

Customer Services of Yadanabon University Library

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Abstract

In an academic library, the main customers or users are the students (undergraduates and postgraduates) and academic staff. Library customers are crucial because they form the basis for the existence of a library. Therefore, all libraries always need to fulfill the customer needs. The objectives of the study are to reveal Yadanabon University Library's customer services and to identify how the library serves its customer services to its users. The study was conducted by using survey and observation research method. The designed questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the data from users. This study helps to identify which types of services are provided by the Yadanabon University Library. The result of the study reveals that Yadanabon University Library always attempts to satisfy the users with its services. It will be useful for the library professionals who want to try to develop their libraries.

Keywords: academic library, customer services, customer needs, Yadanabon University Library

1. Introduction

Libraries are business oriented organizations and thrive on their customers. Library customers in all ages, internal or external, remain the focal point for the existence of any library. In an academic library, the main customers or users are the students (undergraduates and post-graduates) and academic staff. Other categories of customers include the administrative staff and external users. Staff and students of other educational institutions as well as individuals from the university wider community who use the library also form part of its customers. No business exists without the customers.

Libraries are established for use and so every effort exerted in their establishment is in vain if there are no customers/users to patronize and utilize their resources. Library customers are crucial because they form the basis for the existence of a library. There is need to value library customers and recognize that they have a choice as to whether or not to use library services.

1.1 Importance of Customer Service

Any library, information centre or related organization is providing a service to its clients. The success of that service will be judged more on the quality than the quantity of interactions. It is characteristics of all service organizations that quality depends upon the individual delivering it, with consequent difficulties in ensuring consistency and high

standards for every transaction.¹

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¹ Bob Pymm, *Learn Library Management*. 2nd ed. (Bangkok: DocMatrix Pty, 2000), 105. (hereafter cited as Pymm)

In order to provide effective user services, the librarian needs to know the following factors:

- Understanding customer needs
- Providing the right service to meet these needs
- Implementing a satisfactory delivery system to ensure the service is appropriate and timely
- Balancing the collections
- Ensuring a constant commitment to organizational goals.²

To understand the customers' needs fully, library staff should listen carefully to their questions and should not be afraid to ask questions. Clients may be unsure what they need, staff may misinterpret what is said and both will make mistakes. It is therefore crucial in ensuring a satisfactory outcome that the right question is being answered.³

In order to gain insight into customer needs, formal or informal surveys should be undertaken. This can range from simply sitting down with a regular client to discuss their requirements and how well they are being met, to sending survey questionnaires to users and potential users asking how they feel about the quality of service provided. For non-users, surveys or personal contact can be useful in finding out why they do not use the service, and may suggest ways of tailoring the service more directly to their requirements.

From a clearer understanding of client needs it should be possible to design a product or service appropriate to their requirements. For this to succeed, staff must also be committed to an ethic that sees quality service as the preeminent part for their job. For managers, this means employing customer-oriented staff who are willing and able to commit to the ideals inherent in putting the customer first.

To emphasize the importance of excellence in service, a customer service policy should be drawn up, publicized and promoted to all staff. Existing employees should have input into the developments of such a policy, which will cover areas such as the various client groups and their requirements, timeliness and quality indicators, level of response expected, training rights and responsibilities, handling difficult situations etc. New employees must be given copies of the policy, and be expected to read and support its aims.⁴

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The major focus of the present study is to find out the customer services of Yadanabon University Library. The objectives of the study are:

- To study the importance of customer service
- To study the need for effective customer service

² Pymm, 106.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

- To identify how the library serves its customer services to its users of Yadanabon University

1.3 Research Method

The research method adopted for the study was qualitative method. The required data were collected through the questionnaire. The structured questionnaires were distributed to 100 users who always used the library. Besides, the necessary information was also collected from various sources such as books, periodicals, dissertations and theses, etc.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study limited the customer services of the library such as circulation service, reference service, reading room services and e-library service during the period 2005–2006 to 2018–2019. The target group of this research covers the academic community of Yadanabon University Library. These communities are students, teaching staff, administrative staff, and researchers.

2. Literature Review

There are various research studies highlighting the importance of customer services of an academic library. This study enables the researcher to identify research gaps in the previous studies.

