

# UNDERSTANDING THE DRIVERS OF **STANDOUT** **VIDEO EXPERIENCES**

A MEDIA TRIAL CONDUCTED BY IPG MEDIA LAB



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Video advertising has become an established part of the online video viewing experience. Advances in technology and research methods now allow us to dive deeper into what specific video elements elicit positive or negative reactions from viewers. Digital advertising provider Undertone partnered with IPG Media Lab to understand how four key elements of video advertising affect end users' feelings towards a brand, and whether they inspire or discourage action on the part of the consumer.

## THE FOUR ELEMENTS THE RESEARCH FOCUSED ON WERE:



### 1. CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT MODE

whether the user initiates the video (click-to-play) or the unit runs automatically (auto-play)



### 2. VIDEO PLAYER SIZE

large players (400x300 and up) vs. small players (300x250)



### 3. VIDEO PLAYER LOCATION ON PAGE

center placement vs. side-rail placement



### 4. WEBSITE QUALITY

impact of site environment, including quality of content and ad visibility

## SOME KEY FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY, WHICH ARE FURTHER EXPLORED IN THIS PAPER, INCLUDE:

**CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT MODE** (click-to-play vs. auto-play) is the most important element for advertisers to consider when their objective is driving brand awareness.

**THE QUALITY OF THE SITE** a video ad appears on is the primary driver of brand perception, consumer intent, engagement, and overall satisfaction.

**CLICK-TO-PLAY ADS** elicit nearly four times more positive emotions from consumers than auto-play ads.

**LARGER VIDEO PLAYERS** evoke higher levels of brand awareness among consumers and can mitigate the negative effects often associated with auto-play ads.

**PLAYER POSITION** has little impact on consumer response.

# EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The study used a diverse set of measurement techniques to capture a robust range of consumer reactions to video advertising.

Data were collected via eye tracking, facial movements and online surveys. The eye tracking and facial coding were used to gather emotional responses while panel-based surveys captured changes in standard brand metrics.

This approach provided an opportunity to confirm the strength of the overall results by corroborating findings from multiple sources. All media were served through Undertone's owned and operated ad server. The work was fielded from August 9 – 15, 2012.

# KEY FINDINGS

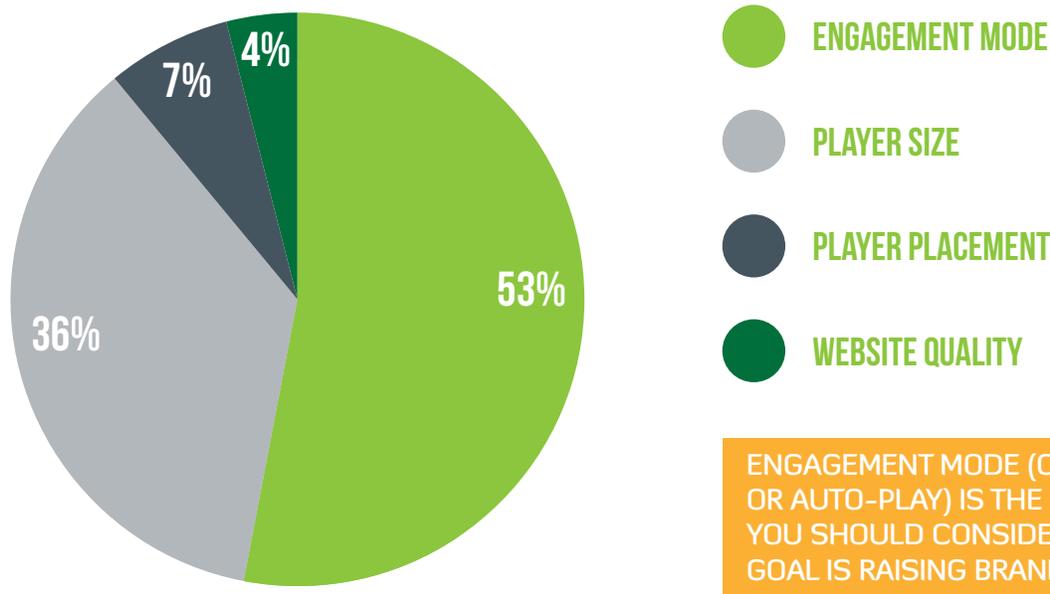
PHASE ONE

## THE ELEMENTS OF VIDEO ADVERTISING AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO BRAND METRICS

**THE FIRST STAGE OF THE ANALYSIS SOUGHT TO IDENTIFY WHAT ROLE EACH OF THE FOUR VIDEO ADVERTISING ELEMENTS PLAYED IN DRIVING KEY BRAND METRICS.**

