



GCE

ICT

Advanced GCE **A2 H517**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H117**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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G061 Information, Systems and Applications

General Comments:

There are three things that make up a good response: knowledge, examination technique and application to the scenario. These have been mentioned in previous reports. It was pleasing to see that the examination technique has improved and candidates were, for the most part, looking at the key word in the question and tailoring their response to meet it. The knowledge is still not always apparent with gaps in understanding and, at times, rote learnt responses. The application to the scenario is, generally, good but there are still occasions where the example relates to learnt responses from class-based activities or a previous examination.

Where a candidate uses a blank part of the examination paper to continue their answer they need to indicate this to the examiner in some way. Whilst responses on extra pages are highlighted, if a candidate has used the blank space at the bottom of another question, it can be difficult to find.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1a Most candidates achieved high marks on this question. The examples given were good and showed a solid level of understanding. Many seemed to understand structure better than context.

1b Candidates who read the question and had the required knowledge scored both marks. Some candidates gave characteristics that were included in the question.

1c There is a difference between a description and an advantage. Some candidates gave descriptions of indirect data. This was also the first question where quicker and easier made an appearance, neither of which was accepted for a mark.

2a There were many ways that a stock control system could be used and most candidates achieved half marks. The second mark was for the descriptive element and many were successful in linking this to Camping4Fun. Overall, this question was answered quite well and candidates showed a good understanding of what a stock control system can do.

2bi The question was very specific – ‘used in a stock control system’, the response requiring the candidate to describe the characteristic and its use on the stock control system. The first mark for identification was achieved by most, but the description was often generic.

2bii This question was on the whole was a high scoring question for most candidates.

3 The question was asking for a description of terms and then an application of the description to the scenario. Most candidates achieved half marks by completing the second part. There were not too many actual descriptions of input or processing. Attempts at describing processing by candidates were particularly weak. They generally made a better job of describing an input.

4a The question asked for an explanation of the advantages. Many candidates described the features rather than provide an advantage to Camping4Fun of the feature. Sometimes candidates gave generic advantages of modelling rather than focusing on specific advantages of using a spreadsheet to do it.

4b This question looked at a different aspect to modelling. Generally candidates performed well achieving over half marks. There were many repeated answers where the candidate had

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mentioned 'to change the layout' in lots of different ways or used different examples – unfortunately this was only credited once.

5 A justification is a positive explanation. Many candidates answered this as an evaluate question and gave negative reasons, which wasted their time and also limited the marks available. Many candidates were unaware of a concept keyboard. Many responses related to regular keyboards, either physical or touch screen.

6ai Professional was a common response which unfortunately did not gain credit. Candidates need to be aware of the need to differentiate their responses; many of the two responses given here were in fact the same point made in a different way.

6aia Linking synoptically with Unit G062 this should have been a high marking question as candidates were required to identify two elements of a design specification. Unfortunately, many responses were too general and did not contain the level of detail required to be credited.

6b The focus of the question was not on the images that are in the image library but the use of the image library to select the images. Candidates who read the question correctly scored highly. Unfortunately, too many candidates regurgitated responses from previous papers and failed to score.

6c This was answered very well, with most candidates scoring highly.

6di There is a lack of understanding over what a printed acetate is. It is appreciated that it is old technology, but as it is in the specification it needs to be covered. Acetate can be a printed copy of the presentation, it does not have to be hand drawn. There was also a sizeable number of candidates who gave advantages as they misread the question.

6dii The majority of candidates were unaware of a hierarchical presentation. A large number answered it as a kiosk application with an automated sequence. Those that did recognise the term did not give the depth of response required and scored half marks.

6e This question was well answered with most candidates achieving over half marks. Those that gave relevant examples tended to achieve all the marks.

6f There is still a large cohort of candidates who are unaware of the difference between health and safety. Those that did know the difference scored highly on this question.

7a Apart from those that confused real and integer, this was answered well with most candidates achieving high marks.

7b Generally very well done.

