Descriptive Notes

From the Chair

Kelcy Shepherd

As I sit here writing this, the Northeast is enjoying (or suffering, depending on your tastes) a wave of sultry weather worthy of New Orleans. I like to think it is preparation for this year's SAA Annual Meeting, which will be my first trip to New Orleans and my fifth straight year at the annual meeting. I'm looking forward to experiencing the sights, sounds, and especially tastes of the Big Easy. I'm also eager for another opportunity to gather with fellow archivists from around the country – to see old friends, make new acquaintances, and to hear about others' work in meetings and sessions. I often return from these meetings reinvigorated, and excited to be working as an archivist.

I've chaired the Section for nearly a year, and it has been a real pleasure. I've gotten great support from the Section's Steering Committee: Christopher Burns, Diane Ducharme (Web Liaison), Mary Lacy, John Rees (Newsletter Editor), Jerry Simmons, Claudia Thompson, and Kathy Wisser (Vice Chair). Together we've reviewed session proposals for Section endorsement, brainstormed uses for the new Section listserv, and provided feedback on an early draft of AACR3 Part I. During the year John has led the effort to create interesting and informative newsletters, Diane has kept the web site accurate and up to date, and Kathy has organized a finding aids fair that celebrates the scope and content note.

Serving as Section Chair has also provided the opportunity for me to be in touch with some of the Section's members. I was surprised and gratified by the number of archivists who look to the Section and its leadership for information on description-related matters. Section members have contacted us about descriptive practice, information on current efforts in descriptive standards, and ideas for getting more involved in the Section. I think the results of these inquiries have been quite satisfying, whether they be dozens of responses to a cataloging question, an opportunity for the Section Steering Committee to offer feedback on a standards revision process, or the recognition that we could work to renew our liaison relationship with other organizations interested in descriptive standards.

My year as chair will of course wrap up with the Section meeting, which will be held Friday, August 19 8:00-10:00 AM. In addition to the Section Reports, we can expect to learn about the status of EAD schema development, the progress made on the revision of AACR, and more from other description-related committees, working groups, and organizations. There will also be the election of the new Vice-Chair/Chair Elect. The meeting will conclude with a presentation by Marcel Caya, Professor, Département d'histoire, Université du Québec à Montréal, and Deputy Secretary General, International Council of Archives. Caya will present findings of his research comparing the scope and content note element in DACS, Canadian RAD, British MAD, and ISAD(G).

See you on the Bayou!

Section Meeting Agenda

Fri., Aug 19
8:00-10:00 AM

I. **Welcome**
II. **Section Reports**
    Section Activities
    Descriptive Notes
    Section Website
    Finding Aids Fair
III. **Reports from SAA Committees, Liaisons, and Related Groups**
    2006 Program Committee – Tom Hyry/Robert Horton
    EAD Working Group – Kris Kiesling
    DACS – Kris Kiesling
    US MARC Advisory Board (MARBI) – Kris Kiesling
    ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) – Mary Lacy
    ICA Section on Professional Standards and Best Practices – Michael Fox
    Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards – Brad Westbrook/Chris Prom
    Encoded Archival Context Working Group – Daniel Pitti
    OCLC
    RLG – Anne Van Camp/Merrilee Proffit
    Archivists' Toolkit Project – Brad Westbrook
IV. **New Business**
    2006 Session Ideas

Election of Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

V. Program

Marcel Caya, Professor, Département d'histoire, Université du Québec à Montréal, and Deputy Secretary General, International Council of Archives, will report on the progress of a research project which compares the scope and content element in four national and international descriptive standards (the U.S. DACS, the Canadian RAD, the British MAD and ISAD (G)).

Section Endorsed Sessions

401. "More Product, Less Process": New Processing Guidelines to Reduce Backlogs
Friday, August 19, 2005
2:15 PM-3:45 PM

Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner recently reported findings and recommendations from their NHPRC-funded research on reducing backlogs of 20th-century materials in manuscript repositories. The speakers describe their application of the Greene/Meissner recommendations to organizational records and personal, family, and congressional papers in small and large repositories. They summarize specific recommendations employed, modifications made for specific situations, the amount of time taken to achieve various end products, and potential use of the recommendations in accessioning.

