

Research Article

Information Quality in Mozambican Web Journalism: From User Experience to Information Quality

Sergio Jeremias Langa* , Jessica Pedro Guerra 

Department of Research, Higher School Of Journalism, Maputo, Mozambique

Abstract

This study, entitled “Information Quality in Mozambican Web Journalism: from user experience to information quality,” stemming from the lack of answers to the question of how the characteristics of web journalism are exploited, sought to understand how the online newspaper “Mozambique Charter” uses interactivity, hyperlinks, and multimedia to improve the experience and quality of information for the internet user-reader. Using a qualitative approach, the authors examined ten editions of the online newspaper. The results show that, although images are used as a multimedia resource, other elements, such as videos and graphics, are not explored, limiting the journalistic narrative. Interactivity is also restricted, as the login requirement to comment discourages reader participation. Regarding hyperlinks, news articles almost never present external links, which do not direct to relevant content, reducing the potential for in-depth information. These findings indicate that the Mozambique Charter could enhance the exploration of interactivity, hyperlinking, and multimedia, offering a more dynamic, multimodal, and higher-quality information experience to users. These findings indicate that the Mozambique Charter could enhance the exploration of interactivity, hyperlinking, and multimedia, offering a more dynamic, multimodal, and higher-quality information experience to users. These improvements could encourage users to engage more deeply with the content, access more comprehensive and reliable information, develop critical thinking and digital literacy skills, and foster a more participatory and informed online community. By enhancing the quality and interactivity of online journalism, the Mozambique Charter can better meet the needs of modern readers and contribute to a stronger, more connected digital public sphere.

Keywords

Information Quality, Webnewspaper, Interactivity, Hyperlinks, Multimediality, Mozambique Charter

1. Introduction

1.1. The Unease of the Investigation

Gonçalves [6], in his article “Journalism on the Internet (the paradox between the fascination with the potential of digital technology and the verticalized news production model)”, argues that the advent of the Internet represents a true

revolution in journalistic discourse, creating a unique space for the circulation of multiple forms of expression of subjectivity.

In the late 1980s, the transposition of journalistic production to the Internet began, with emphasis on the emergence of “real-time news” made available by American

*Correspondence: Sergio Jeremias Langa (sergiolanga@icar.co.mz)

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Online. Until 1989, only 42 newspapers were online, mainly in the United States, where the internet was beginning to change journalism. However, from the mid-1990s onwards, internet access grew rapidly, from 38 million users in 1994 to 56 million by the end of 1995, with the US currently having 307 million users.

In the United Kingdom, the transition to digital is equally significant. Piazzzi [13] highlights that the BBC was a pioneer, launching its first website on May 11, 1994; initially, access was paid, requiring a registration fee of £25 and a monthly fee of £12. Over time, the site evolved, including online discussion groups and a diverse range of content. On April 28, 1997, BBC Online was officially launched, following government approval to use Licence Fee funds. On November 7, 2001, the brand was renamed BBCi, focusing on interactivity and expanding its services to include TV, radio, and varied content.

Furthermore, Gonçalves [6] also traces a historical path of digital journalism in Latin America, highlighting Brazil. The first initiatives in Brazil emerged in 1995, with Journal of Brazil being a pioneer in publishing in cyberspace in that country. In South America, the movement began in Venezuela in 1993 with the newspaper News Merida (Noticias Merida) and in Argentina in April 1995 with the newspaper The Nation (La Nación). The author concludes that, in these publications, there was often a mere transposition of traditional content to digital, resulting in scarce opportunities for interaction, limited to suggestions sent by email.

In Africa, this criticism of the transposition of traditional content is echoed by Aiyesimoju and Talabi [1] in the article "News Digitalisation and Watchdog Journalism in Nigeria". The authors trace the path of watchdog journalism in Nigeria, where digital journalism began to gain strength in the 2000s, in response to the repression of journalists by the government. Newspapers like Point Blank News and Sahara Reporters emerged in this context, but many still limited themselves to simply reproducing traditional content, without fully taking advantage of the interactions offered by the digital medium.

