

MERKLE
DIGITAL
BOWL
REPORT



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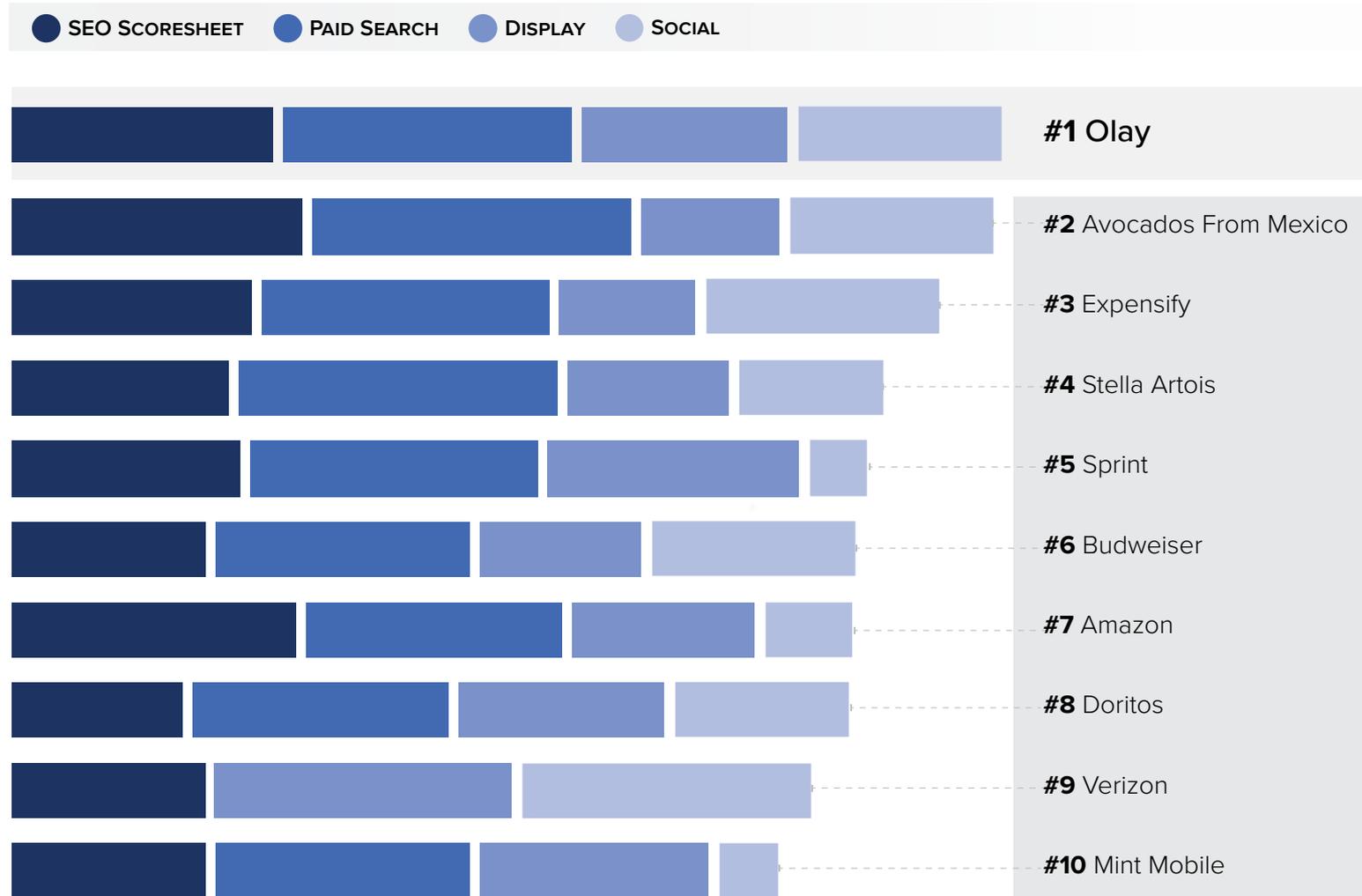
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SUPER BOWL **LIII**

