

South Bay Apple MUG Macintosh

February 2017

A Monthly CUPFUL for South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members

Five Resolutions to Simplify Your Tech Life, by Brian X Chen

In 2017, why not try a new kind of New Year's resolution? Instead of just hitting the gym and dropping some pounds, consider changing some personal habits to simplify the tech in your life. If you are like most people, there are things you do with tech that could use some tweaking. Strengthening your password security, for one, would benefit you tremendously in an era when hacks are rampant. For another, purging the e-junk you have accumulated over the years would help the environment and your sanity. While you're at it, start doing maintenance on your electronics to make sure they work smoothly this year. Here are my top recommendations for resolutions to abide by to make tech less frustrating in the new year.

Clean Up Your Password Hygiene - P.U. — what's that smell? It's your bad password hygiene. You are probably using the same password across multiple websites for banking, shopping, social media and email. That's understandable: A person can only memorize so many passwords. But in 2016, Yahoo reminded everybody that reusing passwords is a very bad idea, after it revealed that 500 million Yahoo accounts were compromised in 2014, in addition to 1 billion accounts that were hacked in 2013. If your Yahoo account password was the same as ones you used elsewhere, those accounts were vulnerable, too.

Start off 2017 by spending a few hours logging into each of your accounts and creating unique, strong passwords. To make this easier, use applications like LastPass or 1Password, which are password-managing apps that let you use one master password to unlock a vault of passwords to log in to all of your internet

Jan 25 Meeting iCloud Demystified, by George Wilde

iCloud Computing? What is it? What can you do with it? Apple's current cloud computing and cloud storage service, called iCloud, is a replacement for Apple's previous MobileMe service. Because iCloud has evolved in multiple directions since the time of MobileMe, you may find that some features you liked previously are still there, perhaps under another name. Also there are many new features - some of which you might like and others that you might hate. You may already be using some of the newer features of the iCloud system without even knowing it. At our upcoming meeting I'll show you some of the most useful features and help you get started on adding any that you'd like to try.

Don't miss the meeting! See page 2 for details.

The election of MUG officers for 2017 was held at the November meeting. The results were:

Directors: Dave Nathanson, Arnold Silver, George

Wilde, Joan King, Pete Myers President: Kent McDonald

VP: vacant

Treasurer: CW Mitchell Secretary: Wayne Inman

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Meetings: Lomita Veteran's Hall, 1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita Mail: PO Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA

> 90277-0432 Phone: (310) 644-3315 Email: info@sbamuq.com

Website: http://www.sbamug.com

Welcome to the SBAMUG South Bay Apple Mac User Group

Members, friends and colleagues are invited to attend our monthly meetings (usually the last Wed of the month). The \$35 annual membership dues entitle you to receive this monthly newsletter by mail or online, plus many more benefits (page 8). To become a member or get more info please check our websiite.



Lomita Veteran's Hall, 1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita

SBAMUG Meeting Format:

6:30—7:30 p.m. Questions & Answers and Sharing: *Everyone* is welcome, beginners encouraged

7:30—7:50 p.m. 'iSocial' – shoot the Mac breeze with others over a cookie*

7:50—8:00 p.m. Announcements

7:50—9:00 p.m Program

*Refreshments provided; donations appreciated! Submit suggestions for topics or speakers, or articles, ideas & original artwork for this newsletter to pimyerz@gmail.com by the last Wednesday of each month. Articles may be edited to fit space.

Officers & Volunteers:

President: Kent McDonald VP: open Secretary: Wayne Inman Treasurer: CW

Mitchell

Directors at Large: Dave Nathanson, Margaret Wehbi, Arnold Silver, George Wilde, Joan King,

Clarence Baisdon, Pete Myers PD Disk Editor: Jim Pernal Membership: CW Mitchell

Member Development: Pete Myers Programming: Kent McDonald

Greeter: open

Server Director: Dave Nathanson Newsletter: Pete Myers, Bill Berks

USPS Liaison: CW Mitchell

Refreshments: Arnold Silver/member

SBAMUG Monthly Calendar

Jan 25: iCloud Feb 22: Wunderlist

Other Meetings:

- 1st Wed each month SBAMUG Core Group, 7:30 pm. Join Google+ SBAMUG community, or email: info@sbamuq.com.
- 2nd Sat. each month SMOG, 9AM in Costa Mesa, ocmug.org
- Last Sat. each month Northrop Grumman-Ham Radio
 Computer Swap Meet, 7--11:30 a.m. Meet at SE corner of Marine/Aviation Blvd, Redondo Beach
- Los Angeles Portable Users Group: Mac OS X, iPhone, iPod, MacBook, etc., <u>.lapug.org/</u>
- Find more: http://www.apple.com/usergroups/

Membership Report – 101 members!