Additionally, Madalena Sampaio [15] in "Digital Journalism: A Historical Journey," reinforces the need for innovation, stating that digital journalism should adopt tools that promote interaction between readers and journalists. Discussion forums, where content is verified before publication, are essential to explore the potential of digital media, creating a space for dialogue that enriches the role of journalism in society.

As indicated by Joanguete [7], the trajectory of digital newspapers in Mozambique begins with publications in PDF format, which emerged from newspapers initially distributed via fax, with small teams of three to four journalists. These initiatives brought a new approach to journalism, contrasting with the model imposed by government-controlled media outlets. The newspaper "News (Notícias)", one of the main state-owned publications, was the first to make this transition, having been launched on April 15, 2006. Since then,

newspapers have begun to adopt digital communication, although the private sector took longer to adapt. Initially, the understanding of digital journalism was limited to the mere transposition of printed content to the Internet. Over time, some private newspapers began to incorporate elements of digital journalism, creating a difference in relation to state-owned newspapers such as "News (Notícias)", "Sunday (Domingo)", and "Challenge (Desafio)".

The first concerns technical aspects, such as bandwidth and the adaptation of journalistic texts to the new medium; the second is related to the lack of financial resources for maintenance; and the third involves the change in the profile of journalists to adapt to the new model.

Although the central point of these authors is not to study the relationship established between digital journalism and its characteristics, they bring valuable insights to the development of this work in their approaches.

Alongside the aforementioned authors who focus on approaches to digital journalism worldwide and in Mozambique, we sought to identify others who analyze digital journalism, such as Joao Canavilhas, Helder Bastos, Marcos Palacios, among others. Although their works are not directly linked to the contexts of the USA, the United Kingdom, or Nigeria, they offer valuable insights into the impact and values that digital journalism can provide to the journalistic landscape in the country. This analysis is fundamental to understanding how lessons learned from different contexts can be applied in Mozambique. Based on this reflection, we formulated the central question: *How does the online newspaper "Mozambique Charter" explore interactivity, hyperlinking, and multimedia to enrich the user experience and the quality of information?*

1.2. Methodological Procedures

With the aim of analyzing the exploitation of interactivity, hyperlinking, and multimedia resources in the online newspaper Mozambique Charter, this study adopts a qualitative, descriptive approach. The categories of analysis include interactivity, hyperlinking, and multimedia, considering aspects such as comments, forms, internal and external links, and the use of multimedia content. The qualitative analysis of these categories allowed us to identify patterns and trends in the use of these resources, as well as to discuss their implications for the quality of information provided to users.

2. Web Journalism

With the growth of the internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) in the 1990s, the media found themselves needing to adapt to a constantly evolving digital environment. In Oblack's view (cited in Bastos, [3]), the expansion of the WWW constituted an alternative to the printed newspaper, making possible the production of digital publications and the

emergence of new information formats, which implied changes in journalistic practices.

The transition of newspapers and magazines to the internet gave rise to a new means of communication capable of integrating different types of media and using global computer networks as support (Christofori [4]). According to the same author, with the advent of the World Wide Web, newspapers began to incorporate resources such as hypertext and multimedia, making websites more interactive and improving the browsing experience for readers.

Web journalism thus refers to a specific area of the internet that uses graphic elements to transmit information. Mielniczuk [8] points out that the web as a part of the internet is distinguished by its graphical interface and the ease with which the public can access and interact with the content.

2.1. Characteristics of Web Journalism

Web journalism is distinguished by the incorporation of characteristics that broaden the possibilities of interaction and consumption of information, namely interactivity, content personalization, hyperlinking, and multimedia. According to Bardoel and Deuze [2], these four characteristics constitute central elements for the definition of web journalism, as they allow for a more dynamic relationship between the medium and the user.

In addition to the speed of information transmission, digital journalism is characterized by the ability to collect, process, and contextualize information. As Silva [9] states, when well utilized, content personalization and interactivity enrich the user experience and strengthen the quality of information, differentiating web journalism from the mere transposition of traditional newspaper content.

