The Environment and Social Media

CHE's mission includes sharing emerging scientific research on various environmental factors that can contribute to disease and disability. The best research data in the world cannot make an impact if it is not widely accessible and read. In today's world, this means making wise use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and web-based blogs. Many of you may be quite experienced in social media, but for those who aren't or who aren't aware of the social media tools CHE uses, below is a brief overview of various types of social media and strategies that have been shown to work well to communicate environmental health messages.

Social media is an increasingly effective method of reaching a broad audience. The Pew Internet Project reports 67% of adults who go on-line use social networking sites. Social media use ranges from 83% of 18-29 year olds to 35% of those age 65 years and older (1). Environmental organizations are one of the most active groups using social media. Craig Newman, founder of Craigslist.org, conducted a review in 2011 and found that environmental groups are second only to animal advocates in the average number of Facebook posts and tweets per week (2).

To reach different audiences, various social media applications may be most advantageous. The Pew Internet Project and Pingdom.com offers insights into user trends (3,4):
Facebook

- Two-thirds of online adults say that they are Facebook users
- Women are more likely to use Facebook than men
- Facebook use is especially common among adults under 29 years of age

Twitter

- Individuals under age 50 (especially those 18-29) are those most likely to use Twitter
- African Americans represent the largest ethnicity of Twitter users
- Urban-dwellers are significantly more likely than both suburban and rural residents to be on Twitter

Top Blogs

- The average top blog has 45% female and 55% male readers
- Average reader age is 41 years old
- Median age of readers is 38 years

Social media provides a favorable platform for non-profit organizations to reach their target audience to achieve a variety of goals. Facebook is most commonly used by non-profits for building awareness and engaging a strong base of supporters for the organization (5). Engaging the audience means more than just sharing information; it encourages them to take the information presented and act on it. The action may be as simple as commenting or sharing the information with their networks, providing evidence that the topic offered is of interest. Information shared may be new data, and may also include news and upcoming events to promote attendance. Recruitment consists of enlisting new members, but may also extend to reaching potential funders. In one recent survey, 46% of non-profits responded that they were fundraising on Facebook (5).

The Non Profit Social Media Decision Guide recommends several approaches for using social media to support or promote an existing fundraising campaign, such as friend-to-friend fundraising strategies and using social media tools at live fundraising events (6). Twitter may be best used to communicate with influencers in the environmental health sector. Twitter also provides an advantage of the ability to locate and engage with users having interests similar to those of your organization. The non-profit consulting group Socialbrite puts forth a ‘60-30-10 rule’ for Twitter content: 60% re-tweets and pointers to promote items from other users or sites, 30% conversation and responses, 10% announcements and events (7).

Blogs have the advantage of providing a larger format for discussion, allowing for the summary of research findings and conversations with key stakeholders (8). In addition to writing a blog for their own organization, non-profits can engage in blogs from other like-minded groups. CHE members, for example, have found it useful to comment on the blogs of pertinent partners, send important blog entries by others to relevant partners, and write a guest blog for other groups.

Many of the resources mentioned provide advice on the best strategies to make an impact with social media. Experts remind us that social media is designed to be just that--social. Posts that are eye-catching and elicit strong feelings are more likely to start conversations and be shared by viewers. Examples of successful posts illustrate this point.

The most popular post on Facebook in 2011 was Satellite Photos of Japan, Before and After the
Quake and Tsunami from the New York Times (9). This suggests that photos are an especially effective way to attract attention to a Facebook post. For other social media tools like blogs, Joseph Romm, physicist, climate expert and founder of the influential blog ClimateProgress.org, points out that the single most important part is the headline, citing the statistic that newspaper readers read 56% of headlines, but only 13% of stories. Dr. Romm provides specifics on writing a good headline: keep it short, use repetition and common figures of speech to make headlines memorable (10). This applies to tweets as well: ClimateProgress.org reported one of their most popular tweets of 2012 was: Hurricane Sandy: The Worst-Case Scenario For New York City Is Unimaginable (11).

