Preface

This is the HKU University of the Art Utrecht Research Policy document (2018-2023), which sets out HKU’s research policy for the coming years. The text builds on the principles outlined in the HKU Research Policy document 2013 – 2017 and on the good work done in recent years in developing and conducting research and innovation within HKU. Taking inspiration from this, we look to the future, redetermine our position and sketch outlines of HKU research in the coming years, in the areas of content, structure and organisation. We do so with conviction, based on the power of collaboration.

We are aiming for a strong external position and good internal organisation, in order to benefit optimally from the increasing attention paid to creativity and design approaches. We propose new ways of how HKU as a network organisation – beyond the borders of disciplines and organisational units – can optimise collaboration between education and research.

We realise that the work will always be a work in progress. What is developed is never finished, but can be developed further in a subsequent iteration.

So this forms the underlying proposition of this document: how we can take the next step, based on the potential and on everything that has already been designed and built up. It gives focus to HKU research, at the same time as providing scope for further dialogue.

At the request of the Executive Board, the HKU Expertise Centre for Research and Innovation (CvOI) has taken the initiative of drawing up this document. The text was written on the basis of contributions from professors, school directors, HKU expertise centres, back offices and knowledge managers. The process of numerous talks and reactions confirms that research is to be found in every fibre of HKU and that it is undergoing dynamic development.

May 2018
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HKU research is distinctive and useful. Distinctive for its focus on creative processes and for linking research to education. And useful in its importance and meaning for society. The research always takes place as practice-based research: it is grafted onto an issue from practice and the research results flow back into practice. Besides art, design and education practices, these may also be practices in society. It concerns research that leads to new insights and usable knowledge, whereby the research process is transparent and can be followed and the results are publicised and shared.

HKU applies three criteria to determine what research is and what its quality describes:

- methodological thoroughness of the research (Rigour)
- relevance of the content of the research (Relevance)
- building up, sharing and continuing to build on knowledge (Knowledge Accumulation)

If one of these criteria is missing, we refer not to research, but rather to research activities, innovation or experiment.

On the basis of this distinctive profile, HKU’s research and innovation policy contributes to:

- Reinforcing, broadening and deepening education
- Creating a productive research learning environment for education, research and innovation
- Building meaningful collaboration with the professional field and knowledge domains
- Providing new directions for solving complex social issues
**Policy context**

For this document, a mapping study was carried out into policy documents and plans for the coming years. The main findings were collected and compiled\(^1\) in an analysis of trends and developments in the areas on which HKU can focus (and continue to focus), at regional, national and international level.

On the one hand, there are the complex EU Framework Programmes and other European programmes that usually focus, for example, on tackling social challenges on the basis of technological developments and innovation. These seldom include programmes that focus primarily on our own sector. However, increasing attention is being paid to the unique contribution of art, creativity and design approaches to complex issues, also in a European context.

HKU identifies with the social engagement that forms the basis for this. In the national framework of policy documents and research agendas, such as the Dutch National Research Agenda,\(^2\) the Knowledge and Innovation Agenda for the Creative Industry,\(^3\) the Human Capital Agenda and the Strategic Research Agenda HBO, HKU also sees many things in common with its own ideas about research.\(^4\) In the Universities of Applied Sciences Sector Agreement 2018,\(^5\) extra attention is paid to further reinforcement of practice-based research.

Regarding policy for art education, there is the KUO Next agenda,\(^6\) which includes the ambition to create a full post-graduate programme for research in the arts. HKU makes a visible and leading contribution to national professorship platforms in the area of research in the arts and 21st-century skills.\(^7\)

The policy agendas for the coming years offer HKU new and broader opportunities for collaboration on and funding of research and innovation projects. But the race is not yet over. At the same time, the increasingly prominent role played by creativity and design approaches in these agendas and specific art and culture programmes requires thorough positioning and professional internal organisation in order to be able to make optimum use of these opportunities.

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\(^1\) The study is included as an appendix. It looked at reports, policy documents, whitepapers and research agendas, in order to map out the opportunities for HKU in the coming years. As regional policy is largely derived from the national and international level, we placed the emphasis on sources that relate to this.