Super Bowl LIII further established the Patriots dynasty with a sixth championship and brought the sixth edition of Merkle's Digital Bowl Report. The report provides an in-depth assessment of how effective Super Bowl television advertisers were in adapting and optimizing their campaigns for key digital marketing channels. Each advertiser is evaluated based on its ability to meet specific and objective criteria across paid search, organic search, social media, and digital media. While the creative designed for a massive television audience tends to earn most of the attention, Merkle scores each brand's efforts to supplement its ad buys with a digital strategy in the competition for audience engagement on the second screen. The 2019 Merkle Digital Bowl Report winner for excellence in digital marketing is:

TOP 10 DIGITAL BOWL ADVERTISERS





2019 Digital Bowl Winner: Olay

First time Super Bowl advertiser, Olay, came to the Big Game with a mission to bring a female focus to the world's biggest TV stage. It didn't stop there. Olay supported an empowering and nostalgic ad, featuring former Buffy actress Sarah Michelle Gellar, with a killer digital campaign that earned top ten honors in all four categories Merkle evaluated. Despite having its singular ad air in the first quarter, Olay never stopped engaging on social, updating Instagram stories, reposting user-generated content, and leveraging influencers until the final whistle. It drove to a top-three SEO finish by creating a Super Bowl-focused landing page and an optimized YouTube video that was visible for campaign-related queries. In paid search, Olay had a visible non-brand presence and tied copy, landing pages, and ad extensions directly to its Super Bowl ad. It rounded out a quartet of top-ten finishes in digital media with retargeting pixels and strong paid social creative.

2019 Digital Bowl Notable Contender: Avocados From Mexico

After winning it all in Digital Bowl V, Avocados From Mexico returned to prominence with a strong second-place finish. It was a standout performer in search, tying with Stella Artois for the top mark in paid search queries by maintaining a consistent presence with optimized content across device types on a wide variety of Super Bowl-oriented search queries. It once again earned the top score in SEO by maintaining the same landing page that has been building equity from previous Super Bowls and filling it with campaign and Super Bowl-related content. In social, Avocados From Mexico excelled at real-time engagement, not only with people, but also with other brands. While it didn't finish in the top ten in digital media, it still managed to cover the basics with proper site tagging, creative, and paid social.

SOCIAL MEDIA



1ST PLACE



2ND PLACE



3RD PLACE



NOTABLE MENTION

Criteria

- ▶ Pre-game groundwork, from profile housekeeping to teasing of creative
- ▶ Real-time campaign content that goes beyond reposting of commercial
- ▶ People-based engagement, with time made for personalized responses
- ▶ In-game earned media spike via hashtag or shares of campaign content
- ▶ Interesting and effective partnership with publishers and/or influencers

Verizon Excelled on All Fronts and Got Rewarded with Enormous Earned Media

Verizon delivered an outstanding performance. Its campaign kicked off on January 18 with a dozen short films that pulled at the heartstrings with relatable stories. The creative showcased the value of a call, highlighting the emotional impact first responders have on our lives. Verizon then encouraged users to share their own stories. And with a donation made to good causes for each post of its hashtag, #AllOurThanks, Verizon smartly incentivized user-generated content (UGC). And there was more, with Instagram Stories shared from its 5G Experience Lab in Atlanta and harmonized influencer amplification. In a way, Verizon only fell short of perfection by posting too much in game week.

