

EDUC 333: Video Games & Learning

Course Assignments & Policies – 2016*

Professor: Barry J. Fishman (fishman@umich.edu)

Class Location: The Prechter Lab, Room 2202 School of Education Building

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon

Office Hours: 4435 North Quad, times vary. Sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/fishman-officehours>

Teaching Team: Lena Carew (lcarew), Liz Chuah (lizchuah), Laura-Ann Jacobs (lxjacobs), Anna Knutson (aknutson), André Monney (amonney), Ben Plummer (bdplum), Nick Sands (sandsng), Kelly Wall (kellywa), Heidi Wong (hhwong)

Teaching Team Email: staff-educ333@umich.edu (includes Prof. Fishman)

Class Blog: We are using Canvas Discussions for “blogging.”

Course Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- ... describe what makes a successful game a good learning environment.
- ... describe core learning theories and how they manifest in different learning designs.
- ... describe core motivational theories and how they shape engagement.
- ... provide an informed critique of interactive media and games for learning.
- ... describe how empirical research/evaluation can be used to assess the relationship between games (or any interactive media) and learning.
- ... represent and defend ideas through discussion, writing, and oral presentation.

Course Overview:

Why are video games fun? The answer isn't as obvious as you might think. Good games draw you in, teach you how to succeed, and keep you engaged with a “just right” level of challenge. Most importantly, players *learn* while playing a well-designed game. Why isn't school like that? This class takes a close look at video games, a close look at education, and considers ways that each can be improved to maximize learning and performance.

This course is designed to be a unique and (hopefully) engaging learning experience. You may think you know how to “play the game of school,” but the rules in this course may not be what you're expecting. *Please read this syllabus carefully!* The assignments and grading system may seem confusing at first, but if you take a little time to read the syllabus and pay attention in class, everything will be explained. Almost everything you need to know is explained in these pages. Did I mention that you should read this syllabus?

Required Texts:

- Card, O. S. (1977). *Ender's Game*. New York: Starscape.
- A video game selected by you (and approved by the professor; see below for details).
- Other readings are distributed through Canvas or available online. Be sure to check prior to completing each week's reading/reaction to make sure you're reading the most recent set.

***Course assignments and schedules are subject to change! Always check GradeCraft for the latest.**

Grading Policy

School is a Game. Your Grade is Your Score.

This is a games class, and so we will take a game-like approach to grading. All assignments and class activities are worth a certain number of *points*; you will earn *badges* as well. Your point total will determine your final grade in the class. In most courses, there is no choice in assignments or exams, and your grade is based on your percentage correct.. don't make any mistakes! In *this* course, you get to choose your pathway, and can do as many assignments as you would like to earn the grade you choose. Take some risks. Use GradeCraft (<http://gradecraft.com> or through Canvas) to plot your path through the course.

See below for possible points, how assignments will be graded, and how points are translated into grades.

Activity	Due	Possible Points	Unlock Requirements
Grinding			
Class Attendance	ongoing	5,000/class session (max 115,000)	n/a
Quiz on Grading System	taken on 1/20	Up to 5,000	n/a
Readings: Online Quiz	ongoing check syllabus	up to 5,000 points each	n/a
Blog Posts (including substantive responses to classmates' posts) on Canvas	ongoing 1x/week from 1/18 through 4/10	500 (basic post) 1,000 (teach us something) 2,500 (be scholarly) total/course=32,500	n/a
Learning Game Review	up to 3x: 1/29, 2/26 & 4/1 @ 4pm	60,000/75,000*	Permission of team leader (can be done up to 3 times)
Team Points	ongoing	1 st =100,000, 2 nd =90,000, 3 rd =80,000, 4 th =70,000...	n/a
Learning from Playing a Game			
Game Selection Paper	1/13 @ 4pm	20,000	(Required for <i>everyone</i>)
Game Play Update Poster 1	in class by 2/25	96,000/120,000*	n/a
Game Play Update Poster 2 (must be unlocked)	in class by 4/7	96,000/120,000*	Complete Game Play Update Poster 1
Game Play Reflection Paper (must be unlocked)	4/8 @ 4pm	128,000/160,000*	Complete Game Play Update Poster 1
Boss Battles			
Individual Paper/Project 1	by 3/10 @ 4pm	160,000/200,000*	n/a
Individual Paper/Project 2 (must be unlocked)	by 4/15 @ 4pm	160,000/200,000*	Complete Individual Paper/Project 1
Group Game Design Project (must be unlocked)	by 4/15 @ 4pm	280,000/350,000*	Confirm project with team leader(s).