\(^2\) Dutch National Research Agenda: [https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/wetenschapsagenda/](https://wetenschapsagenda.nl/wetenschapsagenda/)


\(^4\) These agendas form the basis for funding instruments for research programmes from NWO (e.g. Startimpuls NWA, Comenius), Taskforce SIA (for practice-based research) and NRO (for research in education).

\(^5\) [Universities of Applied Sciences Sector Agreement 2018, The sector agreement concerns publicly funded universities of applied sciences (hbo) as a whole, and covers the period 2019 to 2022. Insofar as this sector agreement applies to the quality agreements, it covers the period 2019 to 2024.](http://www.vereniginghogeschoolen.nl/kennisbank/kunst/artikelen/kuo-next-voor-de-studiejaren-2016-2020.)


\(^7\) In both the [Kunst = Onderzoek platform, arising from the Taskforce KUO Research, in which HKU played a leading role, and the Studio 21CS platform in the area of 21st-century skills, we make a leading and visible contribution to these agendas and developments as a project leader and coordinator.](http://www.vereniginghogeschoolen.nl/kennisbank/kunst/artikelen/kuo-next-voor-de-studiejaren-2016-2020.)
HKU context

The research policy is inextricably linked to the HKU Institutional Plan and other guiding policy documents. Together, they determine HKU’s direction and ambitions for the coming years. The HKU Institutional Plan assumes that both education and research at HKU have relevance for society. Education continually searches for different contexts and research is always practice-based. Creative sectors may boost innovation in other sectors, thus increasing relevance. Research contributes to deepening and innovating the practice of creative professionals, by focusing primarily on creative processes. The development of creative technology and the impact of technological developments on creative processes play an important role in this. We use the results of our research into creative processes to increase our added value to society, to contribute to the knowledge domain and to create an impact on education. Knowledge is therefore always interpreted in education. Furthermore, the HKU Institutional Plan formulates an ethical framework that is based on learning from one another, professionalism, social relevance, innovation, collaboration, multivocality and respect for a different perspective. Determining the direction of research and innovation within these different policy frameworks and contexts is a complex challenge and an art in itself. HKU chooses to position research as distinctive and useful in order to benefit from the growing opportunities offered by the increasing recognition of the value of art and creativity.

8 A regional example is UCREATE, the Center of Expertise for the creative industry, in which HKU works with regional partners on linking the creative industry to healthcare and welfare, to enable better innovation together.
Research and Education

Education and research at HKU are naturally intertwined from the root of creativity. The integration of creating, learning and investigating forms the foundation of both education and research. Research and education policies are in line with each other.

This is why in the coming years we will be intensifying the relationship between research and education (BA, MA and PhD) in a research learning environment, in which research and education collaborate,9 Master’s research is linked to concrete issues in practice,10 and BA, MA and PhD education enrich one another and are directly linked to research within the professorships.11

To prepare students for working in various contexts and in interdisciplinary teams, HKU has workshops, studios and other spaces for creating, learning and experimenting. However, the way these spaces have been used for research activities up to now could be improved, creating a natural movement in which education and research inform, inspire and elevate one another. For this, it is essential to have the resources for collaboration and experiment, including well-appointed rooms with material and technology, as well as ensuring the availability of people and methods to create a challenging and stimulating research environment.

Such research learning environments provide scope to learning communities, in which the professional field, partner institutes and art education can experiment and reflect together, and where one artistic project or piece of research can influence and inform another, thus creating knowledge circulation. In this, the HKU expertise centres play a specific role in knowledge sharing with education and in forming networks in the professional field and society. HKU opts for a hands-on approach; working in, with and for professional practice, whereby research forms an integral part of practical projects, and education is also shaped accordingly. The learning communities connect students, lecturers, researchers, knowledge managers and the professional field.

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9 The development of Studio 118 at the Conservatorium is an example of this.
10 The Innovation Studio, MA Crossover Creativity and MA Art Education are examples of this.
11 MA Scenography is a good example of this.
Research and Creating

Artistic practice and creative process – creation – are an essential element in all aspects of HKU research: in the development of the research questions and research methods, and in the results of the research. Creating is seen here as a form of alternative knowledge production. HKU therefore places a key emphasis on research into creative processes.

