

CONVERSATIONS

A publication for College of Communication alumni



Lauran Berta (CMN '09) helps shape brand communications at a boutique digital marketing firm. Read more on page 6.

Spring 2015

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Applauding achievement

By Dean Salma Ghanem



Since my arrival at DePaul, raising the profile of the college has been my main focus area. Fortunately, the impressive work of our students, faculty, alumni and

friends makes working toward this goal effortless. For example, graduate-level public relations and advertising students competed in the 2015 Arthur W. Page Society Case Study Competition in Corporate Communications and brought home both the grand prize and first prize. Our student media outlets, which include the DePaulia and Radio DePaul, continue to lead regionally and nationally, garnering multiple nominations and awards in recent competitions, and for the second year in a row, our public relations and advertising program was named a finalist for best PR Education Program of the Year by industry-leading publication PR Week.

Learning about our prolific faculty has been an enjoyable part of getting acclimated to the College of Communication. The diversity in research and areas of interest of our faculty is quite impressive, and we showcased a cross-section of this work during a winter

quarter event, Dimensions of Communication. Read about the fascinating presentations—and learn how one presenter received attention on a global level—on page 4.

Studying abroad is a great way for students to enhance their education, and we are pleased to add a new opportunity to do so this summer. Spanish Culture through Film and Social Media joins our long-standing Italian Film Studies program as an option for students who want to study abroad in June. To maximize time between quarters, we've also added a new spring break travel and study program called Miami: A Stage for the Latino Story in Media and Communication. This joint venture between public relations and Latino media and communication immerses students in the media, advertising and cultural environment of this influential market. Read more on page 10.

As alumni and friends, you are the cornerstones of our continued success and growth. Thanks to your generous support, we unveiled an important new resource this spring that will enhance learning across disciplines, as well as innovation and creativity in digital communication: the iLab. Find out more about the transformation of a computer lab into the iLab on page 3.

Scholarship support from alumni and friends like you makes a real difference. Please read the words of grateful students on page 11 to learn more about how you contribute to the educational success of students. Finally, Richard Edelman, friend of the college and CEO of Edelman, the largest public relations firm in the world, will address the Class of 2015 at the 117th Commencement Ceremony on June 14. He shares his thoughts on current trends in communication and shares advice in an interview on page 7.

With so much activity in the college, we cannot possibly fit everything into the pages of this publication. I encourage you to visit the College of Communication website for a full overview of college happenings, and be sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for additional updates. Of course, if you need to reach me, please contact me at communication@depaul.edu.



Innovation Lab prepares next generation of social media practitioners

By Jamie Sokolik

At Gatorade, it's called Mission Control. Target knows it as Guest Central, while the American Red Cross deems it the Digital Operations Center. Regardless of the name, social media command centers are quickly becoming essential to marketing and communications departments at some of the country's largest and most innovative organizations. The College of Communication now joins their ranks with the opening of the Innovation Lab, or iLab, which was based on Gatorade's pioneering model. The iLab provides hands-on experience in social media listening, analytics and insights, as well as the tools and techniques used to obtain that data for students across programs.

"This idea came directly from what we were hearing about changes in the professional world," says Matt Ragas, assistant professor and director of the public relations and advertising graduate program, who has been instrumental in conceptualizing, creating and establishing the iLab. "As more and more companies rely on social and digital media to learn about their clients, customers and audiences, it was a natural evolution for the College of Communication to provide this experience for our students."

One of the college's computer labs in the Richard M. and Maggie C. Daley Building was transformed into the iLab during spring break. With 12 new large-screen TV monitors, students can easily track different analytics, while faculty members will be able to conduct demonstrations for large groups from anywhere in the room. The front walls were knocked down to fit large windows, allowing the space to be transparent and observable, and the iLab's Mac computers will soon provide access to Crimson Hexagon's ForSight, the same social media software platform used in many professional command centers. Comprehensive and intuitive in design, the ForSight software and other social media programs will prepare students for careers in social media analytics and related disciplines.

"The iLab is equipped with hardware and software that will enable our students to get hands-on, real-world social-listening experience," says Salma Ghanem, dean of the College of Communication. "With help from our talented professors, students will become knowledgeable and up to date in the latest trends in communication research and will have a competitive advantage as they enter the workforce."