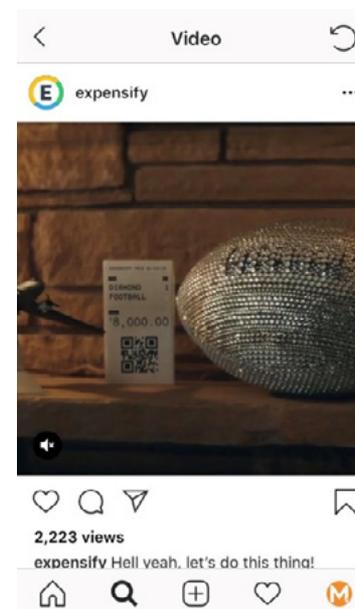


When it Came to the Crunch, Mr. Peanut Gifted the Crowds with True Entertainment

Planters built on a solid pre-game showing with an excellent effort on the night. Its content was unique, playful, and engaging. Social media proved to be the perfect environment for the mascot, Mr. Peanut, to showcase his personality and mix product focus with experience. Planters further incentivized engagement with generous and silly giveaways, discovered through its hashtag, #CrunchTime, and it went out of its way to find and participate in conversations. It was also one of only three advertisers to publish effective, play-related GIFs in real time, and its successful night is perhaps best illustrated by an impressive spike in Twitter followers.

Despite Making Its National Debut, Expensify Outscored Veterans like Pepsi

Congratulations to Expensify, who displayed maturity beyond expectations to finish in our top three. The brand was actually joint leader for social going into the game, due to the considered rollout of a multi-faceted campaign. Highly desirable items that featured in Expensify's tricked-out (and experiential) commercial were made available for users to bid on in a cool contest. A social space on its website reveals the positive response. Expensify reposted Instagram Story mentions and was one of very few brands whose in-game content felt immersive. Next year, it can challenge for the top spot by learning from Pepsi how to better leverage talent for earned media. Pepsi was a fingernail from third, and would have climbed higher still with more people-based engagement.



DIGITAL MEDIA



1ST PLACE



2ND PLACE



3RD PLACE



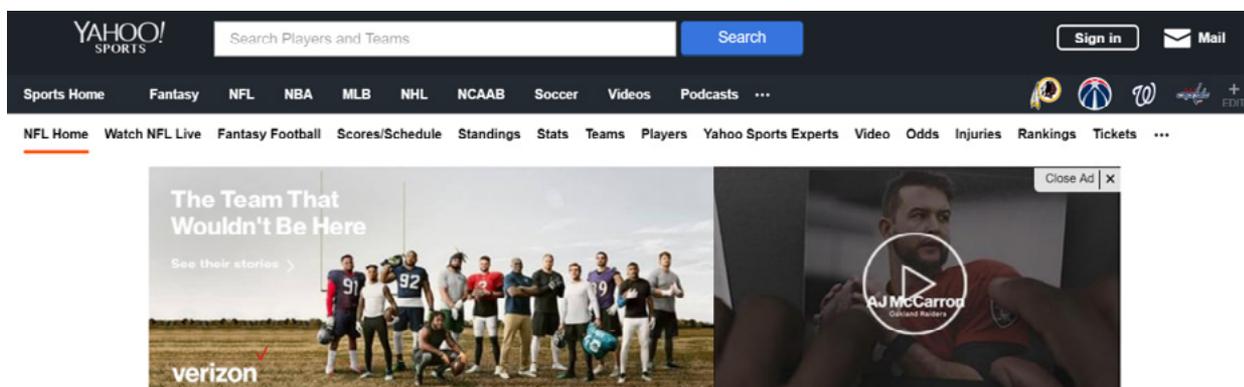
NOTABLE MENTION

Criteria

- ▶ Display and social network retargeting pixels placed on homepage and relevant landing pages
- ▶ Display banners featured on premium sports websites
- ▶ Creative includes Super Bowl-relevant content and eye-catching formats with specialized landing pages
- ▶ TV commercial teased on YouTube ahead of the Big Game
- ▶ Discovery ads deployed and in-stream video ads featured on YouTube or other video inventory
- ▶ Ads featured on Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook

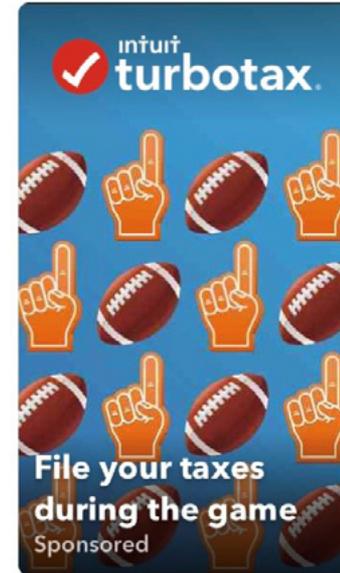
Verizon's Video Strategy Leads to a Big Team Win