2.1.1. Interactivity

Interactivity is one of the main characteristics of online journalism, allowing for more active public participation in the information process. Unlike the traditional model in which the reader assumes a predominantly passive role, the digital environment enables forms of direct engagement with journalistic content. According to Bardoel and Deuze [2], on the web, readers can interact with journalists through email exchanges or by participating in discussion forums and chats.

Motter and Storch [10] emphasize that digital technologies have expanded this interaction, giving users greater autonomy in how they access, select, and consume information. This dynamic contributes to strengthening communication between journalists and the public, promoting a more participatory and collaborative environment in the production and circulation of news.

2.1.2. Hyperlink

Hyperlinks, also called connectivity Lévy [11], are an essential element of web journalism, allowing the connection between information blocks and facilitating navigation

between content. Canavilhas [14] classifies them as embedded (internal), which are inserted directly into the text by means of words, phrases or icons, allowing the reader to access more information without interrupting reading, and menu (external), which appear outside the main content, in areas such as menus or titles, leading the reader to other related information blocks.

2.1.3. Multimediality

The convergence of various media formats, such as text, image, and sound, has gained increasing relevance. Palácios et al. [12] highlight that this fusion of media allows for the creation of richer and more interactive narratives. Salaverrá [14] reinforces that, for effective communication, these elements must be coordinated in order to enrich the reader's experience.

In the context of the online newspaper, multimedia transforms the way news is presented, making it more dynamic and engaging Joanguete [7]. The combination of different resources enables more active interaction between the public and the information, and improves the quality of journalistic communication.

2.2. Information Quality in Online Journalism

The quality of information is a multidimensional concept that assesses whether data is suitable for use in different contexts Bertolazzi and Scannapieco [16]. Wang [17] proposes four main dimensions:

- 1) Accessibility: ensures that information is available and easily accessible;
- 2) Interpretability: refers to the clarity and organization of the data;
- 3) Usefulness: involves the relevance, importance, and timeliness of the information; and
- 4) Credibility: is linked to the completeness, coherence, and accuracy of the information.

Understanding these dimensions allows for a structured evaluation of the quality of information in online journalism, indicating how digital content can meet readers' needs and strengthen trust in the medium.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

In the context of online journalism, the production and reception of news can be analyzed from different communication theories, which help to understand the active role of the public and the quality of information.

2.3.1. Interactionist Theory

The interactionist theory developed by Tuchmann (1978) and Motch and Lester (1974/1993) argues that news is socially constructed, mediated by the interaction between journalists, sources, and the public. Traquina [18] reinforces this perspective by highlighting that journalistic production involves multiple social agents who influence the construction

of the narrative.

In the digital environment, interactivity allows the public to actively participate in the construction of the news, through comments, sharing, and other forms of engagement, consolidating the reader as an active agent in defining the narrative.

2.3.2. Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory, formulated by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, explains how the media influences public perception by highlighting certain themes, making them more important in the social sphere. Wolf [19] observes that the public reacts selectively to the themes presented by the media, being influenced by media relevance.

Similarly, Shaw as cited in Wolf [20] highlights that the media shape what the public perceives as relevant, showing that the content highlighted by the media directly influences the knowledge and attention of readers.

2.3.3. Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory, consolidated by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974/1979), argues that the public is active in choosing the content they consume, seeking to satisfy needs for information, entertainment, or social interaction. Wolf, as cited in Curvello [5], highlights that the media exist to meet the needs of the receiver, with the audience's reception process being active and selective.

Applied to web journalism, these ideas help to understand

how interactivity, hyperlinks, and multimedia resources allow the reader to personalize their experience, influencing the perception of the quality of the information transmitted.

3. The Reader Experience and the Quality of Information in Mozambican Web Journalism

3.1. Characterization of the Mozambique Charter Online Newspaper

Mozambique Charter is a Mozambican online newspaper focused on disseminating information of public interest through investigative journalism. Updated daily, the website is responsive, allowing access from computers, smartphones, and tablets, and is organized into sections such as Politics, Economy, Society, and International. The online newspaper maintains a presence on social media, contributing to reader engagement and the dissemination of information.