The first metric explored was brand awareness. Here, engagement mode, or the way viewers initially viewed the video (click-to-play or auto-play) emerged as the key driver, constituting 53% of the total impact on ad awareness. The second stage of analysis (detailed later in this report) revealed that of the two engagement modes, auto-play ads drive higher levels of awareness than click-to-play ads, but that these higher levels of awareness can come at the expense of positive emotional response and engagement levels.

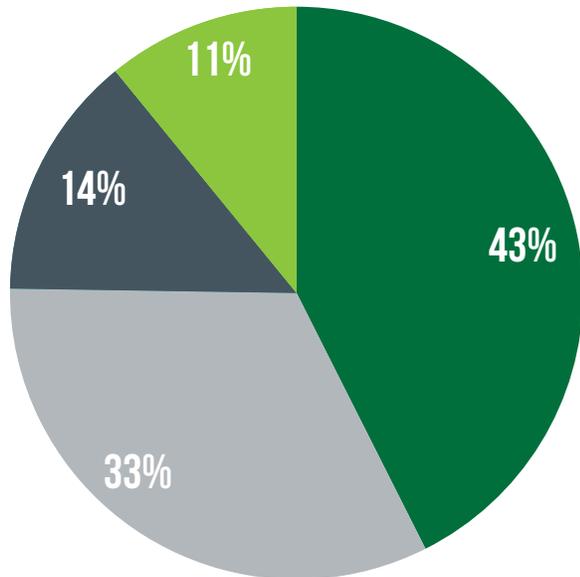
### ▶ VIDEO ELEMENTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO AD AWARENESS:



Source: Panel survey, Total n=1261, non-clickers removed from click-to-play cells

While the method of video engagement emerged as the main element for driving ad awareness, the study found that the quality of the website a video ad appears on is the most important factor for driving intent to purchase. These results confirm the halo effect that exists when a brand is present among high-quality content. Video player size followed website quality as the second most significant factor associated with improvements in intent.

## ▶ VIDEO ELEMENTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO INTENT:



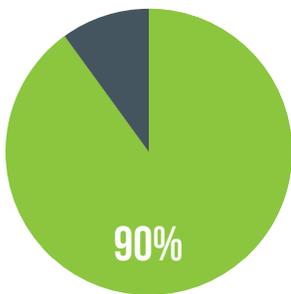
QUALITY MATTERS: WEBSITE QUALITY EMERGED AS THE KEY ELEMENT FOR DRIVING INTENT.

Source: Panel survey, Total n=1261, non-clickers removed from click-to-play cells

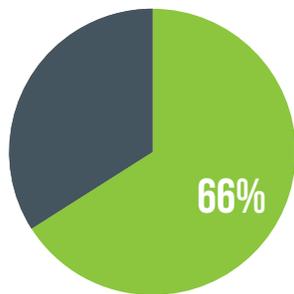
## HOW VIDEO ADVERTISING ELEMENTS IMPACT CONSUMER SATISFACTION

In addition to driving intent, website quality also plays a significant role in driving a number of consumer satisfaction measures tied to the overall video advertising experience. As you would expect, website quality emerged as the most significant of the four elements measured in contributing to trust in the website (90% compared to 10% across the other three elements measured). Website quality was also the most significant of the four elements measured in driving advertising relevancy (66%), engagement (64%) and overall video satisfaction (50%).