At CHE, we asked some of our coordinators and advisors how they use social media. A range of examples are below. We invite you to visit these sites and link your organization's site to them. Don't forget to 'Like' us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and comment on the CHE blog.

Below are some of the social media sites that CHE uses. What social media sites do you use to advance your environmental health messages?

We look forward to finding more ways to strengthen our social media ties with you.
Karin Russ, MS, RN
National Coordinator
Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group

CHE Facebook page
CHE Twitter feeds:
https://twitter.com/che_for_science
https://twitter.com/hlthyagingCHE

Breast Cancer Fund Facebook page
Breast Cancer Fund Twitter feed: https://twitter.com/breastcancerfnd

Campaign for Safe Cosmetics Facebook page
Campaign for Safe Cosmetics Twitter feed: https://twitter.com/safecosmetics

Environmental Health News Facebook page
Environmental Health News Twitter feed: https://twitter.com/EnvirHealthNews

References

1. Pew Internet: Social Networking
2. Nonprofits by area of focus use social media
3. Pew Internet The Demographics of Social Media Users - 2012
4. Blog readership demographics - investigating the world's top blogs
5. Non-Profit Marketing Guide
6. Social Media Decision Guide
7. 24 Best Practices for Nonprofits using Twitter
8. Should Your Nonprofit Launch a Blog?
9. Most Shared Articles on Facebook in 2011
11. **Top 12 Most Viewed Climate Progress Posts Of 2012**

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### CHE Partnership Calls

**CHE Partnership call: Breast Cancer and the Environment: Prioritizing Prevention**

Wednesday April 3, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

On February 12th 2013, the congressionally mandated Interagency [Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Coordinating Committee (IBCERCC) report](#) made seven clear recommendations to enhance research to focus on breast cancer prevention by clearly building the evidence base for environmental exposures across the lifespan that cause the disease.

The report includes the largest to-date analysis of peer-reviewed science on breast cancer and the environment, including many animal and human studies which provide plausible evidence that environmental factors like toxic chemical exposure increase breast cancer risk. Many gaps in research and policies were identified. It calls for a national, comprehensive, cross-governmental breast cancer prevention strategy.

On this call Michele Forman, PhD, and Jeanne Rizzo, RN, Chair and Co-Chair of the IBCERCC Committee will present the report and Linda Birnbaum, PhD, Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, will provide her agency's perspective. Julia Brody, PhD, Executive Director of the Silent Spring Institute and Karen Miller, President of the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition will act as responders on the call.

**Featured speakers:**

**Linda Birnbaum, PhD**, became the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the National Toxicology Program (NTP) on January 18, 2009. In these roles Dr. Birnbaum oversees federal funding for biomedical research to discover how the environment influences human health and disease. Several advisory boards and councils provide Birnbaum and NIEHS/ NTP staff with input to accomplish this large task. Dr. Birnbaum is the first toxicologist and the first woman to lead the NIEHS/NTP. She has spent most of her career as a federal scientist. She has received numerous awards and recognitions, including being elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, in October 2010, one of the highest honors in the fields of medicine and health. Dr. Birnbaum's own research and many of her publications focus on the pharmacokinetic behavior of environmental chemicals; mechanisms of actions of toxicants, including endocrine disruption; and linking of real-world exposures to health effects.

