

# MARKETING OF INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN A.P. – A STUDY

**G. Goapl**

*Research Scholar*

*Dept. of Library & Inf Science, S.V. University, Tirupati-517502*

**Dr. E. Sudhakar**

*Academic Consultant*

*Dept. of Library & Inf Science, S.V. University, Tirupati-517502*

**Dr. I. Chandraiah**

*Professor*

*Dept. of Library & Inf Science, S.V. University, Tirupati-517502*

## ***Abstract:***

*The paper attempts a Marketing of library and information products and services in University Libraries. The analysis and interpretation of data collected from 1192 users consisting of students selected by using random sampling method of the five university libraries in Andhra Pradesh under study. The break-up of the sample of the five university libraries with respect to gender, age, area of residency, subject of interest, qualification, university wise, frequency of visit, time spent, awareness of marketing of library products and services and library products and services.*

**Keywords:** *Marketing of Information services, Marketing Strategies, Library Products and Services, University Libraries*

## **Introduction:**

Marketing is an important functional area of business. If the Products and services are not marketed effectively, they may not be heavily patronized. As a result, revenue may be lost and the business will face survival problem. There are very good reasons why marketing principles should be applied to the running of a service organization like the library. At first, those who fund libraries want to know how well funds are allocated to the library and are being utilized to meet the information needs of its clientele. For continuing financial support, they must be informed from time to time regarding the information statistics on how many books were added to stock and the number of appointments and resignations during the year and that may not make much of an impact on those who administer the funds for the management of the library.

Some information products of the library which developed and marketed by others that generate services. Some products and by products can be developed by the library. The product in other words can be said as any type of physical goods or services provided on time and in required quantity to its users. The word services suggest catalogues, any specific ideas, certain kind of industries. In case of library the products include various journals, periodicals, monthly editions, books reviews etc.

## **Marketing of Information Products and Services**

Information is a type of power and the libraries and information centres deal with this power. Marketing of information implies a set of activities related to transferring the information to the potential users. The concept of marketing is user-oriented. It increases the user satisfaction and thereby develops an element of competition in providing better services to the users. The focus is on saving the time, money and labour as well as adopting the techniques of information technology. Earlier, the users had to pay for the library services in the form of subscription, caution deposit, penalty for lost/damaged books, etc. These measures were adopted to make the users prompt in using the library services. But nowadays, information has become a tradable product which has given rise to the concept of marketing in the libraries. The excessive values of information and it being a resource for the development of the nation have changed the information into a product to be sold in the markets.

### **Some of the information products are:**

- Books (in both print and electronic formats)
- Periodicals
  - Academic journals
  - Magazines
  - Newspapers
  - Newsletters and bulletin boards
- Reference Documents
  - Encyclopaedias
  - Dictionaries
  - Bibliographies and bibliographic databases
  - Directories and databases
- Stages in the New Product Development Process
- Others
  - Videos
  - CDs
  - DVDs
  - Multimedia documents

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## **Library Products and Services**

Library can create awareness about the utility of library products/ services by different modules of communication. The most popular technique is to provide user orientation i.e., special introductory services to attract the new users /customers to the library and information centres.

The following are the various services provided by the libraries and information centres:

- ❖ Library catalogues,
- ❖ Current awareness services.
- ❖ Selective dissemination of information services,
- ❖ Reprography services
- ❖ Bibliography services
- ❖ Translation services
- ❖ Reference services
- ❖ On-line database.
- ❖ Optical disk storage media
- ❖ E- Reference services.
- ❖ Inter library loan services

## **Marketing Need for The Library**

On their face, the terms marketing and library do not fit together. Traditional thinking is that the library service, particularly in academic libraries, is just an essential service and therefore it requires no marketing or advertising and hence there is no need on part of the libraries to market or advertise themselves or their services. In the context of highly competitive, globalized and technological era where the concept of quality has become a cynosure, the marketing of products or services of any organization emerged as prerequisite. Library is no exception. It is an important that Library Professionals shall make assumptions about the informative requirements of their users and the effective delivery system of the services.