7c This question showed a lack of understanding of the definitions from the majority of candidates. With there being a database question in the G062 tasks, it was anticipated that candidates would be aware of the definitions. This unfortunately was not the case. Many candidates used spreadsheet terminology in their answers. Those that did score well used examples from the scenario to demonstrate their understanding.

7d Those candidates that recognised what was required in their response did very well on this question.

7e This was a learnt response and was poorly done by most candidates.

8a This was not very well done with many of the responses lacking the depth or the detail required.

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8b The disadvantages is a difficult question and this was reflected in the number of candidates who scored highly. Many candidates seemed to be unaware of any disadvantages or targeted their response towards the database as a whole and not just the user interface.

9a Most candidates scored half marks on this question.

9b This was very well done with most candidate scoring full marks.

10 This was poorly done with many candidates still viewing the BCS as a trade union. They seem to think that the BCS will mend networks. Those candidates that had covered the topic scored very well but they were in the minority.

11 A large number of candidates scored half marks by identifying the disadvantage but did not go on to gain more marks by expanding their response to show how it was a disadvantage.

12a Some candidates did not read the question and gave responses related to passwords and locked doors. Those that did not give those responses scored high marks.

12b Those candidates with a knowledge of the DPA were able to achieve half marks very easily. However, they were in the minority with many candidates giving the Computer Misuse Act or elements of the DPA that were not relevant to the question. The second part – the measures, was very poorly answered with candidates repeating the requirement in a different way.

G062 Structured ICT Tasks

General Comments

The presentation and quality of much of the candidate work was very good. Most centres did provide candidate work that was clearly organised with a cover sheet containing the candidate's name and number and this was appreciated. The level of teacher annotation to indicate where and why the mark had been awarded differed from centre to centre. It is recommended good practice to follow the guidance on marking work, as indicated on the front cover of the mark scheme, which states 'If a candidate meets the requirements for a mark then tick the box next to that mark. It is beneficial to use the numbers on the left hand side of the tick boxes to cross-reference evidence on the candidate's work'. Those centres that exhibited best practice made it considerably easier for the centre marks to be verified during moderation.

A wide range of different software applications and utilities were successfully used to solve the tasks this year. This included both freeware and proprietary packages. It should also be noted that some packages will make the solutions to the tasks considerably easier than others for a given task and centres are reminded that the Teachers' Guide provides suggestions for suitable software packages. The Teachers' Guide also contain a list of skills that it would be beneficial to teach the candidates before the candidates tackle the tasks.

Many candidates continue to find questions that ask for annotated evidence to 'explain how' a particular feature or routine was implemented difficult. Candidates need to be encouraged to provide detailed explanations that demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of the solution that they have produced. This is often a key differentiator of good candidates. This particularly applies to annotating formulae within the spreadsheet task, queries and expressions within the database tasks and HTML code in the website task.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1 a i) Most candidates gained a mark for providing evidence that the worksheet was named *costs*. Most provided this evidence in the form of a screenshot.

ii) Most candidates were able to demonstrate a suitable process to allow only the variables to be changed. This was mostly done by locking access to all other parts of the worksheet apart from the selected cells. Some candidates only provided a screenshot of the cells being locked and labelled this as 'locking cells on the spreadsheet'. This was not sufficient for a mark and candidates must fully explain a process for annotated evidence, not just label a screenshot.

iii) Most candidates were able demonstrate how they named the correctly selected range as *Season*.

b i) Most candidates correctly printed the worksheet displaying the row and column headings.

ii) Most candidates were able to explain how they set up the validation rule. Candidates need to make sure they fully test a validation rule, especially one that involves a range, with data that falls outside both sides of the range. Some candidates only provided partial evidence of testing one side of the range and could therefore not be awarded a mark.

iii) Most candidates were able to gain a mark to show how the controls for the van type and additional driver were set up. Some candidates did not fully explain the method or include the cell that the control is linked to. This meant that the marks could not be awarded.

