DELIVERING IMPACT
ADDRESSING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES THROUGH RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
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From using animation to teach children about safeguarding, to investigating the economics of restoring peatlands, our Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) has delivered significant results across an impressive breadth of research areas. Through the IAA, we’ve been able to fund some 47 research projects. Importantly, our IAA projects are driven by academics working with external partners, whether this is locally, within the Leeds City Region, or on a national or international level. The IAA enhances the potential impact of research by enabling these relationships to develop, as well as supporting the dissemination and application of research.

Our aim is to enable researchers to explore innovative and imaginative ways in which that might happen. James Simpson’s work, using theatre to help migrants improve their sense of belonging in a new country (see p7), is an excellent example of this, as is the work carried out by Katie McQuaid and Robert Vanderbeck to keep schoolgirls safe from exploitation in Uganda (see p8).

The case studies reported here represent a snap-shot of the extensive projects that we are supporting through our IAA, involving social science research excellence with impact in collaboration with a wide range of external partners.

Distinctively in Leeds, we have deployed our IAA funds to build greater capacity and opportunities for research co-production and knowledge exchange. We’re particularly keen, too, to support researchers at different stages of their careers. Our placement scheme for postgraduate researchers (see p18) has enabled a number of early career academics to engage with charities, action groups and other partners to understand how their research can be used in positive and practical ways.

A priority is building relationships with new partners, as well as strengthening the University’s existing links with external organisations. One of the real benefits of the IAA is the way in which it encourages the co-production of ideas and practices between researchers and partners in industry, government or the charitable sector.

Key to the success of this approach is early stage engagement, so that research is co-developed with our external partners and solutions and approaches developed are much more likely to be adopted by potential users.

Adam Crawford, Director, Leeds Social Sciences Institute
LEEDS SOCIAL SCIENCES IMPACT ACCELERATION ACCOUNT

Established in October 2015, the Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) supports social scientists at the University of Leeds to engage with external partners and maximise the influence of their research on society and the economy. The IAA is funded by the University and managed by Leeds Social Sciences Institute (LSSI) in association with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), as part of their wider IAA network.

Originally set to run for three years, the IAA has been extended to March 2019, ensuring social sciences research at Leeds continues to receive the support it needs to fulfil its potential for impact. The research funding provided by the IAA falls into three categories:

- **Responsive mode impact fund** – stimulating new interdisciplinary activities that include strong user engagement to explore some of the most pressing research challenges facing society
- **Knowledge exchange fellowships** – facilitating the movement of people between external organisations and the University to strengthen relationships and build new collaborations.
- **Postgraduate placements** – funding PhD students to work on short-term research projects with external organisations, enabling the students to gain additional skills and increased employability and bringing innovative ideas into the host organisation.

WORK WITH US

We are actively seeking to encourage and support new research with impact potential across the social sciences.

We also aim to seed new relationships with external organisations, particularly on projects where the partner has not previously worked with the University of Leeds, or where the project would create a step change in the organisation’s relationship with the University.

For information about opportunities through the Leeds Social Sciences Impact Acceleration Account, visit: lssi.leeds.ac.uk/social-sciences-impact-acceleration-account/
THE IMPACT ACCELERATION ACCOUNT
Oct 2015 - Jan 2018

143 External partners
£664K External funding leveraged
£394K Value

IMPACT BREAKDOWN:
35% National
22% International
43% Regional

Projects: 29
Fellowships: 05
Placements: 13
Project:
Keeping each other safe: using animations in teaching children safeguarding strategies

Project Lead:
Dr Hayley Davies, Lecturer in Childhood Studies, School of Education

Animation has the power to convey complex information in a simple and effective way, especially to children. Dr Hayley Davies, in the School of Education, developed three safeguarding animations on important childhood issues that are being used by practitioners to support their essential work.

Communicating with children about complex and emotive subjects like domestic abuse, childhood sexual exploitation and bullying is a challenge for safeguarding professionals using existing printed materials.

The Keeping Each Other Safe project, led by Dr Davies, set out to produce three animations, aimed at children aged 7 – 13 with ethically sensitive messages on safeguarding, which encourage children to speak to someone when they feel unsafe.