Please wear membership card as your name tag - you may notice your first name is in larger letters on your card - so it can be used as a name tag at the meetings.:)

Welcome New Members: Marie Oliva

Renewals:John Gebhard, Wayne Arnold, Marie Cooper, Judith Edgington, Lynne Handy, Bill Lee, Hyim Levy

If your name is not spelled right or your expiration date is wrong, contact cwmitchell@sbamug.com for correction. Or contact CW for everything membership, dues and benefits. Please watch for your renewal letter, then sign and date it and return it with \$35 check (in enclosed self-addressed envelope) or bring letter with payment to meeting.

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SBAMUG December 2016/January 2017 Shareware

This is the Dec/Jan shareware article. This New Year brings a major change. I will no longer make the physical CD that I used to make every other month. Back in the 80's I was told there were lines for the monthly "PD Floppy" of the month at our club. This was before the public internet and even the modems to get the shareware off of BBS's were rare. There have been so few sales of the PD-CD as of late, and so the core group agreed with me to drop it.

There is a plus side to this. I've run across interesting programs that are often free or low cost, only to find they were only available from the Mac App store. I couldn't legally redistribute the programs, and if I did they would be tied to my Apple ID. The first six items below are included in the Dec CD. The other are Jan, three from the App store. So I'll start including the URL's to the non-App store programs so you can download them directly.

EtreCheck-3.zip Free utility program to gather all sorts of info on your Mac and copies it to your clipboard. Deletes any personally identifiable information. You will then paste the results into an email for help or on Apple's discussion forums. This version adds hard drive smart status to the info. OS X 10.6+ Intel

FanControl.zip a very geeky fan control preference pane type of program. Lets you set a low temp to start ramping up your Mac's fans, and a high temperature when to run fans at full. Could help if you run programs that stress your Mac. Requires a terminal command to uninstall, so I'd recommend beginners avoid this one. Free OSX 10.6+

Shapes_4.8.4.zip A simple diagraming application. Shareware \$9.99, OSX 10.8+ Intel 64 Bit

Skim-1.4.24.dmg A PDF reader and note taking program to mark up PDF's. Aimed at scientific papers, it can be used for more general tasks. Free Intel 10.9+

textsoap8.zip A program to clean up text. Remove unwanted characters, change capitalization, remove carriage returns, etc. \$44.95 OSX 10.10+ Intel

Thunderbird 45.5.1.dmg A powerful alternative email program. Attachment reminders, all sorts of filters are a few of the features. Has database lookup of many email and ISP delivery settings, saving you the effort. Latest version has security updates. Free OSX 10.6+

Acorn A bit map image editing program. Designed to be easy to use. Is layer based. \$29.99 OS X 10.10+ Intel http://www.flyingmeat.com

DefaultFolderX-5.1.dmg This program enhances open and save dialog boxes. Has features like recently used folders. Speeds up finding applications. Shareware \$34.95 OSX 10.10+ http://www.stclairsoft.com

foreversave.zip A utility to auto save document and simultaneously doing version backup. Shareware \$19.95, OSX 10.6+ Intel https://toolforcesoftware.com

GPX Viewer2.9.2 First Mac App store App. Lets you view GPX files from many GPS devices. \$0.99 OSX 10.10+

Housekeeping Book 1.4 A program to keep track of simple household expenses. Not powerful enough to be a quicken replacement. Can generate reports to paper or PDF files. Has CSV import/export to spreadsheet programs. App Store. \$2.99 OSX 10.7+

Mactracker_7.6.3.zip A great database program with info on every Mac made. Additionally it covers mice, displays, keyboards, scanners, printers, "I" Devices, etc. Updated version covers the latest Apple hardware releases. Free OSX 10.7+ http://www.mactracker.ca

SuperPhoto 2.21 Final item this month is from the App store. Adds effects to your photos. Free with 208 effects, additional effects are in-app purchases. OSX 10.8+

See you at the January meeting. The PD CD for November - December 2016 will be available at the January meeting.

