

## **Epsom Public Library Collection Development Policy**

The Epsom Public Library provides materials and resources that meet the interest of the community and support lifelong learning. This policy is established by the Library Board of Trustees to inform the public of the principles upon which the library makes decisions regarding the maintenance and use of the collection.

### **Responsibility for Selection of Materials**

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Library Director the authority and the responsibility for selection of library materials and for the development of the collection. The general public and all staff members are welcome to recommend materials for selection. Collection management is a system-wide approach, allowing for the most effective and efficient use of staff time and funds.

Patron demand is a powerful influence on Library collection decisions. Circulation, patron purchase requests and holds levels are all closely monitored, triggering the purchase of new items and additional copies of high demand items. The Epsom Public Library should not attempt to collect materials at a comprehensive or research level for any subject area other than local issues. A broad range of materials should both serve and await the needs of the library's patrons.

The Library recognizes that materials selected for the collection may be controversial and that any given item may offend any individual. Selections will be made not on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building the collection and to serving the needs of library users in accordance with the library's stated goals.

### **Selection Criteria**

#### **The criteria considered in the selection of library materials include:**

- Existing library holdings
- Patron demand
- Community interest and significance
- Individual merit as determined by documentation, awards, professional reviews and/or subject area experts
- Budget
- Quality of the physical format
- Availability of the material or information elsewhere.

Points considered in the selection of materials:

1. Objectionable language and vivid descriptions of sex and violence when dealt with realistically within

the context of the book will not be criteria for rejecting the book.

2. The responsibility for children's choices in reading material rests with the parents and legal guardians. Selection of library material will not be limited by the possibility that it may come into the possession of minors.

3. Material is judged on the basis of the work as a whole and not by a part taken out of context.

4. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title that is in demand.

5. Due to limited budget and space, the Library cannot purchase all materials that are requested. Interlibrary loan may be used to obtain materials from other libraries in New Hampshire for the use of our patrons or when a request is outside the scope of the collection.

### **Gifts**

The Epsom Public Library accepts donations of books and other materials. The Library retains the authority to accept or reject gifts with the understanding that the same standards of selection are applied to gifts and donations as to materials acquired by purchase. Gifts and donations become the sole property of the library, and the Library's staff makes all decisions as to the use, housing, and final disposition of donations. The Library Director and/or Trustees are not qualified to evaluate or appraise gift materials for tax purposes and cannot provide this information to the donors of the gifts.

### **Maintaining the Collection**

As ordering materials is an ongoing process, so is discarding materials. In an effort to keep the collection interesting, appealing, up to date and accurate, the library removes materials from the collection which are outdated, worn, or no longer in demand. The goal of consistent and routine weeding is to ensure that the collection remains useful and relevant to the community. Each item, through its quality, reliability, current usefulness and appearance must contribute to the reliability, reputation, and attractiveness of the Library.

The Library staff follows the CREW method of collection maintenance. CREW stands for Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding.

1. Weeding: A current, useful, and accessible collection is maintained through a continual evaluation and discarding /replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, accuracy, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. The responsibility and authority for weeding print and non-print material rests ultimately with the library director, who may delegate weeding tasks to other members of the library staff. The CREW method gives six general criteria for considering weeding an item from the library's collection. These have been summed up with the acronym MUSTIE:

M= Misleading: factually inaccurate

U= Ugly: worn beyond mending or rebinding

S= Superseded by a new edition of by a much better book on the subject

T= Trivial: of no discernible literary or scientific merit

I= Irrelevant to the needs and interests of the library's community

E= Elsewhere: the material is easily obtainable from another library

2. Disposal of Discarded Material: Weeded materials may be disposed of at the discretion of the Library Director, either through book sales, donations, buy-back programs, or proper trash disposal.

## **Epsom Public Library**

### **Challenged Material or Program Policy**

The Board of Trustees of the Epsom Public Library believes that censorship is a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject material of which one does not approve, one cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

The Epsom Public Library selects materials based on the criteria specified within this policy. In its selection of Library materials, the Epsom Public Library and its Board of Trustees endorse and support the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association. They subscribe to the principles put forth in the ALA Labels and Rating Systems, the ALA Resolution on the Removal of Challenged Materials, Freedom to View Statement, and Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials. Copies of these items are available in the Appendix.

According to RSA 202-A:6, "the library trustees shall have the entire custody and management of the library and all the property of the town relating thereto..." Only the Board of Trustees may remove or restrict materials in the collection in response to a written request by a patron. All resources and programs will remain in use, pending resolution by the Board of Trustees.

Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from, relocated, or restricted within the collection or that a Library program/service/display be discontinued may complete a Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources (see Appendix) form which is available from the Director. The challenged material/program/service/display will remain in the collection/service while it is being reviewed.

1. The request shall be given to the director who will sign and date it.
2. The director will inform the Board of Trustees of the formal request, and provide a copy of the completed form.
3. The written objection will be reviewed by the Library Trustees. The challenger's appeal will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Epsom Public Library Trustees. Decisions of the Library Board are final and are made within 60 days of receipt of the appeal. The patron shall receive a written reply.

## **Appendix.**

### **Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

### **The Freedom to Read Statement**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently arise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

- 1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

- 2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they*

*make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

- 3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

- 4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

- 5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

- 6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society.

Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

*7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

## **Freedom to View Statement**

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.