Verizon scored the top media position by developing a robust strategy to support its #AllOurThanks campaign. The Team That Wouldn't Be Here videos were incorporated into all its creatives and distributed widely across display, paid social, and video channels. Verizon capitalized on the high site traffic across key websites, owning the YouTube homepage on Super Bowl Sunday and placing tandem banners across NBC Sports and Yahoo Sports during the game. Complementary posts across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter encouraged users to engage with the ads by donating \$1 for every share or retweet, up to \$1.5 million. Combine that with robust site tagging to power future retargeting efforts, and Verizon was the night's winner.



Turbo Tax's Wide Distribution Covers the Field

Turbo Tax aimed to reach a wide audience with a strong presence across display, paid social, and video. Its media strategy included traditional display banners across sports websites, video ads across YouTube, and paid social placements across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. Turbo Tax leveraged its relationship with the NFL to produce co-branded pre-roll video ads for Twitter that were promoted across NFL tweets. To provide deeper measurement across its Super Bowl marketing efforts, Turbo Tax utilized brand lift measurement on YouTube to get a read on deeper metrics, such as purchase intent. Its strong presence throughout the game led Turbo Tax to take the silver medal in this year's display rankings.



Buy, Play, & Score With Frito-Lay and Pepsi Brands

Combined display banners for the Frito-Lay and Pepsi brands directed users to the site to play to score. By entering the bag codes or Pepsi receipts, users could play for a chance to win Super Bowl LIV tickets and additional prizes. While the sweepstakes itself provided unique cross-banner exposure that other parent companies may look to copy, there was a clear missed opportunity to promote the contest prior to the Big Game to encourage users to stock up on Frito-Lay and Pepsi products for their Super Bowl parties.



SEO

1ST PLACE2ND PLACE3RD PLACE

NOTABLE MENTION

Criteria

- ▶ Landing page focused on Super Bowl that can be crawled and indexed by search engines
- ▶ Landing page discoverable on mobile for “brand + super bowl commercial,” “brand + commercial,” or campaign related queries
- ▶ Landing page is well optimized
- ▶ Landing page is served securely, is mobile friendly, and meets users’ load-time expectations
- ▶ URL or hashtag included in TV ad to drive traffic to the respective page
- ▶ Video is posted on brand’s YouTube page and well optimized

Avocados From Mexico Named Top Dog in Organic Search

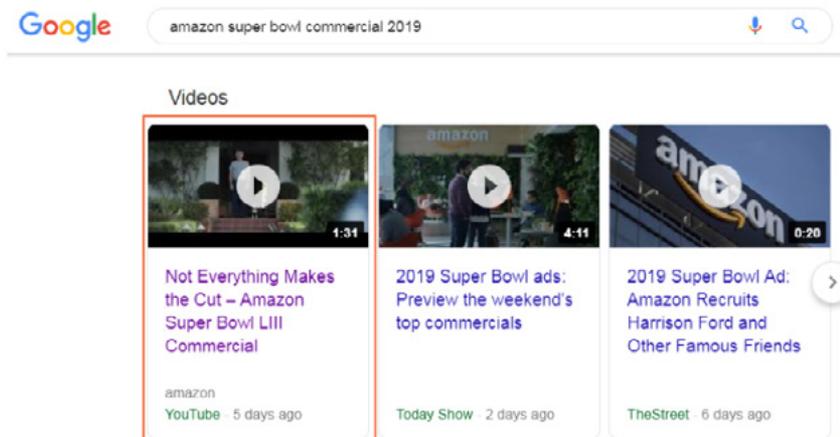
Avocados From Mexico ran a reverse in this year’s spot, putting dogs in charge of judging their humans—who dogs know will do “Anything for Avos.” Searchers could easily find the Anything for Avos campaign at <https://avocadosfrommexico.com/big-game/>, thanks to internal links from the brand’s homepage, a searchable link from the commercial’s final card, and a landing page that targeted “Big Game” keywords in its URL, on-page elements, and content. Avocados From

Mexico also made a smart play by putting one of this year’s VIP organic search players, YouTube, in the game. The brand uploaded teasers and the full advertisement to its official account in the week leading up to the game, securing a top spot in the video carousel of the search engine results page and helping to clinch its win in the organic search league.