Precisely in art education, where makers are guided and trained in their process, there is great implicit knowledge about the creative process. Raising the level of knowledge and awareness of creative processes accelerates and deepens the creative process. As a university of the arts, we are on the cutting edge of practice-based research and an academic discourse on research into/about the arts. This sort of research, which is always directly informed by and interwoven with creative practice, has many different guises and written methodologies all over the world.\(^\text{12}\) HKU has an extensive portfolio of projects and programmes that show how we conduct our research and what impact it has. We have now reached the point where this research also expressly demands a stronger articulation of the research methodology, to enable us to position ourselves and to convey what we do and how.\(^\text{13}\)

This link between research and creating in education necessitates an increase in the research potential in the HKU schools. It also means that lecturers and staff need to develop their knowledge and skills in the area of research and creative processes, and develop and deepen their professional reflection. This requires extra efforts in the area of training and professionalisation.

\(^\text{12}\) Great Britain: practice as research, practice-led research; Australia: performance research, creative arts research; Canada: arts-based research and research-creation; Northern and Central Europe: artistic research.

\(^\text{13}\) This links up with Standard 3 of the Dutch BKO.
Research and Impact

HKU research is useful. It puts things into motion and brings things about in the way that art can. It is important to and meaningful for society. On the basis of innovation, it contributes to new directions for solutions to the societal challenges of the 21st century. The fragmentary and uncertain society to which we aim to deliver concrete and useful contributions requires more attention to and explanation of the values of our actions. The ethics of creating, learning and investigating are important for HKU research.

HKU research has an impact on four domains: art and design practice (i.e. the professional field), art education, knowledge, and society and the professional field. We contribute to art and design practice through new working methods and new repertoire. Research plays a crucial role in the reinforcing, broadening and deepening of education. For educational practice, new forms and methods of working are developed. In society and the professional field, innovative solutions are developed; for example in healthcare. The knowledge domain is enriched with other types of knowledge, such as embodied and sensory knowledge, as well as forms of representing and giving meaning that are unique to art practice.

HKU research is distinctive and recognisable for its focus on shared impact: research projects and research results have an effect on more than one of the four domains simultaneously. HKU research produces new knowledge, insights and perspectives within the arts and art education, at the same time as contributing to innovation within the arts and outside them. It produces both new knowledge and new areas of experience, as well as providing new directions for solutions to complex social issues.
Research and Connections

HKU Research has five distinctive long-term research areas (see diagram). In the first four research areas, the interdisciplinary and cross-domain pillars of the research programmes from the HKU Institutional Plan 2013-2017 remain intact, the fifth is a new joint research area. The research areas indicate HKU’s long-term research themes. The borderlines between the areas are sometimes blurred. And the thematic sub-division even assumes correlation and aims towards collaboration and synergy.

(See HKU Research Areas diagram on the next page)

This classification in research areas is important to how HKU presents itself and contributes to the distinctiveness and recognisability of our research. It conveys the fact that we conduct research on the basis of creating art, media and design and the overlap with technology, education and entrepreneurship.

A research area has no pre-set organisational structure. It is an overarching theme through which HKU can provide long-term scope for various types of investigation, deepening and broadening, and is the place where education, research and the knowledge sharing of the HKU expertise centres and professional practice come together in a natural way.

The four research areas each have at least one professorship that focuses in the professorship programme on a particular accent, in-depth study or specialisation within the theme of the research area, and hereby pays attention to current developments. At the same time, the professorship is responsible for the questions and activities within the research area. A professorship can also link up (temporarily) with other research areas, on the basis of research questions and overlapping key interests.