5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**

### **ALA Labels and Ratings Systems**

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, the ability for library users to access electronic information using library computers does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library.

#### **Labels**

Labels on library materials may be viewpoint-neutral directional aids that save the time of users, or they may be attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to materials. When labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes, it is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language or themes of the material, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the material, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the material. Such labels may be used to remove materials from open shelves to restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate materials. The materials are housed on open shelves and are equally accessible to all users, who may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

#### **Rating Systems**

A variety of organizations promulgate rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public concerning their opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, Web sites, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by the library violates the Library Bill of Rights. Adopting such systems into law may be unconstitutional. If such legislation is passed, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Publishers, industry groups, and distributors sometimes add ratings to material or include them as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse such practices. However, removing or destroying such ratings—if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation. Some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging materials as

objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance, rather than justice and enlightenment, result from such practices. The American Library Association opposes any efforts that result in closing any path to knowledge.

Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005.

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### **Resolution on the Removal of Challenged Materials**

“Libraries: An American Value” states, “We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services.” The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources. Collection development applies to print and media resources or formats in the physical collection. It also applies to digital resources such as databases, e-books and other downloadable and streaming media.

Content filtering is not equivalent to collection development. Content filtering is exclusive, not inclusive, and cannot effectively curate content or mediate access to resources available on the Internet. This should be addressed separately in the library’s acceptable use policy. These policies reflect the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights* and are approved by the appropriate governing authority.

Challenged resources should remain in the collection and accessible during the review process. The *Library Bill of Rights* states in Article I that “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” and in Article II, that “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.” Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution requires a procedure designed to examine critically all challenged expression before it can be suppressed.<sup>1</sup> This procedure should be open, transparent, and conform to all applicable open meeting and public records laws. Resources that meet the criteria for selection and inclusion within the collection should not be removed.

Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extralegal,<sup>2</sup> to regulate or suppress resources in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

#### *Notes*

1. *Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan*, 372 U.S. 58 (1963).

2. “Extra-legal” refers to actions that are not regulated or sanctioned by law. These can include attempts to remove or suppress materials by library staff and library board members that circumvent the library’s collection development policy, or actions taken by elected officials or library board members outside the established legal process for making legislative or board decisions. “Legal process” includes challenges to library materials initiated and conducted pursuant to the library’s collection development policy, actions taken by legislative bodies or library boards during official sessions or meetings, or litigation undertaken in courts of law with jurisdiction over the library and the library’s governing body.

Adopted June 25, 1971; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; January 28, 2009, and July 1, 2014, by the ALA Council.

### **Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials**

Library collections of nonprint materials raise a number of intellectual freedom issues, especially regarding minors. Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

The American Library Association's principles protect minors' access to sound, images, data, games, software, and other content in all formats such as tapes, CDs, DVDs, music CDs, computer games, software, databases, and other emerging technologies. ALA's Free access to libraries for minors: An *Interpretation* of the Library Bill of Rights states:

. . . The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

. . . [P]arents—and only parents—have the right and responsibility to restrict access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child.

Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Policies that set minimum age limits for access to any nonprint materials or information technology, with or without parental permission, abridge library use for minors. Age limits based on the cost of the materials are also unacceptable. Librarians, when dealing with minors, should apply the same standards to circulation of nonprint materials as are applied to books and other print materials except when directly and specifically prohibited by law.

Recognizing that librarians cannot act *in loco parentis*, ALA acknowledges and supports the exercise by parents of their responsibility to guide their own children's reading and viewing. Libraries should provide published reviews and/or reference works that contain information about the content, subject matter, and recommended audiences for nonprint materials. These resources will assist parents in guiding their children without implicating the library in censorship.

In some cases, commercial content ratings, such as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) movie ratings, might appear on the packaging or promotional materials provided by producers or distributors. However, marking out or removing this information from materials or packaging constitutes expurgation or censorship.

MPAA movie ratings, Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) game ratings, and other rating services are private advisory codes and have no legal standing (Expurgation of Library Materials). For the library to add ratings to nonprint materials if they are not already there is unacceptable. It is also unacceptable to post a list of such ratings with a collection or to use them in circulation policies or other procedures. These uses constitute labeling, "an attempt to prejudice attitudes" (Labels and Rating Systems), and are forms of censorship. The application of locally generated ratings schemes intended to provide content warnings to library users is also inconsistent with the Library Bill of Rights.

The interests of young people, like those of adults, are not limited by subject, theme, or level of sophistication. Librarians have a responsibility to ensure young people's access to materials and services that reflect diversity of content and format sufficient to meet their needs.

Adopted June 28, 1989, by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 2004.

## **Request for Reconsideration for Library Materials and Programs**

The Epsom Public Library selection criteria are described in detail in the Collection Development Policy. This form will be reviewed by the library director, and you will be contacted with a response. Please note: your comments are public records. However, your name, address, and phone number will be kept confidential from the general public to the greatest extent allowed by law.

**Patrons who would like the Library to reconsider a title's place in the collection or a program are required to complete this form.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent:

Myself

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Material for Consideration**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material (book ,DVD, magazine, program, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer/Publisher/Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Call Number (Spine Label): \_\_\_\_\_

Did you read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety? Yes  No

Have you read any reviews of this material? Yes  No



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(signature of Complainant)

(date)

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Print or Type Name

Library Use Only
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Director	Date:	Initials:
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Library Trustees	Date:	Initials
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Decision:
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