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Background

New graduate doctors and dentists can lack confidence when diagnosing/treating patients in their early junior posts.

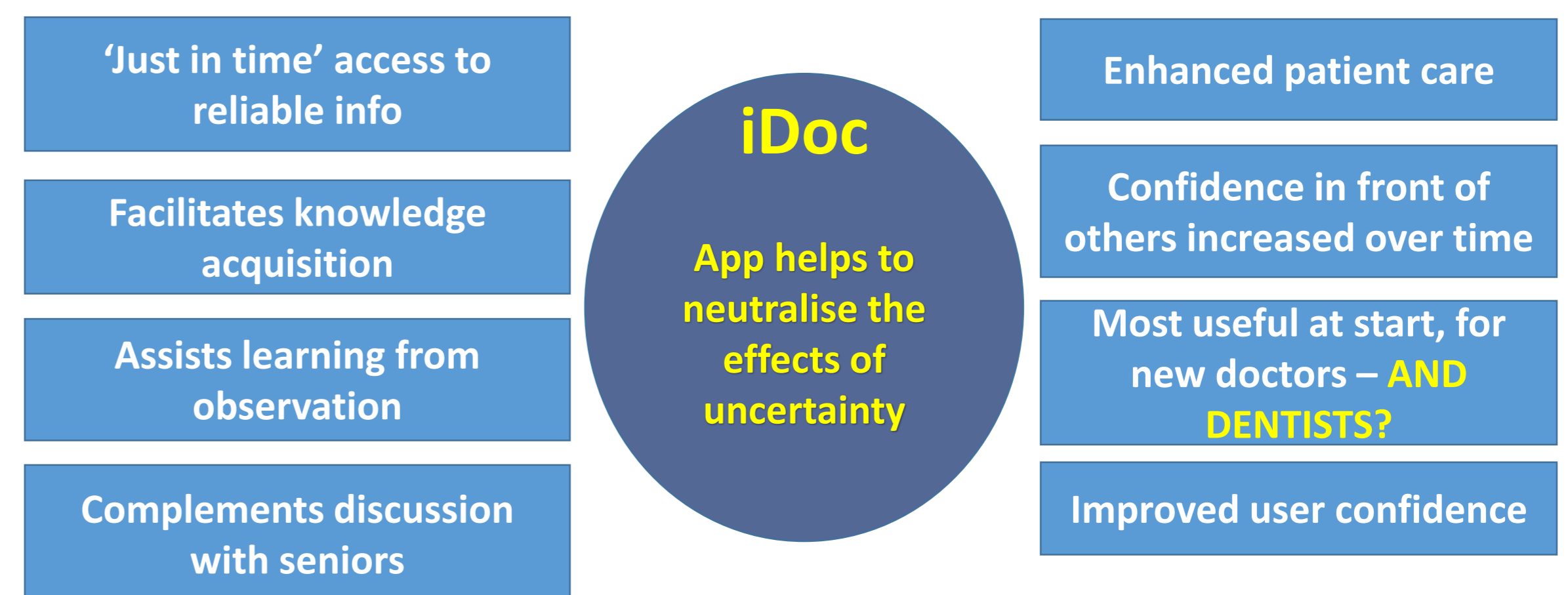
Their workplace colleagues are an important source of information and support but are not always available.

A variety of information sources through the internet and smartphone Apps can support doctors and dentists in performing simple patient management tasks and can help them to have more informed discussions when they call on more senior staff. However, many of these are unregulated.

The Wales Deanery have offered the Dr.Companion© software to trainee doctors in secondary/hospital positions, and more recently Dentistry. Dentistry, through its junior training posts, offers an opportunity to explore the App's use more broadly across primary and secondary care healthcare environments

Aim

To examine how a smartphone App with key medical texts was used in the clinical workplace by postgraduate trainee dentists. We compare findings with our similar studies of newly-qualified doctors' experience.