3.2. Data Categorization

For data analysis, the units of analysis were organized in a clear and objective manner, avoiding overlaps between categories. Three categories of analysis were defined to guide the evaluation of the online newspaper's publications:

Table 1. Data Categorization.

CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS	DESCRIPTION
Interactivity	Evaluate how the online newspaper allows readers to interact with the content and with other users (comments, shares, polls).
Hyperlink	Analyzes the presence and relevance of internal and external links, checking how they complement the information.
Multimedia	Check the use of different multimedia formats (images, videos, infographics, audio) and their role in understanding and enlivening the news.

Source: Authors, 2026.

Table 2. Analysis Variables.

VARIABLES OF ANALYSIS	WHAT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SAYS (LENSES FOR READING THE VARIABLES)	AS PRESENTED IN THE WEB JOURNAL	OUR INTERPRETATION
Interactivity	Bardoel & Deuze [2] argue that interactivity presupposes the active participation of the reader through comments, forums, or	There is a comments section, but it requires login, resulting in low reader participation. There is an option to share on social media.	Interactivity is limited and ineffective. Access barriers reduce public participation, contributing only to the quality of information.

VARIABLES OF ANALYSIS	WHAT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SAYS (LENSES FOR READING THE VARIABLES)	AS PRESENTED IN THE WEB JOURNAL	OUR INTERPRETATION
Hyperlink	emails, promoting two-way communication. L évy [11] highlight the hyperlink as a central element of digital communication, allowing for in-depth information and contextualization.	There was residual use of hyperlinks, with only one external link unrelated to the news and no internal links.	The underutilization of hyperlinks compromises the depth of information and the browsing experience, limiting the quality of information.
Multimedia	Salaverr á [14] defines multimedia as the integration of different multimedia formats to enrich journalistic narrative.	The online newspaper only uses images to complement the text; no videos, audios, or infographics were identified.	The limited exploration of multimedia reduces the dynamism and narrative diversity, weakening the informative potential of the online newspaper.

Source: Authors, 2026

3.3. Interactivity, Hyperlinks, and Multimedia in the Mozambique Charter Web Newspaper

3.3.1. Interactivity in Mozambique Charter

The analysis of interactivity in the online newspaper Mozambique Charter evaluated the participation mechanisms offered to readers, and the level of engagement observed. The existence of comment sections, content sharing options, and user reactions were considered, as illustrated in [Table 3](#):

Table 3. *Interactivity on the Mozambique Charter online newspaper.*

DATE OF PUBLICATION	NEWS TITLE	INTERACTION CHANNELS/PARTICIPATION	REACTIONS AND COMMENTS
July 4, 2024	Mozambique recorded more than 80,000 new HIV infections in 2023	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
April 1, 2024	Maputo Central Hospital registers around 100 cases of conjunctivitis daily	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
November 20, 2023	Public Prosecutor's Office in Cabo Delgado is investigating 152 cases related to terrorism	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
August 6, 2024	Chang will learn his fate today or, at the latest, by Friday	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
September 13, 2024	Africa manages to raise 600 million dollars to respond to Mpox	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
September 26, 2023	Public debt continues to increase	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
May 16, 2024	Succession in RENAMO "Father of Democracy" disobeys Court decision with sponsorship from PRM	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
September 17, 2024	Government still owes 3.3 million meticaís to teachers	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.

DATE OF PUBLICATION	NEWS TITLE	INTERACTION CHANNELS/PARTICIPATION	REACTIONS AND COMMENTS
April 28, 2023	Val ásays that the transformation of BVM into a company aims to increase its contribution to the economy	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.
December 8, 2023	Mandatory Social Security: calculation of retirement by age divides INSS and banking union.	To interact with the site, you need to log in.	No reactions or comments were recorded.