- ❖ In order to create awareness among users about library services, and perhaps also to create desire for these services, build understanding of the value of the services, increase the level of usage, and expand the user base, a successful marketing strategy is necessary.
- ❖ In recent years, the need for marketing of library services has gone beyond the traditional approach particularly since marketing has spread to non-profit organizations like libraries and information centres. Kotler argues that marketing need was felt and marketing philosophy has been successfully applied to non-profit and public organizations. Marketing is considered essential for the following reasons:
  - The libraries invest huge funds on collection, processing, and storage of information

resources. It is usually observed that these valuable resources are put to a meagre use which by implication is wastage of precious funds. In view of the increasing cost of information there is need for the promotion and use of information resources.

- The needy users have casual or almost need perception because of which they do not demand and use information resources. In view of the inadequate resource utilization, information marketing is essential to facilitate need perception of the needy and thereby create demand.
- Information is considered as the fifth need of man; hence users must be conscious of their needs for information. Lack of realization of this aspect puts one to disadvantage and deprivation of proper information use. Marketing of information- based services will eliminate these lacunas and make the needy an information rich user.

## **Marketing Mix for Library and Information Centres**

The marketing mix, also known as 7Ps of marketing consists of seven key elements that can be applied to a library and information centre to promote its services and resources effectively. Here is how the marketing mix can be applied to a library:

### **The library marketing also has 7ps of marketing:**

1. **Product (Services and Resources):** In a library context, the “product” refers to the services and resources offered to users. Librarians should ensure that their collection of books, periodicals, databases, multimedia materials, and digital resources is diverse, relevant, and meets the needs of their target audience. Additionally, they should focus on providing excellent user service including assistance with research, information literacy training and reference services.
2. **Price (Access and Fees):** The concept of “price” in a library context pertains to the access and fees associated with certain services or resources. Libraries often provide free access to their collections and services, but there may be charges for specific items like photocopying, printing, or interlibrary loans. Librarians should carefully consider the pricing structure and ensure that it aligns with the library’s mission and the expectations of its users.
3. **Promotion (Marketing and Communication):** Promotion involves the marketing and communication strategies used to create awareness and attract users to the library. Librarians can employ various promotional tactics such as creating informative brochures, flyers, and posters, utilizing social media platforms to share updates and engage with the community, organizing events and workshops, and collaborating with local organizations to extend the reach of promotional efforts. Effective promotion helps convey the value and benefits of the library’s services and resources.
4. **Place (Physical and Digital Presence):** The “place” aspect of the marketing mix refers to the physical and digital locations where the library services and resources are accessible. Libraries should ensure their physical spaces are welcoming, comfortable,

and conducive to learning and studying. Additionally, they should establish a strong digital presence, including a user-friendly website, online catalogue, and access to digital resources. Creating a seamless and convenient user experience across physical and digital platforms is crucial for attracting and retaining library users.

5. **Participants:** Staff plays a crucial role in promoting the library services. Library staff need to have strong customer orientation in all activities. Their skills need to be honed up in the area of library techniques, communication, technology and team-working skills. All the staff need to be trained and re-trained periodically.
6. **Physical Evidence:** This is another aspect that is particularly important in the provision of services and refers to all physical aspects that can influence the customer's perception of libraries. Things include interiors and exteriors of the library, cleanliness, arrangement of bookshelves, etc. Also it refers to all stationery used in the library, staff uniforms, warranties, guarantees, etc. It is believed that the quality of service is reflected in the physical evidence.
7. **Process:** Refers to the processes the customer has to undergo in order to avail the library services. The library marketer has to make the processes simple and customers' convenience is the objective and guiding factor. Process also refers to the 'behind the screen' tasks in the library which have to be made efficient, keeping in mind the customer service.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The focus of all library and information services marketing activities is the library users who are otherwise regarded as library customers. Hence, the activities such as generating information resources, processing, storing, preserving and provision of access to the information resources for the different categories of library users are the central goal of library and information services.

**Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha, (2016).** indicated that marketing covers activities that connect the organization to those parts of its outside world that use, buy and sell or influence the output it products, the benefits and services it offers. It is a human activity that is directed at satisfying the needs of library users through an exchange process. Marketing implies the exchange process. Marketing implies the exchange of relationship between the services provider and the service, consumer with the aim of satisfying the consumer's needs (Ogbomo, 2015).