Broady–Preston, Felice & Marshall studied relationships between library staff and their customers. They explored this study using a customer relationships management (CRM) framework. It was found that librarians needed not only to ascertain and meet customer needs, but also to form active collaborations with their customers if the true market potential of academic libraries was realized.⁵

K. Kiran studied the perception of academic staff on the quality of academic library services. The study indicated that the library has a positive impact on their teaching, learning and research. The overall satisfaction with the library services received a satisfactory rating.⁶

Rebecca Mugridge and Nancy M. Poehlmann demonstrated that an internal customer service survey approach to assessment delivered many benefits to technical services and library systems units. It was found that technical services and library systems units should identify whether customers were satisfied with the services provided, whether the services were still needed, whether additional services were needed and more.⁷

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

⁵ J. Broady– Preston, J. Felice & S. Marshall, “Building Better Customer Relationships: Case Studies from Malta and the UK,” *Library Management* 27(6/8): 430–445, accessed February 10, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1108/01435120610702422>.

⁶ K. Kiran, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Academic Libraries: Respectives from a Malaysia University,” *Library Review* 59(9) (2020): 261–273, accessed February 10, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00242531011038578>.

⁷ R. Mugridge and N. M. Poehlmann, “Internal Customer Service Assessment of Cataloguing, Acquisitions, and Library System,” *OCLC Systems & Services: International digital library perspectives* 31 (4) (2015), accessed February 10, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1108/OCLC-12-2014-0037>.

Academic libraries are found in higher-education institutions, serving the twin goals of supporting the specific campus curricula while also serving the research needs of faculty, students, and the larger academic community.⁸ Academic libraries differ from each other in many respects but they all have the same basic function, which is to aid the parent institution in carrying out its objectives. The library contributes to the realization of these objectives and supports the total programme by acquiring and making available the books, materials, and services which are needed. In many academic libraries, the mechanization of certain library operations, such as the acquisition of materials, the preparing of book catalogues, and keeping up with circulation, has resulted in improved library services to all users.⁹

In order that all students will have an equal opportunity to use the library materials, certain rules and regulations are established in all libraries. These rules govern the kinds of materials which are circulated, the length of time they can be borrowed, the fines charged for overdue books, the use of library facilities- reading rooms, listening rooms, conference rooms, and other special areas and the hours of service.¹⁰

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The principal objective of the Yadanabon University Library is to enable the service personnel to meet the instructional and research need of its users. The library offers the following services to its users.

i. Circulation Service

The Yadanabon University library offers borrowing privileges to all faculty members, under-graduate and post-graduate students, research scholars and administrative staff. The library has a circulation desk which takes care of most circulation control functions. Its purpose is to make a collection available for use effectively. At the circulation desk, materials are charged, renewed and discharged by using Brown Charging System. At the Yadanabon University Library, lending procedure is simple for the users and the library staff. Normally, active library members can easily check out library books through author, title and subject catalogue by copying the all number in a blank slip and then give to a library staff. The library provides an open access system to the faculty members and a closed access system to the post-graduate and under-graduate students and administrative staff.

⁸ Denise K. Fourie and Nancy E. Loe. *Libraries in the Information Age: An Introduction and Career Exploration*, 3rd. ed., Library and Information Science Text Series (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2016), 70. (hereafter cited as Fourie and Loe)

⁹ Jean Key Gates, *Guide to the use of Books and Libraries*. 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.), 30, 36. (hereafter cited as Gates)

¹⁰ Ibid., 36.

¹¹ Ibid.

In 2018, the library started Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and e-circulation system using ELIB Library Automation System. The users can search the books they want through OPAC. The library provides two computer stations on the left and right side of the circulation desk to access the OPAC. In addition to Yadanabon University Library OPAC, the user can access the website of Union Catalogue of Myanmar Academic Libraries developed by Universities' Central Library.

