Shariah Guidelines for the Use of Modern Technology from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Sunnah

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Abstract
The field of information technology ethics represents a significant and growing area of study in the contemporary era, especially because new ethical problems are appearing that people did not face before. One of the main difficulties is how these problems are usually studied. Most of the time, researchers treat them like general social issues they examine how technology affects society and use ethical theories to judge those effects afterwards. In light of this, the present study explores the topic: "Shariah Guidelines for the Use of Modern Technology from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Sunnah." This research uses a descriptive and analytical method. It aims to: define the concept of Shariah guidelines, show their foundations in the Qur'an and Sunnah, examine the religious, Islamic preaching (da'wah related), and legal (Fiqh related) rules that control how technology is used. This study is divided into an introduction, four main chapters, and a conclusion, followed by a list of key sources and references. The introduction outlines why the topic was selected, the research problem, questions, objectives, and overall structures. Chapter One defines what Shariah guidelines mean in language and technical terms. - Chapter Two investigates these guidelines based on the Qur'an and Prophetic texts. - Chapter Three explores about how technology use relates to Islamic beliefs and efforts to spread Islam (da'wah). Chapter Four discusses the rules of Islamic law that apply in using of technology. Key findings show that ethical rules based on Shariah are essentials to protect people's digital rights, whether the content is free or paid. According to Islamic law, it is not permissible to violate these rights, for example: by accessing

content without permission, stealing intellectual property, or using harmful software—unless there is a valid reason accepted in Shariah. Such exceptions might be allowed if the government believes that certain digital platforms are dangerous to the country's politics, cultural, social, moral, or security risks to society.

Keywords: Shariah Guidelines, Modern Technology, Qur'an and Sunnah, Islamic, Ethics, Digital Laws

Introduction

The field of Information Technology Ethics represents a relatively new domain within the social and human sciences, as many of the issues arising in this area were previously unknown. The core challenge lies in the manner of addressing these ethical issues, given the continued reliance on traditional methods and approaches typically employed in the study and analysis of social phenomena—namely, by identifying the social impacts of various information technologies and subsequently applying ethical theories to these impacts and their consequences. However, employing this methodology in the context of information technology may present several shortcomings (Jorgensen, 2012). In light of the lack of clearly defined or effectively enforced regulatory frameworks, this study was undertaken under the title: "Sharia-Based Regulations for the Use of Modern Technology from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Sunnah." We ask Allah Almighty to grant that this work proves beneficial in its field; He is the One capable of that and fully able.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, as it is deemed most appropriate and suited to the subject matter.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Define the concept of Sharia-based regulations both linguistically and in technical usage.
2. Identify and elucidate the Sharia-based regulations governing the use of modern technology from the perspective of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
3. Outline the doctrinal (Aqidah-related) and missionary (daʿwah-related) regulations associated with technological use.
4. Clarify the jurisprudential (Fiqh-related) regulations pertinent to technology.

Research Problem

Undoubtedly, the field of Information Technology Ethics constitutes a new and critical area of inquiry in the modern era, with many emerging issues that were previously unfamiliar. The primary challenge lies in the approach taken toward these ethical dilemmas, where traditional methods are employed methods that focus on illustrating the social impacts of various information technologies and subsequently applying ethical theories to these impacts and their consequences. In response to this challenge, the present study was undertaken.

The Concept of Sharia-Based Regulations

Linguistic Definition of "Sharia"

The term "sharia" (الشريعة) in Arabic linguistics is derived from the root word *sharʿ* (شَرْع), which follows the morphological pattern of *faʿl*, and is an industrial derivation of *sharʿ* (Al-Maʿani Dictionary, 2023). Etymologically, "sharia" originates from the triliteral root verb *sharaʿa*

(شَرَعَ), meaning "to open and extend," or "something opened with an extension visible to the eye." It also denotes a water source to which people and animals come to drink. This usage evolved into the religious context, where *sharīʿa* signifies a divinely ordained way of life.

