

Strategic Self-Presentation on Social Networking Sites

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Abstract

Contemporarily social networking sites utilize an idealized self-presentation to reach out to diverse and individual users. The information communicated across users has drifted to incorporate unanticipated gains of reforms focusing on empowering users to have total control of their account and profile information. Constructing a self-presentation in online social networking requires the collection of content, layout and design to reflect personality and goals. This study tends to present the relative impact of various self-presentation styles on improving the quality of services afforded by social networking sites. Findings based on the dominant self-presentation such as self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation were expressed in terms of impression and behavior as well as their impeding risk. Findings on self-presentation on social networking sites confines to the pinning effect of socializing with other online users via online social networking sites such as Facebook.

Keywords: Self-presentation, Facebook, Social networking, Networking community, Account information.

1. Introduction

Social networking sites are designed to foster interaction in a virtual environment through facilitating information posted on the profile (user's page). Fundamentally, users page includes users photograph and personal information that describe users/members' interests as well as information about one's identity. Members view their profiles and communicate through various applications similar to email. Such interactions could potentially address many concerns. Membership to social networks has tremendously increased in recent day with the emergence of technological innovations among social networking websites. Social network website presentation accounted for 6.5 percent of all Internet traffic in February 2007 (Hitwise, 2007) and has consistently increased over recent years.

It becomes necessary to review the authenticity of self-presentation in engaging in a disembodied online social networking site such as Facebook. This is because social networking sites enable users to hide their undesired character and physical features and to present their personality in a way to fit with their desired self-presentation. It then implies that information and images posted on user's wall page are based on user's self-presentation and can be easily manipulated. A study by Yurchisin et al., (2005) found that Facebook users display fake photos on social network sites to protect their self-presentation however; this practice could be misleading and has consequences on users way of interaction (Gibbs et al., 2006). Use of fake self-presentation has led to stalking (Whelan, 2005), identity theft, harassment, blackmailing (Gross and Acquisti, 2005) and the discovery of information by unintended individuals such as university officials or future employers (Schweitzer, 2005). It then prompts the need to thoroughly prune off users especially those who are not connected with other known friends and family members. Connection with known member's network will help reduce the risk of accepting online friendship with unknown users and remains a remediation measure to hawking, theft that is of an increase in social sites.

There is limited study on the activities on social networking site. The relevance of social networking services in the present day is very vital to societal growth in that it facilitates interaction across different users. Traditionally, mass communication media services such as television, film, and radio evaluates are limited in the scope of services they provides to the masses and are not timely because information need to be transferred to agents or service providers. However, with Facebook information and data are conveniently conveyed to audience using different services platform.

2. Self-presentation

Self-presentation entails the process of controlling ones perception towards other people and is a key inception and developing a relationship (Leary, 1995, p. 2). Social networking site provides range of privileges to its users to construct intended images and to selectively provide information about themselves in response to others feedback (Goffman, 1959).

The impact of the online self-presentation production has not been investigated for decades back.

Newly emerged online social networking site such as Facebook is presently the most popular among university students globally (Shanyang, 2008). The advent of Facebook has transformed the traditional conditions of self-presentation production. However, in the online interaction corporeal body is detached from social encounters as individuals interact with fully disembodied text mode that reveals nothing about their physical characteristics. The combination of disembodiment and anonymity enabled the creation of technologically-mediated images in which a new mode of identity emerges (Shanyang, 2008).

Studies have shown that more than 90% of students using Facebook social networking services on a daily basis logs on to the site in a multiple times (Lampe et al., 2006; Stutzman, 2006). It becomes obvious that self-presentation on social networking site resulting from the use of fake information for self-presentation when socializing with other members poses serious psychological and sociological consequences which could endanger university students Facebook usage as well as their daily life.

As the growth and popularity of online social networks have created a new world of collaboration and communication among students, an increasing number of students around the world are connected to create, collaborate, and contribute their knowledge. However, there is little theory driven empirical research available to address communication and interaction services offered by social networking site. As its usage technologically grows and is rapidly adopted for social interaction and learning medium for university students, this study therefore was very important in that it tends to investigate the activities conducted through the social network and the self-presentation (Perry, 2010).

