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Using Social Media for the Development of Civic Engagement and Local Governance

Sataporn Roengtam

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to propose guidelines for the development of the administration of local government organizations using digital technology, such as the use of social media in the administration. It will be used in the case of promoting public participation in public policy formulation. The information on the features needed to develop operating systems on social media applications would be collected and then trialed. At the same time, data was collected from the experiments. Then, the received information is made into a user manual. The study found that the municipality could use social media to enhance the communication efficiency between municipalities with the public at an efficiency level. At the effectiveness level, people were satisfied with using social media to raise complaints and recommend municipalities. Meanwhile, municipalities can obtain adequate information to use in making operational decisions in comparison with regular operations. And at the impact level, it was found that the municipality could encourage people to participate in the administration of local administrative organizations and support municipalities begin to take new approaches in response to the needs of the people even better.

Keywords: Digital technology, Social media, Local government, Governance, Citizen engagement

1. Introduction

As the government adopting social media as a tool, social media might increase the government's capacity for engagement [1]. Other social media can build interactive features and increase citizen collaboration with the government. These concerns change citizens' social media tools, especially the local government, to encourage and listen to public demand [2]. Further, social media took a role in public action, its influence on citizen engagement, and increased public trust [3]. Social media includes communication platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which the government intensively uses. The adoption of social media uses brought collaborative nature between government and citizen [4, 5].

The use of social media might increase collaboration among stakeholders. For citizens, social media can engage them in a government program and bridge the gap between the government with society. For the government, social media able to engage public participation and collaboration. Social media platform makes informed citizen and strengthens public relations. It is explained citizen engagement

through social media, including interaction among social media users. Various areas will be involved, where the municipality might use social media to engage the government, organization, citizen, and community. But the challenge is the professionalism to manage social media interaction for communication. For instance, lack of capacity and skill to initiate such engagement requires technological development and professional media skill development. The movement towards social media use requires people's attitude, staff preparedness, time availability, and skill [6].

Further, Dobos and Jenei argue on the changing participation to engagement. There are two types of citizen engagement through instrumental and normative activities. It aims to informing or receiving a response from the governance process [7]. The way of engagement more efficiently should be used among normative activities [8]. At the same time, the form of engagement in local government have to roles to find the way that provides conditions for listening and engagement activities the way and techniques through dialog and interaction in social media. From the government-citizen relationship, there is the ability to dialog, involve, and collaborate. It is expected more likely to be interested in inquiring, expressing opinions, making a suggestion, and taking responsibility. In this approach, the government should motivate and encourage them to better understand the government-citizen relationship. The importance of citizen engagement, understood as the participation of citizens in political and social issues is considered essential for democracy [9].

However, some critiques about the uses of social media in the government have considered not to be the adequate cause of many social media platforms used simultaneously [10]. Social media should be egalitarian (Flecha 2000) and government interventions [11]. Citizen engagement requires systematic probing. Further, the desired citizen development "knowledge and understanding" of the political and administrative activities may influence such the ability to analyze, express, and defend opinions, positions, participate and debate. A chance like tolerance, loyalty, openness, negotiation, and compromise is needed for a democratic society. The municipality opened the internet, mainly social media platforms change and engagement. Social media has quickly grown into public organization tools and human face for communication [12]. Avidar argues social media interaction among organizations and interaction for the public to consume, produce and share online information and raise social media use for engagement. Nevertheless, the growth of social media, "traditional" media still play an essential role in raising the social media visibility of an organization.

This chapter would like to present the study results of the application of social media to develop tools and operating systems that can be used to improve and increase the management efficiency of local government organizations. It will make a presentation of the concrete and practical development model. And it can extend into applications and operating systems that can be applied following the actual municipality operating conditions. This social media will ultimately enable municipalities to further enhance digital technology for the administration and delivery of public services to residents.

2. Theoretical review

Social media refers to the activities, practices, and behaviors among peoples involved and gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using various media. The application of social media by governments requires an organizational change to the culture, people, structures, and processes for effective results are to be achieved. It can create opportunities for developing community-based partnerships by facilitating engagement with the public, such as creating and maintaining

interactions and relationships. The local government is beginning to engage through using social media in different ways. This action includes promoting events and activities, problem-solving, gaining community input, and engaging [13]. Teng et al. [14] also illustrate how local governments can harness technology to improve efficiencies and engage citizens. However, local leaders must be careful that technology-based mechanisms for communication and engagement do not benefit only those who can advance the technology uses. Thus, technology must be complemented by other widely accessible means of gathering participation. In this case, Professionals in using the technologies should not act as a threat but as an opportunity for making the organization more global, interactive, dialogical, and socially responsible.