* meets expectations points/above & beyond points

Policies on Late Work and Assignment Resubmission

Policy on Late Work

All late work will be docked 10% of the points earned each 24 hours it is late, starting at the EXACT time it is due. If an assignment is 5 minutes late, it will be docked 10%. 2 days late, it will be docked 20%, 3 days, 30%, and so on.

Rules for Assignment Resubmission:

- **To be eligible for revision and re-grading, an assignment must be COMPLETE when submitted and be a reasonable attempt to meet the requirements for “meets expectations” as stated in the rubric. Incomplete or shoddy work may not be resubmitted.**
- You may discuss any grade with Professor Fishman, *but you must wait at least 24 hours after the work is returned to you to contact the professor.*
- You may revise and resubmit most* assignments ONCE for re-evaluation.
- You have 1 week from the time a grade is released to make any re-submission.
- Resubmission MUST be accompanied by a cover sheet specifying all changes made in order to redress the problems noted in the original evaluation. (Cover sheet is available on Canvas)
- No assignment will be re-graded after 1 week.
- If an original was turned in late, the revision will be subject to the same penalty as the original submission.

*NOTE that the following assignments may *NOT* be resubmitted for re-evaluation:

- Reading or other Qualtrics Quizzes
- Posters
- Final Game Play Reflection Paper
- Final Group Game Design Project
- Individual Paper/Project 2

Finally, your point total for the course is translated into levels and then a *course grade* as follows: As you complete assignments, come to class, do your reading reactions, and so forth, your points will quickly accumulate. As you earn points, you will “level up.” At the end of the term, your final level corresponds to the grade you will receive for the course. Be sure to use the Grade Predictor tool in *GradeCraft* to help determine what assignments you should do to earn the grade you want!

Points, Levels, & Course Grades		
0	Baer’s Brown Box	---
10,000	Magnavox Odyssey	
50,000	Coleco Telstar	
75,000	Mattel Intellivision	
100,000	Atari 5200	
125,000	NES	
150,000	Game Boy	
200,000	Neo Geo	
225,000	Super NES	F
250,000	Sega Saturn	D-
300,000	Sony PlayStation	D
350,000	Nintendo 64	D+
400,000	Sega Dreamcast	C-
475,000	PlayStation 2	C
550,000	Game Boy Advance	C+
625,000	Microsoft Xbox	B-
725,000	Nintendo GameCube	B
825,000	Nintendo DS	B+
925,000	PlayStation 3	A-
1,000,000	Nintendo Wii	A
1,225,000	PS4/Xbox One	A+

Assignments (You've Got Options)

The main assignments in this class fall into three categories: (1) Class participation; (2) Learning from playing a game; and (3) a “boss battle” that can either be two individual projects or one group game-design project (you can also choose to do more than one kind of “boss battle,” for instance, an individual paper/project AND a group project, if you want to hedge your bets or shoot for a really high grade).

I. Class Participation

Attendance and Active Participation

We will work to build a *learning community* in EDUC 333, and I want this to be a great learning experience for all. To do this requires that you commit to the class and participate. If you *must* miss a class, be sure to let your team leader and professor know. You will receive 5,000 points towards your course “score” for each class you attend. There is no such thing as an “excused” absence... if you aren't in class, you don't get the points, period. (But there are other ways to earn points.)

Please note: *under no circumstances will “double registrations” be tolerated.* I do recognize that students sometimes register for multiple overlapping courses prior to the start of the term as you consider your options, but this *must* be resolved by the end of the first week. I won't share you with another professor.