Student self-presentation on Facebook entails their commitment to engage in instructional social network base on implicit or explicit agreement between online members (Tuomela, 1995). The concept was initiated and developed by a number of philosophers such as Bratman, (1997) and (Tuomela, 1995) and in the present study, expressed in terms of university student representation in the Facebook social network website

While self-presentation on Facebook is explained based on individual level of presentation, in the present study, it is explained as part of a social network representation in performing a group presentation (Bagozzi and Lee, 2002). Self-presentation therefore exists when a student believes that they can be part of the joint instructional activities perform among Facebook members (Tuomela, 2006, p. 37). Student self-presentation on face in the present study will be used to evaluate the type of activities university student commonly perform via Facebook.

3. Why People Engage in Self-Presentation?

People are attracted with the feeling that specific individual or group meets their intended need. Different reasons prompts people to present themselves in a manner they prefer rather than their real natural tendencies.

3.1 To facilitate Social Interaction

Essentially, self-presentation defines the nature of a social situation (Goffman, 1959). Most social interactions are role governed and the interaction proceeds smoothly when these roles are effectively adhered to. The role of self-presentation was first presented by Erving Goffman (1959) who found that social life is highly structured and in some cases formalized by strict rules of protocol. Goffman refers to these efforts as face work as interaction is obliged to honor and uphold the other person's public view. Toward this end, people may misrepresent themselves or refrain from standing for what they really think or feel right. For instance, in a public, people always claim to like the presents they receive, appreciate other people's new clothes or hairstyle or make excuses for why they cannot get together for some social encounter. This form of self-presentational behavior seems to be primarily driven by a desire to avoid conflict, reduce tension or to be liked by others (DePaulo et al. 1996, Goffman, 1959)

3.2 To Gain Favor and Social Rewards

People strive to create an impression that enables them to gain favor and social rewards from others or avoid social punishments. Inducing the impressions in peoples apt to promote raises in a form of social influence in which one attempts to gain power over another.

In the other hand, social rewards depend on one's ability to convince others of a particular quality. This encompasses convincing others that one is likable; convincing others that one is capable of leading (Jones 1990; see also, Tedeschi and Norman, 1985). This implies that self-presentation positions people to influence the nature of social interaction in a manner that suits intended purposes. It is then evident that people actively strive to manipulate how they are viewed by others conjures up images of duplicity. However, strategic self-presentation does not necessarily imply that people tries to deceive others to gain favor or social reward, it also involves genuine attempt to reveal ones positive qualities to others.

3.3 Self-Construction

In most cases people tries to create impressions of ourselves in an attempt to construct a particular identity for

ourselves (Baumeister, 1982b; Rosenberg, 1979; Schlenker, 1980). This form of behavior serves more to a private, personal function in convincing others that one possess certain quality. Often, self-construction is creates an identity or attempt to fashion an identity that explains ones intention. Self-construction arises because most people thinks of themselves as being competent, likable and talented by convincing others that they possess positive attributes. However, this makes people feel better about what they think concerning themselves. This depicts that people seek to create impressions in the minds to make good on their claims.

4. Types of Self-presentation

4.1 The Concept of self-presentation

Self-presentation has shown to be motivated by the desire to impress others (Martin et al. 2007). This impression to appear differently to others has differing influences that affect how people interact and share information (Kamau, 2009). Paulhus and Trapnell (2008) explained that self-presentation can be evaluated on a personal scale appropriating individual view as a core representation in specific situation. In a more detailed study, Jones, E. E., & Pittman, T. S. (1982) confined self-presentation into 5 types as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 concept of self-presentation

Self-presentation	Expression
Self-Promotion	Promotes positive information about oneself by telling others about one's quality
Exemplification	Self-presentation designed to elicit perceptions.
Modesty	Under-representing one's positive traits, contributions as well as accomplishments.
Intimidation	To gains power and creates fear in others by convincing them that oneself is powerful.
Self-Handicapping	A self-presentation strategy in which a person creates obstacles to his or her own performance
Ingratiation	The impressions of one are based on flattery.
Supplication	Making known ones weakness or dependence on others in the hopes of soliciting help.