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- iv) Many candidates were able to gain marks for describing the formula used. Some candidates did not account for the additional day required in the formula to get the correct amount of days hired and therefore a mark for this formula could not be awarded.
- c) Most candidates were able to provide a suitable help sheet to add the print and reset buttons.
- d) Most candidates were able to print the completed *Breakdown* worksheet.
- ii) Many candidates were able to show how to fix the header row in place. Some candidates simply stated that they fixed the header row in place, but did not provide a screenshot and a description of how this was carried out. This could not be awarded a mark
- iii) Some candidates were able to explain the formula that had been used to create the calculations. Some candidates did not explain that different formulae were needed for different stages of the calculations and on some occasions only explained formula to an interim level. Candidates must explain all calculations and formula that are used to reach the end result and not just interim calculations or the end result.
- iv) Some candidates were able to explain the formula that had been used to create the calculations. Some candidates did not explain that different formulae were needed for different stages of the calculations and on some occasions only explained formula to an interim level. Candidates must explain all calculations and formula that are used to reach the end result, and not just interim calculations or the end result.
- v) Some candidates were able to explain how both addressing methods had been used within a formula. Some candidates referred to two different formula in their response, but the task asked for reference to one formula. Some candidates did not explain how the addressing methods had been used, but mostly labelled where they had been used. This could not be awarded a mark.
- e i) Most candidates were able to print the worksheet after the changes had been made.
- ii) Most candidates were able to show how one calculation had been affected by the change.
- f) Many candidates gained marks for a thorough testing table. Some candidates did not make reference to a full location for their test, including the correct worksheet. Tests that do not have a full location cannot be awarded a mark.
- 2 a) Most candidates were able to create a suitable logo and explain how they had met the requirements. Candidates are reminded that they need to demonstrate *how* each requirement has been met and not just label a screenshot with the text from the requirement. This cannot be awarded marks.
- b i) Most candidates were able to produce a suitable hand drawn design for the newsletter. Candidates are reminded that when a hand drawn design is requested, this is what must be produced. Marks cannot be awarded for a computerised version.
- ii) Many candidates were able to create the newsletter template. A computerised template is expected to match the hand drawn design. In some cases, the computerised template did not match the hand drawn design and marks could not be awarded.
- c i) Many candidates were able to explain how the requirements were met for the printed newsletter. Some candidates did not fully show how they had created an automated routine to select the relevant customers.
- ii) Many candidates were able to print the correct newsletters.

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iii) Many candidates were able to explain how the requirements for the discount voucher were met. Some candidates did not explain all requirements - the most common error was not explaining how the watermark was set to appear behind the text, but merely stating that a watermark had been added.

3 a i) Many candidates were able to produce a suitable storyboard. Some candidates did not include all of the data necessary for an effective storyboard. This did not provide enough detail for a third party to create it and could not be awarded marks.

ii) Some candidates were able to create the animation to the requirements and provide suitable evidence for this. Some candidates did not show how all of the requirements had been met and only showed how they had been partially met. The most common error was showing how the business name and logo had been added, but not explaining how they remained visible throughout the animation.

b) Many candidates were able to create a CCS file but a number of candidates did not annotate their code. Marks could not be awarded for a CSS that was not annotated to show the requirements.

c i) Most candidates were able to provide evidence of the webpages they had created.

ii) Many candidates were able to show how the controls and the submit button had been added to the request form. Some candidates did not explain how the full contents of the form were emailed to the given email address. They mostly showed how a button was added to the form labelled submit.

4 a i) Most candidates were able to provide evidence of the relationships created.

ii) Most candidates were able to provide evidence of their table structures, using suitable data types.

b i) Most candidates were able to print the correct customer form.

ii) Most candidates were able to provide suitable evidence to show how the customer form requirements were met.

c i) Many candidates were able to create and print the report. Some candidates did not manage to print the report on separate pages for each customer. This requirement was either missed or could not be achieved.

ii) Some candidates were able to provide evidence of how the report was created. Candidates are reminded to include full evidence of how a report is created; this includes any queries that are used in the process.

d i) Many candidates were able to print evidence of the completed booking form

ii) Some candidates were able to provide evidence of how the requirements were met for the booking form. Some candidates were not able to get the full process working and only partially met the requirements.

e i) Most candidates were able to print the menu form.

ii) Most candidates were able to provide suitable evidence to show how the menu form requirements were met.