604. A New Rosetta Stone? Seeking Commonalities Among Digital Image Databases, Metadata, and Delivery Systems
Saturday, August 20, 2005
8:00 AM-9:30 AM

Unlike OPACs, which rely on the common language of MARC and guiding principles of AACR2, digital image databases are more like modern Rosetta stones, with many languages and formats. Despite emerging standards, digital collections still use a variety of metadata schema and varied technologies. What are the implications of this technological diversity? Should we move toward standardization, and, if so, how? Panelists discuss several digital image databases and consider future directions for managing digital collections.

707. Making a Contribution: Archives Catalogers' Participation in NACO and SACO
Saturday, August 20, 2005
9:45 AM-11:15 AM

Three archivists describe their participation in NACO (Name Authority Cooperative) and SACO (Subject Authority Cooperative), components of the Library of Congress's Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC). You'll hear about PCC's functions, training programs, and membership; unique approaches developed at Penn State for researching name authorities for archival, visual, and architectural records; and NARA's Military Operations Subject Heading Project, which mines NARA holdings to document SACO proposals.

808. Arranging and Describing Literary Manuscripts: From Calendaring to DACS
Saturday, August 20, 2005
1:00 PM-2:30 PM

The practice of describing literary manuscript collections has run the gamut from calendaring individual letters to creating series descriptions. Panelists provide practical advice to help novices and experienced practitioners determine processing strategies, focusing on creative solutions to problems inherent in describing literary collections. You'll discuss with panelists such topics as involving subject experts, balancing donors' expectations with access, degrees of processing, systems of arrangement, and providing access to digital files.

Also of Interest:

701. The Archivists' Toolkit: Toward Streamlined Archival Workflow
Saturday, August 20, 2005
9:45 AM-11:15 AM
The Archivists' Toolkit is a two-year collaborative project funded by the Mellon Foundation to develop an integrated archival management application that streamlines workflows and standardizes archival information. With input from 17 participating repositories, the project focuses on the needs of smaller repositories. The final product will be open source and freely available. The speakers discuss project methodology, describe system features and architecture, and provide attendees ample opportunity to comment on the application's functional specification.

809. Encoded Archival Context: A Prototype Standard for Describing Record Creators
Saturday, August 20, 2005
1:00 PM-2:30 PM

Encoded Archival Context (EAC) is an internationally developed XML encoding standard for the description of

record creators: individuals, families, and corporate bodies. Based on ICA 's International Standard Archival Authority Records (ISAAR - CPF), EAC complements the communication standard for record description, Encoded Archival Description (EAD). The speakers describe this standard's origins and current status, its descriptive semantics and logical structure, its relationship to ISAAR, and its use in collaborative UK and European initiatives.

Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards
Wed., August 17
9:00 AM-5:00 PM

EAD Roundtable
Thurs., Aug. 18
4:00-5:30 PM

EAD Working Group
Sun., Aug. 21
8:00-12:00 AM

Finding Aids Fair 2005
Celebrating Scope and Content: Innovative Uses of Narratives in Finding Aids

Join us in New Orleans for the annual Description Section Finding Aids Fair, "Celebrating Scope and Content: Innovative Uses of Narratives in Finding Aids." The Finding Aids Fair will be open in the Exhibition Hall Friday August 19, from 7:30 am – 4:00 pm. Members of the Description Section will be available at the Fair periodically throughout the day.

This year's theme focuses on the narrative portions of the finding aid. These narrative portions come in a variety of shapes and sizes, crafted to assist users in understanding the contents of a collection. Archivists have used the narrative to tell the story of the materials, to highlight the collection's significance, and to create tools that assist users in assessing relevance and enhancing their interaction with the materials themselves.

If you've done something innovative with the narrative portions of a finding aid, please submit a sample and a brief description of why you did what you did. And stop by the Fair and see what your colleagues have come up with!