Jim Pernal PD Editor

Chat Room

Thanks to Louise Polsky for donating her used iMac to the Girls and Boys Club (bgclaharbor.org). If you have a Mac, iPad or iPhone to donate, email me at pimyerzz@gmail.com.

THE REVENGE OF THE ANALOG: Real Things and Why They Matter, by David Sax (PublicAffairs, \$25.99.) Analog isn't going anywhere, Sax argues, but is in fact experiencing a bracing revival that's not just about nostalgia. Critic Michiko Kakutani writes that Sax provides "a powerful counternarrative to the techno-utopian belief that we would live in an ever-improving, all-digital world." Need any more convincing? Kakutani just named this one of her Top 10 Books of 2016.

Five Resolutions, from page 1

accounts. They also automatically generate strong passwords for you.

Then add an extra layer of protection by enabling twofactor verification on your accounts whenever the option is available. When you enter your password, you will receive a message (usually a text) with a one-time code that you must enter before logging in. Taking these two simple steps will help safeguard you from the inevitable hacks that arise this year.

Maintain Your Devices - After regular use, our smartphones and computers start to feel sluggish and short-lived, but a bit of maintenance can make them feel brand new. First, check the condition of your batteries. With iPhone and iPads, you can hook the devices up to a Mac and run the app coconutBattery, which reveals battery statistics. With Android devices, you can use the app Battery by MacroPinch. If your battery is on its last legs, it's time to order a new one or schedule an appointment at a repair shop to replace it.

If your devices feel sluggish, freeing up some storage can also make a dramatic difference. Start by purging apps you never use anymore. Then do something about those photos you never look at: back up all your photos to the cloud using services like <u>Google Photos</u> and then delete them from your device to start the new year with a fresh photo roll.

Show your gadgets some physical love, too. Give your screens a good wipe with a wetted cloth. If you own a desktop computer, open it up and use compressed air to blow out the dust. Do this basic maintenance every six months and your devices will run smoothly for many years.

Mind Your Infrastructure - We don't hesitate to buy new smartphones every two years — but that neglected, ugly Wi-Fi router tucked away in the corner of the living room may be the most important tech product to upgrade every few years. Among all tech headaches, there is nothing more annoying than a sluggish, spotty internet connection.

Start off each new year by doing some checks on your internet infrastructure. If your router is more than three years old, you probably need a new one that is compatible with today's faster, smarter wireless standards. If you are relying on a router provided by

your broadband provider, you should probably buy a more powerful stand-alone router.

The Wirecutter, the product recommendations website owned by The New York Times, recommends <u>TP-Link's Archer C7</u> as the best router for most people. (If you have less technical know-how, I recommend the Wi-Fi system from Eero, which offers a smartphone app that holds your hand through the network setup.)

Be Less Wasteful - Unused gadgets and power cables take up lots of space in drawers and attics. This e-waste would be better off sold or donated to someone in need, or recycled for their precious metals. During spring cleaning season, make plans to get this unwanted junk out of your life. Companies like Amazon and Gazelle offer headache-free trade-in services for selling used electronics. Just punch in the gadget you are trying to trade in, like a used iPhone or Samsung Galaxy device, and the sites offer a quote for how much money or Amazon store credit you can get in exchange for the gear. Then pack up the outdated hardware, slap on a shipping label, drop it off at a shipping center and wait for the money to roll in.

There is bound to be unsellable e-junk in your pile. Fortunately, all Best Buy locations will take your used electronics and recycle them for free. Just bag the items up and drop them off at the store's customer-service counter, and the retailer will take care of the rest.

Be a Smarter Shopper - To get great deals on electronics, there is <u>no need to wait until Black Friday</u> <u>or Cyber Monday</u>. Carefully research high-quality, long-lasting items you want and buy them when their prices drop a significant amount. This technique can be used when online shopping for just about anything, but especially for tech products that decrease in price as they age.