Bullock et al. BMC Med Educ, 2013; 2015

Method

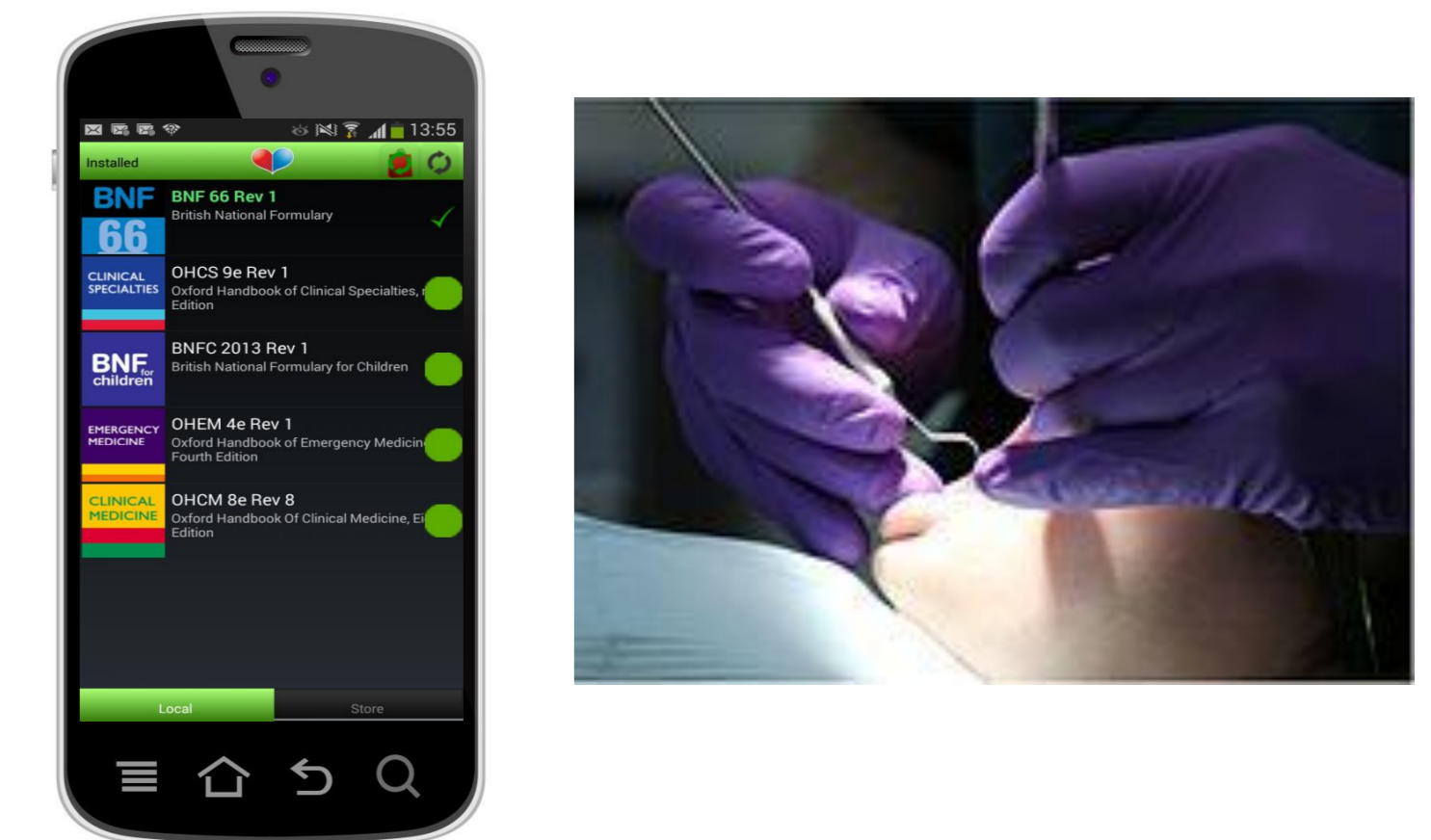
Dr.Companion© software (the "iDoc" App which provides a cross-searchable library of key credible clinical textbooks) was offered by the Wales Deanery, UK to trainee dentists in 2015. The project was named "iDent".

After submitting a baseline questionnaire, participants downloaded the App onto their smartphone device.

During the study they submit 'case reports' which detail specific instances of App use.

Participants (30 trainee dentists) completed the baseline questionnaire and to date have submitted 18 case reports..

Earlier studies with newly-qualified doctors (n=129) provide comparative data from 294 case reports.



Results

Like doctors, dental trainees' main information sources on a daily basis, in the workplace, were people-based:

- senior staff, 70%
- peers, 57%
- other staff in the dental team, 35%

Most commonly consulted "iDent" books were:

- British National Formulary (BNF)
- Oxford Handbook of Clinical Dentistry
- Oxford Handbook of Emergency Medicine.