“We used real-life stories and examples to help create our animations, and make them relevant to the audience,” explains Dr Davies. “The clear messages within the animations help children to recognise abuse, to report it, and to get access to any support that they might need.”

Working with a professional animator, the team developed scripts and storyboards based on the findings from Davies’ research and around the procedures outlined in the Protective Behaviours Programme offered by Hertfordshire based charity, Families Feeling Safe (FFS).

The animations were piloted in two local schools, as well as in parent workshops and professional training. Feedback from children showed that the messages embedded in the animations were memorable, and would increase their confidence in seeking help.

“Children in my research suggested that digital technologies were an important feature of their lives and inspired the idea for digital animation to be used to engage children on these sensitive issues,” Dr Davies adds.

Supporting existing materials and approaches, they are effective for professionals who can use them to talk with children about safeguarding issues. They will also be made available for free on YouTube.

The collaboration has helped to address major societal challenges, making connections between academia and practice.

Throughout the process, Dr Davies documented the development of the animations, and has subsequently produced a valuable guide for those seeking to harness the power of animation as a method for disseminating research. The step-by-step guide provides an effective resource for others who want to create similar materials.
An interdisciplinary project involving practitioners from the creative arts and social scientists has established the potential for refugees and other migrants to develop communication and belongingness through performance arts.

Supporting migrants to gain a sense of home and belonging in a new country can be a challenging prospect, particularly if they’re learning a language at the same time.

The Migration and Settlement: Extending the Welcome project sought to explore the role of creative arts in helping migrants to overcome these challenges, as well as improving their grasp of English.

Working with partner organisations Faceless Arts, RETAS Leeds, the West Yorkshire Playhouse and The Art House, the team co-produced a series of three shadow puppet productions. Conceptualised, made, devised and performed by refugees, the project addressed one of the key societal challenges posed by migration: the importance of feeling a sense of belonging and its relationship to integration.

“Conceptually and theoretically the project has helped us develop our thinking on multilingualism and trans-languaging,” explains project lead Dr James Simpson.

He believes that the research will help to improve the way that English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses can be delivered. “Our work demonstrates that we can both express and perform our identities and our belonging through modes of communication other than talk, and including theatre. Creative practice can enable powerful communication,” he adds.

The project was part of the ambitious, AHRC-funded Translating and translanguaging (TLang) programme exploring linguistic and cultural transformations in four UK cities, including Leeds.

Bev Adams of Faceless Arts (now Co-Director of Edgelands Arts) said: “Working with academics has been tremendously rewarding as we each bring our own strengths and perspectives. This project demonstrates the power of visual art and performance as language, and has helped us broaden the range of services we offer.”

The project – and the wider TLang strategy – are helping the University to develop research capacity. “Working with doctoral researchers like Jessica Bradley, we’re developing new projects and partnerships that will allow us to grow our research,” Dr Simpson adds.
Keeping girls in school and safe from exploitation

Project:
Keeping girls in school and safe from exploitation in Jinja Municipality, Uganda

Project Lead:
Dr Katie McQuaid, Research Fellow, School of Geography
Professor Robert Vanderbeck, Head of School of Geography

Discrimination against women is widespread in Uganda and girls face multiple barriers to accessing – and remaining in – school, high levels of gender-based violence, and poor economic opportunities. An action research project, led by researchers in the School of Geography, aims to understand and challenge local barriers to girls’ education.

The project focused on increasing girls’ educational opportunities in one school in Jinja, eastern Uganda, through challenging inequality and highlighting it as a problem. A Social Platform, comprising key stakeholders, and a Girls’ Club was set up, and both continue to meet regularly to ensure research activities contribute directly to new local policies and practices.

A guidance framework for use by Ugandan teachers to strengthen institutional capacity to recognize and respond to barriers to girls’ schooling and promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment has also been developed and disseminated.

The researchers developed the approach in partnership with Makerere University, Jinja Municipal Council (JMC), a government primary school, with 60 children aged 10-16 years and local educationalists, as well as government and law enforcement authorities.

Dr Katie McQuaid and Professor Robert Vanderbeck from the School of Geography led the project. Dr McQuaid explained: “The research team established an innovative approach to child-led participatory research and community action, combining social science and arts methodologies.