Further, social media are functional in publishing information about public interaction and sharing strategies for resolving social problems and promoting positive change. There are two essential elements to consider: first, the media can support local activation by strengthening the network effect; and secondly, the media as an international network, able to contribute significantly to opens the connection whole around the world. Information-based web and social media play roles in pursuing communication networks (horizontal and vertical communication), particularly media relations, such as a) making strategies for policies and communication between the international and local networks. b) improving dialog space between government and citizens. c) as a tool for engagement and participation. More specifically, in enhancing stakeholders' engagement [15].

The local government context could use social media to focus on municipal management, engage citizens in local decision-making, and improve government to citizen relationships. Citizens need government capacities to encourage public needs, such as providing public service, favoring high participation rates in public sector management, and helping local government prioritize and implement.

Social media as an 'alternative' public space, the development of Web 2.0 technologies have been described as offering the 21st century by providing opportunities for extensive citizen engagement with the government [16]. The development of social media technologies has led to more use by governments. Governments should have already moved from the past traditional phase with social media platforms and should deliver and create value using social media. The governments are using digital technologies to engage in e-services such as broadcasting information, emphasizing citizen interaction [17]. Social media applications, built on Web 2.0 technologies, offer governments extensive means to engage communities and make services more efficient. It also allows for encouragement. Governments aim to value civil society as a legitimate partner for change through enhancing capabilities for collaboration, participation, and empowerment. However, the government using digital technologies to enhance direct citizen engagement in city, regional or provincial planning processes [18]. Indeed, Web 2.0 and social media are now considered part of participative citizens to the government in providing public service and information. Some governments are increasing with e-government service that includes social media tools.

Social media lies in the perceived advantages of both the government and the citizens, although the benefits tend to be idealistic. For example, there is much talk about increasing public participation, citizen involvement, transparency, coproduction, using more excellent knowledge, and reaching stakeholders. It also identifies benefits such as the actual value of engagement that raises awareness of new policies, services, or social issues and encourages interaction with feedback from governments. Use the internet and media platforms to organize and promote their interests and actively participate in their social interaction [19].

Ellison and Hardey [20] said that the viability of social media as a potential means to stimulate citizen engagement in local politics and ask whether people

can use specific platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to develop innovative and accessible forms of democratic dialog within the local community. The role of local government and citizens themselves is in the process of constant articulation, primarily concerned with considering the kind of role social media can play in facilitating new forms of dialog and local engagement. The peoples are constantly experimenting and realizing the social media feasibility, combining this creatively with face-to-face interaction and bridging the distance of view and participation. Social media is an arena that deserves attention and critical reflection as a political site and as a starting point for this new type of public engagement [21].

3. Methodology

This chapter will implement the qualitative research methodology through data collection, data analysis, and synthesis. There will be a specific selection of three municipalities in Khon Kaen province, Thailand. There are three steps of researching as follows.

First, this research will use the interview and focus group methods for the selected key informants to collect data.

The second, about data analysis. This research will use the content analysis method to compare all collected data between before and after using social media in local government administrations and then interpret data followed by theories and concepts.

The third, data synthesis, will be conducted by gathering all analyzed data to be reorganized to propose the SOUP model.

4. Key results

4.1 The key factors

This chapter presents the concept and practice of applying social media to promote citizen engagement and local governance development. The aim of presenting is a model of development called the SOUP Model. The development of social media use following this model is as follows.

1. The use of social media must be designed to facilitate sharing (Sharing: S)

   Information between citizens, departments, administrators, municipalities, and the public can be quickly and universally provided to be used as a tool to enable all parties to be mutually beneficial in terms of monitoring progress. In addressing public complaints to a municipality, it is used to raise awareness and understand the municipality about the needs of people while also expressing it to the public and the public. Knowing the performance in various areas of the municipality can be appropriate for the people's use. For example, it is used as a medium for sharing and exchanging information in tracking complaints submitted by the people to the municipality. It has set up a variety of tools for people to send information to the application easily.