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- f) Some candidates were able to create and provide evidence of an archive routine.
- g) The standard of user guides produced varied greatly. Candidates are reminded that the document should be of a professional standard and must cover all the requirements in detail.

G063 ICT Systems, Applications and Implications

General Comments:

It was pleasing to see that examination technique for many candidates has improved this year. Candidates were able to achieve well in some questions that required extended responses.

As with previous years, a significant number of candidates lacked the breadth and depth of knowledge needed for this paper. It is expected that all parts of the specification are studied to the same depth.

A small number of candidates appeared to have learnt the mark scheme for previous years examination paper and simply tried to use this as a basis for answering questions.

Handwriting was particularly problematic this year. Many candidates' answers were difficult to read with some being illegible. Where the examiner is not able to read a response, no marks can be awarded.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1 Most candidates could identify and describe a user guide, but far fewer could name anything else that would be produced during documentation. Centres are encouraged not to teach each unit in isolation. For example, candidates would have produced technical documentation as part of the coursework in G064 which would have been an acceptable answer for this question.

2 Most candidates demonstrated that they understood the concept of prototyping, with many developing a linked set of points for full marks. Some candidates described what prototyping was, rather than how it could be used to develop an application which prevented them from gaining full marks.

3 Many candidates knew that a real time system responded immediately, but worrying a number of candidates thought that 0 to 4 seconds was appropriate for an autopilot! Clearly a time-frame delimited in milliseconds would be more appropriate in the context given. Candidates must ensure answers relate to the context of the question. Some candidates gave good answers about the characteristics of real-time interfaces explaining that user intervention may not be required for extended periods.

4 In general, most candidates could structure a comparison, but weaker candidates continued to generate a list of distinct points instead. Some candidates gave superficial answers such as a satellite phone being larger than a cellular phone.

5 Poor examination technique meant that some candidates did not read the context of the question and answered a different question about anonymising proxy services. Most did, however, understand the function of a proxy server and could describe its role, but fewer were able to give clear explanations to justify its function.

6 Many candidates could not identify the components of an expert system which was disappointing since this is a rote-learning topic. Fewer could then actually describe these components in detail. There are plenty of online systems candidates could have used to have gained practical experience of the theoretical concepts.

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- 7 This question was generally well answered, and experience from G064 allowed candidates to transfer their knowledge. A small number of candidates simply stated what a parallel changeover strategy was rather than describing disadvantages.
- 8 Many candidates gave generic answers about standards rather than referring to the context of the Internet. A significant number of candidates described the standard layout of a qwerty keyboard for example. Few were able to extend their answers into a detailed explanation for the top band.
- 9 Most candidates could make at least one comparison although some candidates were not able to give a single point about a LAN or a virtual network.
- 9bi Although generally well answered, some candidates attempted to describe more than two advantages. Where candidates did this, only the first two answers were marked.
- 9bii This question was generally answered well where the candidate had read the question and provided answers in the context of wireless within each building. Some candidates provided answers about transferring data between buildings where were not worthy of credit.
- 9c Many answers were of the general 'faster' variety rather giving precise technical detail which is expected at A Level. Some candidates talked about the fact that the line was leased from the telecom provider unlike an ADSL line which was owned by the customer!
- 10ai Many answers listed items that would be found in a design specification rather than answering the question which asked what the purpose of it was.
- 10aii Generally well answered with experience from G064 being used. Some candidates gave superficial answers such as 'colour' which were considered too vague.
- 10b The majority of candidates could identify components of a forms based interface such as drop down boxes but could not go on to explain how the use of these features impacted upon the user experience in either a positive or negative way.
- 10c Generally well answered. Some candidates gave examples that could be incorporated such as 'green=good' 'red =bad' but did not actually explain how this helped the user.
- 10d Most candidates scored some marks by stating that a tester drew up the test plan, but few had the in-depth knowledge of the testing process required to score full marks.
- 11a There was a variable degree of knowledge regarding the technical details of central database with local indexes. Few candidates could explain the relevant security and data integrity issues. Many candidates simply provided answers about a central database and ignored the fact that the question included local indexes.
- 11b This question was generally well answered by candidates who were able to identify security issues related to distributed databases and then went on to describe how the issue could be overcome.
- 12a This was a synoptic question which was generally well answered by candidates. A small number struggled to give a second way in which the model could be used.
- 12b Most were able to give correct answers to this question.
- 12c Candidates have clearly practiced how to answer this type of question. Whilst most scored well, some candidates simply provided a list of points or weak descriptions that prevented them from moving into the higher mark bands.