To provide better service, lending policies are established by the university librarian. According to the lending policies, the library permits the users to borrow knowledgeable books and books on subject matter and teaching aids. The academic staff can borrow six books at one time and the students are allowed to borrow two books. The loan period for academic staff is two weeks for knowledgeable books and one month for books on subject matter and teaching aids. The students and teaching staff can borrow books for one week. It depends on the current library collection. If the returned book is overdue, five kyats are charged for the overdue book per day. Occasionally, issued books may be lost or damaged. It is responsible to the borrowers. In this case, three times of original cost must be fined depending on the difficulties to replace new one. Yadanabon University Library frames these rules and regulations for increasing the use of library.

The library also provides reservation service at the circulation desk. If a library member demands the book borrowed by someone, he can reserve it and the library will inform him when the books is returned. The books can be recalled after two week or one month loan for teaching staff and one week loan for students and administrative staff.

Table 1. Annual List of Library Membership

Year	Membership			
	Teaching Staff	Student	Academic Staff	Total
2005-2006	185	700	73	958
2006-2007	285	1042	52	1379
2007-2008	172	660	51	883
2008-2009	135	1253	37	1425
2009-2010	222	1639	81	1942
2010-2011	165	223	52	440
2011-2012	166	1095	44	1305
2012-2013	176	1082	25	1283
2013-2014	78	1688	16	1782
2014-2015	221	1725	29	1975
2015-2016	154	1797	27	1978
2016-2017	201	2200	19	2420
2017-2018	163	1936	9	2108

Source: Annual Records of Yadanabon University Library

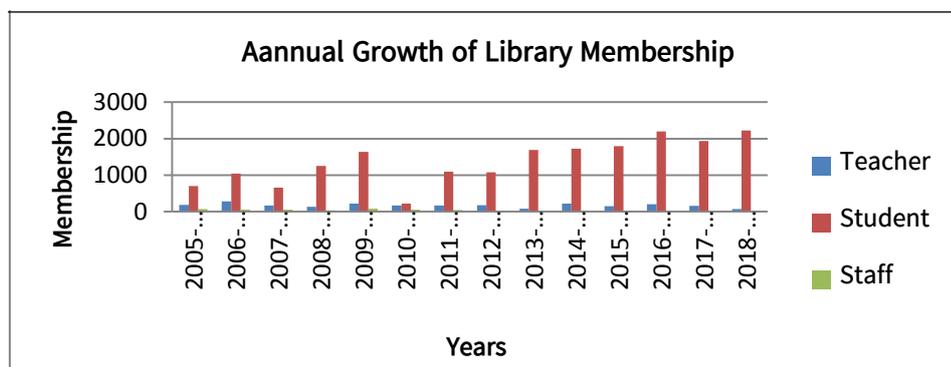


Figure 1. Annual Growth of Library Membership

According to Figure 1, the number of members grows yearly. But, in the academic year 2010-2011, the number of members was the lowest.

The following table shows the annual statistics of the library.

Table 2. Annual Circulation Statistics

Year	Number of Books Issued		Total
	Myanmar	English	
2005-2006	8819	1022	9841
2006-2007	11039	1187	12226
2007-2008	8068	909	8977
2008-2009	10694	1280	11974
2009-2010	15249	1363	16612
2010-2011	14905	1230	16135
2011-2012	11591	820	12411
2012-2013	10744	729	11473
2013-2014	12509	665	13174
2014-2015	11415	503	11918
2015-2016	11123	605	11728
2016-2017	8772	483	9255
2017-2018	14595	564	15159
2018-2019	13399	535	13934

Source: Annual Records of Yadanabon University Library

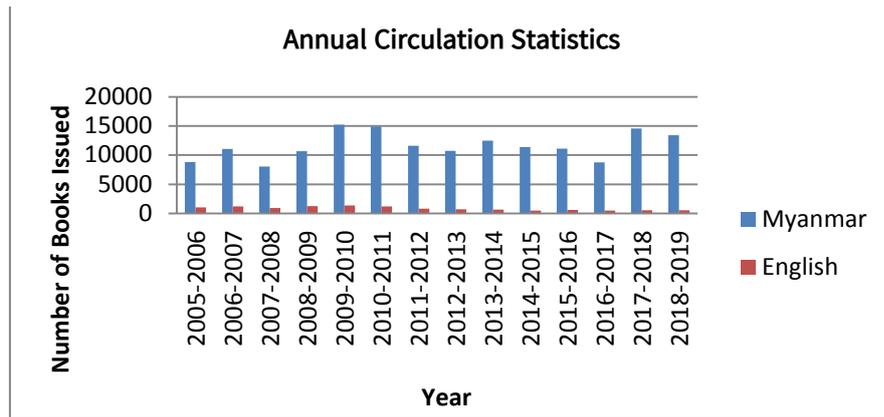


Figure 2. Annual Statistics of Circulation Service

The above figure shows loan statistics of circulation service. The results show that most of the users utilized books in Myanmar rather than books in English.