Also: It is possible to only earn *partial* attendance points for a class, if you arrive very late or leave early, or are tragically off-task during class. Be present!

Team Activities and Competition

You will be assigned to a team, and each team will work with an individual member of the teaching team throughout the semester on many in-class assignments and challenges. Be a good teammate and participate. That's right... this is a massively multiplayer course.

Your team activities count! Your team will compete against other teams all semester long, and members of the winning team will each receive an extra 100,000 points towards their course grade! The second place team will receive 90,000 points, third 80,000, and so on down to the last place team. It pays to participate! Ties are possible (e.g., more than one team can be ranked “1st” and receive all 100,000 points). And there are some nefarious ways to steal points from other teams. See Canvas and GradeCraft for details.

Weekly Reading Quiz (offered each Monday, check syllabus)

Each week, there will be a multiple-choice quiz online to check your understanding of the readings. This quiz will be made available online for a limited window of time each week – from Sunday at 8pm until Monday at 11:59 pm. If you get *all* of the answers on this quiz correct, you will receive 5,000 points.

Blog Posts (ongoing, limited to once/week starting 1/18 and ending 4/10)

The course blog allows you to reflect on your learning, or to report on and/or critique ideas and reports about games and learning that you encounter in your daily travels online and offline. To keep things simple(r), we are using Canvas Discussions instead of a “real” blogging platform.

Your posts are viewable by the whole class. This makes the assignment more meaningful, and should encourage you to do your best work. Note that posts cannot be “revised” like other assignments. So if you submit a basic post, you can't revise it to earn “teach us something” points. (See below for more on the levels).

There are three “levels” of blog post. For a typical post where you link to something interesting or make some interesting observation about the world, you will earn 500 points (this is a “basic” post). For a post where you “teach us something” that enhances our understanding of topics in the class you will earn 1,000

points. For a post where you are “scholarly”, e.g., reference/cite readings from the class as discussed in the “How to Be a Scholar in EDUC 333” document, you will earn 2,500 points. You may earn points for either new posts, or substantive responses to others’ posts (we love a good conversation!). You can earn points for only one post/response each week of the semester, starting at 12:01 am on Monday 1/18, and ending at 11:59 pm on Sunday 4/10.

Learning Game Review (can be completed up to 3 times, due by 1/29, 2/26 & 4/1 @ 4pm)

This class is about games that teach, but we don’t have time to explore *all* of them. So I invite you to explore, play, and write a critique of games that are *explicitly designed for education*. Where to find these games? Start by looking at places like <https://www.brainpop.com/games/>, <http://www.glasslabgames.org/>, <http://www.funbrain.com/>, or any one of hundreds of other sites. Choose *one* game to focus on for each paper, and examine it thoroughly.

Your critique should be between 3 and 5 pages long, and analyze the game from the perspectives of learning, motivation, and assessment. Cite readings from class directly. Your focus should be on how the game supports learning of core or 21st century skills... things that *school* wants to teach. (This is different from learning from playing your game for the entire term (see below), where the focus does not have to be on “academic” learning.) You should also comment on how the game is or might be integrated with classroom or school-based learning.

You can do this assignment up to three times, *but you must get each paper topic/game approved by your team leader in advance*. This is to make sure that you have chosen an appropriate game, and that you have a good focus for your paper. Refer to the assignment overview on Canvas and the rubric in GradeCraft for more details.

II. Learning from Playing a Game

Required Game “Text” and Game Selection Paper (due on Wed., 1/13, @ 4 pm)

For your first assignment, you will choose the game you’ll play this semester. It can be a Mac, PC, console or mobile game (e.g., DS, Wii, Xbox, PS3 or PS4), but it must be a contemporary video game, the kind you could buy at a game store or online today. *Don’t* pick an explicitly “educational” game.

