Aligning wishes of multiple orgs into an open source project

FOSS Backstage 2024

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Photo by airfocus on Unsplash

Nick Vidal 👋

Community Manager at the Open Source Initiative

Projects: ClearlyDefined, Open Source AI, etc

See also github.com/nickvidal

ClearlyDefined Project

- ClearlyDefined's mission is to crowdsource a **global database of licensing metadata** for every software component ever published for the benefit of all.

- Organizations are able to fetch a cached copy of licensing metadata for each component through a simple API.

- Organizations are able to contribute back with any missing or wrongly identified licensing metadata, helping to create a database that is as accurate as possible.

Thomas Steenbergen 👋🏻

I help orgs manage open source in a strategic, safe and efficient manner that meets their business needs.

Former Head of OSPO at EPAM/HERE. Currently #OpenToWork

Maintainer / Contributor to:

OSS
Review Toolkit

TODO

SPDX

OPENCHAIN

See also github.com/tsteenbe

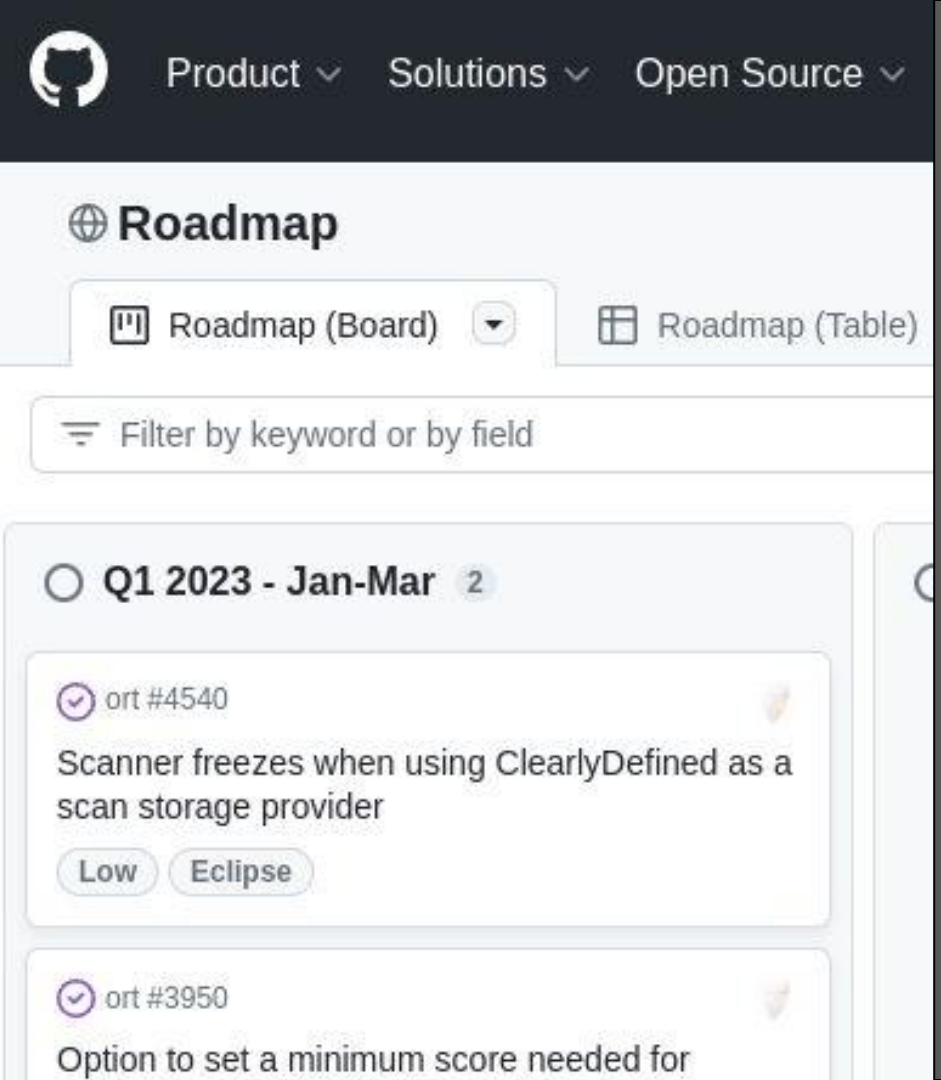
OSS Review Toolkit Project

The OSS Review Toolkit (ORT) is a **FOSS policy automation and orchestration toolkit** which you can use to manage your (open source) software dependencies in a strategic, safe and efficient manner.