**Dipanwita Ray (2022).** pointed out that marketing of information products and services in the libraries. Various aspects have been dealt with in this regard. The scope of marketing has been discussed in general and also in terms of libraries. The factors of knowledge management in respect of marketing information have been mentioned. These include information explosion, the increased need of knowledge and the speed of time by which knowledge is regenerated. The data-information-knowledge sequence has also been touched upon. The first entity in the sequence is data and then comes information and finally knowledge is generated. The unique features of marketing of services have been dealt with. The features include the facts that services are not produced and owned, intangible, inseparable, imperishable and variable. Above all, the marketing principles to be followed by the modern library services have been discussed in detail. The principles include the active attitude of the company, equal importance

of 'marketing' as other functions, integrated marketing activity. The special professional skills of the librarians for marketing information and library services have been highlighted. The problems of marketing information services have been mentioned which are lack of proper knowledge, scientific and technical products being used in non-market environment and difficulty in estimating the value of information products and services.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of marketing on the use of library products and services by postgraduate students in universities in Andhra Pradesh:

- ❖ To examine the Tools, Techniques and Methods used for Marketing of products and services of University Libraries that are intended for postgraduate students in select universities in A.P.
- ❖ To study the frequency of the use of library Products and Services by the postgraduate students in select universities.
- ❖ To investigate the extent of marketing of the library products and services done by librarians in the universities.
- ❖ To know the marketing strategies used to create awareness of library products and services to postgraduate students in the select universities.
- ❖ To assess the influence of marketing on library products and services to the postgraduate students in the select universities.
- ❖ To offer suitable suggestions for efficient and effective marketing of the product and services of University Libraries.

## **Methodology**

The present study is intended to know the status of Marketing of Information Products and Services in Selected University Libraries in Andhra Pradesh. The study expanded to the users also. The target population is P.G.Students in 5 universities. Survey method is adopted to collect data from university libraries as well as users.

### **8.1. Sample Selection**

According to annual reports of the Universities there are total 13563 P.G. Students users in the 2022-2023. Due to user reluctance to respond to such studies because of their pre occupation in their works with great difficulty 300 questionnaires at each university were distributed on the bases of random sampling which raised the total questionnaire to 1500. After repeated visits it became possible to collect 1192 questionnaires from the users of the sample universities. Data was also collected from the annual reports of the universities for the study.

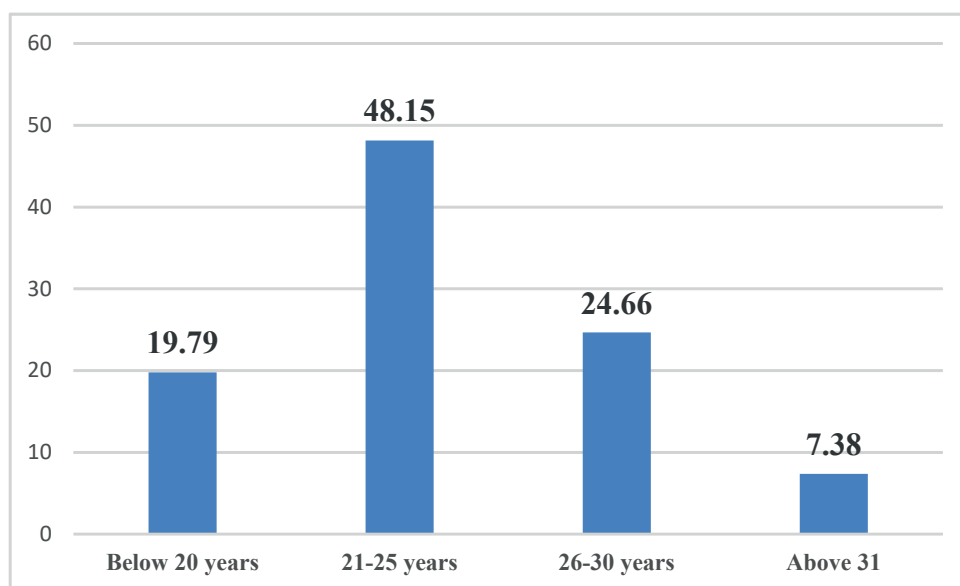
## Data analysis

### Gender-wise distribution

S.No.	Gender Wise	Frequency	Percentage
a	Male	784	65.77
b	Female	408	34.23
<b>Total</b>		<b>1192</b>	<b>100</b>

It is obvious from Table-1 Out of the total 1192 respondents, 784 (65.77%) are male respondents and the remaining 408 (34.23%) are female. The proportion of the male respondents was much higher than that of the female.