Before you choose your game, you must do a little research and then write a brief report of what your research told you, why you valued the sources you chose, and why you chose the game you did. Your report must also state what you hope to learn, accomplish, or achieve by playing your game, and most importantly... what you believe the potential learning or educational value of the game might be. This report should be between 2 and 3 double-spaced pages. For your research, you are required to consult *and cite in APA style* the following sources. At minimum:

- TWO human beings (should be cited as “personal interviews”)
- TWO online or print sources (such as gamer magazines, online reviews or enthusiast web sites)

You are encouraged to choose a game that you think will be satisfying and motivating, but it **MUST** be a game that’s **NEW** to you. In other words, if you’re already a *World of Warcraft* player, you can’t just re-roll. You need to choose a new game or a different genre of game altogether. If you play sports games (e.g., *Madden*), you can’t just pick a different edition or another sports game. If you *are* an athlete, you cannot play a game related to your sport (e.g., soccer players cannot play FIFA). Think also about whether you suspect that the game will hold your interest for the entire term.

Just in case your choice is not a good fit for the class, hold off on any purchases until you get feedback on this assignment!

Looking for some game ideas? Check out the Computer & Video Games Archive at the Duderstadt Center. The Computer & Video Games Archive (CVGA) is in the basement of The Dude, which is located on North Campus. Their web site: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/computer-video-game-archive>

Your game selection paper is worth up to 20,000 points. See the rubric on GradeCraft for more details about the elements of this assignment and how each element will be evaluated.

“Show and Tell” Critique Poster Sessions (you must sign up on Google Docs)

Throughout the term you will present a report and analysis of your ongoing game play from your “game text.” These presentations will be “walk around” poster sessions. This means that you will create a poster and display it on the wall of the classroom. Each week we’ll have about 18 people present posters. The rest of the class will be able to wander around the room and visit the posters. *If you wish, you may present a second poster later in the term for extra points, so long as you presented a first poster.*

This assignment is meant to give you practice and experience with presenting your theories, analyses, and ideas to a friendly audience. I expect that as you read and consider the materials we discuss during the week, you *will* connect those ideas to your experiences with your game. If there are particularly interesting moments, ideas, concepts, happenings, etc. with your game that you think are relevant to class discussions, readings, and course materials, you are encouraged to explore those ideas more deeply in this presentation. You should find a way to bring your game (or recorded moment in the game) in order to *show* people what your poster is talking about.

This assignment will also help broaden the number of games we are exposed to in class. Because our speakers and readings are mostly K-12 focused, your show and tell is a great opportunity to bring in more commercial and off-the-shelf games. It also gives you a chance to work with the ideas from the readings in a concrete way.

Analyses can be either a close reading of a particular moment in a game or else a broader (but focused) discussion of a particular game rule, narrative structure, character model, social phenomenon, etc. that you

consider relevant and meaningful. For example, you may wish to present the *World of Warcraft* community's reactions and dealings with Chinese farmers or the way that a game's tutorial level elegantly teaches players the game's "design grammar." Or maybe you want to present the elements of a game that are meant to promote "learning" and suggest ways you might evaluate that learning. Whatever your choice, you must directly connect your game to the readings and discussions from class.

As a poster presenter, you are responsible for the following logistics:

- Posters should reference and connect to readings in the course (and cite them properly).
- Posters should be constructed and displayed individually, but you may consult others in your preparation and collaborate with others who are playing the same game.
- Posters are not necessarily arguments for your particular approach to your game; instead, they should take the form of analyses, connecting theory to the text or experience you're examining. Tell us what you notice, what you observe, what's interesting to you and for what reasons.
- Posters should have two or three main points. Structure is important! Tell us at the start what you will be discussing, and be sure to connect the examples you use in a way that helps us clearly see what you see.
- You must bring the materials needed to display your poster with you to class, and hang the poster up *before class begins*.

The first poster session must be presented before 2/25 (that's the week before "Spring" Break). You must do the first poster in order to unlock the ability to do a second poster. If you choose to do an (optional) second poster, it must be presented before 4/7 (the week before our final week of classes). Each poster session is worth up to 120,000 points, for a total of up to 240,000 points if you opt to do both.