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13 Again, good examination technique allowed many candidates to score well in this question. Those that planned what they wanted to say and then wrote in a structured way, connecting their points and explaining the impact scored highest.

14 Some candidates failed to identify their chosen hardware or software development and so were restricted to mark band 1. Some others discussed hardware and software in general rather than the impact that the identified development would have on the personal privacy of the staff that work for ABC homes.

G064 ICT Project

General Comments:

Most centres are supporting the moderation process by fully completing the URS (Unit Recording Sheet) in full with candidate and centre information fully and accurately completed. Annotation generally provided an explanation to where marks have been awarded, along with page numbers and the marks awarded clearly stated. When little or no annotations were provided, it was sometimes very difficult for the moderator to find the work that had been allocated the marks and also to understand in some cases, why the teacher had awarded the mark. The use of the interactive URS helps to avoid clerical errors in the addition of candidate marks, as this is done automatically, but centres must make sure that all marks are inputted, to avoid these being omitted.

Comments on Individual Questions:

a(i). Nearly all candidates were awarded full marks for this section, with an overview of the organisation, client and a brief overview of the current problems faced.

a(ii). The first element of the investigation was completed well by candidates. Most provided details about where, when and how the investigation would be conducted; along with justification of their chosen investigation method and why alternative methods were not suitable. Most candidates had also clearly communicated these plans with the client via email or letter.

The first reasoned set of questions should only cover the current system and will enable the candidate to fully investigate and understand how the current system works at present and the issues faced by the client. A number of candidates asked questions relating to the new system in this first investigation and this needs to be avoided at this stage. For three marks to be awarded, candidates should be covering all aspects of the current system, with all questions justified and follow up questions considered.

All candidates were able to provide a record of the interview response and a transcript of questions asked and responses given by the client.

The analysis of the current system should first of all provide a detailed overview of the organisation's system at present and how it operates. Candidates should also identify the problems faced by the client and organisation. For the full three marks to be awarded, candidates should be discussing and analysing these problems in detail and considering the potential impact that they may have on the organisation and customers. This level of detail was sometimes missing from candidate work.

The second investigation focuses on the client requirements for the new system and is separate from the requirements specification that is developed in section a (iii). The investigation should cover similar areas to the first investigation, but this time it will focus on the new system and what the client would like from it, subsequently forming the basis for the requirements specification to be developed.

a(iii). The requirements specification tended to be completed well by most candidates, but some candidates were awarded the full three marks for their requirements, despite them not being specific. Most candidates discussed the three alternative methods to a good standard, with their suitability in comparison to requirements specification, cost, feasibility and benefits all discussed to provide a reasoned choice to be made. The chosen method was identified and agreed with the client. For three marks to be awarded for the hardware and software section, candidates

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need to ensure that the list is complete, along with each component discussed in relation to the system to be developed.

b(i). Designs continue to be detailed and clearly enable the client to visualise and understand how the developed system will look and operate. For top marks, candidates must ensure that their designs are in sufficient detail so that a third party may successfully recreate them. This is also applicable for the test plans, which must have specific test data and expected outcomes to be awarded full marks. The user test plan is also expected to be present within the design section, especially when full marks are being awarded.