Self-presentation has been explained to incorporate key issues that motivate people to assume certain position or appear differently to different people. Jones and Pittman (1982) highlighted five different styles of self-presentation; self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. A study found that self-presentation styles fall on two factors labeled agency and communion (Paulhus and Trapnell, 2008). The present study explained self-presentation based on the concept of Jones and Pittman (1982) because it supports broad application of the meta-framework.

Jones and Pittman (1982) outlined 5 different styles of self-presentation; self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. Previous research has found that types of self-presentation can be organized focusing on individual achievement and a communal factor (focused on maintaining the group) (Paulhus and Trapnell, 2008). Based on this previous research we hypothesize that factor analysis will reveal agentic and communal factors in Jones and Pittman's (1982) 5 self-presentation styles shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Dominant forms of self-presentation in social networking sites

Self-presentation Strategy	Impression	Behavior	Risk of self-presentation
Ingratiation	To be liked	Favor, respect	Deceitful
Self-promotion	Decent	Boasting	Untrustworthy
Intimidation	Influential	Blackmail	Criticize
Exemplification	Upright	Selflessness	Insincere
Supplication	Unable	Despise	Challenging

The concept of the 5 self-presentation (Jones and Pittman, (1982) depicted specific situation that prompted online users to adapt certain self-presentation to satisfy their intended need for interacting with other online users.

Ingratiation appears to be the most familiar impression strategy whereby online users get other users to like them. Since we tend to like people who agree with us, say nice things about us, do favors for us, and possess positive interpersonal qualities such as kindness, it is no surprise that ingratiation can be accomplished through imitation, doing favors for others, and posting positive personal characteristics on the Facebook walls. However, if other users know that you are trying to manipulate them, they may distrust or dislike you. Since people want to likable by others consequently, they can disincline to believe that a show of affection for other people is inauthentic even when such a motive is obvious to an impartial observer. For this reason, ingratiation seems to be a highly successful self-presentation used by students to socialize with online members via social networking

site (Paulhus and Trapnell, 2008).

Self-promotion is another common self-presentation strategy where users of online social network sites attempt to convey their view to their friends. To achieve this, they seek to convince online members by showing kindness and appear to be open minded. This differs from ingratiation because in ingratiation, people try to get others to like them while with self-promotion; the undergraduate students are trying to get other online friends to think that they appreciate them and are talented. In most situations, it is beneficial to be seen as both likable and competent. Unfortunately, it is not easy to display both of these qualities during online interaction with others. For this reason, people are often forced to blend to balance these two self-presentation strategies (Jones and Pittman (1982).

Although ingratiation and self-promotion appears to be the most common self-presentation strategies, sometimes users of online social networking sites want to be feared and respected by others. This type of self-presentation is referred to as intimidation. This is usually common among users who are of the same age (Jones and Pittman (1982).

Another form of self-presentation is exemplification. This form of self-presentation exists when online users attempt to create an impression that they are morally superior or preferred than others (Jones and Pittman, (1982).

A last form of self-presentation is supplication. Supplication occurs when users of social networking site publicly exaggerate their weaknesses and deficiencies to other online members, especially in situations when online users appears to be helpless rather than competent in order to attract others. This can be observed when one claims to not know how to use or do something especially during when interaction extends beyond ones knowledge. The more general point is that people often exaggerate their weaknesses to get them what they want. In extreme cases, these tendencies may underlie consequences (Perri, et al., 2010; Paulhus and Trapnell, 2008).

5. Social Networking Site

Social networking site reviewed in this study draws on Facebook as a more representative of other social networking site. This is because Facebook has remained the most popular and most used social network site since 2007 (Social Networking Sites Fact Sheet, 2014). Facebook founded in February 2004 has gained significant popularity among other social networking sites. Statistics showed that Factsheet of the Facebook official page already garnered more than 750 million active users among which 50% log on to the site daily in 2008 (Agarwal et al., 2009). Facebook accommodates over 70 language translations on the site which has helped the networking site to become leading social network site all over the world (Facebook, 2011a; Facebook, 2011b). There are many communication features in social networking site which include post messages, disseminate personal information, upload, and share photos, chat, as well as invite friends to an event.