To submit entries, please contact:
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NC ECHO Metadata Coordinator
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News Notes

NEH to Provide Support for Continued Development of the Northwest Digital Archives

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded the Oregon State University Libraries $300,000 for continued development and expansion of the Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA). The NWDA provides integrated access to regionally significant archival and manuscript materials in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington through a union database of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aids available online at: nwda.wsulibs.wsu.edu.

Oregon State University Libraries will continue to be the lead institution for the project and Washington State University will host and provide the technical infrastructure for the finding aids database.

The 2-year project (to begin July 1, 2005) will build on the strong foundation established by initial funding awarded by NEH to the OSU Libraries for establishment of the consortium in July 2002. As of early April 2005, the NWDA database includes 2,385 finding aids describing archival collections at 16 repositories. The new NEH funding will support the addition of at least five new institutions to the consortium and a minimum of 1,600 finding aids to the NWDA database from a minimum of sixteen institutions (five new and eleven continuing). New participating institutions include: Idaho State Historical Society; City of Portland Archives; Eastern Washington State Historical Society; Gonzaga

University; Pacific Lutheran University; Seattle Museum of History and Industry.

A consortium administrator will oversee training; coordinate and monitor the work of the participating institutions and the data conversion contractor and submission of finding aids to the database; implement procedure and policy decisions made by the NWDA Executive Committee; and coordinate dissemination activities. A data conversion contractor will provide initial encoding of approximately 1,300 finding aids and a minimum of 300 finding aids will be encoded directly by staff at participating institutions.

Larry Landis: larry.landis@oregonstate.edu or 541-737-0540.

EAD at University of Maryland
Jennie Levine

The University of Maryland Libraries is pleased to announce the launch of ArchivesUM (http://www.lib.umd.edu/archivesum), an online database of finding aids for manuscript and archival collections at the University of Maryland Libraries. In this collaborative effort with individuals from the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), staff coded finding aids using Encoded Archival Description (EAD). The database currently holds 420 collection abstracts and 120 full finding aids and also includes subject resource guides and an advanced search feature.

The finding aids in ArchivesUM are created using three tools: 1) Microsoft Access database. Staff use the database for all stages of the records life cycle, including accessioning, record-keeping, and descriptive purposes; 2) Converter. A converter program written in Java is used to convert database records into XML; 3) Administrative Interface. Via the administrative interface, the repository editor can upload, delete, and convert finding aids to HTML.

Joshua Lederberg Papers at National Library of Medicine

Lederberg received a PhD degree from Yale University in 1947 for his discovery that certain bacteria undergo a sexual stage, that they mate and exchange genes. As a result of his discovery, bacteria became one of the most important experimental organisms in genetics. As professor of genetics and, later, medical genetics at the University of Wisconsin from 1947 to 1959, Lederberg described a form of genetic recombination in bacteria mediated by a viral vector, a process he called

transduction. In subsequent decades transduction became one of the foundations of recombinant DNA research.

Lederberg received a share of the 1958 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine "for his discoveries concerning genetic recombination and the organization of the genetic material of bacteria."

In 1959 he was named chairman of the newly-established Department of Genetics at Stanford University, a position that enabled him to relate genetics to the larger realm of human health and biology. While at Stanford he turned into an early proponent of space biology, and was instrumental in introducing computers and artificial intelligence into laboratory research and biomedical communicant as a collaborator on DENDRAL, one of the first expert systems in science.

With an abiding faith in the ability of government to improve society, secure peace, and protect the environment with the advice of scientific experts, Lederberg has served for over forty years on advisory commissions on science and health policy, space exploration, national security, and arms control. He has worked to bridge the gap between scientists and the public, most prominently by writing a weekly editorial column on science and society for the Washington Post between 1966 and 1971.

In 1978 Lederberg returned to New York as President of Rockefeller University. He became University Professor Emeritus and Raymond and Beverly Sackler Foundation Scholar in 1990, when he resumed his research into the chemistry and evolution of DNA and into computer modeling of scientific reasoning. He continues to advise government and lecture widely about developments in science as they relate to public policy and public health, in particular about the threat of bioterrorism and of both new and reemerging infectious diseases.