Source: Authors, 2026

An analysis of ten editions of the online newspaper Mozambique Charter revealed that, despite the existence of a comments section, none of the news items analyzed registered reader interactions, even in content with a high number of views. This data highlights a mismatch between information consumption and the effective participation of the public.

One of the main factors contributing to this limitation is the requirement for mandatory login to comment, through external platforms. This mechanism introduces an additional barrier to reader engagement and tends to discourage participation. According to Motter and Storch [10], interactivity in the digital environment presupposes accessibility and user autonomy, conditions that are weakened when access to participation is conditional.

The interactivity observed in Mozambique Charter can be understood from the three chosen theories. According to Interactionist Theory by Tuchman (1978), readers are expected to actively participate in the news construction process, but the login requirement limits this direct participation. Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) indicates that audience interaction can influence the

visibility of topics, but the low usage of the comments section suggests that readers have little impact on the information agenda. In turn, Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973) shows that restricting access can reduce the gratifications sought by readers, limiting their engagement with the content available on the platform.

Although the platform offers tools for commenting and sharing content, interactivity on the Mozambique Charter online newspaper is limited, reflecting the potential for reader participation without evidence of effective active engagement.

3.3.2. Use of Hyperlinks/Links

Hyperlinks are essential in online journalism, allowing connection between information blocks and facilitating navigation between content L évy [11]. In the Mozambique Charter, the presence of internal hyperlinks, which refer to content on the site itself, and external hyperlinks, which direct to complementary sources, was analyzed. Table 4 presents the distribution of these hyperlinks in the analyzed publications.

Table 4. Use of Hyperlinks.

PUBLICATION DATE	NEWS TITLE	INTERNAL HYPERLINKS	EXTERNAL HYPERLINKS
July 4, 2024	Mozambique recorded more than 80,000 new HIV infections in 2023	Absent	Absent
April 1, 2024	Maputo Central Hospital registers around 100 cases of conjunctivitis daily	Absent	Absent
November 20, 2023	Public Prosecutor's Office in Cabo Delgado is investigating 152 cases related to terrorism	Absent	Absent
August 6, 2024	Chang will know his fate today or, at the latest, on Friday	Absent	Absent
September 13, 2024	Africa manages to raise US\$600 million for response to Mpox	Absent	Gift
September 26, 2023	Public debt continues to increase	Absent	Absent
May 16, 2024	Succession in RENAMO: "Father of democracy" disobeys court decision with sponsorship from the PRM	Absent	Absent

PUBLICATION DATE	NEWS TITLE	INTERNAL HYPERLINKS	EXTERNAL HYPERLINKS
September 17, 2024	Government still owes 3.3 million meticaais to teachers	Absent	Absent
April 28, 2023	Val ásays that the transformation of BVM into a company aims to increase its contribution to the economy	Absent	Absent
December 8, 2023	Mandatory INSS: calculation of old-age pension divides INSS and banking union	Absent	Absent

Source: Authors, 2026

During the analysis of 10 news articles from Mozambique Charter, it was observed that external hyperlinks play an important role in the construction and consumption of news, but they do not always fulfill their purpose. For example, in the story from September 13, 2024, about raising US\$600 million for Mpox, the external link redirected to irrelevant content, harming the reader's experience. No internal hyperlinks were identified, a feature that could enrich navigation and increase audience engagement.

According to Tuchman's interactionist theory (1978), the interaction between journalists, sources, and the public is essential in news production; links without relevant content limit this interaction and the active role of the reader. The definition of agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) shows that relevant hyperlinks reinforce the importance of certain topics, while inappropriate links can reduce the credibility and ability of the newspaper to highlight topics. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1970) shows that readers seek content that meets their informational needs; ineffective hyperlinks frustrate these expectations and

compromise audience satisfaction.

The limited and inadequate use of hyperlinks in the Mozambique Charter impacts interactivity, the perception of news relevance, and the quality of information, demonstrating that the correct application of this resource is crucial for narrative construction and the reader experience.

3.3.3. Multimedia Content Composition in News

Multimedia in web journalism involves the integration of different formats, such as text, image, audio, and video, to make information more dynamic and understandable. Salaverr á [14] emphasizes that this combination must be harmonious, ensuring that each element contributes to the clarity of the journalistic message.