Accordingly, in its original linguistic sense, *sharia* refers to "a source of drinking water or a place for human and animal use," while *sharʿ* indicates "the path leading to it." Just as human beings depend on water for physical life, they likewise require *sharia* for spiritual life, regulating a righteous and upright way of living.

Abdullāh ibn al-Aʿrābī and Abū Manṣūr al-Azharī stated that *sharaʿa* means "to make something manifest, clear, and explained to those in need of it." Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr agreed that, linguistically, Islamic *sharia* means "the grand way," and that whoever initiates and clarifies a matter for people has indeed *prescribed* it (al-Sufyānī, 1988). In *Lisān al-ʿArab* by Ibn Manẓūr, it is recorded: "Sharʿa: The one who approaches the water *sharaʿa* (engages) by drinking it directly; animals *sharaʿat* by entering into the water... Sharia denotes a place along a riverbank where animals access water. 'Sharia,' 'shirāʿ,' and 'mashraʿa' are locations where people or animals descend to obtain water. Al-Layth said: The term is thus applied to what Allah has legislated for His servants, such as fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, marriage, and others" (Ibn Manẓūr, 1994).

The plural of *sharia* is *sharāʾiʿ*, and its meanings revolve around divine legislation, method, water source, and, contextually, religious law. According to Al-Maʿani Dictionary (2023):
• *Sharia* refers to what Allah has legislated for His servants in terms of beliefs and rulings.
• *Sharia* also means a method or path, a water source accessible without the use of a rope, and the threshold or entrance.
• *Law of the Jungle* is metaphorically called "Shariat al-Ghāb."
• In technical usage (fiqh), *sharia* refers to the practical rulings of religion.

Technical Definition of "Sharia";
Undoubtedly, Islamic Sharia is distinguished by significant features that set it apart from other legal or ethical systems. It draws from diverse sources and covers multiple dimensions, both religious and worldly, which makes formulating a comprehensive definition challenging. In *Lisān al-ʿArab*, *sharia* and *shirʿa* are defined as "what Allah has legislated and prescribed for His servants, such as fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, zakat, and all acts of righteousness."

Allah Almighty says: *"Then We put you, [O Muhammad], on a clear legislation from Our command"* (Al-Jāthiyah 45:18), and: *"To each of you We prescribed a law and a method"* (Al-Māʾidah 5:48).

In interpretation, *shirʿa* refers to "religion," while *minhāj* refers to "path," though both can sometimes mean "path," understood here as "religion" (Ibn Manẓūr, 1994).
Some scholars maintain that the technical meaning of *sharia* encompasses the rulings of all religions whether divinely revealed or otherwise. They define it as "a collection of rules and regulations, both oral and written, that clarify the modes of worship and practical applications of such laws by their initiator or by those commanded to convey them, such as the revealed heavenly religions" (al-Saʿdī, 2013).

Definition of Sharia-Based Regulations
Based on the preceding discussion, *sharia-based regulations* may be defined as: "A set of binding and definitive standards regulating what Allah has prescribed in matters of religion, including fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, zakat, and all acts of righteousness."

Shariah Regulations from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Sunnah
Undoubtedly, one of the most important objectives behind the sending of messengers was the purification and refinement of human souls, with the aim of establishing a society where all individuals coexist in peace and security. Allah, the Exalted, says: *"It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they were before in clear error."* (Surah Al-Jumu'ah: 2). He also says: *"Allah has certainly conferred favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error."* (Surah Aal Imran: 164).

Moreover, the Noble Prophet ﷺ himself confined his mission to the completion of noble character, stating: *"I was only sent to perfect good manners."* (Al-Bukhari, 2002). Morality, therefore, constitutes one of the fundamental pillars and essential components of Islamic Shariah. The greatest description of the final Messenger ﷺ was given by Allah:
"And indeed, you are of a great moral character." (Surah Al-Qalam: 4).