“The work has created a positive change in the lives of the primary school children who have creatively engaged policy-makers, local authorities, service-providers and their families as future ambassadors in challenging the oppressive and exploitative situations that confront their children.”

The Head Teacher of the primary school said: “There has been a very big change, the girls have become very much assertive, very brave and have open discussion with boys... this project has removed their shyness and they can now stand on their own. The parents realised somewhere they were not doing the right thing, now they will listen to them, make time for them. The teachers also.”

A policy report, which outlines the evidence gathered, has been launched in Uganda in association with the Ministry of Education and Sport and Jinja Municipal Council.

An Education Officer in Jinja Municipal Council added: “This is important work, the girl child is facing many challenges, and the research will form the foundation for making change and intervention in Uganda.”
“The work has created a positive change in the lives of the primary school children who have creatively engaged policy-makers, local authorities, service-providers and their families as future ambassadors.”
THE UK’s police forces constantly need to change and develop to ensure they’re effective at tackling crime. Research conducted by the AIMTech (Adaptation Information Management and Technology) Research Centre in the Business School is providing information which will help the UK’s 44 police forces to map out their digital future to 2025.

The two-year Information, Technology and Policing project focused on understanding the current state of technology infrastructure in policing, measuring this progress against previous research conducted by AIMTech almost a decade ago. The project was undertaken by Dr Alistair Norman, Dr Nicky Shaw, Emma Gritt, Emma Forsgren and Simon Williams and led by Professor David Allen.

“The use of technology within police forces is an area of intense activity with very significant changes in policy, practice and underlying infrastructures,” says Professor Allen, Director of AIMTech. “Our aim was to provide an impartial and independent assessment of how technology is used, and to provide policy makers and stakeholders with some ideas about how technology could be used to drive improvements.”

Using surveys to establish a baseline, every police force in the UK took the opportunity to share their views. These were supported with qualitative interviews and in-depth surveys to develop insight into five key technologies on policing, including: social media, data analytics, technology and demand management, mobile technologies and ICT sourcing/outsourcing.

The project has resulted in the publication of four influential reports. In addition to five case studies, the following reports are available: Policing, Information and Technology in the UK: A National Survey; Mobile Technology Benefits Identification and Measurement; Mobile Technology in UK Policing and the Emergency Service Network, and Delphi Study: Technology and Transformational Reform in Policing - Barriers and Enablers.

Academics from the University have presented the findings of the research at conferences across the world, and with a number of papers either published or in draft form plus three substantial funded projects developed from the work and an EU bid already submitted, the University of Leeds is establishing itself as leading the discussions on the use of technology within emergency services.

“This project has brought into focus the need for police forces to modernise, putting technology at the heart of policing. The research has been informative for the key stakeholders and is influencing policy discussions,” Professor Allen adds.
Mental Health and Housing

Project:
Housing is a mental health issue: action research with the Focus E15 campaign

Project Lead:
Dr Kate Hardy, Associate Professor in Work and Employment Relations, Leeds University Business School

Those at risk of displacement or homelessness are much more likely to experience mental health problems. Action research conducted by researchers at Leeds University Business School and community action group Focus E15 is helping to shape the national debate on the impact of austerity, and the need to improve mental health services offered to those at risk.

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In November 2016 the group published its report, Homelessness, Health and Housing, at an event attended by over 80 stakeholders. The launch of the report made headlines across the UK, including front page coverage in The Guardian, with illustrations used in the report forming part of an exhibition curated by the Museum of Homelessness at London’s Tate Gallery.

An unforeseen impact of the project has been the interest of psychologists in the mental health impact of homelessness. “Psychologists have been interested in our findings, using it as the basis for their own studies and for offering additional support to those at risk of homelessness or displacement,” Dr Hardy adds.

A further direct consequence of the work has been the creation of the Housing and Mental Health Network, a partnership between local communities, charities, psychologists, academics and others to develop new approaches to the issues of mental health, austerity, homelessness and housing.