You can use it to:

- **Generate CycloneDX, SPDX SBOMs**, or custom FOSS attribution docs.
- **Automate your FOSS policy** using risk-based Policy as Code to do licensing, security vulnerability, InnerSource and engineering standards checks.
- **Create a source code archive** for your software project and its dependencies to comply with certain licenses or for business continuity.
- **Correct package metadata or license findings**, using InnerSource or with the help of the FOSS community.

💬 Let's talk about roadmaps in a open source project...



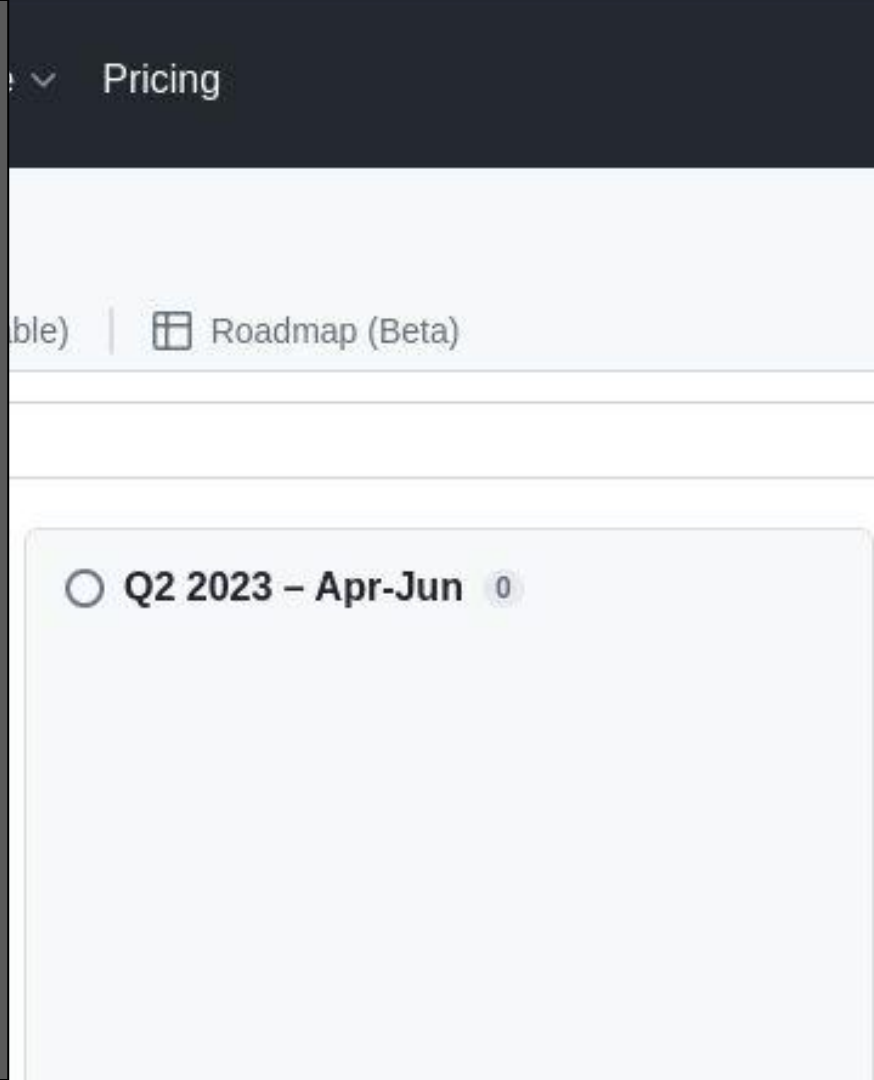
A public and up-to-date roadmap for an open source project can:

- Encourage new contributors to join a project
- Guide the efforts of existing contributors
- Give confidence to adopters about the direction and sustainability of the project

"They Can Only Ever Guide:"
How an Open Source Software Community Uses Roadmaps
to Coordinate Effort
https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3449232

Yet ORT, like many open source projects with a diverse community, struggles to maintain a roadmap due to:

- **Unclear market need**
  - Local value of current and future project's capabilities is often unknown.
  - Limited to no insights into local decision makers or available resources across community.
- **Getting commitment to deliver is hard**
  - No top-down control.
  - Contributors / maintainers capacity is limited due to other obligations.