NOTE: The second poster session will have different grading criteria than the first.

Please see the poster rubrics and overviews on GradeCraft and in Canvas for complete information on the required elements.

Game Play Reflection Paper (due on Friday, 4/8, @ 4 pm)

This paper, due at the end of the semester, is a summation of your experiences with your game play text throughout the entire semester. You must complete at least one poster session to unlock the Game Play Reflection Paper assignment. If you've done a good job on your poster session(s), then you've already done most of the hard work. Now all you have to do is write a paper to tie the whole experience together. See the rubric on GradeCraft for details on required elements of this paper and how each element will be assessed.

A full rubric is posted on GradeCraft, but here are some of the requirements for this paper:

- The length is 10 pages *maximum* (double spaced, images not included in page count).
- The paper will be a complete analysis of your game play, with a focus on *what you learned* in the course of the play.
- You must include ideas from across the entire term, with proper APA-style citations.
- The paper should address your experiences both within and around the game, e.g., with fan communities.

III. The Boss Battles

In a game, a boss battle is when you take what you've learned, and re-combine it in inventive ways to defeat foes stronger than any you've faced before. You should have all the necessary knowledge to win the fight from the levels you've already completed; but you might need to apply that knowledge in ways you hadn't previously considered if you are to prevail... And sometimes, you have to *earn* the right to take on a challenge.

We will have two options for your boss battle assignments. You can choose to *either* complete two (2) small individual projects worth up to 200,000 each, or one (1) group game-design project worth up to 350,000 points. Note that you may "hedge your bets" by combining these. For instance, you may choose to do *one* individual project, *plus* a group game design project. Or if you're totally nuts, you could do both individual projects *and* the group project... but are you totally nuts?

Individual Projects/Papers

(First is due by Thurs. 3/10, @ 4pm; Second is due by Fri. 4/15 @ 4pm)

This is actually *two* different projects that will be due at two different points during the semester. The first due date is right after "spring" break, and the second is at the end of the term. (Note that you may of course submit any work in this course *before* the official due date.) Your projects may be completely independent of each other, or they may build upon each other. The topic is completely of your choosing, but by your team leader and by the professor to make sure it is going to be a fruitful and worthwhile investigation before you begin your work. *NOTA BENE: You may only do the second individual project if you successfully complete (unlock) the first individual project, earn a grade, and read your feedback.*

This project may take the form of a paper, or you can feel free to be creative (but scholarly) in other media. Short film? Podcast? Really impressive diorama? In terms of scope, if you were to write a more traditional academic paper, I would expect it to be at least 8 pages, single-spaced. And it *must* be a work of scholarship in that it should draw from and cite class readings, references you identify on your own from the library or other sources, and be analytical and critical. In short, it should make some form of *argument* about games and learning, and that argument should be well-supported.

A list of criteria to guide your work will be posted on GradeCraft/Canvas. The first individual project is worth up to 200,000 points. The second project (which can only be done *if you complete* the first project) is worth up to another 200,000 points.

Group Game Design Project (due on Friday, 4/15, @ 4 pm)

In this project, you will work together with a group of your classmates on the design of a game that has well-defined learning objectives of the type that would be useful in K-12 education. You are not responsible for the actual development or prototyping of the game, though if you wish to do some development, knock yourself out.

You are responsible for forming your own group. A group must have *at least 3 students and not more than 4 students* (this will be strictly enforced). All group projects and teams must be approved by your team leader(s) and the professor.

This will be a *group* project, and you will be graded as a group. We will provide some group process support to help you structure this task.

Your final project will be submitted to GradeCraft *as a group*. Only one team member needs to submit the final report online. In addition to the written paper, you will also prepare a group *poster* that will be shared in the final class meeting. Part of your grade will be a reflection of the quality of this poster.