Alumna Krysten Gibson (CMN '08) agrees that the iLab will be a critical learning tool for communication students. Gibson works for VML, the full-service digital marketing and advertising agency that staffs Gatorade's Mission Control, where she has been assigned for the last five years as the supervisor of data insights. Gibson also acted as an unofficial consultant for the iLab and was instrumental in developing it in a way that will allow students to gain the most relevant professional experience.

"If I saw job applicants who had experience with this software and knew how to glean insights from data, hiring those candidates would be an easy decision," Gibson says. "Right now, pretty much everyone in these positions learns on the job. It's a gap in the industry, and DePaul is taking a leadership role in implementing the iLab."

As social media becomes increasingly vital to industries across the board, classroom application will broaden with the expectation that CMN students in all programs will benefit. "Command centers are the future of digital communications," Gibson says. "Establishing the iLab now is a huge advantage for the university and future College of Communication alumni."

Faculty entertain and inform with fast-paced presentations

By Kelsey Schagemann

As faculty, staff and students filed into CMN's auditorium on Jan. 29, several people could be heard stumbling over the phrase “PechaKucha” and debating the correct pronunciation of this tongue-twister. Loosely translated as “chit-chat” in Japanese, PechaKucha—say pe-chahk'-cha—is a presentation style that originated among a group of architects in Tokyo in 2003. In a PechaKucha event, each speaker selects 20 images to accompany his or her presentation. The images advance automatically after 20 seconds, forcing the speakers to be engaging and concise.

CMN's Dimensions of Communication event, powered by PechaKucha, offered an opportunity for five faculty members to share their latest research in an entertaining format. Check out the recaps below and visit bit.ly/cmnpresentations for the full text and images from each presentation.



A Week in the Life of a New Yorker Cartoonist

PRAD Instructor Ken Krimstein discussed the difficulties of the creative process during his presentation. He noted that approximately 50 regulars, himself included, submit 10 cartoons each week to The New Yorker, which also receives thousands of unsolicited cartoons. “Of all those, maybe 12 get into the magazine,” he said.

On Wednesdays, Krimstein frequently finds himself staring at a blank piece of paper. Joking that it looks quiet and peaceful, he assured the audience, “It’s not. It’s a raging, screaming maniac saying ... write, draw, write, draw!” By Thursday, Krimstein is still thinking, jotting down ideas in his notebook and trying to combat the demons of self-doubt. Somehow, as the weekend rolls around, the pages start filling with visuals and captions. “By midnight Monday, I’ve tortured myself into a final 10,” he stated. On a good week, Krimstein will receive a short email from The New Yorker’s cartoon editor, the sum total of which is “ok.” Krimstein is fine with that: “‘O’ and ‘k.’ No question, those are the best letters in the English language.”

Krimstein’s presentation caught the eye of the local PechaKucha organization, which invited him to speak at PechaKucha Night Chicago Volume 33 in March. Subsequently, Krimstein’s audio and slides were featured on the global PechaKucha site. Check it out at pechakucha.org/users/kenneth-krimstein.



What Ants and Bees Can Teach Us About Dirty Dishes and Household Harmony

Assistant Professor Kendra Knight, who teaches courses on relational communication, tackled the division of household chores in her presentation, with a focus on varying levels of tolerance for cleanliness. “Division of domestic labor is the third most frequent source of conflict among heterosexual married couples, behind money and child-rearing,” she said.

Knight introduced the audience to the concept of “response threshold,” which she described as “the point at which an undone household task produces such a negative stimulus so as to make a person feel compelled to attend to the task.” As an example, Knight displayed two images of trash cans, one that was almost full and one that was overflowing. For some people, the first trash can triggers a negative stimulus; for others, it’s the second image that produces an adverse reaction. When individuals have different response thresholds, the person with a lower tolerance often does more household labor. In Knight’s research, she found that this person is also more inclined to pick a fight: “They were more likely to initiate a demand/withdraw conflict pattern ... whereby one person criticizes and pursues, and the other deflects or checks out.”