**Michele Forman, PhD**, is the Bruton Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of
Texas Austin. She has a PhD in Epidemiology, Masters in Nutrition, Masters of Science in Public Health and Masters of Arts in Anthropology. She has developed and conducted 10 longitudinal cohort studies in the US and overseas. She is currently the Study Location Principal Investigator for the Harris County National Children's Study (NCS) and the Travis County site and is also conducting formative research in nutritional status for the NCS. For over 30 years, her research focuses on women’s health throughout the life course, with an emphasis on the effect of pregnancy, early childhood, puberty, and the reproductive years on risk of breast and other hormonal cancers. She has over 138 peer reviewed publications, is on the editorial boards of several journals, has numerous book chapters, and invited presentations nationally and internationally, is on many institutional committees. She is the Chair, Interagency Committee for Breast Cancer and the Environment for the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

Jeanne Rizzo, RN, President and CEO of the Breast Cancer Fund. Ms. Rizzo leads the organization's strategic initiatives to remove the chemical bisphenol A, or BPA, from food packaging; to ensure cosmetics are non-toxic; and to overhaul the broken chemicals-management system that allows tens of thousands of toxic and untested chemicals to be used in consumer products. She also guides scientific initiatives, including the 2011 publication of a groundbreaking BPA dietary study. Recent legislative victories include the passage of a federal law banning toxic chemicals linked to breast cancer from toys, and California laws creating the first statewide biomonitoring program, advancing the safety of cosmetics and regulating chemicals in consumer products. Recent victories in the marketplace include a commitment from Campbell Soup Co. to remove BPA from its can linings and from Johnson & Johnson to globally reformulate its cosmetics products to remove harmful chemicals.

Call responders:

Julia Brody, PhD, executive director of Silent Spring Institute, is a leader in research on breast cancer and the environment and in community-based research and public engagement in science. Brody's current research focuses on methods for reporting to people on their own exposures to hormone disruptors and other emerging contaminants when the health effects are uncertain. She also recently led a project connecting breast cancer advocacy and environmental justice in a study of household exposures to endocrine disruptors and air pollutants through a collaboration of Silent Spring Institute, Communities for a Better Environment (a California-based environmental justice organization), and researchers at Brown University and the University of California, Berkeley.

Karen Joy Miller is founder and president of Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc., a grassroots community organization established 1992. Karen was diagnosed in 1987 with breast cancer, and for nearly 20 years has been an advocate for public health. Her primary focus has been on environmental triggers that contribute to the onset of disease. She is a founding member of the New York State Breast Cancer Network and Long Island Breast Cancer Network, collectively they represent 30 breast cancer organizations. Serves on the executive board, Children's Environmental Health Center, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She served as an advisor on the following New York State boards: Breast Cancer Detection and Cervical Education Council; Governor's Sustainability & Green Procurement Council; the Pollution Prevention Institute. Karen contributed to the recent Breast Cancer and the Environment: Prioritizing Prevention report, serving Interagency Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Coordinating Committee (IBCERCC) as a
advocate non-federal member.

Steve Heilig, MPH, CHE Director of Public Health & Education, and Director of Public Health & Education, San Francisco Medical Society will moderate the call.

**CHE Cafe call: A Conversation with Dan Fagin, Author of "Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation"**
Thursday April 11, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

**RSVP for this call**

In *Toms River*, a story of a small town ravaged by industrial pollution, Dan Fagin weaves together the history of toxicology, the origins of the chemical industry, the subtleties of cancer etiology and treatment, the politics of state and federal agencies as they interact with big corporations, the trauma and courage of the children with cancer and their families, the strains on the Toms River community, the intricacies of the legal mediation, and the pitfalls of "cluster" investigations--all in one extraordinary book.

Reviewers have described *Toms River* as "a gripping environmental thriller" (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review), "a crisp, hard-nosed probe into corporate arrogance and the power of public resistance" (*Publishers Weekly*), "an epic tale of our chemical age" (Carl Zimmer), and "essential reading for our times" (Siddhartha Mukherjee).

Join CHE on Thursday April 11, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern for a conversation with Dan Fagin about *Toms River*, the Toms River community, environmental health and cancer.

**About Dan Fagin:**
A science journalism professor at New York University, Dan Fagin is a nationally prominent journalist on environmental health topics. He has twice been a principal member of reporting teams that were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize, and has won both of the best-known science journalism prizes in the United States, from the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Association of Science Writers. His recent publications include *Nature*, *The New York Times*, *Scientific American* and *New Scientist*. At NYU, Dan is an associate professor of journalism and the director of the masters-level Science, Health and Environmental Reporting Program (SHERP).