Additionally, the Qur'an presents the ethical traits of "the servants of the Most Merciful" at the forefront before mentioning their acts of worship: *"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth humbly, and when the ignorant address them, they say [words of] peace"* (Surah Al-Furqan: 63). In fact, Allah the Exalted made virtuous behavior and noble character both the outcome and purpose of acts of worship. He said regarding prayer: *"Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do."* (Surah Al-Ankabut: 45).

He said about fasting: *"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous."* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 183), and regarding Zakat: *"Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."* (Surah At-Tawbah: 103). Faith in Allah softens the heart and cultivates compassion toward all creation, prompting believers to act righteously out of love for Allah, hope for His mercy, and fear of His punishment. Faith in Allah's attributes, such as His mercy and kindness, inspires believers to embody those very attributes in their own conduct. Many authentic Hadiths underscore the central role of ethics in Islam. Among them:

- Al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: *"I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about righteousness and sin. He said: 'Righteousness is good character, and sin is that which wavers in your soul and you dislike that people find out about it.'"* (Muslim, 1955).

- Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As (may Allah be pleased with him) said: *"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was neither vulgar nor indecent. He used to say: 'The best among you are those with the best character.'"* (Al-Bukhari, 2002).
- Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: *"Nothing is heavier on the Scale of the believer on the Day of Resurrection than good character, and Allah hates the vulgar, obscene person."* (Al-Tirmidhi, 2003–2004).
- Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) said: *"The Prophet ﷺ was asked about what most admits people to Paradise. He said: 'Piety and good character.' He was asked about what most leads people to Hell. He said: 'The mouth and the private parts.'"* (Al-Tirmidhi, 2005).
- Abu Umamah al-Bahili (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: *"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for one who forsakes argument even when he is right, and a house in the middle of Paradise for one who abandons lying even in jest, and a house in the highest part of Paradise for one whose character is excellent.'"* (Al-Tirmidhi, 2005).
- Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: *"The dearest and closest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be those of you with the best character. The most hateful and furthest from me will be the boastful, the arrogant, and the pretentious."* (Al-Tirmidhi, 2005).

Books of Hadith have dedicated numerous chapters to various virtues such as patience, honesty, piety, steadfastness, trustworthiness, fulfilment of covenants, assisting others, humility, modesty, contentment, chastity, forbearance, gentleness, kindness in speech, bravery, generosity, dignity, and respect for others. Likewise, they warn against vices such as arrogance, vanity, anger, and stinginess. Ibn al-Qayyim compiled the principles of commendable character traits into two main roots: humility and high aspiration, encompassing chastity, generosity, patience, forgiveness, altruism, sincerity, contentment, truthfulness, and forgiveness of others' mistakes (Qaradaghi, 2025).

Muslim ethicists have likened the humble earth that flourishes with rain to the human heart: just as the earth thrives upon receiving rain, so too the heart blossoms with mercy when it becomes humble (Qaradaghi, 2025). Conversely, Ibn al-Qayyim grouped blameworthy traits into two main roots: arrogance and abasement. From arrogance stem pride, oppression, envy, injustice, and rejection of advice. From abasement stem lying, betrayal, cowardice, stinginess, and weakness (Qaradaghi, 2025). In today's world, geographical, political, legal, and cultural boundaries have been eroded by modern changes and globalization, supported by technologies like the Internet, satellites, and live television broadcasts. These advancements, while beneficial, can also threaten the last strongholds of Islamic moral and cultural resistance if not regulated by clear Shariah guidelines.

Thus, users of modern technologies must abide by both Shariah and ethical regulations to ensure lawful and moral usage. Muslims are obligated to adhere to both religious and ethical codes, while non-Muslims are expected to observe the ethical standards. It is important to note that proper human instinct (fitrah) is in full harmony with the teachings of Islam. Special attention must be given to both doctrinal and jurisprudential regulations, and their overlap with ethical standards, in all aspects of life and technology.