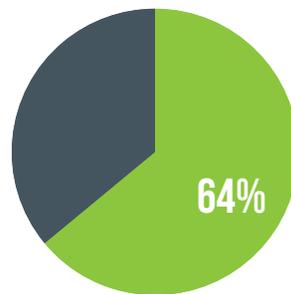
## ▶ THE ROLE OF WEBSITE QUALITY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION:



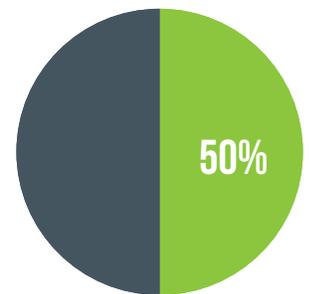
I TRUST THE WEBSITE



THE ADS WERE RELEVANT



THE ADS WERE ENGAGING



VIDEO SATISFACTION

Source: Panel survey, Total n=1261, non-clickers removed from click-to-play cells

WEBSITE QUALITY DRIVES A RANGE OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION MEASURES TIED TO THE VIDEO ADVERTISING EXPERIENCE.

# KEY FINDINGS

## PHASE TWO

## A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE DIFFERENT VIDEO ADVERTISING ELEMENTS

WHILE THE FIRST PHASE OF THE ANALYSIS PROVIDED AN OVERALL LOOK AT THE ROLE THE FOUR VIDEO ADVERTISING ELEMENTS PLAYED IN DRIVING BRAND METRICS, THE SECOND PHASE TOOK A DEEPER DIVE INTO EACH OF THE DIFFERENT ADVERTISING ELEMENTS. THIS STAGE OF ANALYSIS LEVERAGED A COMBINATION OF EYE TRACKING, FACIAL MOVEMENTS AND ONLINE SURVEYS.

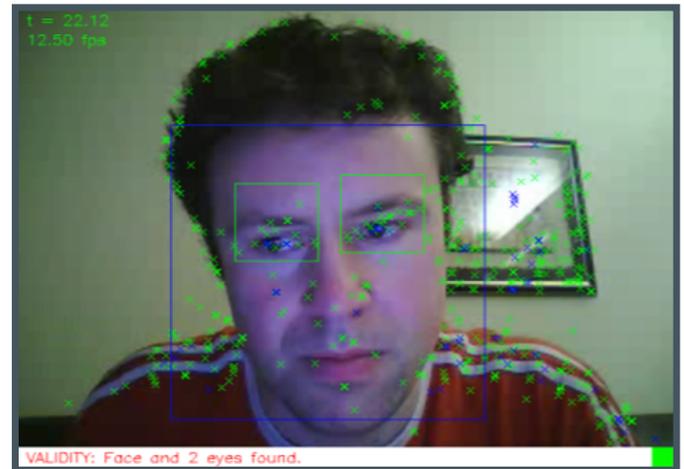


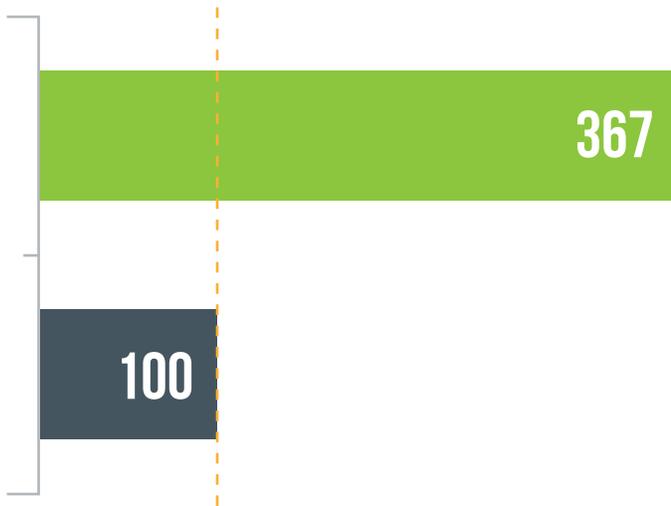
Image Source: EyeTrackShop

Eye tracking and facial expression analysis were used to measure non-verbal reactions to the different video advertising elements

## FACIAL EXPRESSION ANALYSIS CONFIRMS THE IMPORTANCE OF USER-INITIATION IN DETERMINING THE SUCCESS OF VIDEO ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

Data collection from the facial recognition examination uncovered a somewhat negative reaction to auto-play videos compared to click-to-play campaigns. Positive facial emotions, such as happy or surprised, were nearly four times higher among viewers initiating the video (click-to-play) versus those where the video started automatically (auto-play).