**Special Announcements**

**Resources from recent CHE calls:**
If you missed any of the following CHE calls, you may listen to MP3 recordings and find supporting materials at the following links:

- March 20, 2013 - [Transgenerational Effects of Prenatal Exposure to Environmental Obesogens in Rodents](#)
- February 14, 2013 - [Chemical Policy: Recent Developments and Controversies: A Discussion with Richard Denison, PhD](#)
- February 7, 2013 - [Superfund Contaminants and Reproduction](#)
CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

Stay in touch with CHE through social media:
Visit CHE’s blog to read recent posts including commentary by Genon Jensen, Executive Director of the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Coordinator of CHE's Climate Change and Health Working Group on HEAL's new report, The Unpaid Health Bill--How Coal Power Plants Make Us Sick, and Balancing Act by Nancy Hepp, MS, CHE's Research and Communications Specialist, which discusses how CHE selects items for its daily new feed.

Visit CHE's Facebook page.
Join CHE on Twitter. Update: CHE is now tweeting during our Partnership calls. Join the online conversation by following CHE on Twitter.

CHE Asthma
~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ New report addresses childhood asthma and phthalates exposure: Researchers at the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health at the Mailman School of Public Health are the first to report an association between early childhood exposure to the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) and an elevated risk for asthma in young children. BPA is a component of some plastics and is found in food can liners and store receipts. Results appear in the March edition of the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. Read more

CHE Climate Change
~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ HEAL releases new report addressing the health costs associated with air pollution from European coal power plants: This report from the Health and Environment Alliance, CHE's Partner Organization in Europe, is entitled The Unpaid Health Bill--How coal power plants make us sick. It reveals that the health costs of coal-fired power stations add a financial burden to the European population of up to €42.8 billion a year. Read more and download the report

~ New resource: Climate impacts on health: Along with CDC's Climate and Health Program, the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program has started a novel project to track heat-related deaths and illnesses. Read more
CHE Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum
~ coordinated by Sarah Howard, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ CHE's Sarah Howard presented at the Environmental Health 2013: Science and Policy to Protect Future Generations conference on Filling a Critical Data Gap: Type 1 Diabetes and Environmental Chemicals. Noting the well-documented but unexplained increased incidence of type 1 diabetes in children in 58 countries worldwide, she described some upcoming research projects designed to test the hypothesis that exposure to environmental chemicals may contribute to this disease.

~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals


CHE Fertility and Reproductive Health
~ coordinated by Karin Russ, karin@healthandenvironment.org

~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals

Resveratrol protects against age-associated infertility in mice. Loss of oocytes and follicles and reduced oocyte quality contribute to age-associated ovarian aging and infertility. Accumulation of free radicals with age leads to DNA mutations, protein damage, telomere shortening, apoptosis and accelerated ovarian aging. Increasing evidence shows that resveratrol, enriched in certain foods, for example red grapes and wine, has anti-tumor and anti-aging effects on somatic tissues by influencing various signaling pathways, including anti-oxidation, as well as activating Sirt1 and telomerase. Human Reproduction.

Prenatal exposure to DDT and hypertension diagnosed in women before age 50. Elevated levels of the pesticide DDT have been positively associated with blood pressure and hypertension in studies among adults. Accumulating epidemiologic and toxicologic evidence suggests that hypertension during adulthood may also be affected by earlier life, and possibly the prenatal environment. Environmental Health Perspectives.

Proteomic analysis on the alteration of protein expression in the early-stage placental villous tissue of electromagnetic fields. To explore the possible adverse effects and search for cell phone electromagnetic field (EMF)-responsive proteins in human early reproduction, a proteomics approach was employed to investigate the changes in protein expression profile induced by cell phone EMF in human chorionic tissues of early pregnancy in vivo. Reproductive Sciences.