2. The use of social media must be designed to facilitate openness and use (Openness: O)

   The use of social media should be designed that it can be easily and universally used by citizens, agencies, administrators, municipalities, and the public. All parties can benefit, both in monitoring the progress of work to resolve the

public's problems and raising awareness and understanding the municipality. It can also be used to show people and the public about performance in various municipality areas. It provides opportunities for people to use various channels or tools in raising complaints and informing their recommendations. The municipality should adopt a local development policy by facilitating social media and other non-governmental channels. Social media, which this openness provides, has given the public more opportunities.

3. The use of social media must be designed to provide optimal accessibility and use in the context of local usage (Uniqueness: U)

   Its use should be able to adapt to the way of living of the people in the area. It should not create too much of a burden on the people they have no interest in using. It can apply to local government organizations and does not affect government officials and employees' regular operation. It may result in not being accepted in the practice of government officials in the organization. For example, the awareness of differences among the groups of people in the area is because some people do not have the skills to use social media. But they familiar with the use of regular communication channels. The municipality must provide facilities for these people. The municipality might have established an agency with a regular officer responsible for receiving complaints and suggestions from the public. And then, the officers will bring the information received from the public into the application for action. In addition, the municipality may set up a new agency to be mainly responsible. It acts as a central agency that facilitates the application for the coordination between the municipality's internal officials, citizens, and administrators to monitor the performance.

4. The use of social media must be designed to support the cooperation of the state and the people. (Partnership: P)
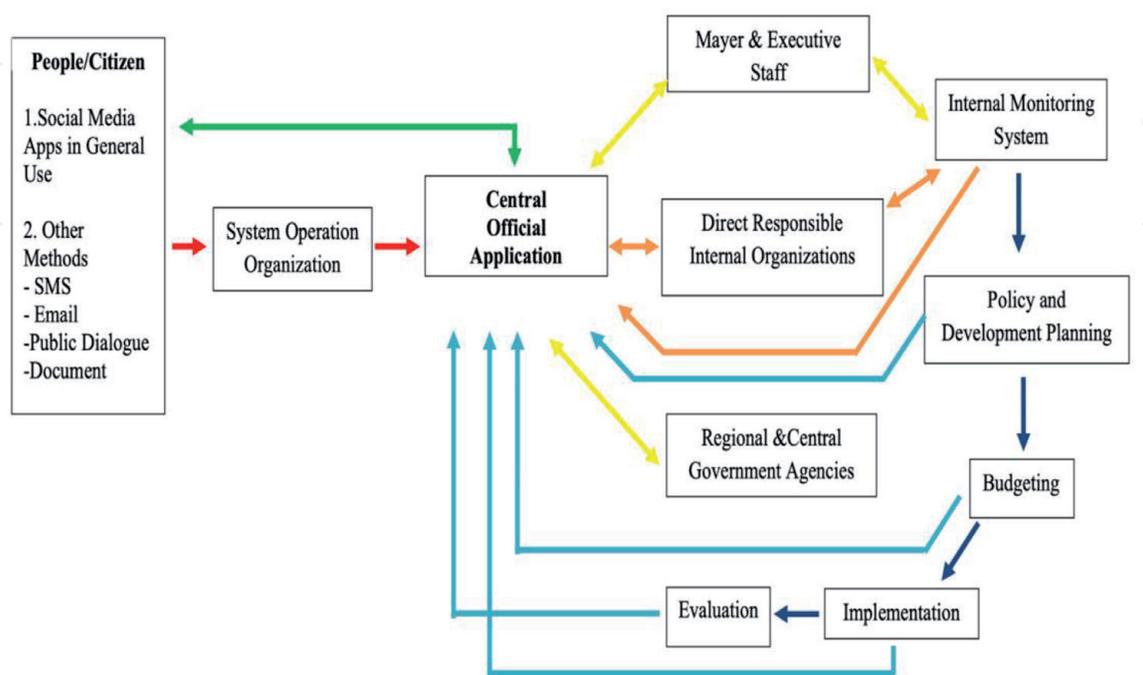
Figure 1.
Development model for using social media to promote civic responsibility and local governance (SOUP model).