Doctrinal and Missionary Regulations Related to Technology

1. Preserving Islamic Creed, Identity, Values, and Principles: Users of modern technology must refrain from ridiculing the fundamentals of religion (such as God, the angels, the messengers, the scriptures, the unseen, acts of worship, etc.), its rituals, or its values and traditions. They must avoid denying what is universally known in religion, deeming the unlawful as lawful or the lawful as unlawful, among other breaches. Faith in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and destiny both its good and evil is the solid foundation of the creed, which must remain untouchable whether one is using technology or not.

2. Respecting the Rights of Others (Muslims and Non-Muslims Alike): Respect for other nations and peoples is crucial for projecting a positive image of Islam and Muslims, and for fostering productive and beneficial relationships. Respecting others, refraining from belittling them, and honoring their right to express their opinions so long as it is done respectfully and within fair and useful discussions (whether with Muslims or non-Muslims) are among the noble manners of Islam.

3. Promoting Coexistence Among Civilizations to Create Da'wah Opportunities: Delivering the message of Islam with wisdom and good manners is essential.
   "The matter of coexistence and civilizational communication among individuals of diverse societies, religions, and cultures has become a humanitarian necessity with social and cognitive dimensions where constructive ideas meet to develop life away from conflicts of domination and exclusivity. Thus, coexistence and civilizational communication are not only founded on ethical and humanitarian principles but also on a collective effort to build a shared present and future, grounded in respect for diversity. This diversity is reflected in the global social system that ensures equal rights among individuals based on the principles of global citizenship. Achieving coexistence and communication represents an advanced stage reached by societies that recognize the reality of diversity and seek to develop common grounds among their members. Through this understanding and practical steps, coexistence and civilizational communication can move from theoretical moral ideals to existential realities and tangible social practices.

4. Given the current global climate of wars and conflicts, which fuel discord and division among societies, the need to disseminate the culture of coexistence and tolerance becomes urgent. This entails embedding these values into daily behavior and deeply rooting them within societies and between them. Moreover, transforming this culture into practical behavior is no less important than spreading and solidifying it intellectually; only through treating these values as an integral part of human behavior can they be truly beneficial" (King Fahd National Library, 2020).

5. Contributing Actively to Global Human Knowledge and Modern Technology: Muslims should engage actively in the various fields of knowledge and technological advancement. The presence of specialized Muslim scholars in these fields enhances the global role and message of Islam, making it a vibrant force on the international stage.

6. Confronting Intellectual Invasions and Missionary Campaigns, and Responding to Doubts Raised Against Islam: The ideological campaigns and missionary calls targeting Muslims via modern technological means must be countered effectively. Orientalists and missionaries persist in their attempts to undermine the morals, heritage, and creed of the Muslim nation. Given their partial successes, it is crucial for Muslim preachers to confront them using similar tools and platforms.

7. Presenting a Positive Image of Islam and Demonstrating Its Universal Message Through Modern Technology: Hence, the use of modern technological means for this purpose is considered a personal obligation (fard 'ayn) for some Muslims, specifically those capable of defending and promoting Islam through these means.

8. Adhering to the Fundamental Islamic Principle of "Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil": Given the ease with which immorality can be accessed and propagated through modern social media platforms, Muslims must remain steadfast in promoting virtue and preventing vice.

9. Activating the Role of the Family, Society, and Government in Monitoring Published Content and Content Creators: It is necessary to impose strong deterrent disciplinary sanctions on those who violate ethical and religious guidelines.

10. Strengthening the Role of Responsible and Specialized Institutions in the Field of Da'wah and Islamic Outreach: Institutions concerned with promoting Islam and its message must intensify their efforts in the modern technological sphere (Noor, 2020).