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14 a) Research in the arts, media and design; b) Research and innovation on the borderlines between the arts and education, technology and economy.
Research area
CREATIVE PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY
Interactiviteit, mixed reality, augmented reality, experience design, transmedial storytelling, citizenship, participatie, AI, user design, Artistic Intelligence (AI), bio-technology, big data

Research area
CREATIVE PROCESSES AND MULTIDISCIPLINARITY
Interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, transmediality, co-creation, hybrid artist/teacher/researcher

Research area
CREATIVE PROCESSES AND LEARNING
Transfer of knowledge, sharing, life-long learning, capacity-building, professionalisation, education innovation and organisation development

Joint research area
CREATIVE PROCESSES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Key-enabling methodologies (KEM’s), authorship, research ethics, ownership

Research area
CREATIVE PROCESSES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Creative industry, connectivity, value creation, value propositions for new professional practices, lean start up, entrepreneurial creativity, models for collaboration
In each research area, there is scope for:

- research questions from practice; to be conducted through professorships, Innovation Studio or programmes from the schools such as Music Design, or by lecturer-researchers, whether or not involving student projects
- research questions through the schools and centres that are outside the specialisation of the professorship
- lecturer-researchers from the schools conducting research based on furthering expertise connected to the theme (in that case coached through the professorships)
- researchers-in-residence and visiting researchers
- pre-PhD students, PhD students, PhD- and postdoc researchers, who are embedded in one of the professorships on the basis of their specific research question

**Emerging research**

Besides the five research areas, substantial scope is created for themes, questions or areas of application, which come to light over time while working. This is not *pop-up research* on trendy themes, but a deepening, broadening and innovation of the research. Within a research area, a strong question or development may arise on a specific theme, based on an area of application or in relation to one or more other research areas. This may then lead to an intensification of research capacity in this area, thus facilitating extra collaborative ventures with the school, the professional field and the research partners. The CvOI and the professorships hold joint responsibility for filling in this free scope.
Research and Collaboration

To promote good knowledge circulation and achieve shared impact, it is crucial to have collaboration between the professorships themselves and between all the places in HKU where research is conducted. This collaboration will be expanded and intensified in the coming years, in order to boost further knowledge sharing and knowledge development within HKU and elsewhere. The CvOI has a managing, coordinating and advisory role in this.

One important connection between the research areas, and thus between the professorships, lies in the joint research area that runs right through all the themes. It concerns a continuing programme, in which participants work on supra-thematic research questions, which benefit HKU’s research as a whole. A start will be made in 2018 with the research programme Research Methodologies, in which all professors, the Innovation Studio, the research programme Music Design and the pre-PhD candidates will participate. They form part of this research group.

The contextual research will be conducted by one or two post-doc researchers and managed by the CvOI in collaboration with the professorships. On the basis of this programme, a Research and Creating lexicon within HKU will also be initiated: a living glossary to clarify the notion of research and to jointly develop a language based on the essence of creation. This will contribute in turn to the work in context with other parties.

Another strong connection is formed by the HKU expertise centres, which link up well thematically with the various research areas. They play an important role in building interesting and relevant networks of partners and potential partners in practice, and in listing or gathering research questions from the various professional fields. They also contribute to knowledge sharing and to interpreting knowledge and expertise in education.

As learning and experiment spaces within the HKU expertise centres, the Innovation Studio, Future Labs and HKU X also function as natural meeting places between education and research. They operate supra-thematically on the basis of a specific role and quality, and in connection with several schools.

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13 The Innovation Studio (CvOI) introduces design thinking in various domains (education, healthcare and sustainability) outside the arts, in order to solve complex issues. The Innovation Studio’s design philosophy always revolves around the user. The goal is to bring about behavioural change through user-centred design. The Future Labs (HKU Expertise Centre for Creative Technology) are a multidisciplinary experiment lab for creative technology, in which lecturers, researchers, workshop and technical staff, and excellent students experiment with the latest technology. HKU X (HKU Expertise Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship) is the enterprising learning environment for students and alumni who want to go further with their enterprise or project. The focus is on collaboration, not only within their own discipline, but also with other disciplines (creative or otherwise) and with academic research.
HKU research also works in the knowledge domain, along with other knowledge institutes and research centres. We work in accordance with Open Science, make an active contribution to broad debates on artistic research, design research and research in the arts, and advocate links between art professorships, universities and pre-PhD and PhD programmes in the arts.\textsuperscript{16}

HKU builds up and perpetuates a strong and wide network of strategic relations in the region, the Netherlands and over the borders, with whom we collaborate and carry out commissions.