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/manuscripts/ead/jl552.html

OhioLINK EAD Task Force
Amy McCrory

OhioLINK's Database Management and Standards Committee has convened a task force to facilitate authoring and delivery of Encoded Archival Description finding aids in the state of Ohio.

Previously, the OhioLINK Metadata Task Force (also a DMS committee) wrote an application profile for Dublin

Core to create consistency across digital collections in the OhioLINK Digital Media Center. Now, DMS wants to look at different specific metadata schemes and EAD is one community within the larger metadata efforts at OhioLINK.

An overarching long-term goal of this committee is to make EAD more attractive to OhioLINK institutions by making it easier for them to encode finding aids. Additionally, institutions will be encouraged to contribute
those documents to OhioLINK, in order to further customization and standardization.

Rita Crocker Clements Papers
Texas A&M Cushing Library

Charles Schultz recently completed a 329 page Inventory of the Personal Papers of Mrs. Rita Crocker Clements that is available online at http://library.tamu.edu

Mrs. Clements is a long-time prominent Republican in Texas who began her political careen ringing doorbells and knocking on doors to get out the vote for Dwight David Eisenhower in 1952. She was active in Dallas County, the State of Texas, and nationally in the Republican Party. She was also First Lady of Texas 1979-1983 and 1987-1991 when her husband William P. Clements was Governor of Texas. He was the first Republican Governor of Texas in over a century. Texas A&M University also holds Governor Clements' personal papers as Governor of Texas as well as Deputy Secretary of State, the records of his three campaigns for Governor of Texas, and his official records as Governor of Texas. Detailed finding aids are available at the same web site for the official state papers and the three campaigns, and a finding aid is being prepared for his personal papers.

Julia Morgan Collection is first NEH award for Cal Poly and the Kennedy Library

The Special Collections Department of the Robert E. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, has been awarded $249,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to arrange, describe, and create electronic finding aids for their architectural archives on California architect Julia Morgan (1872-1957). Original architectural plans, drawings, sketches, photographs, transparencies, personal papers, journals, project files, and correspondence from Morgan's life and career are part of the project. A principal goal of the project is to catalog the collections at Cal Poly to make them fully accessible to researchers.

The award comes less than a year after the university celebrated the centennial of Julia Morgan's licensing as the first female architect in California. Morgan was also the first woman to earn certification in architecture from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

The Morgan collections at Cal Poly have been used for scholarly research, lectures, monographs, biographies, children's books, local and traveling exhibitions, historic house interpretation, building restoration, documentaries on public and cable channels, and other scholarship that advances public and scholarly understanding of architecture, the built environment in California, and the humanities disciplines.

Contact: Nancy Loe
Cal Poly Kennedy Library
(805) 756-2305; nloe@calpoly.edu

Archival Resources Redesign Grant

RLG is pleased to announce that it has received a major grant from the Earhart Foundation for the redesign of RLG Archival Resources. The grant will provide the initial funding to make RLG Archival Resources, one of the world's largest and most important databases of information about archival and manuscript collections, into a more broadly accessible online resource for researchers worldwide.

"The trustees of the Earhart Foundation are glad on this occasion to provide assistance to your educational and research program," says Ingrid Gregg, president of the Ann Arbor-based Earhart Foundation. The private foundation, established in 1929 by oil magnate Harry B. Earhart, has a long history of supporting research in the humanities and social sciences.

Launched in 1998, RLG Archival Resources contains information about the special collections of hundreds of major research institutions in the US, and increasingly from international archives. Any institution may contribute descriptive information about their archives at no expense. Access is currently by paid subscription, for use by researchers at subscribing institutions. With this new grant, RLG aims to increase the use of primary research materials (as well as encourage more institutions to contribute to the database), by redesigning the service for wider institutional and individual access.

http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=120

Contact: Anne Van Camp, RLG
mailto:avc@notes.rlg.org

Feature Articles

Implementing *DACS*: The Experience of the Bancroft Library Archivists
by Lynette Stoudt

In February 2005, SAA Council voted to approve *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (*DACS*) as the professional standard for archival descriptive content. In examining this new standard, Bancroft Library archivists found that many of the elements in *DACS* were already in use in either our finding aids, MARC 21 records, or in both. At this point, we are applying *DACS* only to our finding aids, and we are still in the early stages of repository-wide implementation.