Credits: Daiga Ellaby

Tragedy of the Commons

- Overuse of common resource
- “Free rider” problem
- Someone else will tackle an issue / problem

- What incentives can we create so that we get a commitment from individuals and companies to tackle a problem?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy_of_the_commons

Commitment models

- Time / Money
- Donation / Sponsorship
- Bounties / Grants
- Crowdfunding
- Books / Merchandise
- Advertising
- Consulting / Paid support
- Venture capital
- SaaS / Open core
- Dual license
- Foundations / Consortiums

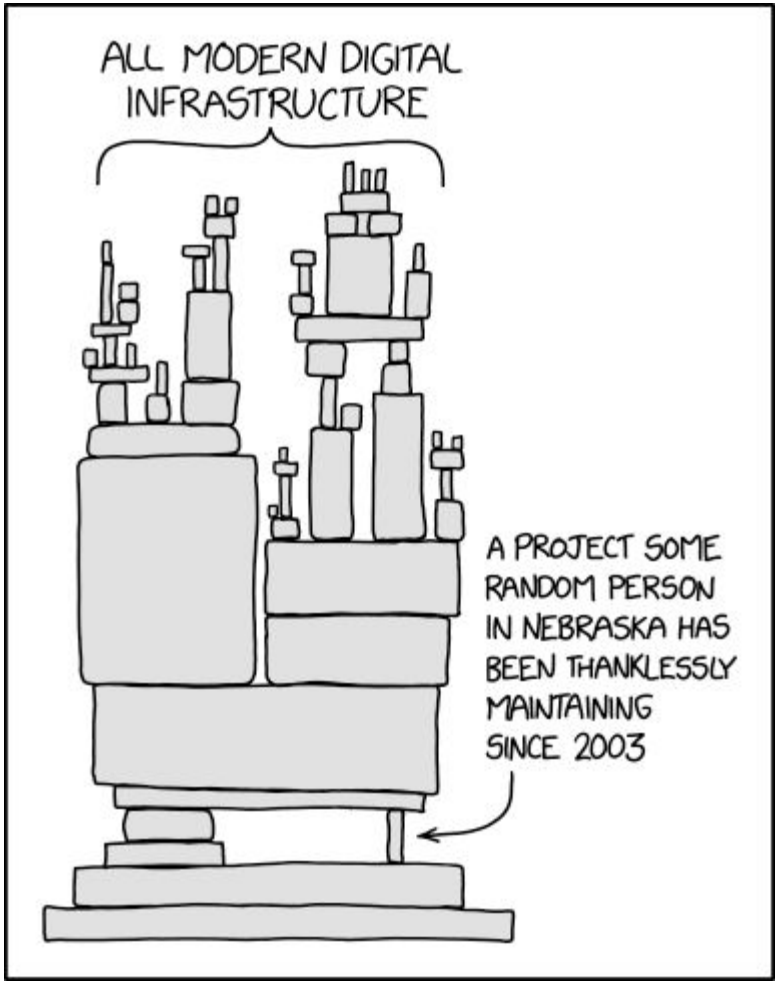
"Working in Public" Nadia Eghbal https://nadia.xyz/

Governance models

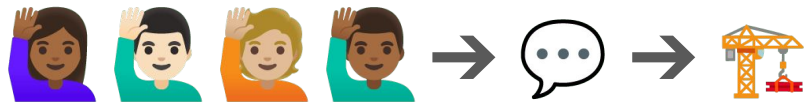
- Corporate-backed
  - Single vendor
- Foundation-backed
  - Linux Foundation
  - Apache Software Foundation
  - Eclipse Foundation
  - Python Software Foundation

Why upstream contributions?

- Reduce risks / Better security
- Maintainability / Compliance
- Shape roadmap / features
- Collaborate with other orgs
- Reduce costs / resources



xkcd.com/2347 (CC-BY-NC-2.5)



How can contributors commit to a feature in a FOSS project?

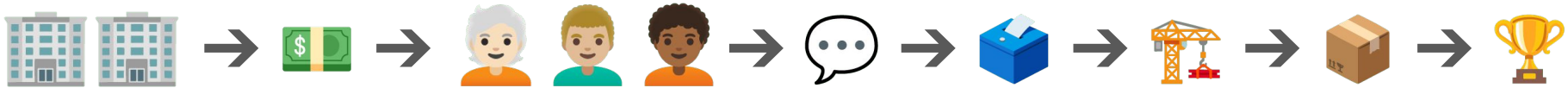
#1: Informal agreements

Members of orgs agree to:

- collaborate to build a feature informally
- member usually commits their own time or people they control

#2: Steering Committee

Orgs pays to become **member of project steering committee** who then decides on open source **project feature enhancements**.

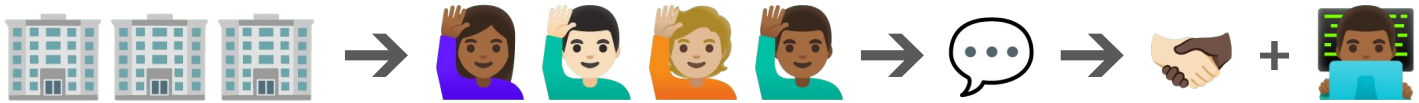


Can we just contribute to this large feature?