The HKU Expertise Centre for Research and Innovation (CvOI) has an advisory and managerial role regarding the structure of and collaboration within the research areas. As a knowledge centre, it ‘safeguards’ the quality and continuity of the research areas, which together form the backbone of HKU research. It advises organisational units within HKU on participation in and possible contributions to these areas and thus to HKU research. The centre provides services for acquiring and managing projects. It also compiles experience and know-how, and guides the building up of networks and the forming of HKU consortia connected to HKU. In this, CvOI has a stimulating and driving function, and bears responsibility in this broad sense for knowledge management and relationship management (at regional, national and international level) concerning research and education within HKU.

\textsuperscript{16} For example, in 2017 a joint research group was started with researchers from UU and HKU, in which the creative process is being investigated through practice-based research in several research workshops.
SET-UP OF HKU RESEARCH

Research unit

HKU has one research unit to which the following units contribute: the four research areas (including the professorships), the overarching HKU research area, postdocs, PhD students, the Innovation Studio, Future Labs, school programmes such as Music Design17 and the knowledge managers of CvOI.

Professorships

On the whole, research is conducted within and through the professorships.18 The following are associated with a professorship:

The professor: who leads the professorship, conducts research, teaches, is a member of the research group of the research programme Research Methodologies, and is responsible for the research within the relevant research area.

A research group: researchers who are members of the regular research group of a professorship. They may be lecturer-researchers, makers/researchers or external researchers from the knowledge domain:

1. Lecturer-researchers: lecturers with the ‘role’ of researcher, as set out in the lecturers’ profile
   They may be:
   a. a member of the research group – and thus committed to the professorship programme
   b. conducting research as part of professional development

2. Makers/researchers (professional field): makers/researchers with their own practice/art practice, who are associated with a professorship and may also be excellent alumni

3. External researchers: researchers from a specific knowledge domain that is affiliated with a research area

4. Interns from academic higher education or higher professional education

PhD students and postdocs: temporary research functions based on contextual links to the research areas or to the overarching research programme. These research positions are partly funded by external resources and always link up with one or more HKU schools and/or expertise centres on the basis of their position in a professorship.

17 The research programme Music Design is an example of a strong community of practice of lecturers from a specific school (HKU Music and Technology), who develop research projects and programmes based on an intrinsic interest in and necessity for developing the profession. The programme now has an extensive portfolio and sufficient quality in the area of research to qualify it for the research unit.

18 At the time of writing this document, HKU has the following professorships: Performative processes, Art & Professionalisation, Interactive Narrative Design, Research in Creative Practices, and Creative Economy.
Researchers-in-residence: makers/researchers from the international discourse, with whom we have a connection and who conduct interesting research that touches on our own research and innovation practice, are welcomed to our HKU researchers-in-residence programme. This is a customised programme, based on reciprocity, which is coordinated and managed by the CvOI. It necessitates collaboration between schools, expertise centres and professorships, and it corresponds with the HKU Internationalisation Vision.

HKU Expertise Centre for Research & Innovation

HKU positions its research and innovation in a wider social and relational framework. Within this framework, the HKU Expertise Centre for Research & Innovation searches for links with local, regional, national and international partners, policy frameworks and opportunities that correspond to the research programmes within the HKU research unit. This search is guided mainly by the research areas and the professorship plans. On the basis of the research areas, the professorships work closely with the knowledge managers of the CvOI. There are knowledge managers in the fields of project-based work (lobby & acquisition, coordination & execution of projects), dissemination, publication, quality assurance and internationalisation.