Beginning in late 2004, Bancroft Library archivists utilized two related upgrades to our finding aids to facilitate our implementation of *DACS*. As we upgraded our encoding to EAD Version 2002, we also updated our print finding aid template to insure consistency between the print and online versions. We took advantage of this interruption in finding aid production to take a closer look at each element in *DACS*. As we reviewed the elements, we noted whether they were already in use in our multilevel description, and whether the content complied with *DACS*. We also noted the *DACS* elements that were not in use for later implementation consideration.

DACS contains twenty-five elements in Part I, and we found that we were already using thirteen of the elements uniformly in both our print and EAD finding aids. The elements included: 2.1 Reference Code; 2.3 Title; 2.4 Date; 2.5 Extent; 2.7 Administrative/Biographical History; 3.1 Scope and Content; 3.2 System of Arrangement; 4.1 Conditions Governing Access; 4.2 Physical Access; 4.4 Conditions Governing Reproductions and Use; 5.2 Immediate Source of Acquisition; 6.3 Related Archival Materials; and 7.1 Notes Element. In analyzing the content of these elements, we determined that 2.3 Title, and 2.4 Date, required significant content changes in order to comply with *DACS*. As a result, we have largely discontinued the use of square brackets for supplied titles (as suggested in 2.3 Title) and in the date element (as suggested in 2.4 Dates). In addition, we no longer use the term "ongoing" in the date element, instead we note the end date of the collection materials, and note possible accruals according to 5.4 Accruals. We began spelling out abbreviations like "circa," rather than propagating the multiple forms of abbreviations (i.e., "c." or "ca.") that have entered into

our description over many years. We no longer use the abbreviation "n.d." for archival materials that are not dated, and instead use the term "undated." We have also started expressing our dates in "year-month-day" order.

To provide consistency between the print and EAD versions of our finding aids, we added the following two elements to our print finding aid: 2.2 Name and Location of Repository, and 2.6 Name of Creator(s). In compliance with *DACS*, we are establishing names of creators/collectors according to the guidelines in Part II - Describing Creators.

After careful evaluation of the remaining *DACS* elements, we adopted the following new elements in both versions of our finding aids: 4.3 Technical Access; 4.5 Languages and Scripts of the Material; 5.4 Accruals; 6.2 Existence and Location of Copies; and 8.1.4. Rules or Conventions (other guidelines in Chapter 8 were already largely in use in our description). These elements were implemented because they significantly enhance our description and provide essential information to library patrons and staff. By adopting 4.3, we now provide detailed information on the software/hardware required to access electronic collection materials. Element 4.5 provides for recording the language(s) of collection materials consistently throughout Bancroft finding aids. In utilizing 5.4, we now record the end date of collection materials, rather than using the ambiguous, administrative term "ongoing." Element 6.2 allows us to note in our finding aids whether collection materials are available on microfilm or digitally. Because we require patrons to use alternate forms of collection materials when available, noting this information in the finding aid frees reference staff from checking the MARC 21 record for alternate forms every time there is a request to view original archival materials. By noting the rules we use in our archival description (according to 8.1.4), we are conveying to current and future Bancroft archivists the standards on which our description is based.

Though we adopted several new *DACS* elements in our finding aids, there are a few that currently remain in use only in our MARC 21 records: 4.6 Finding Aids; 5.1 Custodial History; 5.3 Appraisal, Destruction, and Scheduling Information; 6.1 Existence and Location of Originals; and 6.4 Publication Note. Several of these elements are used primarily in describing single items or small manuscript collections. Since we typically describe single items and small collections only in

MARC 21 records, it seemed reasonable (at this point) to suppress these elements from our finding aids.

Currently, we are not creating authority records as suggested in Chapter 11. We continue to refer to the Library of Congress Name Authority File and our local authority file for name authorities, and we utilize *DACS*, Part III - Forms of Names, to create new name authorities. The practice of creating fully documented archival authority records may be revisited at some point in the future.