The users were asked to give their opinions to the circulation service. The following table shows the users' comments on the circulation service.

Table 3. Users' Comments on Circulation Service

Good	Fair	Bad
75%	20%	5%

Source: Survey

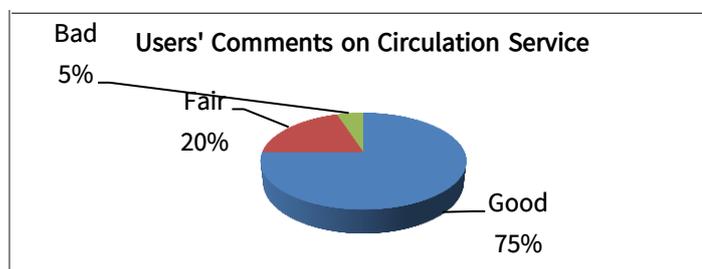


Figure 3. User Comment of Circulation Service

According to Figure 3, 75% of the users responded that the circulation service is good for them. So, it can be said that majority of the users were satisfied with the circulation service of the Yadanabon University Library.

ii. Reference Service

A librarian who works public services, is answering questions posed by library patrons at a reference desk, by telephone, or via-email. A reference librarian may also be called upon to provide point of use instruction on the use of library resources and information technology.

Yadanabon University Library provides reference service to the users as possible as it can although the library holds very small reference collection such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, handbooks, yearbooks, theses and dissertations, etc. Reference books cannot be used outside the library. As the library has a separate reference section, it offers open access system to all the users. They all can approach the bookshelves by

themselves and can use the books they want openly. The library only maintains the records of the users who enter the reference room every day.

The following table shows the annual statistics of the users in reference room.

Table 4. Annual Statistics of Users in Reference Room

Year	Number of Users
2005-2006	3102
2006-2007	4680
2007-2008	3486
2008-2009	5256
2009-2010	7635
2010-2011	8257
2011-2012	8186
2012-2013	6506
2013-2014	6127
2014-2015	11819
2015-2016	13564
2016-2017	13340
2017-2018	16745
2018-2019	18071

Source: Annual Record of Yadanabon University Library

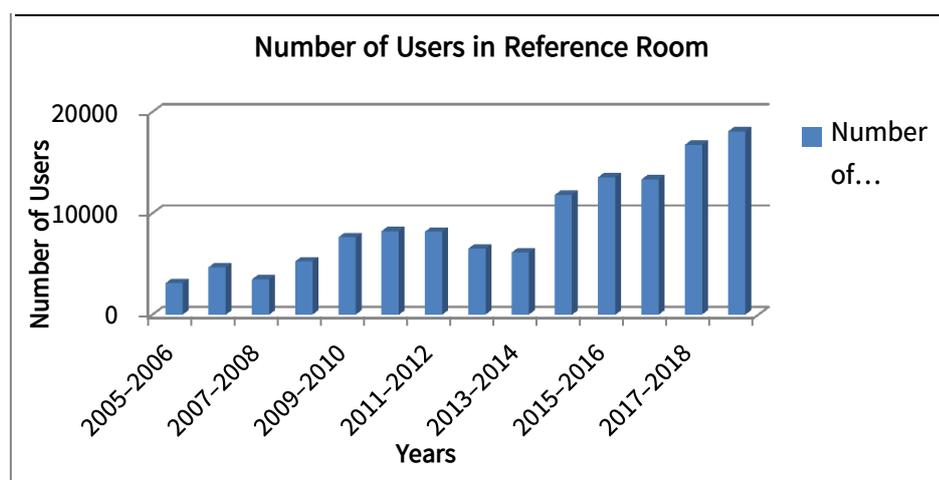


Figure 4. Annual Statistics of Users in Reference Room

The above figure shows that the number of the users who entered the reference room increased yearly. Among them, the academic year 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 had the lowest number but the academic year 2018-2019 had the largest number.