The CvOI gathers and compiles the results of research conducted within HKU and shares them with other universities of applied sciences, the creative professional fields and other sectors. This allows knowledge from research and innovation to flow back into professional practice and education. The CvOI also guides and supports the professorships and other research units in the quality assurance activities, in order to guarantee the coherence of the research department. After all, it concerns the total footprint we want to make with HKU research in society and the professional field, in art education and in the knowledge domain. Quality assurance includes peer reviews, advisory committees, planning, monitoring and evaluation, etc. It is carried out by the knowledge managers in cooperation with the researchers, on the basis of the HKU Research Quality Assurance Memorandum. This memorandum is based on the Sector Protocol for Research Quality Assurance 2016-2022 (BKO).
Third cycle research in the arts

In the academic year 2018/2019, HKU is starting a pilot pre-PhD programme. In this year, education and research will together give shape to the further development of a pre-PhD programme based on the outlines of this HKU Research Policy document (2018-2023). In order to develop this into a PhD programme, HKU aims to collaborate with universities on the basis of a covenant, in line with the Dutch Names and Degrees Protection Act (Wet Namen en Graden). In view of the breadth of the research areas, HKU will have to sign several covenants in order to fully cover the expertise. The research into creative processes also forms the core of the pre-PhD programme.

The development of this new venture into a distinctive unit within HKU is conditional on the creation of a HKU research environment together with the professorships, expertise centres, labs and schools.

Partners and networks: regional, national and international

HKU has, builds on and maintains a strong and wide network of strategic relations in the region, in the Netherlands and over the borders, with whom we collaborate and carry out commissions within our research and innovation objectives. In doing so, HKU’s strength lies explicitly in working with external parties on demand articulation. Part of the research therefore comes from outside HKU. HKU is part of a larger ecosystem of applied or practice-based research, with which we interact. We are known as a creative partner that can contextualise research from a different perspective, namely non-technological innovation. This external profile and HKU’s track record make us an interesting partner in complex EU projects.

HKU’s external partners are important to us, and long-term relationships enrich our research. HKU research links up with themes that interest our partners. The partnerships are strongly anchored in the HKU organisation. We are continuing our collaboration with local, regional, national and international partners.
In the coming years, we will focus in particular on using and expanding our position. The professorships organise their own international peer review and measure themselves against the international context of their research. They publish in the Netherlands and abroad. In the coming years, we will be paying special attention to the further reinforcement of the international benchmark of our research, which also includes the development of a third cycle programme (‘PhD in the arts’).

Connections in the region

In the region, HKU is involved with regional partners like the City of Utrecht, the Province of Utrecht, Utrecht University, University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, UMCU, U CREATE and cultural organisations. Together, we represent the Utrecht region and the research that takes place here. There are also monthly meetings about the European research and innovation agenda, in which we put forward joint applications.

National collaboration

At national level, HKU is affiliated to committees that come up with policy developments in the areas of the Dutch National Research Agenda, Smart Culture and KUO Next, and we participate in the research network (HON) of The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences. The two professorship platforms\(^2\) are peer networks, where joint knowledge, experience and expertise are shared, developed and stimulated. HKU acts as a project leader for these platforms and helps to shape them. This enables us to contribute to forming national networks of researchers, to remain well informed and to help determine the direction of policy in the area of the arts.

\(^2\) See also footnote 7.
Networks in Europe

In connection with HKU’s internationalisation policy, HKU is continuing its position in the European research networks and the associated funding. In recent years, HKU has maintained its high track record and gained a place in the Horizon 2020 programme and the Structural Funds. After 2020, HKU would also like to benefit from the follow-up programmes (Horizon Europe and Structural Funds).

HKU is also an active participant in the Dutch ‘Universities of Applied Sciences network’ (UAS10), on the basis of which it makes a contribution to the UAS4EUROPE network,23 in order to reinforce the positioning of practice-based research in Europe.

HKU is a member of several international intermediary organisations in the fields of art education (education and research), the arts and certain professional fields in the arts.24 These organisations are for collaboration and discussion with related institutes and/or professional fields, and as intermediary organisations they act as representatives for the relevant professional field towards national and international authorities, including the European Commission.

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23 UAS4EUROPE is a network of European universities of applied sciences, founded in 2015 by umbrella organisations from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Austria, among other countries. These universities of applied sciences have joined forces in order to stimulate and promote practice-based research within the EU.

24 Supportive member of the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA); and membership of the Association Européene de Conservatoires (AEC), Cumulus (International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media), Utrecht Network (which includes the MAUI network,) Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE) and European Network on Cultural Management and Cultural Policy Education (ENCATC).
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