An epigenetic 'smoking gun' for reproductive inheritance. A recent study has revealed that
fetal exposure to nicotine due to maternal smoking has multigenerational (MG) effects on rat offspring. Such epigenetic effects on the conceptus may explain why 98% of the inherited human diseases are unaccounted for by Mendelian genetics, exposing the 'black matter' of biology and medicine. Expert Review of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

**Fetal growth and prenatal exposure to bisphenol A: The Generation R Study.** We investigated the relation of prenatal BPA exposure with intrauterine growth and evaluated the effect of the number of measurements per subject on observed associations. Our findings suggest that maternal urinary BPA may impair fetal growth. Because previous studies have shown contradictory findings, further evidence is needed to corroborate these findings in the general population. Environmental Health Perspectives.

**DHA supplementation and pregnancy outcomes.** Observational studies associate higher intakes of n-3 (omega-3) long-chain PUFAs (LCPUFAs) during pregnancy with higher gestation duration and birth size. A supplement of 600 mg DHA/d in the last half of gestation resulted in overall greater gestation duration and infant size. A reduction in early preterm and very-low birth weight could be important clinical and public health outcomes of DHA supplementation.

**Prenatal and postnatal bisphenol A exposure and body mass index in childhood in the CHAMACOS cohort.** Consistent with other cross-sectional studies, higher urinary BPA concentrations at age 9 were associated with increased adiposity at 9 years. However, increasing BPA concentrations in mothers during pregnancy were associated with decreased BMI, body fat, and overweight/obesity among their daughters at age 9. Environmental Health Perspectives.

~ **Call for Abstracts:** American Society for Reproductive Medicine/ International Federation of Fertility Societies conjoint meeting. October 12-17th. Boston, MA. ASRM/IFFS are seeking abstracts for their annual meeting. ASRM features a Special Interest Group in Reproductive Environmental Health. Deadline for abstracts: May 1, 2013.

**CHE Healthy Aging Initiative**

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, mvalenti@igc.org

~ CHE's Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative focuses on bringing information about environmental influences on health across the lifespan to new audiences. These include those working in community planning, social services, aging, food and nutrition, conservation, and medicine, among others. Our efforts include presenting at major conferences of these constituencies, distributing key materials including our Healthy Aging and the Environment Pocket Guide, and collaborating with new partners to encourage cross-cutting interventions. In this effort, CHE is in the vanguard of making the scientific connections between early, mid-life and later life health.

Recent examples of our outreach have included the New Partners for Smart Growth conference in Kansas City where we collaborated with colleagues from the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program to present a well-received 90-minute panel Designing Healthy Environments Across Communities and Generations, attended by over 100 participants, with one person writing that she "found it to be one of the most valuable sessions that I attended."

Next we reached out to an international gathering of researchers at the Environmental Health 2013: Science and Policy to Protect Future Generations conference in Boston with a poster on
Environmental Determinants of Health Across the Lifespan: Opportunities for Cross-cutting Interventions. The ecological and lifespan health perspective seemed to resonate with many of the researchers, especially those from Europe, and countries of the global South, who seem more tuned into this thinking than Americans.

In March, at the premier Aging in America Conference in Chicago, attended by over 2500 participants, we organized two 90-minute panels, one on Safer Chemicals, Healthier Aging, and another on Healthy Environments Across Generations, with colleagues from Pesticide Action Network, Parkinson's Action Network, US EPA Aging Initiative, AARP, and Elders Share the Arts. Attendees included social workers to policy executives, and it was clear that our message was new and provocative.

CHE Mental Health
~ coordinated by Mary Burke, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ New working group coordinator announced: CHE is pleased to announce that Mary Burke, PhD, with Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation and the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at the University of California, San Francisco will now coordinate the CHE Mental Health Working Group. The goals of this working group include:

- educating and engaging the mental health community in regards to environmental exposures that may impact mental health and result in psychiatric symptoms;
- developing materials for health professionals and patients regarding how to reduce environmental exposures that may contribute to neurological or behavioral problems; and
- encouraging the mental health community to support chemical policy reform and other efforts to improve environmental health.