The multi-disciplinary project is already changing the nature and focus of services offered to those at risk, as Emer Morris of Focus E15 explains: “We better understand the effects that facing homelessness can have on people’s mental health, and hence what sort of emotional support – alongside practical – they might need, and what we are able to offer.”
DEVELOPING A NEW STYLE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Project:
The Petitions Committee: developing a new style of public engagement

Project Lead:
Professor Cristina Leston-Bandeira, Professor of Politics, School of Politics and International Studies

A researcher from the School of Politics and International Studies used the opportunities presented by a Knowledge Exchange Fellowship to evaluate the new 2015 House of Commons e-petitions system, focusing on the extent to which the new system has led to enhanced public engagement with UK Parliament.

Public engagement is a relatively new activity for parliaments. Whilst this has expanded rapidly within the last decade, there is still very little understanding of what constitutes effective public engagement or what criteria might be used to evaluate its potential.

The Petitions Committee: Developing a new Style of Public Engagement project mapped the expansion of UK parliamentary public engagement, its different components – namely the steps in engagement from acquiring information to actual participation – and the challenges this brings to an institution such as parliament.

Working with external partner the House of Commons’ newly created Petitions Committee, project lead Professor Cristina Leston-Bandeira shadowed the work of the Committee, one day a week, to observe private proceedings and carry out interviews with parliamentary officials, MPs and petitioners. This strategy of co-production was maintained throughout the project.

Since the new e-petitions system was introduced two years ago, the Petitions Committee has contributed towards a fairer and more transparent e-petitioning system, with varied and innovative forms of engagement with the public.

The petitions were categorised into three main types; Protest Petitions, Substantive Petitions and Cry-For-Help Petitions.

“This categorisation can help the Committee to identify the most appropriate course of action for different petitions,” explains Professor Leston-Bandeira.

She believes that her research could help to improve and broaden public engagement further through suggested enhancements to the e-petitions site, a stronger focus on petitioners rather than simply signatories and the development of engagement opportunities outside Westminster.

Professor Leston-Bandeira added: “The School of Politics and International Studies has some connections with the UK Parliament, but this project represents a step-change in this relationship. The partnership allows the University to not only consolidate the on-going research in this area, but also facilitate a better, more valuable dialogue between Parliament and academics, to the benefit of the students.”
“[The Committee] should be the catalyst for a fundamental change in the relationship between parliament and practitioner.”

TACKLING TENSIONS IN KNOWLEDGE, EVIDENCE AND IMPACT AGENDAS

Project:
Enabling effective research collaboration for global development: tackling tensions in knowledge, evidence and impact agendas

Project Lead:
Dr Lata Narayanaswamy, Lecturer in International Development and co-Deputy Director the Centre for Global Development

Multi-stakeholder, academic-practitioner collaborations are crucial for international development. This project, led by researchers in the Centre for Global Development (CGD), advances ideas and methodologies for making such partnerships work more effectively for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Researchers from CGD worked with partner organisation INTRAC, an NGO specialising in strengthening civil society through capacity building, research and advocacy, to organise a global three-day online conference.

Dynamic real-time discussions on critical themes and questions were animated by key contributors throughout the three days.

Participants from diverse countries, such as Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Thailand and the Palestinian Territory, and different areas of development, including research, policy, advocacy and practice, worked together to address the growing concern around how to ‘do development differently’ – who decides what development is; what types of development we are arguably feeling forced into promoting; and what type of development we want to see.

Project lead Dr Lata Narayanaswamy, in the Centre for Global Development, explains: “The project identified three SMART objectives: public engagement; innovative project methodology; and strategic partnership strengthening, all of which were achieved through the online seminar format.

“We were able to engage with an incredibly diverse set of stakeholders who may not have considered the University of Leeds for expertise in development studies before. The response has been entirely and positively overwhelming.”

One of the key milestones of the project has been that stakeholders sought better understanding and potential synergies of differing agendas around ‘evidence’, ‘impact’ and ‘knowledge.’

Dr Rachel Hayman, Director of Research, Learning and Communications at INTRAC, said: “Practitioners working in NGOs, government and civil society have to constantly challenge themselves on how they produce and use evidence, and whether they are reproducing inequalities in their ways of working.

“The online conference provided a refreshing space to think about this from multiple perspectives. This is all the more urgent as we collectively seek solutions to the most pressing global development challenges through better collaboration.”