Mirroring our findings from "iDoc" case-report data, by enabling immediate access to up-to-date and reliable information at-the-chairside



"iDent" enhanced:

- Safety (e.g. checking dosage)
- Timeliness (e.g. in relation to decision-making)
- Effectiveness (e.g. evidence-based treatment planning)
- Efficiency of Patient Care (e.g. time saved searching for hard copy texts)



Doctors and dentists had concerns using a smartphone in front of patients

- at "iDent" baseline, 67% anticipated feeling uncomfortable

Conclusion

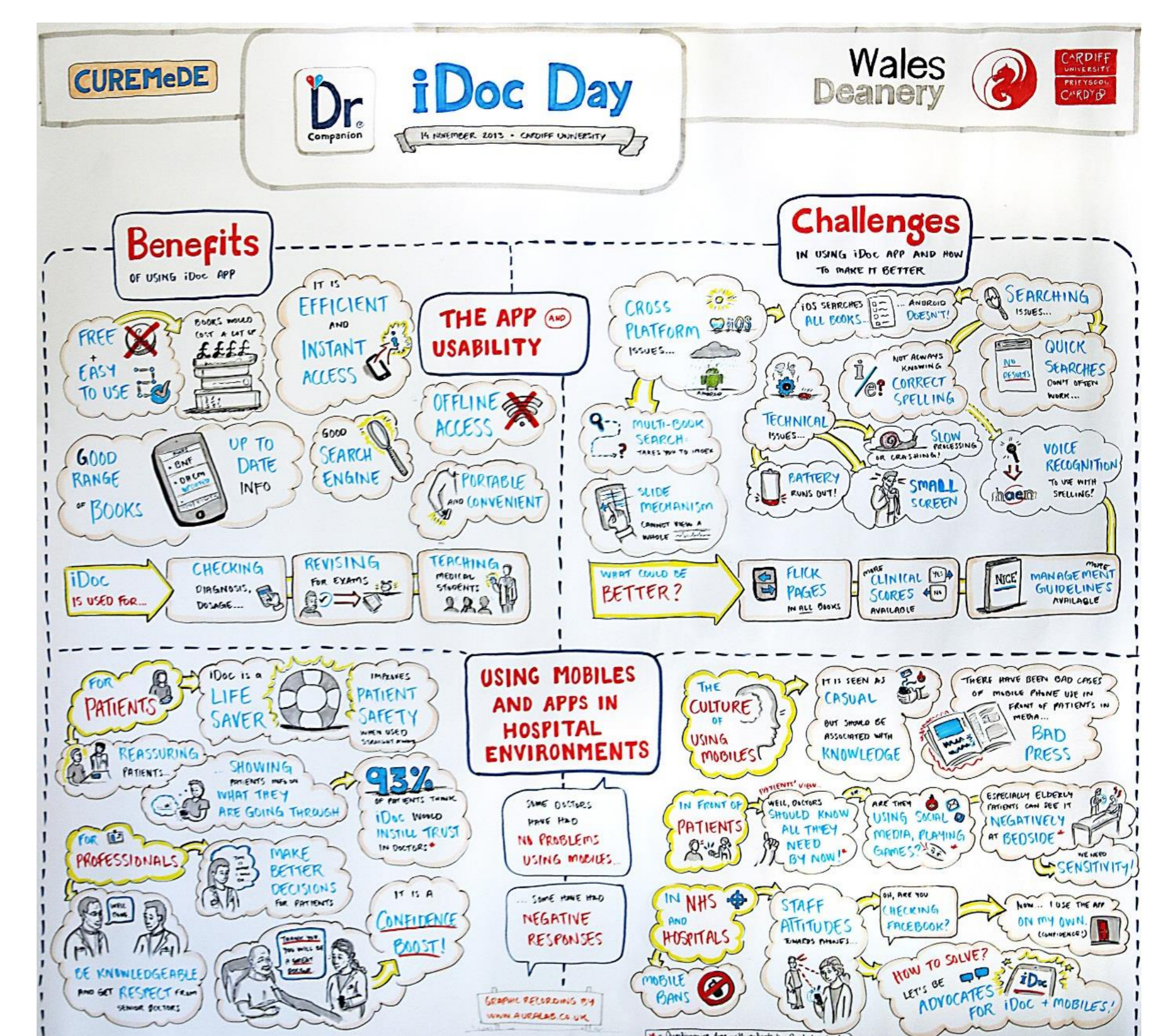
Our study, with trainee dentists, demonstrates how they benefit from the Dr.Companion© App in the same way as newly-qualified doctors.

Providing internet-free/educational access to key credible clinical textbooks, on their smartphone, supports trainees learning in the workplace and "saves clinical time", supporting patient safety.

A novel initiative, initially, supplied to all junior doctors in Wales – mainly hospital-based - its use for young dentists covers a wider variety of clinical environments and patients: hospital, general dental practice, community dental clinics and patients with special care needs.

Many young doctors/dentists are solely responsible, at all hours, for the patients they manage and in most cases their first point of contact for advice and support may be elsewhere in the workplace.

This App - "iDent" - supports basic understanding (of multiple conditions and multiple medications and their interactions), reducing the need to distract the next senior clinician from their own commitments except when essential.



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