▶ **FACIAL RECOGNITION ANALYSIS REVEALS IMPACT OF DIFFERENT ENGAGEMENT MODES:**



**EMOTIONAL RESPONSE INDEX**

- CLICK-TO-PLAY
- AUTO-PLAY

CLICK-TO-PLAY ADS RESULT IN NEARLY FOUR TIMES MORE POSITIVE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS THAN AUTO-PLAY ADS.

Source: Facial coding panel, Total n=456

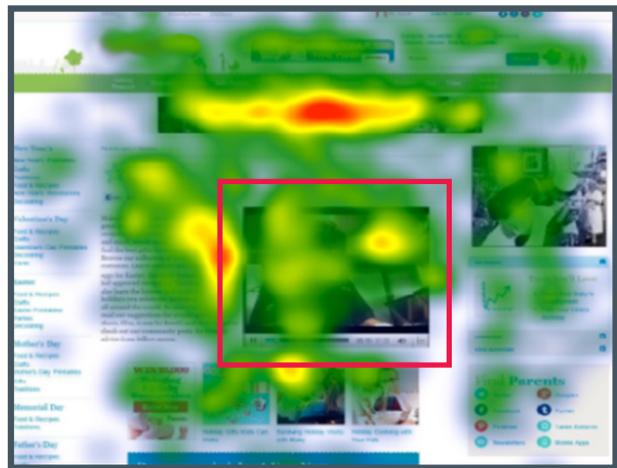
Eye tracking data was consistent with these findings, revealing that respondents viewing click-to-play videos were more focused, and engaged with content in more depth than respondents viewing auto-play videos. This included browsing to new content and the likelihood of stopping a video from playing. These results are also in alignment with the panel survey, in which respondents agreed that they trusted the website more when they initiated the ad and had a greater overall satisfaction with the videos.

▶ **CLICK-TO-PLAY ADS DRIVE MORE FOCUSED AND ENGAGED VIEWS:**

**CLICK-TO-PLAY**

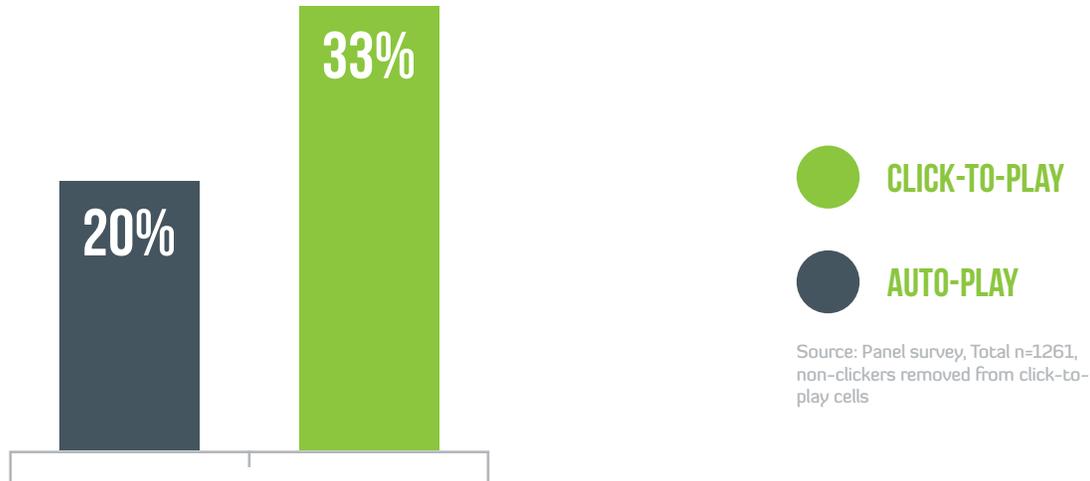


**AUTO-PLAY**



How did people engage with click-to-play vs. auto-play ads? In the images above, red signifies the highest concentration of eye movement. These images represent a composite across all observations throughout the study. Clearly, with click-to-play videos viewers were more focused on the video itself, while with auto-play it's apparent that viewers were spending more time looking elsewhere on the page.