The online conference format represented a new method for the INTRAC research team; consolidated key networks, represented good value for money and will now be included in its suite of options for future events.

Key contributors have registered their interest to participate in future discussions, and Dr Narayanaswamy will take forward this critical engagement and enthusiasm in terms of funding proposals, building communities of practice and networks amongst development stakeholders and raising the profile of global development expertise at the University of Leeds.
“We were able to engage with an incredibly diverse set of stakeholders who may not have considered the University of Leeds for expertise in development studies before.”
Project:
Economic benefits of peatland restoration: making the numbers count for policy

Project Lead:
Dr Julia Martin-Ortega, School of Earth and Environment

An interdisciplinary project, involving researchers at the Sustainability Research Institute in partnership with Scotland’s Rural College and The James Hutton Institute, provided insight into public perceptions of peatland restoration in Scotland. The information gathered is being used to inform the Scottish Government’s peatland restoration agenda.

Peatlands have formed over millennia, providing a range of ecosystem services that are key to human well-being, such as carbon storage, water quality and wildlife habitat. Climate change and land use are altering the structure and function of peatlands, which threatens the delivery of these ecosystem services.

Restoration programmes are consequently being deployed across the globe, and it is now important to understand and assess the benefits that this restoration brings.

The team sent an online survey to almost two thousand Scottish residents in spring 2016. Their findings showed a majority of respondents agreed that restoration will benefit them and future generations — and considered peatland restoration to be a good use of public money.

But the research also showed how public perceptions about peatlands are complex and that what the public sees as peatlands in good condition might not coincide with conservation objectives.

Project lead, Dr Julia Martin-Ortega, from the University of Leeds, explained: “Scotland’s National Peatland Plan emphasises the need for an improved understanding of peatland benefits by the wider public.

“The ultimate aim of the research was to support environmental policy makers in guiding public investments in ecosystem restoration and stimulate private investments so that social welfare can be maximised through environmental policy.”

She believes the restoration agenda needs to acknowledge the multifaceted views the public holds about peatlands to ensure that restoration targets and people’s preferences can be well aligned.

Andrew McBride, Project Manager of the Peatland Action by Scottish Natural Heritage added: “In the last few years in Scotland there has been the start of a cultural revolution in the perception of peatlands, and a realisation that peatlands have so much more to offer when in good condition and working for us, rather than against.

“This report has helped shape my thinking on the importance of having strong public support and the complexity of that support.”

The team continues to research the economics of peatland restoration through the NERC-funded Peatlands Tipping Points project, which looks into understanding the socio-economic consequences of abrupt regime shifts on these ecosystems. As part of the Integrated Yorkshire Catchment Programme (iCAPS) led by the University of Leeds, the team is also looking into applying this research within Yorkshire, in partnership with the Yorkshire Peatland Partnership and Moors for the Future. Findings will be disseminated through the EU Life Peatland network.
In 2017, the city of Leeds launched a pioneering city-scale Climate Commission, a coalition of public, private and third sector other organisations with a common purpose: to encourage low carbon, climate-resilient development in the city. Underpinning this venture was a comprehensive assessment of the energy-saving potential of UK cities, carried out by the University of Leeds.

Researchers in the ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy assessed the total energy bills and the energy and carbon saving potential in the UK’s 50 biggest cities. They discovered that extraordinary savings of up to £7 billion per year could be made across these cities by making simple improvements to heating, lighting, insulation, appliances and vehicles.

Implementing the improvements would cut the cities’ carbon emissions by almost a quarter more than currently expected. It would also create significant employment opportunities, while costing less than one per cent of each city’s GDP annually over the next decade.

Key to unlocking these opportunities will be organisations like the Leeds Climate Commission. The Commission is formed of 24 organisations including Yorkshire Water and the NHS, house builders, transport providers and community groups, as well as the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council.

“It’s increasingly clear that we can’t rely on the old models where we wait for central government or local authorities to take the lead on these issues” says Professor Andy Gouldson who led the study and also currently chairs the Commission. “We can be much more effective if we work alongside these bodies and supplement their expertise with the skill and energy of a much wider range of actors from across the city.”