The following are the core required components of your report (with some initial thoughts on each):

- Game Description: Of course, you have to describe the game! You should focus on game play and a full description of the learning goals. Storyboards or screen mock-ups are a great idea.
- Motivation and Learning Theory: You must separately address both learning theory and motivational theory in your project. Go back to the readings and presentations on these topics. What theory underlies the design of your game? How is our understanding of motivation and engagement leveraged to help promote learning? Citations are a requirement in this section! This is one of the most important parts of the report.
- Logic Model: Logic models make an appearance in the lecture on research design. This is the “bridge” between what your learning goals and motivational elements are and how they manifest themselves in the game. A graphic is a requirement here (think flow chart), but text to explain yourself is also important.
- Research Evaluation Plan: This is the other most important section of the report. You need to fully describe how you plan to investigate whether players of your game actually achieve the desired learning goals. The methods should be appropriate to the questions you frame. NOTE that you don’t actually have to conduct this research. I just want to see that, given a set of claims about learning, you know what you would look for to evaluate those claims.

There is no minimum page length for your final report, but there is a maximum of 15 pages of text (1.5 line spacing, please). Figures, graphics, and instruments are not included in this count. Please make sure that you are properly addressing each of the required grading criteria (see GradeCraft/Canvas for rubric).

IV. Badges

There are many for your efforts in class to be recognized. In most classes, your final grade is all you have to show for your efforts. But does that number really represent your true effort? Does a single number (89%) capture what you learned? Are you an “A-”, or a “B+”? Of course not! You’re much more than that.

Badges are part of a movement to find ways to recognize accomplishments that go beyond grades. Badges aren’t a new idea (see: Scouting), but they are experiencing a resurgence in informal learning (clubs, museums), and increasingly in formal school settings. Badges can be used to record the mastery of specific skills or dispositions. In EDUC 333, you can earn badges for skills such as demonstrating creative thinking, being an excellent presenter, showing leadership in your team, and so forth (see GradeCraft for a list of all of the badges).

V. The Fine Print

General Comments on Assignments and Course Requirements

- As the semester continues, the instructor may alter or add to the assignments. Pay attention!
- For all assignments, you are expected to draw heavily on readings from the entire course in justifying your design choices, research rationale, etc. If all you can offer is your own opinion, why bother taking the class at all?
- Professionalism is important. Grammar, style, organization, and clarity count.
- Cite all your sources in APA format—points will be deducted for failing to do this. If you don't know APA format, get yourself a copy of the APA "Manual of Style" in any bookstore and become familiar with its major points. This isn't just narrow-mindedness; common formats help reduce uncertainty and facilitate the sharing of work and ideas, a critical component of a healthy intellectual community. To make life easier, acquire some form of computer-based reference and citation manager and use it (like Zotero). If you start building a reference collection now, it will serve you for a long time.
- Incompletes are given only under unusual extenuating circumstances.
- Communication is KEY. Always keep in touch with your professor and/or team leader. If we don't know that you're having a problem, we can't help you. The professor is always happy to talk about stuff with you... even stuff that isn't related to the course.

Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. You may obtain copy editing assistance, and you may discuss your ideas with others, but all substantive writing and ideas must be your own, or be explicitly attributed to another. An exception is group work, which is assumed to be a collaboration by all group members. See both the University policy on Academic Integrity (<http://spg.umich.edu/pdf/303.03.pdf>) and the LSA Office of the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/examples.html>) for definitions of plagiarism, and associated consequences. Any violation of standards for academic integrity will result in severe penalties, which might range from failing an assignment to failing the course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu/>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

Information about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students, while acknowledging that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (732) 764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs> , or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources .

For a more comprehensive listing of the broad range of mental health services available on campus, please visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>

Pay Attention!

I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time, and will notify the class of changes when they occur. These may include additions or changes to the readings or assignments. Please pay attention to class announcements, both in class and on-line, to learn about any updates or changes!

Rules of the Class

- You get *out* of class what you put *in* to class.
- *All* ideas are worth consideration.
- Everyone is responsible for *their own* learning.
- Everyone is responsible for *everyone else's* learning.
- Only *YOU* are responsible for the quality of your work.
- There is no such thing as “Fight Club.”

Acknowledgements

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