## ▶ CLICK-TO-PLAY ENHANCES SATISFACTION AND TRUST IN WEBSITES:



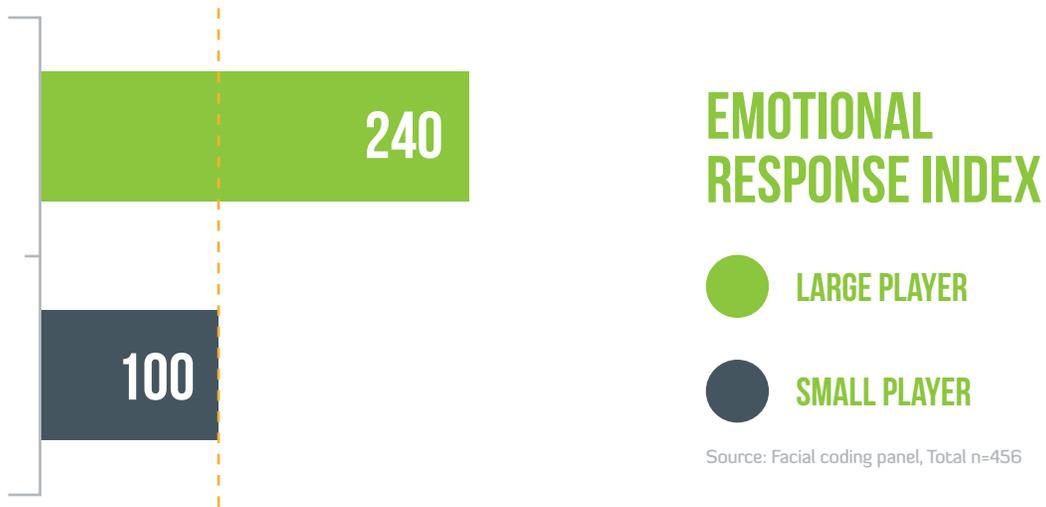
Within the two modes of video engagement, auto-play out-performed click-to-play in terms of boosting brand awareness, but to the detriment of both the consumer's emotion, engagement, and intent, which is driven more through click-to-play ads. It is therefore important for advertisers to understand that awareness of video advertising can be a good thing or a bad thing. For instance, some consumers may think "I was aware of the ad but I had a negative reaction to it." Obviously, when the goal of an advertiser is simply "awareness," this wasn't the intended outcome.

If a marketer's goal is to capture a consumer's attention, auto-play ads can be effective. However, if a marketer is concerned about perception and wants more meaningful engagement, click-to-play emerged as a better and safer option. Understanding these nuances and deploying a combination of auto-play and click-to-play ads is key for advertisers looking to drive prospects through the purchase pathway.

## LARGE PLAYER SIZES POSITIVELY AFFECTS CONSUMERS' EMOTIONAL RESPONSE IN FACIAL EXPRESSION ANALYSIS

As stated earlier, video player size emerged as a key driver for awareness with large players driving higher levels of awareness than smaller players. This occurred across the board for both unaided and aided awareness metrics, including both men and women and those in-market. The results of the facial expression analysis supported these findings by demonstrating the fact that large players actually help mitigate some of the negative emotional response of auto-play ads. Large video players showed significantly better emotional valence than small video players during auto-play ads. These findings suggest that users embrace the opportunity to view a large player and do not show the same negative emotions normally associated with auto-play experiences.

**▶ FACIAL RECOGNITION ANALYSIS REVEALS LARGE PLAYERS CAN HELP MITIGATE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF AUTO-PLAY ADS:**



**PLAYER POSITION: ALTHOUGH THE SMALLEST CONTRIBUTOR TO BRAND METRICS, VIDEO PLAYER POSITIONING SHOWS SLIGHT VARIATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT BRAND METRICS**

As one would expect, center placement of video ads resulted in increased aided brand awareness and brand favorability when compared to video ads running in the side-rail. When looking at the lower funnel intent metric, the research revealed that video ads in the side-rail slightly outperformed center placements. The variations between center placement and side-rail were slight, however, and were consistent with typical patterns that we see when analyzing how consumers view web pages. It's also worth noting that the findings of the regression modeling revealed that the video placement variable only contributed 14% of the overall impact on intent metrics, making these findings less consequential for video advertisers.