Jurisprudential Regulations Related to Technology
These jurisprudential regulations are closely and deeply intertwined with ethical regulations, which could aptly be termed *regulations of sound natural disposition (fitrah)*. Without a doubt, "normal social or electronic relationships cannot be properly maintained without a moderate jurisprudential reference that weighs the emerging issues and challenges of human interaction with modern technologies according to the scale of Islamic law, its principles, and objectives, aiming to bring about benefit, avert harm, distinguish between what is lawful and unlawful, and protect individuals and societies from deviation and corruption. Therefore, jurisprudential regulations serve as a safety valve for the secure use of modern technologies, especially social networking platforms" (Joulis, 2014). Among these jurisprudential regulations are the following:

1. The Right to Use (Haq al-Intifa') of User Privacy: Whoever creates an account on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or an email service, attains a personal right to use based on international electronic agreements regulating these companies. Thus, the authority to use or refuse usage under normal circumstances belongs to the account holder, provided they abide by the general conditions set by these companies, such as continued activation. In turn, the companies are obligated to honor the agreements by providing their free services within the bounds of this right to use. Respect for these agreements is one of the important obligations for users.

2. Respect for Privacy and Prohibition of Intrusion into Personal Data Without Permission: It is forbidden to violate users' privacy without their explicit consent. A distinction must be made between public information accessible by simply browsing a user's public page such as publicly shared photos and posts, which are made available for general viewing and private or closed groups/pages, where even attempting unauthorized access, such as hacking or illicit password retrieval, is prohibited. Such acts constitute an assault on others' privacy and are contrary to Islamic principles. Users who violate this are accountable for the harm they cause, according to what is judged by the state (the ruler or judiciary) in line with Islamic law.

3. The Financial Relationship Between Users and Website Owners: A distinction must be made between two types of users:
   o First: Businesses, companies, organizations, and institutions that pay a fee annually or over longer terms to reserve specific spaces on the internet. This reservation is

considered a private property with commercial value that cannot be contested. It is a lawful possession, granting the right to utilize, gift, lease, loan, or sell the space according to the contractual terms (Zarqa, 2004).

- o Second: General users who access websites offered for free under general conditions stipulated by the company. When a user registers, they acquire a personal right of use granted by the platform. Jurisprudentially, this is classified as a "right to benefit" (Haq al-Intifa'), akin to being licensed to use a facility without ownership similar to entering a publicly accessible building with permission. This right is distinct from ownership and entails specific limitations according to the company's terms (Joulis, 2014; Zarqa, 2004).

4. The Prohibition of Spying and Invading Private Matters: Regardless of the motives, except for cases justified by Shariah such as exposing an enemy, a spy, or a criminal group all forms of espionage are prohibited. This serves to protect individuals' privacy and prevent violations of their dignity and personal affairs. The Qur'anic foundation for this regulation is the verse: *"And do not spy or backbite each other"* (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12), and the Prophet ﷺ said: *"Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech. Do not spy, do not investigate, do not envy, do not hate each other, do not turn away from each other. Rather, be servants of Allah, brothers."* He ﷺ also stated: *"O you who have believed with your tongues but faith has not yet entered your hearts! Do not backbite Muslims, nor follow their private affairs. For whoever follows their private affairs, Allah will expose his private matters even within his own home."* (Abu Dawud, 1999).

5. The Use of Pseudonyms on social media and Digital Platforms: The permissibility of pseudonyms is determined by their meaning. Names with permissible and positive connotations are allowed, such as *Moonlight*, *Lion of the Desert*, *Light of the Faith*, or *We Rise by Islam*. However, names with inappropriate, corrupt, or religiously offensive meanings such as *Satan*, *Iblis*, *Adulteress*, *Pessimist*, *Lover of Alcohol*, etc. are forbidden due to their contradictory implications against Islamic ethics and teachings.