“If we can do this effectively, we’re encouraging the city to step up and take control of its future, playing an active role in developing initiatives — in this case relating to climate change — that will benefit everyone.”

Speaking at the launch of the Leeds Climate Change Commission, Leeds City Council leader, Councillor Judith Blake said: “The council has become very used to working in partnership with other organisations and it’s a real strength of the city that we recognise the need for all the different sectors to come together to assist us in taking this very important issue forward.”

Since launching the Commission, the city has adopted a low carbon strategy and is developing a special initiative on finance to create investment in low carbon solutions. Plans are also in progress to establish a second Commission to look at infrastructure and transport.
CREATING IMPACT THROUGH POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PLACEMENTS

Our IAA placement scheme offers early career researchers the opportunity to work on a research project in partnership with an external organisation. Researchers are able to engage with the needs of the organisation, as well as gaining valuable experience that improves their employability. The host organisation also benefits from fresh thinking and innovative ideas.

KATUCHA BENTO

“I worked with the Birmingham-based Brazilian Cultural Centre (CDOB) on a project called Singing, Drumming, Dancing: Brazilian Female Blackness in the UK. The aim was to open up spaces to Brazilian women so they can share experiences and local knowledge, to promote empowerment and solidarity, and to strengthen the Brazilian Community in the city.

“In particular, the project promoted a Circle of Solidarity – a space where the local community of women, both Brazilians and non-Brazilians, could think about and debate the contributions of black Brazilian women. The solidarity created by this group led to mutual support on personal issues, for example one member was able to translate for another in her contact with the City Council to understand how to pay her housing taxes.

The work had a further positive effect on the way CDOB engages with the wider community, as the organisation gave four children four months free practice in Capoeira - a Brazilian acrobatic martial art. At the end of the project, the directors of CDOB decided to take the project forward, continuing with activities.

EMMA BIMPSON

“Basis Yorkshire is a small charity in Leeds which works with sex working women, as well as girls and young women who have experienced or who are at risk of sexual exploitation. Funding from the LSSI IAA enabled me to carry out an evaluation of a Housing First project for sex working women in Leeds, one of the only projects of its kind in the country. It provided unconditional housing and intensive support to six women with a range of highly complex health and social support needs.

“The evaluation provided the charity with the information required to secure funding to continue the project, and has contributed to a growing national evidence base. The project has also allowed me to develop my area of expertise and research skills by working with a local organisation, and has broadened my academic and non-academic research contacts.”

MARY ROBSON

“My LSSI placement was at Basis Yorkshire, working specifically with the adult sex workers service. As there has been a significant move to sex workers operating through the internet, Basis has begun to develop its netreach service to match this technological change.

“My placement involved developing the service and scoping for future capacity building, including mapping Leeds-based online sex workers and platforms to inform best practice in terms of methods and strategies of contact by Basis. As Basis is a formal partner in the Beyond the Gaze (BtG) research project — the largest UK study to date of internet based sex work — my work has been part of the enhanced netreach being forged by Basis and BtG, which has fed into the BtG and National Ugly Mugs practitioners group, who are currently developing good practice guidance for internet based sex workers.

“This opportunity enabled me to foster lasting links with the Basis and BtG team and to gain experience working on a research project within an external third sector organisation. I have also continued to support netreach development over the past year.”
“My PGR placement with the Crohn’s & Colitis UK Leeds Network provided me with a valuable opportunity to make the results of my PhD at the University of Leeds accessible to the public. In my PhD, funded by Crohn’s & Colitis UK, I investigated the experience of transition to motherhood with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). I video-recorded interviews with mums who have this illness.

“Thanks to the IAA grant, I created three YouTube Medleys from these video-interviews, honed through several rounds of feedback from Network members. These Medleys offer women with IBD, their partner, and healthcare providers with insight into the challenges and rewards of becoming a mum while managing IBD. I am delighted that the Medleys have had more than 1000 views since they were released in September 2017.”

Photo shows Jihane, PhD researcher at the School of Psychology (centre) with Dr Peter Branney, Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology at the University of Bradford and Professor Anna Madill, Chair of Qualitative Inquiry, School of Psychology, University of Leeds.
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