When Culture Meets Social Media

Assistant Professor Jay Baglia started with a very personal story. “My partner and I had experienced a miscarriage,” he shared, explaining the impetus for his recent book, the title of which he borrowed for the presentation. Baglia and the book’s co-editor wanted to confront “the stigma of pregnancy loss and our culture’s peculiar nonresponse to it” through a series of essays.

The book features 20 communication scholars and health care practitioners offering their perspectives on this topic. Baglia focused on first-person narration in part to counter the “biomedical ‘Voice of Medicine.’” In contrast, he said, “Storytelling is subjective ... narrative gives us a great deal of valuable information about the patient experience, although this perspective is sometimes marginalized by differently trained members of the health professions.”

Baglia highlighted the book’s recurring themes, including social support, pregnancy loss in popular culture and silence. “This book is a collection of narratives, but it is also a work of activism and for activists,” Baglia asserted. “We endeavor to provide a template for change—for repair—at the relational, institutional and cultural levels regarding miscarriage and infertility.”



Paratextual Board Games and the Contemporary Media Environment

Assistant Professor Kelly Chu studies how consumers process information and interact in digital environments, as well as the relationships between cultural values and consumer behavior. In this presentation, Chu shared research she conducted on cross-cultural differences in the use of social media in China versus the United States. “I proposed that social media usage, attitudes toward social media and perceived information credibility on social media are three potential factors that influence electronic word-of-mouth,” she explained.

To test this hypothesis, Chu surveyed college students in both countries about how and why they use social media. She found that Chinese students spend much more time on social media than their American counterparts. How each culture perceives the credibility of online information also influences their online interactions, with the Chinese consumers relying more heavily on personal sources of information. Chu, whose background is in advertising, concluded that “social media marketers should develop culturally meaningful global marketing campaigns to target consumers with different cultural backgrounds.”



Communicating Pregnancy Loss: Narrative as a Method for Change

Associate Professor Paul Booth, an expert in fan studies, dived into the world of board games for his presentation. “The resurgence in board games reflects our complex media environment,” he argued, explaining that licensed games, in particular, offer insight into how people interpret media. “Rather than transmedia, adaptation or franchise, I prefer the term ‘paratext,’ which means ‘around the text,’” Booth said.

In his research, Booth discovered that many of the games are quite complex, even for players who are familiar with the media upon which the game is based. “In the ‘Game of Thrones’ games, players have to negotiate and use diplomacy to form alliances with others,” he said. Meanwhile, a game based on “The Lord of the Rings” takes advantage of gaps between known action scenes to allow players to create new narratives. “Paratextual board games allow us to see the media environment as constructed not by absolute delineations between one text and another, but as a series of shifting interpretations of media texts,” Booth concluded.

Forward-thinking mindset and appreciation of the past launches alumna’s digital media career

By Jamie Sokolik

Flash back to 2005, when online communication was in its infancy. Facebook had been popular for about a year, and Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey was still an undergraduate student. Blogging had started picking up speed just a few years prior, and newspapers were beginning to realize the benefits of digital content.

In the midst of this quickly evolving digital landscape, Lauran Berta (CMN '09) enrolled at DePaul to study communication. When she secured an internship at the Chicago Sun-Times, she realized that the field was about to make a big shift. “Journalism was so different at the time, but I could see the direction we were headed,” she says. “I’ve been back to campus since graduating, and I love seeing all of the social media classes in the journalism department now. It’s fantastic.”

After interning for a year, Berta was offered a full-time digital media position at the Sun-Times, which she accepted, and completed her degree at night. After six years with the Sun-Times, Berta decided she was ready for a new challenge and took a position as digital content specialist for Wirtz Beverage Group, a liquor distributor headquartered in Chicago. “One of the really appealing things about the position at Wirtz was that the social media and digital division was new,” she says. “We were able to shape what digital would look like for the company, as well as what roles each of us would play.”

Berta’s responsibilities at Wirtz varied greatly, from managing corporate communications to writing press releases and blog posts to developing an e-commerce site. One of her favorite duties was helping with event activations, which are intended to help raise awareness of products or launch a brand into a new market. Berta worked at many of these

events, including the Life is Beautiful festival in downtown Las Vegas.