Shariah Regulations Related to Technology
These jurisprudential regulations are closely and significantly intertwined with ethical standards, which can rightly be referred to as the principles of innate human nature (Fitrah). Undoubtedly, social or electronic relations cannot function properly without a balanced Shariah-based reference that evaluates contemporary issues and challenges in human interactions with modern technologies through the lens of Islamic law, its principles, and its objectives—to promote benefits, avert harm, and distinguish between lawful and unlawful acts, thereby protecting individuals and societies from misguidance and deviation. Thus, jurisprudential regulations serve as a safety valve for the secure use of modern technologies, especially social media platforms. Some of these jurisprudential regulations include:

Right of Beneficial Use
The privacy of users is protected. Anyone who creates an account on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or an email account enjoys the right of personal beneficial use based on international electronic agreements governing these companies. Thus, the user retains usage rights as long as they comply with the platform's general conditions. Companies are, in turn, bound by their agreements to provide services within the framework of users' rights.

Respect for Privacy

Unauthorized intrusion into personal data is forbidden. Publicly available posts and images can be accessed without permission; however, attempting to hack closed groups or private pages is prohibited. Such actions violate Shariah principles and users may be held accountable for the harm caused according to Islamic legal provisions as enforced by the judiciary.

Financial Relationship between Users and Platform Owners

There are two types of users: (1) Commercial users who pay for reserved spaces on the internet, gaining full ownership rights, allowing for sale, lease, donation, or endowment. (2) General users who obtain a license to benefit from free services without ownership, akin to personal authorization to use the service, which differs from ownership.

Prohibition of Spying and Invasion of Privacy

It is strictly prohibited to spy on or intrude upon others' personal matters unless there is a legitimate Shariah reason, such as security threats. Otherwise, spying and unauthorized access violate the Quranic and Prophetic injunctions against such behavior.

Use of Nicknames in Social Media

The permissibility of using nicknames depends on their meanings. Nicknames with positive or neutral connotations are permissible, whereas those with immoral or inappropriate meanings are forbidden according to Islamic etiquette.

Findings

From the foregoing discussion, several significant findings emerge regarding the relationship between Islamic Shariah and technology, particularly in terms of personal rights, ownership protection, and ethical regulations.

First, personal rights and ownership protection are clearly safeguarded by Islamic Shariah. Whether these rights pertain to publicly available resources or private ownership, Islamic law explicitly prohibits any violation, hacking, theft, or the distribution of harmful software targeting such property. The only exception to this rule is when legitimate authority, such as the state, deems certain online entities or activities a threat to national security, societal morals, or public order. In these instances, the state may intervene, but this must be backed by Shariah principles and legitimate justification.

Second, the overlap between Shariah-based and ethical regulations concerning technology reveals a close alignment between Islamic law and modern ethical standards. The immutable teachings of Islamic Shariah, drawn from the Qur'an and Sunnah, are consistent with ethical concepts such as personal freedom, respect for privacy, and intellectual property. Islam acknowledges personal freedom but limits it to ensure that it does not infringe upon others' rights or violate the commands of Allah. Furthermore, Islam places significant emphasis on the protection of privacy, prohibiting actions like spying, disseminating private information without consent, or engaging in blackmail, as these are in direct violation of Islamic principles. The respect for material and intellectual property is also emphasized, with Islam mandating the protection of others' property regardless of the owner's religion. Additionally, Islamic law supports contracts established through modern technology, provided they comply with Shariah guidelines.

Finally, the implications of this overlap demonstrate the universality of Islamic Shariah. It shows that the principles of Islamic law are not rigid or incompatible with modern technological advancements. Rather, Islamic law is adaptable and can engage with contemporary societal issues, including those arising from technological progress. This challenges the misconception that Islamic law is outdated and unable to accommodate the changing needs of modern societies.

Recommendations

Given the rapid pace of technological advancement and its pervasive influence on global societies, the researchers recommend that decision-makers at both international and local levels take several important actions. First, there should be a reassessment and review of Shariah and ethical regulations related to technology to ensure they remain relevant in the face of new challenges posed by modern advancements. Second, these principles should be integrated into university curricula across all academic levels, ensuring that future generations are educated on both the positive and negative aspects of technology. This will encourage users to engage with technology in ways that align with societal values and ethics, guided by Shariah-based moral principles in Muslim countries, and broader ethical norms in non-Muslim countries.

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