# CONCLUSIONS

In summary, video advertising is a complex ecosystem made up of several important factors that contribute to a consumer's viewpoint of a brand. These research findings demonstrate that marketers need to think clearly about a variety of elements before developing and executing an online video ad campaign. Of chief importance are the four key elements of the video advertising experience: user initiation, video player size, video player placement, and website quality. To best make use of the insights garnered around these elements, there are several crucial questions that every marketer should ask themselves before developing a video advertising strategy:

#1

## WHAT IS THE BUSINESS OBJECTIVE OF MY CAMPAIGN?

This should always be every marketers' first question, but it holds particular importance in the case of video advertising. Your objectives will determine the type of campaign you should be buying. For example, if your objective is to simply raise awareness, the research findings revealed that auto-play ads are extremely effective. On the other hand, if you are trying to drive positive sentiment and drive lower funnel metrics such as intent, the research revealed click-to-play ads as the better option.

#2

## SHOULD I BE THINKING ABOUT SITE QUALITY WHEN CRAFTING MY VIDEO BUY?

Website quality is a major factor in effective video advertising. Media planners must carefully select high-quality websites on which to place ads because no matter how fantastic or engaging an ad may be, the research clearly demonstrates that the more well-perceived a website is, the better the ads will be received.

#3

## SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT PLAYER SIZE?

The findings indicate that large video players have several benefits. Not only do they generate higher levels of brand awareness, but they can also cancel out the negative emotional impact sometimes associated with auto-play ads. Large players also improve overall website design perception, which in turn reflects positively back on advertisers by improving the overall perception of their brand.

#4

## DOES THE POSITION OF VIDEO ADS ON THE PAGE MATTER?

According to this study, the short answer is no. Center vs. side-rail ads did not display much of a difference among consumer sentiment and intent. The position of the player on the page is one less thing for an advertiser to worry about.

# DETAILED METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a best-in-class measurement methodology to test the different variables of an engaged user experience. The study included both live media and a lab test that included a panel survey and eye tracking and facial coding to gather emotional responses. Two advertisers signed on to be part of the study—a major advertiser in the consumer packaged goods space, and a leading film studio. Advertisers provided standard VAST-compliant in-stream video creatives for a single brand that were loaded into variations of the Undertone video player. Both live and lab tests were run concurrently.

Panelists were recruited to participate in the survey randomly from the eRewards panel and routed into questions pertaining to one of the brands based on self-reported web browsing behaviors. Respondents were then asked a number of branding, website, and ad attribute questions. EyeTrackShop performed the online eye tracking studies using their panel, while Real-eyes was used for web-based facial expression measurement.

## USERS WERE PLACED INTO ONE TEST CELL CORRESPONDING TO A VIDEO PLAYER VARIABLE. THESE CONSISTED OF:

- **USER-INITIATION:**  
either click-to-play or auto-play
- **VIDEO PLAYER SIZE:**  
300x250, 400x300 or 640x480
- **VIDEO PLAYER PLACEMENT:**  
center of the page or side-rail
- **WEBSITE QUALITY:**  
high-quality or low-quality based on TrustMetrics quality ratings

# MODELING AND STATISTICAL TESTING

All analyses were run via multinomial logistic regression (MNL) with categorical predictors. The effects of exposure characteristics, such as user-initiation, player size, video placement, and website quality on the outcome metrics of awareness, purchase intent, etc., were modeled using probabilistic regression analysis. This was used since all measures, both explanatory and outcomes, were dichotomous (yes/no). By including the control group of non-exposed respondents in the models, all exposure effects were calibrated against the condition of non-exposure, allowing for measurement of the actual and not simply relative impact of each of the exposure characteristics on the outcomes.

This comprehensive approach to research methodology elicited some valuable insights. By testing the four critical elements of the video advertising experiences, researchers were able to determine when and why consumers experienced positive and negative reactions. The detailed analyses in this report provide useful information for marketers about the key factors that make up how consumers react to video advertising.

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For further information on this research study and to find out more about Undertone's video advertising solutions, contact Jared Skolnick:

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