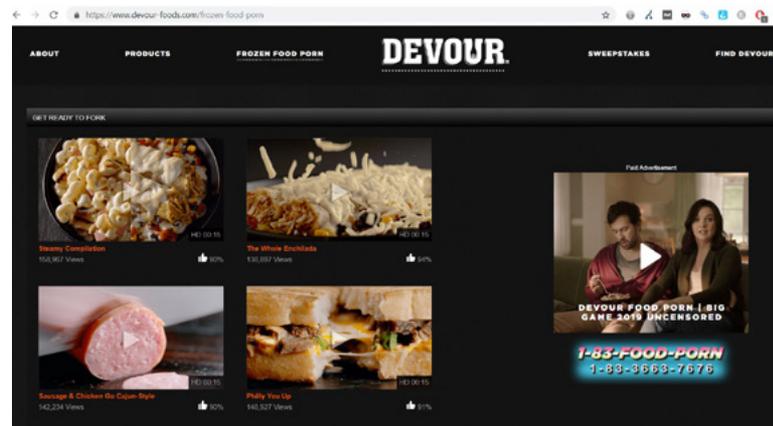
Amazon's "Failed Alexa Attempts" Score Big in Organic Search

Following the organic search playbook, Amazon created a dedicated Big Game landing page (<https://www.amazon.com/b?node=18602825011>). Including the commercial on the landing page, having a fast page load time, and uploading the commercial to YouTube helped Amazon push toward the front of the pack. With search engine results pages (SERPs) increasingly dominated with video content in Top Stories and Video carousels, YouTube optimization was a key piece for a winning strategy. Like the Patriots and the Rams, Amazon left plenty of points out on the field. To improve its organic search score, Amazon could have better optimized the page title, H1, and meta description of its landing page to include additional Super Bowl and campaign-specific content to improve search engine visibility and drive more traffic to the page.



Not Ashamed to Say It - Devour's Creative Landing Page Play

Devour waited longer than some brands to put up a dedicated landing page, but during the game, users who landed on its homepage were redirected to it. When investing significant time and money into developing creative content, the objective is for it to be seen. Redirecting searchers who found the homepage with broad queries was a creative play from Devour that wasn't tried by any other advertiser on Sunday.



PAID SEARCH



1ST PLACE



2ND PLACE



3RD PLACE



NOTABLE MENTION

Criteria

- ▶ Paid ads featured on first page of search results for relevant queries across all device types
- ▶ Paid search ad copy related to the Super Bowl, including extensions
- ▶ Landing page content, which reinforces the Super Bowl and directs user with clear call to action

Avocados From Mexico Feasts on Snack Competitors

Avocados From Mexico made a strong return to this year's Digital Bowl, earning a tie for first place with Stella Artois, and its third consecutive win in the Paid Search Digital Bowl section. Avocados From Mexico had a consistent presence on all devices on a variety of Super Bowl-oriented search queries. In particular, it dominated the Super Bowl snacking query space, showing ads on “super bowl snacks” and “super bowl foods.” While Planters, Pringles, Doritos, and M&Ms claimed a relevant stake in this nonbrand query space, Avocados From Mexico is the only advertiser who consistently capitalized.

Within its ad copy, Avocados From Mexico seamlessly aligned search intent to copy and landing page. On non-brand Super Bowl snack searches, Avocados displayed “Find Great Recipes” messaging and directed users to recipe pages. On branded terms, Avocados From Mexico served ads referencing taglines from its Super Bowl TV spot, citing “What would humans do for Avos,” and directed users to a page fully aligned to the TV spot content.