What happens if one of the orgs pulls out?

What if each party commits different things?

What about us (unpaid) maintainers?



How can multiple orgs commit to build together a feature in a FOSS project?

Commitments between parties are typically handled via **contracts**

Aren't open source licenses also contracts?

 it depends..

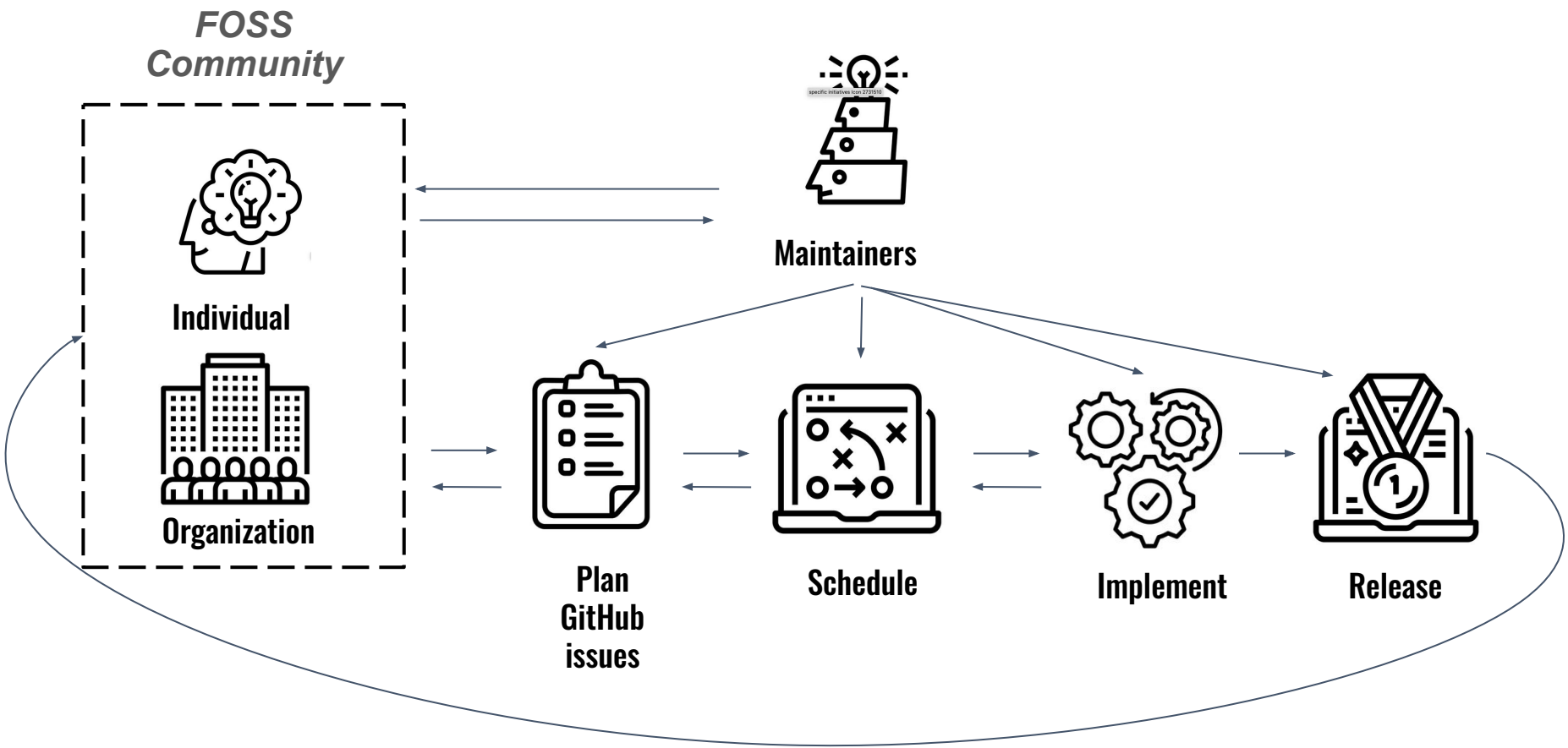
What if we made a contract for open source commitments?