Social media should provide people with more opportunities to become responsible for the municipality's administration. It must enable citizens to participate in monitoring, supervision, and decision-making conveniently and conveniently with municipalities and cover all stages of their implementation, for example, using applications to display progress on problem-solving. Complaints are put into the operating system that will facilitate the public to follow up on the performance as soon as there is progress in solving problems. It can also be used to collect feedback data and the needs of the people to use in the formulation of development projects that will be used in the fiscal year or to consider in the formulation of local policies and plans for the next fiscal year.

4.2 The model

The use of social media will help the people and the municipality work together more closely together. It will also help the people to raise themselves to become partners in the administration and formulation of their local public policy with the municipal officials. Because it will provide people with access to information on the same basis as the municipality, which, when the people have received such information, will help the people follow up to ensure that the municipality must work following the problems and needs of the area as much as possible. It will enable the people to monitor the performance of the municipality at every stage. And it will also support the people to take responsibility in the municipality's administration with more equality.

From the guidelines for promoting the use of social media to develop the administration of the local government mentioned above, they have been synthesized to create a SOUP model for promoting social media in the development of citizen engagement and local governance shown in **Figure 1**.

5. Discussion

From **Figure 1**, it shows that the SOUP model has various components:

1. Person

2. Organization/unit

3. Applications and work processes related to the implementation of social media for the development of Citizen Engagement and Local Governance

It will be presented through applications for handling various citizens who want the municipality to resolve the problem or want the municipality to use it as a policy and a local development plan. The details of such a model can be presented and classified by various three elements as follows.

5.1 Person

Figure 1 shows that persons directly involved in using the model are citizens, staff in the organization responsible for overseeing the central application's operating system, and the mayor, Including the municipal administrators. These groups will play a role and the responsibility for using social media for development, as shown in **Table 1**.

The model was assigned to different groups of people related to the use of social media. They act together both as a recipient and information sender. The

Groups	Authorities	Responsibilities
Citizen	Report a complaint and suggestions for local development	Follow up on the outcome of the complaint report and their suggestions through the application
Staffs in the agency that manages the application's operating system	• Check the correctness of the information sent by the public • Bringing information on complaints and suggestions into the application • A center for communication	• To consider and improve the language of complaints and suggestions • Forward information to the agency responsible directly and related agencies • The medium of providing information and news to the both
Mayor and municipal administrators	• Follow up on solving problems according to complaints received from the public • Consideration to make a policy and local development plans	• Supervise the operations of the responsible agency to resolve issues using operational progress notification status sent from the central application as a tool. • Bring various suggestions to be considered together with various agencies involved at regular intervals

Table 1.
Shows the roles and functions, and responsibilities of various groups in the use of social media.

municipality should set up an agency to perform this duty as a center of communication and coordination. When the citizens act as a sender of complaints and recommendations to the municipality, this one will act as a receiver and carry information to continue. At the same time, the municipality acts as a sender, that is, contacts citizens to report progress on the resolution of complaints or various policies to the public. The two parties interact with each other within the process of using social media to perform that work. It will help all parties to receive information and news equally all the time. This operation will result in making the municipality and the people can be closer to each other. It will contribute to building partnership, which is one of the critical features of local governance.

5.2 Organization

From the model presented by this study, three leading agencies are involved in adopting social media in the development, namely the system operation organization, the directly responsible organizations, and the central government agencies. These agencies will play a role and responsibility for using social media for development, as shown in **Table 2**.

The model specifies that municipalities can use social media to provide the three groups of organizations with coordinated operational guidelines in a supportive manner systematically or empowerment. The agency that serves as application supervision will serve as a connection point for the operations of the two remaining organizations to work together, not duplicate, between the central government and the municipality in terms of operations for solving problems of the people in the area, policy setting, and various development plans. It aims to create repetition, which will help the central government formulate policies that can support the municipality's policy. Because the central government will know information from the report of the application and help the central government know that what needs of residents have been developed? And the municipality has a policy for such development or not? Which central government must support the municipality's policy? This acknowledged information will help the