In the Mozambique Charter, the analysis of the selected news items verified the presence of images as a complement to the text, without identifying videos, audios, or infographics. Table 5 below presents the results of this verification:

Table 5. Composition of Multimedia Content in News.

PUBLICATION DATE	NEWS TITLE	IMAGE	VIDEO	AUDIO
July 4, 2024	Mozambique recorded more than 80,000 new HIV infections in 2023	Present	Absent	Absent
April 1, 2024	Maputo Central Hospital registers around 100 cases of conjunctivitis daily	Present	Absent	Absent
November 20, 2023	Public Prosecutor's Office in Cabo Delgado is investigating 152 cases related to terrorism	Present	Absent	Absent
August 6, 2024	Chang will know his fate today or, at the latest, on Friday	Present	Absent	Absent
September 13, 2024	Africa manages to raise US\$600 million for response to Mpox	Present	Absent	Absent
September 26, 2023	Public debt continues to increase	Present	Absent	Absent
May 16, 2024	Succession in RENAMO: "Father of democracy" disobeys court decision with sponsorship from the PRM	Present	Absent	Absent
September 17, 2024	Government still owes 3.3 million meticaais to teachers	Present	Absent	Absent
April 28, 2023	Val ásays that the transformation of BVM into a company aims to increase its contribution to the economy	Present	Absent	Absent

PUBLICATION DATE	NEWS TITLE	IMAGE	VIDEO	AUDIO
December 8, 2023	Mandatory INSS: calculation of age-based pension divides INSS and Banking Union	Present	Absent	Absent

Source: Authors, 2026

Analysis of the news revealed that all editions include images, but there is limited use of other multimedia resources, such as videos, audios, and graphics. For example, in the news story of July 4, 2024, about new HIV infections, images were used, but educational graphics and videos could have reinforced the impact of the message. Similarly, the news story of April 1, 2024, about cases of conjunctivitis could have benefited from video interviews or explanatory visual resources.

According to interactionist theory (Tuchman, 1978), news production is an interactive process involving journalists, sources, and the public; the lack of complementary multimedia represents a missed opportunity to stimulate greater reader participation. Agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) indicates that multimedia resources could make certain topics more visible and influence the public agenda more effectively. The Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973) highlights that readers seek content that satisfies their informational and entertainment needs; the absence of videos and graphics limits this interactive experience.

Diversifying multimedia resources could improve interactivity, make the narrative more engaging, and strengthen the quality of information, aligning online journalism with the expectations of the digital audience.

Final Considerations

This study analyzed how the online newspaper Mozambique Charter explores characteristics of digital journalism (interactivity, hyperlinks, and multimedia) to enrich the user experience and the quality of information. The analysis of the editions revealed that interactivity is present in a limited way. Although readers can access content and participate via comments, the login requirement restricts participation, limiting dialogue and the collaborative construction of the narrative. In this sense, Interactionist Theory (Tuchman, 1978) highlights that interaction between journalists, sources, and the public is essential for the dynamic construction of news, and its limitation compromises the depth of information.

As for hyperlinks, their use is infrequent and, in some cases, leads to irrelevant content, which makes it difficult to delve deeper into the information. Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) suggests that the media influence the visibility and relevance of topics; thus, the inappropriate use of hyperlinks reduces the potential of the online newspaper to highlight and contextualize important topics.

Regarding multimedia, the Mozambique Charter uses images, but does not explore videos or graphics, limiting the diversity and dynamism of the narrative. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973) reinforces that readers seek content that satisfies informational and entertainment needs, and the absence of these resources can diminish the reading experience and engagement.

The results indicate that the Mozambique Charter could improve the exploration of these characteristics by promoting more interactive, multimodal, and accessible content, thus offering a more engaging experience and increasing the quality of the information provided.

Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BVM	Mozambique Stock Exchange
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
INSS	National Institute of Social Security
WWW	World Wide Web

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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