b(ii). The majority of candidates are focussing solely on the system development aspect for their project plans, rather than the whole project. For two marks to be awarded, project plans should cover all elements of the system development, with each being listed as a separate task. Predecessor and successor tasks should also be taken into consideration and included. If a candidate includes whole project in their project plan and simply lists 'system development', as one task, this is not sufficient for marks to be awarded.

c(i). Many candidates are developing complex non-linear systems, using a range of methods including spreadsheets, databases and websites, with backend databases automatically linked to the site. A few candidates are developing projects that are classed as linear and these are frequently over-marked by centre assessors. For any type of project, candidates must ensure that they follow the non-linear processing requirements if they are to be awarded marks from the middle and top mark bands. To achieve this, data must be processed in two different ways for a system to be classed as non-linear. To be graded in the top mark band, candidates need to have solved the problem faced by the client, with a fully working system that meets the requirements specification.

The processing is frequently over-marked by centres. Candidates should show how one element of their system that processes data was firstly developed and then show that it working as expected; using sample data to show the correct flow of data throughout the system. If someone were to then recreate this element, they would be able to judge whether it is working as expected, through the sample data that has been used. A number of centre assessors simply refer to the system development evidence when awarding marks and it is sometimes very difficult for the moderator to identify the specific evidence required for this section.

The evidence showing the system HCI was completed to a good standard. Candidates should discuss how any relevant requirements have been met, along with evidence demonstrating different aspects of the developed system and how the HCI has been amended accordingly e.g. forms and reports in a database system.

The testing evidence tends to be marked accurately with candidates providing screenshots of tests being carried out, along with a discussion of the results.

c(ii). The description of training required is frequently written in detail and the plans clearly show that candidates have thought about the training needs of their client and additional staff where applicable. The data transfer sometimes needs further expansion with regards to the volume of data needing to be transferred from the old system to the new. Nearly all candidates were able to provide a detailed comparison of the different changeover methods available. Fewer were able to discuss each method in relation to the organisation and how each would impact it, which is necessary for two marks to be awarded.

d. Most user guides were produced to a high standard and provide the user with a complete overview of the system and how it operates. To be awarded marks in the top mark band, candidates should be producing a manual that covers the complete system. If elements have been omitted, then marks should be placed in the middle to lower mark band. In addition to the complete system overview, candidates also need to provide an onscreen guide to the user for

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the top mark band. Simply providing a hyperlink to an electronic copy of the user guide is not sufficient for marks to be awarded and candidates should be providing users with some form of onscreen guidance, explaining how to use various elements of the system. The manual should also include all 'common elements', including: contents page, index, glossary, screenshots and a troubleshooting guide, along with evidence of on-screen help which is present to support the user.

e. The first section of the evaluation requires candidates to evaluate their solution against their requirements specification. For four marks to be awarded, candidates should list each of their requirements and clearly discuss where and how each requirement has been met within the system. The candidate should also discuss any shortfalls. Simply stating that a requirement has been met or not met is insufficient and no more than one mark should be awarded. Most candidates were able to provide a good discussion of each requirement and shortfalls were discussed where applicable.

Possible extensions to the system should be discussed by candidates and simply listing a range of ideas of possible extensions can only be awarded one mark. Extensions should also be valid and appropriate to the developed system. This section is frequently over marked with candidates failing to provide a description of exactly how each extension would be achieved for the second mark to be awarded.

The final section of the evaluation compares the project plan against the actual development of the system. If a candidate has not developed a project plan, no marks can be awarded for this section, as there is no way to make a comparison. Candidates should discuss the differences between the two. For one mark, they will identify the differences and for the second mark, candidates will explain why the difference occurred. Most candidates completed this section successfully where a project plan was developed and centre assessors were accurate in the marks awarded.

f. Most reports are easily navigable and structured in a logical order, with candidates providing a detailed contents page, all pages numbered and clear section headings. The majority of candidates also provide a comprehensive log of events and this is required for candidates to be awarded full marks for this section. However, some centre assessors are awarding the full three marks, even when a log of events has been omitted. Without the log of events, only one mark can be awarded for this section.

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