Traditionally, social network services comprising of individuals and organizations that are connected socially for a meaningful relationship and to interact with members to share values (Garton et al., 1997; Kempe et al., 2003; O'Murchu et al., 2004). Traditional social network services are more concerned with relationship with friends while current innovation in social network services focuses on virtual community through computer-mediated communication.

Social networking services provide services to millions of people globally. A study showed that millions of users engage with Friendster since 2003; MySpace has over 300 million users as of the beginning of 2008 and Facebook are being subscribed by over 750 million members out of which about 85% of the U.S. are students (Agarwal et al., 2009). According to Facebook statistic, there is increasing active users presently out of which over 50% are active user logs on daily with an average user network comprising an average of 130 friends (Facebook Statistics and Facts 2011). Cyworld, a major online network in Korea are subscribed by over 18 million and has expanded their services to China since 2001 and to the U.S. since 2006 (Ohbyung and Yixing, 2010). Xiaonei, a social network service in China are mostly used by students (Fu et al., 2008).

Worldwide statistics in 2013(The Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics, 2014) showed that there are over 950 million Facebook users out of which 500 million people log onto the site daily which represents 48% increase from 2010 to 2011. Five new profiles are created in every second worldwide. In Europe, over 223 million people are on Facebook. Age 25 to 34, at 29.7% of users, is the most common age demographic comprising 53% female and 47% male (The Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics, 2014). However, the highest internet traffic occurs weekly between 1 to 3 pm and there are 83 million fake profiles accounting for fake self-presentation spending an average 20 minutes daily.

Every 60 seconds, 510 comments are posted, 293,000 statuses are updated, and 136,000 photos are uploaded. 42% of marketers report that Facebook is critical or important to their business (The Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics, 2014).

However, the emergence of Facebook plays an important role in identifying empowerment in the use of social networking site for interaction purposes. Social networks such as Facebook offer an interactive feature that facilitates social interaction and enhances social connectivity among users. However, a systematic study of

the factors that affect the social network with empirical validation is important in developing comprehensive understanding of the user self-presentation as well as student activities and learning outcome in socializing students. This study is important to the body of knowledge in that it reveals impact of self-presentation from the perspective of daily practices and creates awareness on the motivation leading to different self-presentation in social network site.

6. Dangers with Social Networking Sites

Disembodied online interaction reveals nothing about physical features and re-creation of biographies and personality of users; making it possible for people to reinvent themselves through the production of fake identities. As a result, a man can pretend to be a woman, an introvert to be an extrovert enabling most disadvantaged people to bypass the obstacles preventing them from constructing desired identities in face-to-face interaction and the exploration of various non-conventional identities (Rosenmann and Safir, 2006; Shanyang, 2008).

A study on more than 4000 students Facebook profiles at Carnegie Mellon University showed that student's exposes their personal information with no concerned on over cyber risk (Gross and Acquisti, 2005). Another study found increased chances of reciprocity and creation of personal contact information in online social network interaction (Koh et al., 2007). A study found that student's personal information such as name, telephone number and pictures that were sent to unknown people through online chat resulted to aggressive sexual solicitations (Mitchell et al., 2010).

Facebook social network website has been recognized as a well-established social networking sites however; its features can be easily changed to user self-presentation format (Gibbs et al., 2006). This is common because users are motivated to interact via online social networking in such a way that satisfies certain self-presentation. Customizing of Facebook social networking website is possible because privacy setting is limited to individual user preference to interact with others (SEC, 2012). However, Facebook have achieve success in the area of uniting friends and classmate as well as business partners and family members together, yet insuring authentic self-presentation remains an issue that should be looked upon to control vulnerability.

Social networking site represent a venue for a free expression in the real world (Sas et al., 2009; Posey et al., 2010) and afford the opportunity to post images and messages to various respective users. However, studies doubts the authenticity of self-presentation identity in representing honesty in the information communicated across the social networking sites (Dwyer et al., 2007; Posey et al., 2010). Social networking users are provided with the opportunity to structure their information and images in a fashion that deceitfully convince their audience (Dwyer et al., 2007, Lewis and George, 2008; Posey et al., 2010).