contributor commitment agreement 

Contributor Commitment Agreement

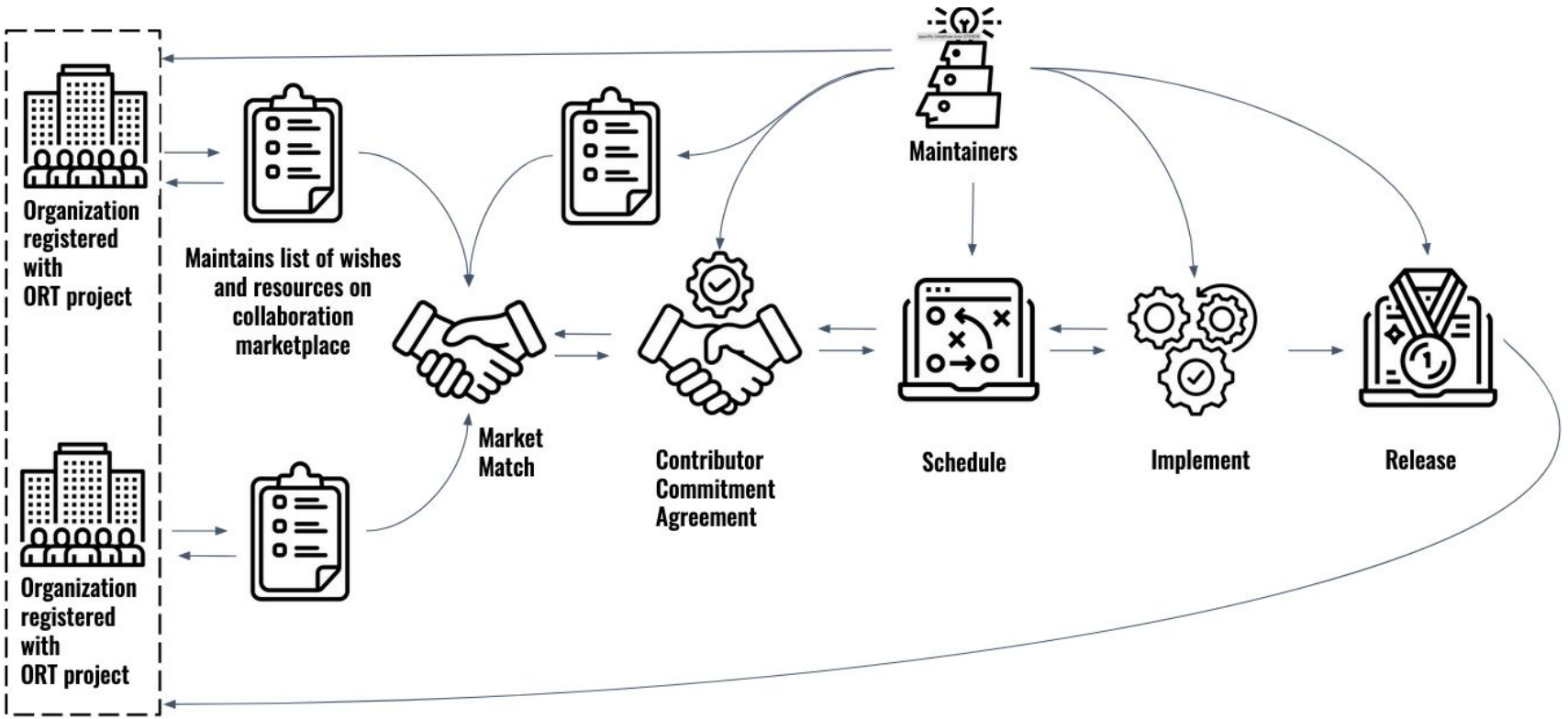
- Preconditions
  - Project has defined enhancement proposal for larger contributions with multiple parties
  - Maintainers are capable to commit to working on larger contributions
- Enhancement proposal agreed upon by signees (that includes project maintainers) => Link to GitHub issue or similar
- Break up obligations (think money for project)
- If one party prefers to stay anonymous the agreement can enforce this.

https://unsplash.com/@lcaohoanq



Balancing
supply and demand
is commonly done
via
marketplaces

Marketplace



Marketplace CMS & CCA

- Collaboration Marketplace Specification (CMS)
- Contributor Commitment Agreement (CCA)

- Addresses the mismatch between open source communities and enterprise users via a marketplace and re-usable contract.

Collaboration Marketplace Specification

- Specification defining format for enhancements wishlist (list of issues), resources (💪 or 💰) and point of contact. Wishlists can be public or private (anonymous via deployment keys).
- Integrated with regular GitHub / GitLab issue workflow and permissions (low operating costs, GitHub actions?)

Wanna learn more about ClearlyDefined & ORT?

Join us tomorrow at the
ORT Community Days
March 6 & 7
Berlin, Germany

Photo by airfocus on Unsplash

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