The users were asked to give their opinions to the reference service provided by the Yadanabon University Library. The following table shows the users' comments on reference service.

Table 5. Users' Comments on Reference Service

Good	Fair	Bad
78%	22%	0%

Source: Survey

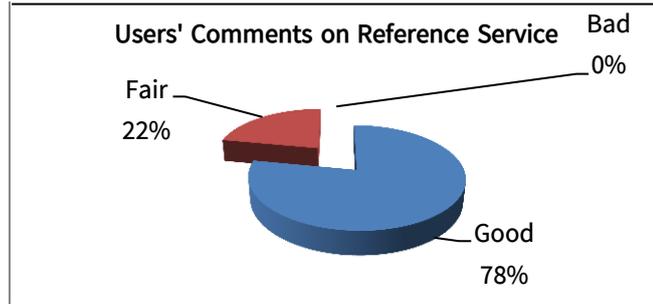


Figure 5. Users' Comment on Reference Service

According to Figure 5, majority of the users (78%) responded that reading room service is good and 22% of the users said this service is fair. No one identified that this service is bad. So, it can be observed that the reading room service provided by the library fulfilled the needs of the users.

iii. Reading Room Service

The Yadanabon University Library provides reading room services to its users. Periodicals including current and back issues are provided at the reading room. Current magazines are displayed in alphabetical order of name of magazines. The library provides its users open access to the periodicals at this room. The readers can use current periodicals up to three months back at the reading room. Back volumes of periodicals are kept at the periodicals section on the first floor of the library. The room is located at the ground floor of the library to access easily for its users. It provides 27 titles of periodicals to its readers. At the reading room, journals, magazines and newspapers are displayed for reading purposes. They are Myat Mingalar (မြတ်မဂလာ), Shwe Amute (ရွှေအမြုတေ), Thurizza (သူရဇ္ဇ), Natkhatta Yaungchi (နက္ခတ္တရောင်ခြည်), Mahaythi (မဟေသီ), Kalya (ကလျာ), Kunpyuta Journal (ကွန်ပျူတာဂျာနယ်), Thuta Swe Sone (သုတစွယ်စုံ), Myawaddy (မြဝတီ), Yoke Shin Tae Kabyar (ရုပ်ရှင်တေးကဗျာ), Hlo What San Kyal (လျှို့ဝှက်ဆန်းကြယ်), Atwe Amyin (အတွေးအမြင်), Thuta Padaethar (သုတပဒေသာ), Khityanat (ခေတ်ရနံ့), Ngwe Taryi (ငွေတာရီ), Ziwaka (ဇီဝက), Yadanamon (ရတနာမွန်), The Best English, English for All, Light of English, Top of English, Myanma Alin (မြန်မာ့အလင်း), The Mirror (ကြေးမုံ), Mandalay Daily (မန္တလေးနေ့စဉ်), Myawaddy (မြဝတီသတင်းစာ), Yadanabon (ရတနာပုံ), and Myanmar Times (မြန်မာတိုင်းမ်).

The following table shows annual statistics of users who visited the reading room daily.

Table 6. Annual Statistics of Reading Room Users

Year	Number of Users
2005-2006	5781

2006–2007	9619
2007–2008	4003
2008–2009	9904
2009–2010	13471
2010–2011	10434
2011–2012	7742
2012–2013	5878
2013–2014	7825
2014–2015	15531
2015–2016	16009
2016–2017	17527
2017–2018	30420
2018–2019	23348