### Age Group



**Figure-1- Age Group**

The above figure-1 reveals that age-wise distribution of the sample respondents. The study finds that 48.15 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 21-25 years, about 24.66 percent are between 26-30 years, 19.79 percent of the respondents are below 20years and the remaining respondents are 7.38 percent age category of above above 31 years.

### Area of residence

S.No.	Area of residence	Frequency	Percentage
a	Urban	476	39.94
b	Rural	716	60.06
<b>Total</b>		<b>1192</b>	<b>100</b>

It is obvious from Table-2 that a majority of the respondents 716(60.06%) are rural area students and the remaining 476(39.94%) respondents are urban area students. Hence, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents are rural area students.

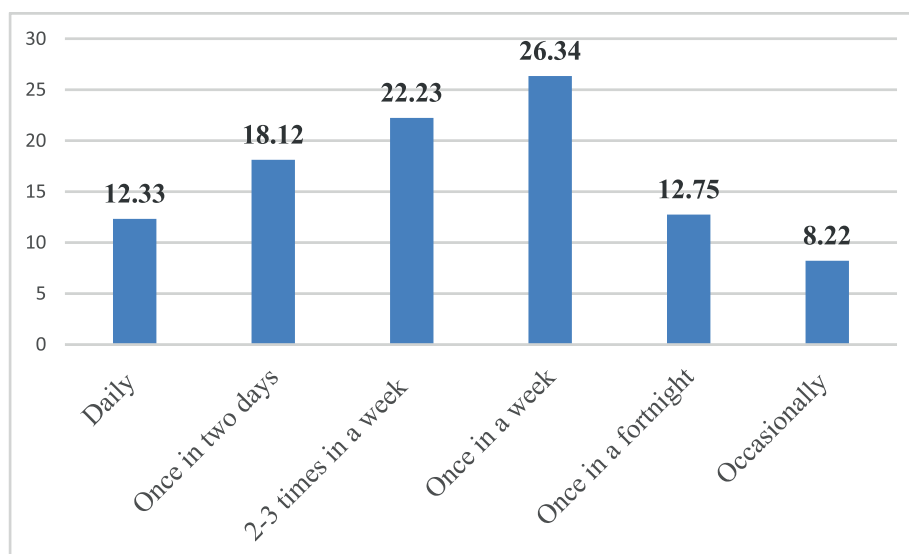


### university wise distribution

Name of the university	Frequency	Percentage
Andhra University	242	20.30
Sri Venkateswara University	246	20.63
Acharya Nagarjuna University	238	19.96
Sri Krishnadevaraya University	232	19.46
Sri Padmavathi Mahila Vishwavidyalayam	234	19.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>1192</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table-3 reveals that university-wise distribution of the sample respondents. The study finds that 20.63 percent of the respondents are Sri Venkateswara University users, about 20.30 percent are Andhra University Students, 19.96 percent of the respondents are Acharya Nagarjuna University users, 19.64 percent of the respondents are Sri Padmavathi Mahila Vishwavidyalayam users and the remaining respondents are 19.46 percent of the respondents are Sri Krishnadevaraya University users.