Organizations	Authorities	Responsibilities
An agency (new?) that is responsible for the use of the application	• Manage applications • Coordination center	• Maintain applications • Manage a database for supporting the exchange of information between citizens and municipalities.
Various departments	• Solve the problem	• Establishing a project for solving problems
that serve directly to resolve the issue	• Communicating with the people • Participation in policy formulation and local development plans	• Notification of the results of complaints • Listen to the opinions of the people to improve operations. • Report results and improve operations
Departments of central government	• Collect information about complaints and recommendations for the local development of the people • Follow up and supervise the operations of the municipality	• Create a database for decision-making in formulating policies, plans, and projects for national development. • Monitoring and supporting the performance of the municipality to be systematic

Table 2.
Shows the roles and functions, and responsibilities of organizations/agencies in the use of social media.

central government formulate policies parallel with the policy and the local development plan appropriately and be implemented more efficiently.

5.3 Applications and work processes related to the implementation of social media

From the models presented by this study, it is found that social media can increase the efficiency of municipal administration in promoting civic engagement and local governance. Central governments and municipalities should work together to create an application. It should be designed to have unique characteristics, which can support all types of social media applications that people use today, whether using YouTube, LINE, Twitter or Facebook, etc. The application must be compatible with all types of social media to receive complaints and recommendations for the development (Openness) and act as the central processor that can be converted from anywhere. The citizen can use social media as the medium for sending the information right to the mayor, the agency's head, including sending the information back to the people who own the complaint and those suggestions directly. There is no need to switch to the application or other kinds of social media by the people. But they can use the social media that they regularly use to communicate with the municipality (Uniqueness) by this application. It will act in information management to facilitate all parties to work together without creating an additional burden on all parties involved (Openness).

For example, when people are faced with a problem that needs to be solved or help from the municipality. They only use their mobile phones or computers regularly used to transmit information via social media, where they are most convenient to send such information to municipalities. The municipality then takes information into the application to connect with information to the mayor and the head of the agency involved in solving those problems. People will be able to use the application

to keep track of information related to the action taken by the municipality by the central application will send information on the progress of operations back through the social media that the public uses to send the information directly.

In addition, the applications will serve as a link for information and news between municipalities, provincial government agencies, and the central government (Sharing). It is responsible for submitting complaints and various needs to the regional agencies and the center, which can be used to formulate policies, programs, and projects that will not be duplicated with the local development policy that the municipality has already implemented. But this information can formulate policies or programs for various projects that will enhance the efficiency of municipal operations. This application will help the operation resolve the problem and respond to the needs of the people in the area more successfully.

Another benefit of using social media that this study offers is that the central government agency can use the data collected by the application to monitor municipal operations (Sharing). Because of the linkage system between the municipality's application with the central government, it gives a tool to the central government to know another part of the municipality's performance and implement the regular operational supervision system already in place. The various departments of the central government will be able to use the information in consultation or join in formulating guidelines for monitoring and promoting the municipality's performance appropriately. Social media can reduce wasted time and the operational budget of government agencies in the central government and the municipality.

The advantage of using an application is an application can adapt the use of social media with different features to be compatible with the central application (Uniqueness). This use will facilitate the people to use it well because it gives the user the feeling that it is easy to use. People can use social media in a way that they are already familiar with the use. There is no need to adjust the method of use or must change the application in any way. The feature also reduces the impact on government officials and municipal officials rejecting their use since this system does not create additional business. There will be a unit within the municipality responsible for administering this system as a facilitator for applying the application. It is an agency that facilitates communication with the people, which will enable government officials and officials of various departments within the municipality to fulfill their primary duties and responsibilities in solving problems for the people. Traditionally, it will enhance the performance of government officials and municipal officials to meet the needs of the people more efficiently.

Another advantage is that using such applications allows the public to use the various tools and various social media applications to send information about complaints or various suggestions directly to the application (Openness). After that, the application will display the progress of the municipal problem-solving operations. Information will be displayed in the system so that the public can come in and watch at any time. People can obtain information on their own. In which such opportunities will help to increase the acceptance of social media among people as well. This approach can optimize how social media is used to suit better how people use them (Uniqueness).