Once again, Avocados From Mexico cohesively aligned its paid search advertising to its Super Bowl TV investment.

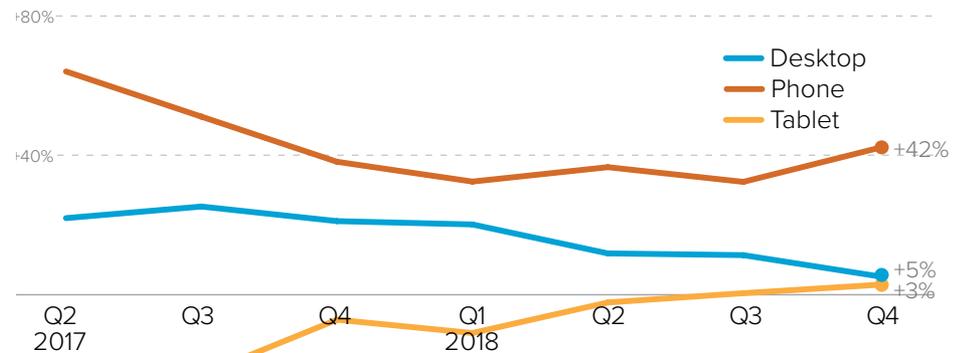
The screenshot shows a Google search for "snacks super bowl". The search results include two prominent ads. The first ad is from Avocados From Mexico, titled "Are You Ready for Game Day? | Find Great Recipes & More". The ad copy includes the URL "www.avocadosfrommexico.com/Avocados/Always-Worth-It" and describes the best guacamole recipes for game day. The second ad is from Mezzetta, titled "Not Your Usual Game Day Snacks | Step Up Your Snack Game". The ad copy includes the URL "www.mezzetta.com/" and promotes Mezzetta peppers and olives. Both ads include links to recipes, contact information, and product locators.

Ad Format Innovation Sets Brands Apart

With recent SERP and ad format changes, top space is more valuable than ever. On the search results page, the Merkle Q4 2018 DMR found click share for positions three and four hovered at 12 percent, making it crucial to strive for the top two positions. Innovative advertisers like Bud Light and Sprint capitalized on the changes to expanded text ads that allow brands to leverage three headlines and two descriptions, as opposed to two headlines and one description. The new format allows brands to occupy a larger portion of the SERP while continuing to improve messaging.

Google Search Spending by Device Type

Y/Y Growth



TOP PERFORMANCES BY CATEGORY

 1ST PLACE
  2ND PLACE
  3RD PLACE
  NOTABLE MENTION

SOCIAL MEDIA RANK

-  1ST Verizon
-  2ND Planters
-  3RD Expensify
-  4TH Pepsi
- 5TH Avocados From Mexico
- 6TH Olay
- 7TH Budweiser
- 8TH Doritos
- 9TH Bubly
- 10TH TurboTax

DIGITAL MEDIA RANK

-  1ST Verizon
-  2ND TurboTax
-  3RD Sprint
- T-4TH Mint Mobile
- T-4TH NFL
-  T-6TH Doritos
- T-6TH M&Ms
- T-6TH Microsoft
- T-6TH Olay
- T-6TH Toyota

TOP PERFORMANCES BY CATEGORY

 1ST PLACE
  2ND PLACE
  3RD PLACE
  NOTABLE MENTION

SEO RANK

-  1ST Avocados From Mexico
-  2ND Amazon
-  3RD Olay
- 4TH TurboTax
- T-5TH Amazon Prime
- T-5TH Expensify
-  7TH Devour
- T-8TH Bumble
- T-8TH HBO
- T-8TH Sprint

PAID SEARCH RANK

-  T-1ST Avocados From Mexico
-  T-1ST Stella Artois
-  T-3RD Amazon Prime
-  T-3RD Audi
-  T-3RD Bon & Viv SpikedSeltzer
-  T-3RD Expensify
-  T-3RD Kia
-  T-3RD Olay
-  T-3RD Pringles
-  T-3RD Sprint
-  T-3RD Verizon

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