The primary activity of this working group is the exchange of new science over the working group's listserv. To participate, please email info@healthandenvironment.org and ask to be added to the Mental Health Working Group.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE HEAL
~ coordinated by Lisette Van Vliet, lisette@env-health.org

~ European Parliament vote on EDCs conveys urgency of protecting health: The European Parliament has voted to pass the Westlund report on the protection of public health from endocrine disrupting chemicals. While it is a non-legislative report, it is anticipated that it will be influential for the European Commission's further work on EU EDCs policy--in REACH, in the Criteria for identifying ED pesticides, biocides and beyond; and the overall EU Strategy on EDCs, including international work. Read HEAL's press release

CHE Oregon
~ coordinated by Sarah Petras, sarahp@oeconline.org

~ Opportunities for a Toxic Free Oregon: CHE Oregon and the Oregon Environmental Council are looking for health professionals to get involved in Oregon legislation on toxics & children's health. If you're interested in learning more about opportunities to get involved in
environmental health advocacy efforts this legislative session, please contact sarahp@oeonline.org.

For information on the links between chemical exposures & health and updates on ways to prevent exposures in Oregon, visit and "Like" the Toxic Free Oregon Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/BPAfreeOregon.

**Announcements and News Highlights**

**7th annual "Sense of Wonder" Rachel Carson contest**
This annual contest has been announced, and is co-sponsored by the US EPA Aging Initiative and others. Music has been added to the areas of creative expression that also include poetry, dance, essay, photo, and songwriting. The deadline for entries is June 10th, 2013. [Contest details and submission guidelines](#)

**EHN wins journalism award for environmental justice series** *Environmental Health News* has won Honorable Mention in a national journalism competition for its 10-part series investigating environmental justice problems in communities across the country. The Oakes Awards, one of the most prestigious awards in environmental journalism, are bestowed by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. This year there were 140 entrants and 10 finalists. *The Chicago Tribune* won first for its amazing series on flame retardants. *USA Today*, EHN and *Inside Climate News* got honorable mentions. Other entrants included the LA Times and the New York Times. [Read more](#)

EHN and its sister site, The Daily Climate, offer a wealth of valuable information each day at no cost to subscribers. The daily email subscriptions and the 350,000-item news archive have recently been supplemented by a Facebook page and Twitter feed.

**Environmental Health News: email, Facebook, Twitter and a website archive**
[Visit the website](#)  
[Visit the EHN archives page](#)

Friend EHN on Facebook by searching for Environmental Health News

**March 2013 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online**  
[Read more](#)

**March 2013 issue of Environmental Factor available online**  
[Read more](#)

CHE maintains a [news feed](#) of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

**Reports, Resources and Other Updates**
Third Edition of *America's Children and the Environment* available from US EPA

*America's Children and the Environment* is an EPA report that presents key information on environmental stressors that can affect children's health. In January 2013, EPA released an updated third edition of this report (ACE3) that shows the status and trends of:

- Environments and Contaminants (contaminants in air, water, food, and soil and other environmental conditions),
- Biomonitoring (chemicals measured in the bodies of mothers and children), and
- Health (childhood diseases and health outcomes).

[Read more and download the report](#)

**New issue: Environmental Justice**

The February issue focuses on Empowered Partnerships: Community-Based Participatory Action Research for Environmental Justice.  
[Read more](#)

CHE lists hundreds of reports, books, videos, databases and other resources in a searchable [Portal to Science](#) on CHE's website.

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Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Elise Miller, Director of CHE, at [elise@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:elise@healthandenvironment.org).

Best wishes,  
Elise Miller, MEd, Director  
Steve Heilig, Director of Public Health and Education at San Francisco Medical Society and CHE  
Erika Sanders, Administrative Coordinator

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