### Frequency of Library Visit

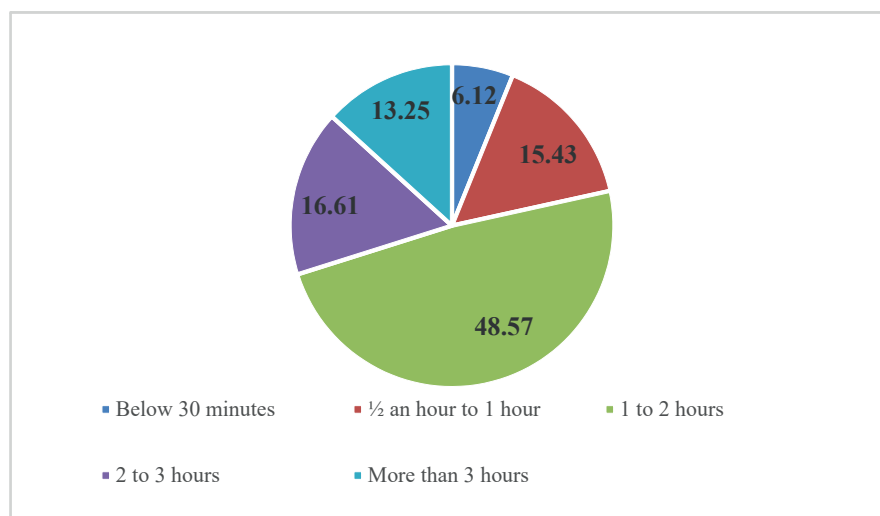


**Figure-2: Frequency of Library Visit**

It can be observed from the figure-2. that a majority of the respondents 26.34 percent have used frequency of library visit Once in a week, followed by 22.23 percent used it once a week, 18.12 percent of the respondents Once in two days. 12.33 percent of the respondents are frequency of library visit daily, 12.75 percent of the respondents are visit library Once in a fortnight whereas the remaining 8.22 percent of the respondents frequency of visit library a Occasionally.



### Average Time Spend in the library



**Figure-3: Average Time Spent in the library**

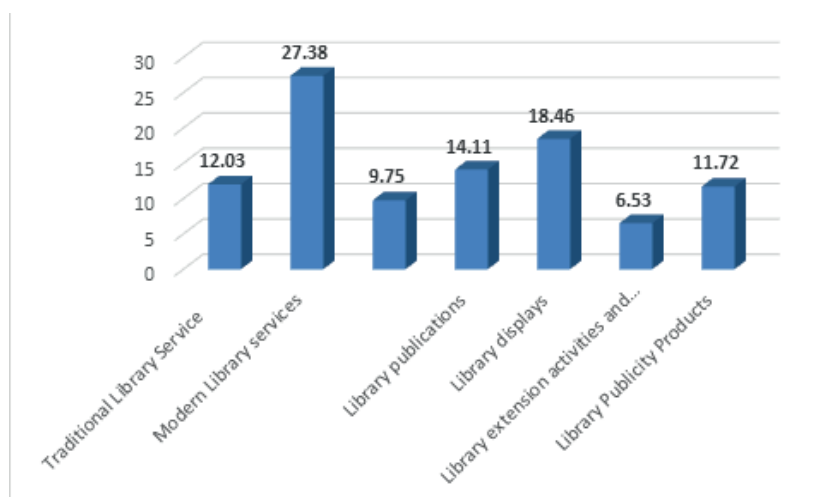
As per figure-3 a majority of the respondent's 48.57 percent have time spent in 1 to 2 hours per day in their respective libraries, followed by 16.61 percent of the respondents doing so for 2 to 3 hours per day, 15.43 percent of the respondents have browsed for 1/2 an hour to 1 hour per day, 13.25 percent of the respondents spent time More than 3 hours per day and the remaining respondents are spent time 6.12 percent Below 30 minutes per day.

### Aware of the marketing of library products & service

S.No.	aware of the marketing of library products & service	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	964	80.87
2	No	228	19.13
<b>Total</b>		<b>1192</b>	<b>100</b>

It is evident from table-4 that majority of the respondents 964(80.87%) are aware of marketing of library products & service, and the remaining 228(19.13%) respondents are no aware marketing of library products & service.

### If yes, are you aware of the following services and products.



**Figure-4: If yes, are you aware of the following services and products.**

It is evident from figure-4 that majority of the respondents 264(27.38%) are aware of Modern Library services, followed by 178(18.46%) respondents being aware of Library displays, 136(14.11%) respondents are aware Library publications, while 116(11.98%) respondents are aware of Traditional Library Service, 113(11.72%) respondents are aware of Library Publicity Products, 94(9.75%) respondents are aware of Specialized library services to publicize and market library holdings and information services and the remaining 63(6.53%) respondents are aware Library extension activities and services.