6. Conclusion

This chapter can analyze all the above studies against the proposed model to develop social media usage. This study proposes that there must be functional characteristics that are consistent with fundamental principles 4. That is, it can be shared (Sharing), can be used openness (Openness), practical use for space

Principles	Concepts	Implementations
Sharing (S)	A link of information and news between municipalities with provincial government agencies and the central government	A center for collecting information about complaints and various suggestions of the people to government agencies to use in the formulation of policies, plans, and projects
	The data collected by the application can be used to monitor municipal operations.	Use the information in consultation or jointly formulate guidelines for monitoring and promoting the operation of the municipality
Openness (O)	The application can support all types of social media applications commonly used by people today.	They are facilitating all parties to work together without creating additional burdens on all parties involved.
Uniqueness (U)	People can use the social media they regularly use as a means of communicating with municipalities.	A central processing unit that can convert any kind of social media information for mutual benefit
	It is easy to use.	It is an implementation that can adjust the use of social media with different features to be compatible with the application of municipal.
Partnership (P)	Helping all parties to receive information and news equally and all the time	All parties act together as a recipient and information sender
	Departments have operational guidelines that empower the performance of each other systematically	Organizations can know each other's information, which will help each organization to define policies that can be used for development consistently and efficiently.

Table 3.
Summarizes the results of comparative data analysis between social media usage and SOUP principles.

(Uniqueness), building partnerships in work. (Partnership), also known as the SOUP model. This chapter demonstrates how the municipality can strengthen social media to foster citizen engagement and develop local governance in **Table 3**.

The data analysis showed that the SOUP has some qualifications that enable municipalities to increase their capacity for action in promoting the participation of citizens. Because the municipality can provide more channels for citizens to access the management of public affairs [22, 23], the municipalities can use social media to process information that the public wishes to offer directly using the municipal application to convert all subsections [24–26]. The public does not need to change any method of use. They Just use the social media that you use regularly and send it to social media at the municipality. The application is a specially developed tool for the development of communication systems between citizens and municipalities. The application works as a source of information to the internal departments and local administrators. This application will speed the collaboration between citizens and municipalities to use social media to contact and send information to locals [27, 28]. This application will be a central processing tool to deliver the people's information directly to the mayor and responsible agencies within the municipality and at the same time. This application will enable the use of all related information. And all parties can track progress or the results of all joint actions [29, 30]. The municipality will process the application and report results to at least four stake-holders, including one is sent to the responsible agency. The second is sent to the mayor. The third is sent to the federal government. The fourth is to send it back to the people who own the matter. Therefore, all parties involved will be able to investigate all operations together jointly. Even the central government can recognize it [31, 32]. Social media will link the corrective process [33–35].

This system will support the public to ensure that the municipality will put various suggestions into operation. Because when the government agency has received the matter, the application will immediately report the results to the people who send the information directly. Referring to the people who own the story, they will know that what he proposed was met with some degree of response from the municipality. People were able to use the application in monitoring the progress of the municipality's operations in the matter that they are proposing or other matters that they are interested in following. This operating system will help both the public and the municipality work together efficiently and closer [36, 37]. Because it will facilitate the public no longer have to come to contact the government in person. People can see it on their mobile phones or any other personal communication tool. This application will be the manager of all information, which means that the application can be developed or adapted for municipalities to promote their work with their people better.

However, this kind of use is still limited, namely the laws and regulations relevant to the municipality's performance. As a result, municipalities may not fully utilize all the information they receive from their citizens via social media. Nevertheless, the open use may affect the annual administrative costs of municipal. Because obtaining certain types of information that do not meet the needs of use makes municipalities more burdensome regarding operating time and budget expenditures in screening information received from citizens to extract only information that can be utilized. In addition, there are concerns about the use of social media regarding the coordination system within the organization, which is still not a usual bureaucratic practice. Adaptation to support this kind of work. As a result, municipal authorities are unable to establish coordination practices that are not yet clear enough to foster collaboration in the form of complementary support or to empowerment performance of each other And each other systematically.

To increase the efficiency of the internal management system in supporting the use of social media. This study suggests the central government' agencies need to review and revise guidelines to support municipal use. It may be in conjunction with the municipality to define as a measure of operation to be used as a basis for monitoring and evaluating the municipality's performance, including consultation to advise the municipality to improve and develop administrative processes. These operations can increase the efficiency of the municipality's use of social media. At the same time, they may join municipalities in using social media as a regulatory tool. This implementation will create savings in the budget of the municipal administration as well.

Acknowledgements

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