The earliest access tools currently in use at the Bancroft Library (mostly typewritten finding aids) date from approximately the 1950s. At this point, we do not have the resources to revisit 50 years of descriptive conventions in order to upgrade the content in all of our finding aids. Instead, archivists are incorporating the new standards into current description.

During the planning process, we documented our decisions to incorporate into an in-house processing guide. We also plan to revisit our standards periodically to insure that they continue to meet the needs of Bancroft Library patrons and staff. We are pleased to finally have a content standard that can be used in the creation finding aids, and we look forward to further adoption of *DACS* in other Bancroft Library output formats.

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University of California, Berkeley Grant Update and Descriptive Notes
By Waverly Lowell

In December 2004, the Environmental Design Archives (EDA) wrapped up work on "The Moderns: Arrangement and Description of Bay Region Architectural Archives", a two-year, NEH-funded project to process and preserve the papers of architects William Wurster / WBE (Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons) and William Turnbull, Jr. / MLTW (Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker) and landscape architects Garrett Eckbo and Robert Royston. These collections consist of significant primary source material documenting the Bay Area Modernist style (1930-1980), a style characterized by designs that satisfied the special needs of climate, site, and plan with imaginative and experimental rather than canonically modern solutions. All four designers were highly recognized within the design profession and beyond and helped to shift the locus of architectural debate and design sophistication away from the East Coast and toward California. Based primarily in the Bay Area, each created work that resonated with a sense of place and integrated vernacular forms with technological innovation and native, local materials; each promoted an aesthetic that dissolved the distinction between inside and outside space and taught in the College of Environmental Design at the University of California, Berkeley.

The enormity and complexity of these late 20th century collections required the development of model guidelines for appraisal as well as the application of the Standard Series for Architecture and Landscape Architectural Collections. With NEH support, these four significant collections were rehoused (some drawings were flattened; others re-rolled) arranged, described, selectively digitized, and made accessible through local, regional, and national bibliographic databases containing both MARC records and EAD finding aids. Using the Project Index as a descriptive tool, multiple processors maintained intellectual control over the disparate pieces of a given collection while it was being worked on in more than one location. "Colophons" were also created and included as a descriptive component of the finding aids to describe appraisal and processing decisions that has proven useful to both reference staff and patrons.

The finding aids were encoded in EAD and published in the Online Archive of California (OAC). The finding aids include complete, searchable project lists, identifying the client or project name, location, date, collaborators, and collection material formats for each architectural or landscape architectural project. By using the OAC as the EDA institutional database, the project index allows searching for a single client name across all EDA finding aids which will show cross-collection results for each architect or landscape architect that worked with a particular client or on a particular project.

Another component of the NEH-funded project was the digitization of nearly 500 drawings, photographs, and documents from the four collections. The Wurster collection marks the first successful export of METS (Metadata Encoding & Transmission Standard) objects from the UC Berkeley-designed WebGenDB database and display of the complex images through the OAC. WebGenDB allowed EDA to flexibly create a hierarchical structure of images based on architectural project and material type, automatically encoding the metadata and scanned images into METS objects. The METS objects are linked to the EAD encoded finding aids through "dao" elements, and displayed so that all images related to a single architectural project are

grouped together. The hierarchical structure of the METS objects allows inherited metadata from the collection and project level to be surfaced at each item level without having to repeat redundant (yet vital) information at the lower levels. Results of this pioneering effort can be viewed at:
http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf8k40079x

New Electronic Descriptive Tool Developed
A successful website addition to facilitate research was the development and mounting of "I-pages." Because electronic finding aids are not inherently intuitive, we found that linking users from the list of collections

directly to the online finding aids often raised as many questions as it answered. In response to this situation, EDA staff created an **i**ntermediary **i**nformation page (= I-page) that provides an image of the creator of the collection, one design project, and summaries of the finding aid biography and scope and contents. The I-page then allows the user to link to the electronic finding aid, the down-loadable excel version of the project index, and related collections. Researcher response to the I-Page has been overwhelmingly favorable. For a sample I-page see
http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/profiles/funk.htm

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