### **Library Products and Services**

S.No	Library Products and Services	Most Frequently	Frequently	Some times	Rarely	Never
1	Book lending	723 (60.65%)	167 (14.01%)	178 (14.93%)	108 (9.06%)	16 (1.34%)
2	Reference service	598 (50.16%)	298 (25.00%)	144 (12.08%)	65 (5.45%)	53 (4.44%)
3	Referral Service	678 (56.87%)	312 (26.17%)	94 (7.88%)	52 (2.09%)	56 (4.69%)
4	Reprographic Service	586 (47.65%)	243 (20.38%)	101 (8.47%)	139 (11.66%)	123 (10.31%)
5	Inter library loan	156 (13.08%)	246 (20.63%)	367 (30.78%)	179 (15.01%)	244 (20.46%)
6	Internet browsing facility	184 (15.43%)	248 (20.81%)	369 (30.95%)	193 (16.19%)	198 (16.61%)
7	Scanning	84 (7.04%)	296 (24.83%)	768 (65.93%)	148 (12.41%)	196 (16.44%)
8	Printing	367 (30.78%)	356 (29.86%)	142 (11.91%)	208 (17.44%)	119 (9.98%)
9	Document delivery services	712 (59.73%)	278 (23.32%)	94 (7.88%)	50 (4.19%)	58 (4.86%)
10	Indexing Services	543 (45.55%)	286 (23.99%)	103 (8.64%)	137 (11.49%)	123 (10.31%)
11	Newspaper clippings	542 (45.46%)	296 (24.83%)	148 (12.41%)	86 (7.21%)	120 (10.06%)
12	Current awareness service	642 (53.85%)	244 (20.46%)	152 (12.75%)	82 (6.87%)	72 (6.04%)
13	Translation services	296 (24.83%)	768 (64.42%)	148 (12.41%)	196 (16.44%)	84 (7.04%)

The above table-5 shows that majority of the respondents 768(65.93%) are sometimes of using Library Products and Services for Scanning followed by 723(60.65%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Book Lending, 712(59.73%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Document delivery services, 678(56.87%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Referral service, 642(53.85%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Current Awareness Services,

598(50.16%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Reference service, 586(47.65%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Reprographic service, 543(45.55%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Indexing services, 542(45.46%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Newspaper Clippings, 369(30.95%) are sometimes of using Library Products and Services for Internet browsing facility, 367(30.78%) are most frequently of using Library Products and Services for Printing.

## Findings

- ❖ Out of the total 1192 respondents, (65.77%) of the respondents are male and the remaining (34.23%) are female.
- ❖ Nearly fifty (48.15%) of the respondents are in the age group of 21-25 years.
- ❖ Most of the respondents (60.06%) are rural area students and the remaining (39.94%) are urban area students.
- ❖ The study finds that (20.63%) of the respondents are Sri Venkateswara University P.G. students followed by (20.30%) are Andhra University Students, (19.96%) of the respondents are Acharya Nagarjuna University Students, (19.64%) of the respondents are Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam Students and the remaining respondents are 19.46 percent of the respondents are Sri Krishnadevaraya University Students.
- ❖ Majority of the respondent's (26.34%) are visiting library Once in a week, followed by (22.23%) twice in a week.
- ❖ Nearly fifty of the respondents (48.57%) have spent time in 1 to 2 hours per day in their respective libraries.
- ❖ Majority of the respondents 264(27.38%) are aware of Modern Library services
- ❖ Most of the respondents (80.87%) are aware of marketing of library products.
- ❖ More than fifty percent of the respondents (54.19%) are most frequently of using information products.



## Conclusion

Libraries can be considered as marketing of information products and services in library users as information. Most of the marketing of information sources, services and products available in the libraries are utilizing and awareness pointing towards the need for systematic user orientation programmes. The present marketing activities and quality of services of the libraries are moderately accepted by the users. It needs more promotional activities for marketing of information products and services. Based on the analysis the proposed marketing strategy for the University Libraries in Andhra Pradesh.

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