Web tools like <u>Camel Camel Camel</u> and <u>Keepa</u> make price tracking on Amazon.com easy. On their websites, just do a search on the name of the item, and the sites will pull up a price history. From there, you can create a tracker to alert you via email whenever a price drops to a desired amount.

Many deals that emerge throughout the year are as good, or better, than the ones on Black Friday. You just have to know how to spot them.

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Another way to save money is to consider <u>buying used</u> <u>products</u> whenever possible. Be on the lookout for sales of used or refurbished electronics from reputable brands like Apple, GameStop, Amazon and Gazelle. Before you buy a used item, read about its condition carefully: Often, products sold as used were barely touched before they were returned by a customer, or they were restored to good-as-new condition by a refurbishing center.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/28/technology/ personaltech/five-resolutions-to-simplify-your-techlife.html?

Apple AirPods - Bluetooth With Less Fiddling?, by podfeet

The promise of the AirPods is many fold. One aspect is that they're supposed to make pairing much easier. Let's see if Apple really got rid of this major annoyance. We'll start with the first experience of opening them up.

Packaging and Setup - The AirPods come in a very small plastic case that acts as the charger. The case itself charges the AirPods, so It has a Lightning port on the bottom.

When I first opened the AirPods. I pulled them out of the box, and opened Bluetooth on my phone and tried to pair them. I got the dreaded "Pairing Unsuccessful" even though they were in my list of available Bluetooth devices. I put them back in the box, and woke up my iPhone. Then I simply opened the box. Immediately a beautiful little screen slid up from the bottom with a picture of the AirPods in their case and one button that said Connect. I tapped it. Instantly the screen changed to Podfeet's AirPods and it showed me a picture of the two AirPods with their two different battery charges and the case showing its charge, and a done button. So, yeah, open the box, tap two buttons, you're done. Put them in your ears and when they detect they're in place, they give you a lovely chime in your ears.

The second part of the AirPods' magic is that pairing is synced through iCloud. This means that any device you have that's logged into your iCloud is automatically paired. I whipped open my iPad Pro, tapped on Bluetooth, tapped on Podfeet's AirPods, and boom, I was connected. No pairing.

Then I went to my MacBook Pro, saw Podfeet's AirPods

under the Bluetooth icon in my menu bar, selected connect ... and nuthin'. Tried again. And again. And again, I complained to Pat Dengler and Steven Goetz on Telegram. Tried again. Grrr. Threatened to call AppleCare. Opened iCloud in system prefs. It suggested I log in, which it does ALL THE LIVE LONG DAY. I logged in yet again, but still no joy. So I rebooted the Mac and suddenly I was able to connect to my AirPods.

I titled this article "Apple AirPods - Bluetooth With Less Fiddling?" because I think having to reboot my Mac is a LOT more fiddling than I wanted. They work great now, but still that wasn't exactly a joyful experience.

Fit - I find the AirPods to be extremely comfortable, almost to the level of forgetting I have them in my ears. I took them on a walk and a run and they stayed in my ears perfectly. However, I'm one of the lucky ones who has ears made for earbuds. We had heard from early reviewers that these stayed in difficult ears much better than the traditional Apple EarPods, so Steve was cautiously optimistic that maybe he could use them too. Regular earbuds simply fall right out of his ears. Sadly, while the AirPods don't fall out of his ears, they also don't go into his ears. Unless he pushes on them with his fingers, the sound isn't at all good.

Sound Quality - In spite of this problem, Steve agreed to take on the task of talking about AirPods' sound quality for music.

To perform this review I compared the AirPods' music reproduction quality against six other listening devices. I tested two sets of wired, over-the-ear headphones: the Sennheiser HD 203's that I use for monitoring the live Nosillacast, and the Bose TP-1As that Allison uses when she records and monitors the NosillaCast. I also listened with two sets of wired earbud-style headphones: the Sennheiser Sport that goes around behind your head, and Apple's own wired Earpods. And lastly I compared the AirPods to two sets of Bluetooth headphones: the Jabra Sport Wireless+ that hook on your ears (these are the ones I use for exercise) and the Trekz AfterShokz boneconducting headphones that Bart and Terry told us about.