With self-presentation in mind, social network services which have been already linked globally can be more effectively used negative impact can affect student's social, emotional and cognitive development of student (Roberts et al., 2005). Most of these influence result from posting terrifying and immoral images on member's wall which can potentially affect student activities as well as their instructional lifestyle. However, as Facebook online social network services have grown rapidly over recent years, the prevailing influences could potentially affect most users. These features make it possible for students to have their mobile user data at their fingertips.

6.1 Time Consumption

Spending so much time in online social networking sites such as Facebook has become a common daily activity especially among students whereby they share their personal information for interaction purposes (Ellison et al., 2006). The Fairfax Digital (2007) reported that most convicted sex offender's uses Facebook sites in Australia. Sydney Morning Herald (Baxter, 2008) confirmed that the convicted sex offenders use Facebook and drew attention to private information provided on social networking sites with no control over its usage.

Facebook user's displays personal information on a range of websites despite privacy groups suggestion of not to reveal personal details to strangers (Govani and Pashley, 2005). This could lead to stalking (Whelan, 2005), identity theft, harassment, blackmailing (Gross and Acquisti, 2005) and the discovery of information by unintended individuals such as university officials or future employers (Schweitzer, 2005). In addition, lurking has also become a common activity that consumes student's time (Suziki and Calzo, 2004). This is supported by the unprecedented opportunity afforded by social interaction and connectedness among members depicting dimensions of online environment in promoting interactive platform to socialize based on online setting (Angeli, 2009; Papacharissi, 2009).

7. Relevance of Online Social Networking Site

Online environments provide an alternative socialization platform for students to learn without the need for social and religious limitations which are predominant over face-to-face interaction. The relevance of social networks extends to providing an ideal communication channel although the instructiveness of the social

network is hampered by self-presentation. The extent at which self-presentation affects online social network users are still unknown however, a recent study have shown that there are predominant types of self-presentation among university students [references on self-presentation].

Examining Facebook usage and preferences based on self-presentation, is an vital step of providing interaction online network that meets students learning and relationship needs and to improve online education system []. This study provide clarification on the mental images on the importance to Facebook usage among university students.

The inclusion of Facebook as a learning platform offer a cost effective learning approach that are currently being used most among students. Establishing an interactive means of communication between university students facilitated sharing of a common interest. It then implies that self-presentation offer a wealth experience to students using online system. Mohammed (2011) highlighted that students consistently use social networking site as a reference to communicating with other students.

In addition, Facebook usage has been found to be mediated by motivation and positively influences students learning outcome and satisfaction of online community (Kim et al., 2004; Beenen et al., 2004). At the individual level, the study found that the relationship with other users influences member's attitude. The level of social acceptance by other online users has been found to be influenced by posting frequency (Rau et al., 2008). This depicted that socializing via Facebook is constrained by factors such as attitude and frequency of posting on other user's wall.

Social networking users can conveniently access their site using their mobile devices. The incorporation of mobile internet solutions feature in March 2011 enabled Facebook users to use Smartphone features on simpler phones to effectively communicate in an easier and cheaper way (Guardian, 2011). This has spurred the mobile access especially in developing countries where second generation (2G) Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) mobile phones is widely used (Guardian, 2011).

The advent of Facebook aimed at facilitating social interaction exclusively among students. The site is available for use by anyone with a valid email and allows users to choose one or more networks to belong such as a particular university, geographical location or city, or organization. A social network comprising of university students may include thousands of members with a profile containing basic information such as year of graduation, home town and personal information such as name and marital status. Users inform others about what they are currently doing by changing their status messaging at the top of their personal profile.

8. Networking Community

Social networking sites facilitated the creation of new communities by coordinating individual users into groups enabling them with the right of expression in a self-patterned manner. This implies that social network represents a platform for an open discussion of sensitive topics that could be difficult in face-to-face discussion and by this coordinate public opinions (Angeli, 2009). Networking sites are useful in expressing public view or initiate protest against corruption thereby activating the need for political demonstration.

Social networking community lend itself to an interactive gathering of like-minded users; the anonymity that enables deep and intimate disclosures of societal issues especially regarding governance and leadership (Maloney-Krichmar and Preece, 2005; Tidwell and Walther, 2002). This is because face-to-face interaction is influenced by social contextual factors that possess serious threat to the individual involved. Study conducted among 4000 Carnegie Mellon University students Facebook profiles shows that students prefer engaging in social interaction using social networking site such as Facebook (Gross and Acquisti, 2005).

