forces instructors to understand that "certain conventions of design are more effective than

others for visual, aural, or multimodal texts," and as a result "teachers will need to become more

informed about these conventions because they will influence the rhetorical and aesthetic impact

of all multimodal texts." Design is linked with delivery, and here delivery aligns itself with ethos

again. The knowledge of the composer gives them credibility in delivery. In an attempt to answer

the calls by leading scholars in the field of rhetoric and composition an influx of work was produced that aligns itself with the visual aspect of delivery when incorporating technology into curriculum. This is reminiscent of the work of Eyman in 2015. Shortly after this push toward multimodal composition Zappen publishes his work on procedural rhetoric. Around the same time, chronologically, the divergence of how to approach technology and its uses in composing, and communicating takes place.

Palmeri in *Remixing composition: A history of multimodal writing pedagogy* (2012) wrote that "the critic would strive to sort art works into genres and periods, the remixer would seek to creatively recombine disparate materials--to make a new composition by juxtaposing samples from radically disparate artistic traditions and periods" (p. 13). Remixing is the approach to delivery she takes in her book, which she attributes to the shifts in technology. The interface pushes scholars to focus on delivery.

This is evident in Arroyo's book *Participatory composition: Video culture, writing, and electracy* (2012) discusses participatory composition, and the connectedness of students. The result of their practices accounts for the "commands of our online world relentlessly promote participation, encourage collaboration." Arroyo is one of many scholars to view delivery as the method that exemplifies the students' ability to communicate using technology effectively. Hocks had similar thoughts on participation based on networks. According to Hocks in "Understanding visual rhetoric in digital writing environments" (2003) students "engage in what Porter calls "internetworked writing"-writing that involves the intertwining of production, interaction, and publication in the online classroom or professional workplace as well as advocating for one's online audiences (12)" (631). The network technology forces rhetoric and composition to rethink delivery.

The rethinking of delivery can at times separate it from ethos, or use delivery to establish ethos based on the system the communication takes place in. The attention given to delivery in assignments intended to incorporate the use of technology in the classroom, and help students develop multiliteracies reflect an attempt at reclaiming the importance of delivery because of the participatory nature of multimodal assignments, and visual elements of this type of composing that aligns it more closely to a performance than alphabetic text. Like the understandings of ethos, and delivery, in addition to how to use them, the approaches taken towards scholarship in digital rhetoric and what to do with the then newer interest in writing in digital spaces accounts for split in how to approach the issues discussed. In terms of pedagogy there is attention given to applying traditional rhetorical strategies, or in the case of delivery reclaiming them. In digital rhetoric the above review points to a split amongst what aspect of the technology used to communicate should be researched. The point of origin in research differs based on the scholar's understanding of the terms digital rhetoric.

Conclusion

In attempting to review the numerous amounts of scholarship written about ethos, and its relationship with delivery, digital rhetoric and technology in the composition classroom many different areas of concern and study were overviewed. This is not comprehensive, and at times it is disconnected. This disconnect is a result of various factors. Some of which represent a gap in research in the field of rhetoric. Others are the result of an attempt to move between different areas of research in rhetoric. Through these works character, or ethos, is an important element of the speaker successfully persuading an audience, or communicating within the constraints of a specific technology. The information above will inform a future project that will attempt to establish that Cicero's connection between ethos and delivery is equally as embedded as

Aristotle's work.

The modern understanding of ethos is linked to credibility of the author or speaker. This credibility can come from being an expert in the filed written or spoken about, which harkens back to Plato's criticism that rhetoricians know the skills or tricks to persuade, but not the knowledge of the experts on any given subject. There are actions, and deliberate decisions a speaker or writer can make to establish their ethos. For a modern composer/writer, or communicator, the options for delivery and establishing ethos reflect the performative nature of working with interfaces and digital delivery. The areas that writers must pay attention to now are similar to those that Cicero and Quintilian believed to be effective in establishing ethos through delivery to be effective in persuasion. Digital rhetoric may at times tend to stray too far from the classical rhetoric that informs many of the concepts and practices used when writing in digital spaces.

The connection between Aristotle's ethos, and definition of rhetoric are often applied to modern issues and concerns in rhetoric. Applying our modern lens to his work, and using his work to make sense of our modern work creates gaps in research. The reliance on Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "the art of persuasion" can lead to excluding Cicero's work. In the digital rhetoric definitions discussed above there is attention given to the role of technology in digital spaces and its impact on writing. There exists a conscious effort to rethink persuasion in these digital spaces, and/or move away from associated digital rhetoric so heavily with persuasion. Rather than run away from Aristotle's definition, digital rhetoricians could fill that gap in research by incorporating elements of Cicero's work on ethos and delivery. Connecting black box technology with ethos and delivery as written about Cicero could continue to situate technology within rhetoric, and return some of the theory to a place that is more familiar to

rhetoricians. If Cicero's ethos and delivery find itself included in some of the theory, or definitions of digital rhetoric there may be more access to the theories that will result in bridging the gap between theory and application.

Inversely, the attempt at incorporating technology in the classroom often reflects not enough attention paid to the field of digital rhetoric. Despite Selber's call to develop students' multiliteracies and approach technology on a more rhetorical level, the assignments proposed for composition classrooms are not situated enough in digital rhetoric. Often times they reflect an attempt at incorporating technology for the sake of doing so. The attention to delivery because of the visual nature of the interface, but not addressing interface theory and/or the role of the technology used in writing proves that some, not all, work in looking to incorporate more technology falls short. More work in this field needs to be critical and questioning of the technology while still working towards its inclusion, rather than rejecting it or accepting it too quickly.

It is not necessary to change our most commonly accepted definition of rhetoric. However, working from Cicero's understanding of ethos and delivery, and applying that when available may allow for rhetoricians to do more work in digital rhetoric that reflects the rhetorical choices made with each system of technology by researching more than the delivery, but how the choices made in delivering content impacts ethos. The inclusion of MAAT in this review is to be used later as an example of writing and performing within a system that reflects cultural practices. For our modern lens this system is similar to using specific applications/software for writing/composing based on the audience we wish to reach. Choosing the correct technology impacts our delivery, ethos, and overall experience of writing/composing. I argue that while these different areas may seem too complex to cohesively work together, the

truth remains that Aristotle and Cicero's ethos and delivery are so embedded in the rhetorical

practices and theories that finding a common thread to assist in filling their respective gaps.

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