So what were the results? First, I expected the AirPods' sound quality would be similar to Apple's wired EarPods, and sure enough I could barely discern any differences in sound quality. But what surprised me is how good the AirPods (and EarPods) sounded against their strongest competitor, the Bose TP-1A over-ear headphones. Although the TP-1A's are not Bose's highest end headphones, they do produce very good sound quality across a wide range of music. The AirPods produce a very crisp sound with no

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hints of compression and remarkably good sound across the spectrum, from low to high. Only in the bass department did the Bose headphones outperform the AirPods, but not by very much.

Music quality from all of the other listening devices I tried was considerably degraded from that of the AirPods. The bottom line is that I would definitely wear AirPods to listen to music, they produce great sound quality across a wide range of music ... if only they would stay in my ears.

Consistent Connectivity - If you've used Bluetooth headphones before, you know a big problem can be getting the signal to travel from your phone through your body to your headphones. I tested the AirPods in my Spi-Belt (which is a thin nylon bag that goes around your waist). I tried the phone in the front and in the back and no matter how I moved I could not get the signal to break up. I suspect that because there's two headphones both receiving Bluetooth, you might have better success getting a signal than with other headphones where only one does the receiving.

Controlling Audio with AirPods - There's one feature of the AirPods that is a pretty big downside to me. There are no buttons on the AirPods, so you have to use Siri to interact with them. As we all know, Siri insists on having an Internet connection to do pretty much anything. You can simply be asking her to dial a phone number that is stored locally on your iPhone and she still has to have Internet. This can create some problems with using Siri on AirPods.

I like to fast forward through ads in podcasts if I've heard them before. It's pretty easy to do on AirPods, you simply double tap on one of them, wait for the Siri ready noise, and say "fast forward 38 seconds". She'll come back and say, "Ok, fast forwarding 38 seconds". That's great! Unless you don't have an Internet connection in which case she does nothing at all. I walk next to the Pacific Ocean and it turns out it's incredibly difficult to provide cell service next to gigantic bodies of water. Some of my path has Internet but some of it doesn't. The intermittent success of this is really irritating. I do like that I can be specific about how far forward or back I want to go, but having it not work sometimes is a giant waste of time.

Ok, let's keep going. What if I need to turn the volume up? Same problem, only Siri to do this. Skip to the next item on my playlist? Nope. Not if there's no Internet. If I

were able to program the controls, I would make double-tap go forward in a podcast whatever I've told my app is my default, and maybe triple-tap to go back. But nooooo.

You can control the audio using your paired device, so if you're on a plane (or the beach) you can still fast forward and rewind and change volume by hand, but if you're exercising it's kind of a pain to do It that way.

Pause - One thing is really cool though. To pause audio, you simply remove one of the AirPods from your ear. Super easy. I especially like this because it could be a useful cue to someone who tries to talk to you that *now* you're listening. Very good design.

Another nice feature is that you can use just one AirPod at a time, and charge the other one in the case. With a promise of 25 hours of battery life from the case, you could use the AirPods in series and get double that. Pretty cool innovation. It's important to also note that if you're listening to stereo music, the single AirPod will combine both stereo tracks into a mono track so you don't lose half your music.

You can change the behavior of double-tap on AirPods but not to anything useful. You can change it to play/pause (which is harder than taking one AirPod out in my opinion) or make double-tapping do nothing at all. Gee, that's super useful. I suppose you could prank someone and make them think their AirPods were broken!

The controls to change this behavior are in a weird place. On your iOS device, open up Bluetooth, tap on the "I" next to your AirPods, and then you get the controls. Along with the usual disconnect and forget this device, you can change their name and mess up double-tap as I described.

You can also turn off automatic ear detection. This is really dumb because it disables the play/pause when you remove one from your ear, and the headphones will still play music even when they're not in your ear!

Both AirPods have a microphone and for some reason Apple thought it would be useful for you to make one of them stop working. Which would also be dumb. So your big control set is to disable all of the good features, but not change the behavior to something else. How about doubletap to fast forward the amount set in your podcast app and triple tap to go back...without needing an Internet connection? Oh, I said that already, didn't I?