Prior to the festival, Berta wrote and distributed press releases, contacted media, and created blog posts and other digital content to help generate buzz. During the event, she live-tweeted and captured photo and video content to share with key partners. “Marketing in this way is extremely important to brands because it provides the opportunity to bring your online voice to life,” she says. “It’s amazing to experience all of your hard work at the event and to interact with your followers and get their reactions in real time.”

After she had spent almost a year and a half with Wirtz, Berta’s LinkedIn profile caught the eye of entrepreneur Marc Landsberg, the founder of SOCIALDEViant, a boutique digital marketing firm in the West Loop. Landsberg was so impressed with Berta’s skills and experience that he reached out to her to discuss a job opening. “I just loved his vision,” Berta says. “His goal is to be the world’s kindest company. That’s where the focus is. It’s a wonderful atmosphere to work in.” Berta focuses primarily on the firm’s Leinenkugel account, shaping the creative content and identifying the best tone, voice and image for the brewing company’s brand.

Looking back on her career path so far, Berta asserts that her journalism background has been immensely helpful at every turn. “The background in the history of journalism that I received at DePaul—really understanding how we got to where we are today—has been a huge benefit in my career,” she says. “When you have that knowledge, you’re better able to write diverse copy and understand different audiences. It’s an invaluable tool to have in this fast-paced, ever-evolving field.”



Lauran Berta’s top four tips for recent graduates:

Keep up on trends.

Every industry is constantly changing. Always read, listen and learn. The second you stop doing those things is the second that you get left behind.

Use DePaul’s resources.

DePaul has so much to offer its students and alumni. Attend alumni events, meet with career advisors and keep in touch with your professors. There’s always someone who can impart advice when you need it most.

Don’t network. Make friends.

Instead of networking, make friends. Surround yourself with people you admire and who will keep you inspired. They might open doors you never knew existed.

Don’t be afraid to make leaps.

Lack of previous experience doesn’t necessarily mean an opportunity is off limits. Everyone has a unique history and skill set that can be more valuable than industry-specific experience. Leverage what you know to bring a fresh perspective to the table.

Legendary PR executive shares advice and wisdom

Richard Edelman, the president and chief executive officer of the eponymous public relations firm, is the commencement speaker for the College of Communication and the College of Computing and Digital Media. DePaul will confer an honorary degree on Edelman during the June 14 ceremony.

Founded in 1952, Edelman is the world’s largest public relations firm. The company started in Chicago and currently employs more than 5,000 individuals in 65 cities around the world. Richard Edelman, who holds both a BA and an MBA from Harvard University, has been recognized by PR Week, Glassdoor and the Arthur W. Page Society’s Hall of Fame for his outstanding leadership and expertise. Edelman shares his thoughts here on the PR industry and communication in general, and offers advice for success.

On your blog, you frequently discuss trends in communication. What are some of the recent trends you’ve identified? How is the PR landscape changing?

One of the key trends is the increasing overlap of brand marketing and corporate reputation. This means that the chief marketing officer and the chief communications officer must be working together consistently. Some companies, such as IBM, GE and PayPal, have actually combined the two functions or have moved the CCO into the CMO job.

A second trend is the emergence of a four-leaf clover media ecosystem. The first leaf is mainstream media; the second leaf is born-digital media [materials that originate in media form], such as the Huffington Post; the third leaf is social, such as Facebook; and the fourth leaf is owned, which is best expressed as every company having the opportunity to be a media company. The third trend is dispersion of authority, as the average informed person has eight daily sources of information and is checking news throughout the day.

The agency you lead is international in scope, your career has spanned the globe and you are a regular speaker at the World Economic Forum.



What is the value of PR in our increasingly connected world?

While the PR business has always been about promotion of brands and protection of corporate reputation, there’s a new area of opportunity related to the C-suite [senior executives]. Specifically, this opportunity includes strategic counsel to the C-suite to evolve the company strategy on supply chain, product composition and treatment of colleagues. As the legendary Bill Nielsen, formerly of Johnson & Johnson, has said, “We are the conscience of the corporation.”

What are some of the main challenges facing the PR industry today?

Key issues for the PR industry include the shrinking of our main channel of distribution—mainstream media; the more ideological born-digital media, which is challenging our ability to represent clients in certain sectors; the overlap with other marketing services firms, such as advertising agencies or digital firms; and finally, the changing spending patterns of multinational clients who prefer to invest more in fewer markets.