A study by Mitchell et al. (2010) using a representative sample of 2500 over law enforcement agencies in the United States found that social networking sites were primarily used for initiating relationships, for communication between victim and offender and to disseminate information and pictures about the victim's friends.

Mitchell et al. (2010) found that young adult sends their personal information such as name, mobile number and pictures to other social network users and attempts to meet each other. Ybarra et al. (2007) found that 75 % of a sample comprising young adult kept their personal information secret to other online users, 5 % percentage have discussed with unknown users while 20 % have sent their information to other online users.

A study by Datan and Mislán (2010) analyzed three major social networking sites which are Facebook, MySpace and Twitter and found that user information on all three sites was: name, gender, age, address, date of birth, picture, sexual orientation and relationship status.

Among the need to investigate self-presentation includes precise control of too many posting in everyday life, posting of unimportant information too frequently and inappropriate comments about other users' relationships. Information that does not contribute to enhancing user knowledge positively will likely destroy relationship or disrupt national peace leading to conflict. Unfriendly interaction via social networking site could lead to the termination of the relationship.

Influences from networking communities that are associated with social influence theory with self-

presentation includes; compliance, internalization and identification.

1. Compliance occurs when users are expected to perform a specific attitude by a social actor who wants to reward or punish those who could not behave in like manner (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000).
2. Internalization entails the adoption of self-esteem in order to meet some certain goals shared with others (Dholakia et al., 2004).
3. Identification occurs when users accept an influence in other to establish or maintain relationships with other students (Kelman, 1958).

9. Key Issues Social Networking Site Addresses

Social networking services becomes an essential to maintain existing relationships such as sending message to friends, post a message on my friend's wall, stay in touch with friends or people I know, maintain relationships with people you may not get to see very often, find out what acquaintances or friends are doing now (Bosch, 2009; Ellison et al., 2007; Joinson, 2008; Lampe, Ellison and Steinfield, 2006, 2008; Lewis and West, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009; Sheldon, 2008a; Stern and Taylor, 2007; Young and Quan-Haase, 2009).

Using social site makes it easier to meet new people to find information about other people, develop a friendlier relationship, find companionship, meet new friends (Ellison et al., 2007; Lampe et al., 2006; Sheldon, 2008a; Stern and Taylor, 2007; Urista et al., 2009; Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin, 2008). Using Facebook is cool; fun (Lewis and West, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009; Sheldon, 2008a).

Networking sites makes oneself more popular such as popularity to contest and have more Facebook friends (Urista et al., 2009), pass time by supporting people to engage with other online users, spend time with others when bored, distract oneself, play games and use applications within Facebook (Joinson, 2008; Pempek et al., 2009; Sheldon, 2008a; Stern and Taylor, 2007). Online users express or presents their selves by updating their status, profile (Joinson, 2008; Pempek et al., 2009) and has broadened learning platform such as finding help with school work (Bosch, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009).

Typical instance has been demonstrated in a study comprising 50 undergraduate students and five lecturers at a university in South Africa where it was found that students used Facebook to find answers to questions about course venues and assignment details through their friends, share information or ideas about projects, lecture and study notes as well as to inform lecturers areas of their topics (Bosch, 2009).

10. Conclusion

This study explored the connection between self-presentation via social networking sites and private self-conceptions considering the functions it serves and the manner in which people go about trying to create an impression of themselves in the minds of other people. For different reasons, people view themselves in ways that are consistent with their publicly displayed self-presentation images. Five common self-presentational strategies were identified: (1) ingratiation (one strive to get other people to be liked); (2) self-promotion (people tends to convince other people of their competence); (3) intimidation (people try to lead others to believe they are tough and ruthless); (4) exemplification (people create the impression that they are morally virtuous); and (5) supplication (people seek to convince others that they are weak and helpless). A measure to bring the influences associated with fake self-presentation to minimum on social networking sites is to scrutinize the acceptance of online friend prior to interaction and sharing of personal information. This study has successfully reviewed the dominant types of self-presentation and the intention that motivated users to impress others for acceptance.

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