Phone Calls - On my long walks I often like to chat on the phone to Pat or Lindsay. With my Sennheiser headphones they complained of wind noise. Then I got the Smartbean

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adapter I've talked a lot about that gives Bluetooth to any wired headphones. It didn't occur to me that it would solve the wind problem but it did. I keep the Smartbean clipped under my shirt, and it bypasses the mic on the headphones and uses its own mic. That means I have zero wind noise because my shirt acts as a perfect windscreen.

But then Bart and Terry talked me into getting the Trekz Titanium bone-conducting headphones and I was back to wind noise complaints. It was time to test the AirPods out with voice calls. Apple says "An additional accelerometer in each AirPod detects when you're speaking, enabling a pair of beam-forming microphones to focus on the sound of your voice, filtering out external noise to make your voice sound clearer than ever before."

I tested the AirPods with a call to Lindsay and she noticed something really interesting. She said that if I was not talking, she could hear the wind, my footsteps, and cars driving by were pretty loud. But as soon as I started talking, she very clearly heard mostly me and hardly any background noise. Overall she said they sounded great, and on my end her audio was perfect.

I should mention that a quick double tap of an AirPod was all it took to answer the phone when she called. It's also the way you initiate a new call, using Siri to access your contacts. If you have an Internet connection. Did I mention that already? Seems I might have...

Latency - One of the things people find with Bluetooth is that there's a lot of latency which means they're bad as real-time monitors. For a test, I chose a video by Jenny Nicholson, who does these hilarious videos about super hero movies. I'm happy to say that there was *no* lag whatsoever.

But I didn't think that was enough of a test. Steve and I got on a Skype call with me on my iPad and him on his iMac. I made him say "beep beep beep" to me a bunch of times. Partly so I could be sure to see the beginning of the words for the lag question but I have to admit part of it was just because it was funny to watch him say it. Again, not a discernible split second of lag. I don't know how Apple conquered this but it sure seems they've done it

Random Other Bits and Bobs - When I walk somewhere with my traditional headphones in, I can rip them off and just toss them wherever I am. But with AirPods, you have

to open the case with two hands and carefully slide each pod into the correct hole. Don't put both in your hand and then open the case, because you'll waste time trying to figure out which one is which. You do get the satisfying closure of the case, and it's a lot easier to put away than a pair of wired or even Bluetooth headphones. The case is so compact I'm really delighted to carry that instead of my old headphones.

But I fear that that little extra time to put them in the case might make us just set them down somewhere. And that's when we'll lose them. I wore them into the Apple Store the first day and a sales guy started talking to me. I took one out and began to chat, then wanted to look at something on a shelf and I almost set the one AirPod down. I had to catch myself and hang onto it. I also worry about leaving them around at home. As much as I enjoy opening and closing the AirPods case, it's not as easy to remove them as I would like. I have medium-length fingernails and it actually can take me 2-3 tries to pull them out. I suspect that I'll find a way to do it reliably but right now it's a bit of trial and error. They could stick out just a tiny smidge higher and I'd be able to grab them more easily. I even tried shaking them out but they're magnetically held in place and they won't fall out.

My goal is to wear the AirPods when I exercise so I wondered whether they're water resistant. I wasn't willing to submerge mine, even for science, but luckily EverythingApplePro was willing to test theirs. They dropped them from higher and higher heights, up to 10 feet, in and out of the case. The case got pretty scuffed up but the AirPods continued to work and showed no signs of having been dropped.

Then they went much further than sweat. They decided to run them through the washing machine, including soap and then ran them through the dryer! Then they submerged them under a foot of water for five minutes. These folks are really dedicated to science. After all of this torture, the AirPods worked perfectly with no damage whatsoever. So yeah, I think I can sweat in them!

Bottom Line - From my twenty four hours of testing, I think the Apple AirPods are pretty great. Oh yeah, and there's no wires which is awesome.

Allison's review has been edited to fit the space available. The full article is at:

http://www.podfeet.com/blog/2016/12/apple-airpods/

PERIODICALS

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CW Mitchell at

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