Throughout your career, you have worked for major corporations, nongovernmental organizations and family businesses. What are some of

the key lessons you’ve learned along the way? What advice would you offer to recent graduates starting out in their careers?

Make connections with members of the media as you begin your career because one day, the cub reporter will become the senior editor. Be active in your community as a volunteer or board member because you will make important connections and be a smarter PR person. Don’t forget to make time for your family; attend games, plays or whatever interests you; and keep physically fit.



Associate Professor and Media and Cinema Studies MA Program Director Kelly Kessler was selected as one of 20 university faculty members nationwide to participate in the selective Television Academy Foundation Faculty Seminar in Los Angeles. The seminar gave Kessler the opportunity to meet with directors, writers, designers, producers and other industry professionals. She also toured Warner Bros. and DreamWorks Studios, heard from the creators and writers of Netflix's "Orange Is the New Black" and the CW's "Jane the Virgin," and went backstage for a taping of ABC's hit show "Dancing with the Stars." Kessler is pictured at left with actress Geena Davis.

The DePaulia placed second in two categories at the 2014 Pinnacle Awards. The student-run newspaper received second place in the Four-Year Weekly Newspaper of the Year category, and David Webber (CMN '14) was honored in the Best Sports Columnist category. The Pinnacle Awards recognize the best college media organizations and individual work in print, broadcast or online produced within the academic year. Additionally, the DePaulia took home second place at the 2014 National College Media Convention Best of Show Awards, sponsored by the Associated Collegiate Press, in the Four-Year Weekly Tabloid category. More recently, the DePaulia was awarded first place in General Excellence by the Illinois College Press Association in March. The newspaper took home 17 awards, the most of any newspaper in its division.



Six entries from "Good Day DePaul," the student-run television news program, placed in the Society of Professional Journalists 2014 Region 5 Mark of Excellence Awards in categories including Television Feature, Television General News Reporting, Television Sports Reporting and Best All-Around Television Newscast. Nicole Suarez won the Television Feature Category for her story on Professor Clara Orban's "World of Wine" course. Her feature will now advance to the national competition.



Two DePaul teams placed extremely well in the 2015 Case Study Competition in Corporate Communications, a national competition sponsored by the Arthur W. Page Society in alliance with the Institute for Public Relations. Students Renata Sandor, Andrew Tonne and Maggie Christ took home the overall grand prize of \$5,000 for their entry, "Cigarettes Out. Health In. An Analysis of the Rebrand of CVS Health." Additionally, Sue Susenburger, Lily Kim and Allie Kuopos took home a first-place prize of \$2,500 for their case, "General Motors' Corporate Culture Crisis: An Assessment of the Ignition Switch Recall."



Alex Zadeii, a senior in the public relations and advertising program, was accepted to the American Association of Advertising Agencies' Multicultural Advertising Internship Program. Upon graduating, Zadeii will work as an account management intern for mcgarrybowen in New York City. The 10-week, paid summer internship offers students practical work experience and networking opportunities.



Assistant Professor Lisa Calvente was awarded a 2015 Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Faculty, administered by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The fellowship provides a stipend for a one-year sabbatical, as well as grant funding for research, travel or publication.



In May, Instructor and Journalist in Residence Chris Bury served as a judge for the Better Government Association's 2014 Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards for Investigative Reporting. The awards honor the best government-related investigative reporting in the Midwest. Additionally, Bury received a first-place National Headliner Award in the Business and Consumer Reporting category for his piece "What Works: Detroit Seamstress," which he reported with Rick Wilkinson for Al Jazeera America.

For the second year in a row, CMN was one of five finalists in the 2015 PR Week Awards for PR Education Program of the Year. The award was open to any undergraduate or graduate curriculum taught during fall 2013 or spring 2014 and recognizes achievements in a variety of areas, such as curriculum, faculty quality and advances in enrollment.



Radio DePaul won several awards at the 2015 Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Awards in March. DePaul was recognized for best event promo and best public affairs event/promotion, as well as most innovative program. The latter award went to "The Sister Cities Connection," a collaboration between Scratch Radio in Birmingham, UK, and Radio DePaul. The radio station was nominated for a total of 14 awards.