Source: Annual Records of Yadanabon University Library

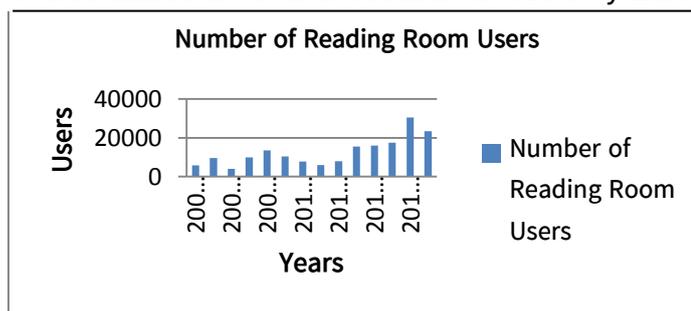


Figure 6. Annual Reading Room Users Statistics

The above figure shows the use of reading room service. The result indicates that the number of users in the academic year 2017–2018 was the highest but the number of users in 2007–2008 was the lowest. It can be noted that the number of users in 2018–2019 was lower than the year 2017–2018.

iv. e-Library Services

At the Yadanabon University Library, there have been a wide range of e-journals and e-books collections with the addition of high quality reference information and databases through the EIFL, e-library Myanmar Project funded by the Open Society Foundation. E-library enables the users to access e-resources, such as e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers and other sources. EIFL provided e-library Myanmar Project to promote effective teaching, research and learning across all faculties for the sciences, social sciences and humanities in 2015. As a result of the project, faculty and students from Yadanabon University got a great opportunity to access high quality international journals, databases and e-books. For the University students in Myanmar, they have developed knowledge and building skills and capacities with an expanding range with this e-library Myanmar Project. On the University campus, high speed internet bandwidth

(about 700 mbps) is provided. 100 mbps of Internet bandwidth is connected to the library. So, as e-Library services, the library provides wifi free access and free internet access service to its users.

At present, the library provides academic online databases by the subscription of MALC (Myanmar Academic Library Consortium). Online databases, such as Reference and Newspaper includes Credo Online Reference Service, Master FILE Premier, Oxford English Dictionary Online and Oxford Quick Reference. Under the Multidisciplinary e-resources, Cambridge Journals Online, EBSCO Academic Search Premier, Edward Elgar Journals and e-Book Collection, Oxford Handbooks Online, Oxford Journals Collection, Oxford Scholarship Online, SAGE Research Methods, SAGE Research Methods Cases, Taylor & Francis Combined Library, JSTOR are provided. For Myanmar sources, Journal of Burma Studies can be accessed. Regarding subject on Law, Journals of Justcite, Justis, Investment Claims and Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law, Oxford Legal Research Library, Oxford Reports on International Law, Oxford Scholarly Authorities on International Law are available at the library. For the science subject, databases of Bio One, IOP science, Nature Publishing Group Journals, Royal Society of Chemistry Gold, Royal Society Journals Collection can be accessed. Regarding Business, Economics and Education, databases of ERIC (Education Resource Information Center), IMF e-library can be accessed for the users. The library gives online database access training to library staff, faculty members and students continuously.

4. Findings and Discussion

Customers need to be heard and listened to—this is the basics of customer service. The importance of effective customer service in academic libraries cannot be overemphasized. Regarding library membership, the number increased from year to year. So, it can be said that users' interest also increased gradually. According to the statistics of reference users and reading room users, the number of users increased yearly. For the users' comments, the research applies the questions that asked the level of services such as Good, Fair and Bad. Based on findings, majority of users over 75% gave "good". Thus, it can be noted that library customers are satisfied with library services. They will find it very easy to come to the library any time when they have information needs either for personal or academic purposes. Yadanabon University Library can support university customers in teaching, learning, research and professional development. But, concerning with subject reference sources or teaching aids, users recommended that these collections are inadequate for users' requirement.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The objective of the university library is to support the academic programmes of the university by providing relevant information so as to respond to the ever-increasing information demands of the users.¹² Yadanabon University Library always attempts to provide better customer services to its users, to analyse users' needs and to fulfill the requirements of the users. So, the library develops gradually year by year with the support of the authorities and great effort of all library staffs. Thus, in this empirical study, the research recommended that library collection has to be enhanced to ensure that there is enough and balanced collection reflecting the customers' needs. E-Library services also have to be enhanced and the faculty and students should be encouraged to access online e-resources. In this way, university libraries should maintain good collection and provide good customer services.

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