Assistant Professors Mike Devlin and Sydney Dillard were selected to participate in the Advertising Educational Foundation 2015 Visiting Professor Program, a short-term fellowship for professors of advertising, marketing, communication and the liberal arts. Devlin and Dillard will be placed with an advertising agency, media company or marketing organization with the goal of building connections and inspiring ideas between academia and industry. The two-week fellowship takes place in June.



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Around the college

1 Associate Professor Paul Booth published two books this spring, “Playing Fans: Negotiating Fandom and Media in the Digital Age” and “Game Play: Paratextuality in Contemporary Board Games.” Both books draw on Booth’s interest in pop culture, new media and fandom. In “Playing Fans,” Booth takes a close look at the complicated relationship between the entertainment industry and the fans it courts, arguing that pastiche and parody best define this contemporary movement. Booth homes in on a specific form of pop media in “Game Play,” which explores the increasing popularity of strategic board games associated with TV, film and book franchises. To learn more about Booth’s research, see page 5.

2 Sixteen students explored Miami’s vibrant media industry during a five-day immersion trip held over spring break. Miami: A Stage for the Latino Story in Media and Communication offered students an inside look at Latino media outlets, advertising agencies, neighborhoods and the unique Miami Latino vibe. Online classes before and after the trip enriched students’ understanding of the Latino media landscape. For a final project, students presented hybrid photographic and video projects on the history, cultural discourses, media and other aspects of Latino culture in Miami. The course, which is part of the Latino Media & Communication (LM&C) program, was created by Cristina Benitez, visiting instructor and director of LM&C, and Maria De Moya, assistant professor.

3 DePaul hosted its annual Scholarship Luncheon at the JW Marriott on April 14 to honor the university’s generous donors. Current CMN donor-funded scholarships include the Communication Dean’s Council Endowed Scholarship, the Joe and Mary Anne Cappel Endowed Scholarship, the College of Communication Scholarship, the Carlos Hernandez Meritorious Endowed Scholarship for Undergraduate Journalism, the Kat McCullough Endowed Scholarship, the Reach for Excellence Award in Public Relations funded by Robert A. Kornecki and the Wilke Family Endowed Scholarship in Communication. To learn how to create a scholarship in your name, contact Janet Trzaska, director of development, at jtrzaska@depaul.edu or (312) 362-8930.



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4 An evening reception at the Palmer House Hilton on April 29 brought CMN alumni and friends together to meet Dean Salma Ghanem, who expressed her great enthusiasm for the college, gratitude to its alumni and excitement for its future. Several beloved faculty members and graduates from across the decades compared notes on industry trends and shared stories from their DePaul days.

5 PRAD students participated in several career-focused events earlier this year:

- Mad for PRAD, sponsored by the DePaul Career Center, connected alumni with current students for roundtable conversations about the public relations and advertising industries. Pictured: Alumni speakers Colette McLaughlin (CMN ‘13) and Fran Rugo (CMN ‘12). Photo credit: Amal Saleh (LAS ‘14).

- Recruiters, editors and recent graduates served on a panel focused on writing in public relations and advertising. Acing the Writing Test was sponsored by Edelman, Jasculca Terman, TMP Worldwide and DePaul.

- Industry experts stopped by campus for the Career Center’s Real Talk About Interviews, which offered an inside look at strategies and techniques to help students shine during the application process.

- Students learned key steps—and what not to do—when applying for full-time paid internships in advertising during How to Get That Summer Ad Internship, a panel featuring five recruiters from four different agencies.

THANK YOU FOR...

... all the things that make DePaul awesome! Your gifts help support Radio DePaul, where I used to work. Now, I have a job at WGN Radio. Thank you for your generosity; you helped make this school financially possible for me.

—Jacob Alderman
Communication and media



... being so courageous! It takes someone with a big heart to give back. I am very thankful for your generous and meaningful gifts.

—Mirella Montesinos
Communication studies

... making my time at DePaul the best years of my life.

—Alex Romen
Journalism

... realizing how amazing DePaul is and making it possible for students like me to go to a great school.

—Kyla Patterson
Public relations and advertising



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