The Role of Photojournalists that Cannot Be Replaced by Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: *The profession of photojournalist has become an inseparable part of the media industry for many years providing soulful images that can strengthen news and depict actual events visually. Even though the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can create images automatically, the existence of the photojournalist profession cannot be replaced because physical presence at a location can provide dimensions of emotion, human experience, and actuality that cannot be provided by AI. Even though AI can contribute in the form of interesting images, it still has weaknesses in terms of visual reality because the role of photojournalists as sensitive observers of the combination of feeling, taste, humanity, and visual experience will always be relevant and cannot be replaced in the media industry.*

Key words: *journalist; photo; visual; AI; media.*

Background

The development of technology and photographic media cannot be eliminated from the early 90s which began to discover the era of digital photography, the early 2000s which can edit using computer devices and the current various online-based applications that can edit photos instantly. All the discoveries and advances in the elements of visual formation seem to be stopped by the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) where in general AI is the result of human work in the form of technology designed to make a computer system imitate human intellectual abilities in the form of visuals, writing, counting, and sound capabilities.

AI seems to be a new pandemic for conventional workers where it is physically feared that it can shift manual workers including photographic art workers. In this case, photojournalists also feel a little disturbed by its presence but on the other hand, it is also beneficial for some photojournalists. The basic concept of a photojournalist is to be present at an event, take a series of shots often interpreted as photo coverage, edit, caption, and finally send it to the editor's desk.

It is feared that AI does not provide reality in terms of image processing because the form of imagery that is processed too instantly is feared to be incompatible with the visual description that occurs in the field. AI can also produce images simply by typing

prompt sentences to further process into an algorithm until the command becomes a visual work that the author wants even though sometimes the finished result does not match the author's expectations.

It is a concern among visual journalism workers that AI will take away their jobs, starting with AI newsreaders where the newsreaders are not humans but AI artificial humans reading the daily news. In addition, the voice that can be read by AI instruments can help the performance of news presenters but still, AI cannot do intonation and language emphasis on underlined words.

The editing method done by a photojournalist can also be done instantly for the size of the AI process, it is feared that it is not the same as reality because AI is not present in the coverage but only a machine that shortens human performance. It would be better if photojournalists continue to edit with conventional software such as Adobe Photoshop, Light Room, and similar software because when editing a photographer does not imagine but fixes the image as if it were made a reality according to the actual situation in the field to avoid the biases of photojournalistic hyperreality work.

In a photojournalist's tendency for the work process in the field to be fast-paced, artificial intelligence also helps in image editing and enhancement. Advanced image processing algorithms can automatically improve the quality of photos, correct exposure, and remove noise or disturbances in images. This development is like two sides of a coin, wrong and right, as it raises several challenges and ethical questions. Artificial intelligence in photojournalism work raises issues about image authenticity and photo manipulation. It is important to uphold the principles of journalistic integrity and ensure that published photos are accurate representations and do not contain manipulations that mislead the public.

The business of the journalism industry is about trust and integrity, it will be a question of how integrity can be done by robots and algorithms. The value of privacy is absolute in the processing of sources and news because artificial intelligence is done by the first party with a computerized operator, of course, the second party who fills in the prompt can be seen by the first party as the operator. Confidentiality and privacy rights are as important as the right of refusal and the right of reply of the source or subject of the photo because that is the basis of photojournalism work that can be said not to harm others.

It is a very basic difference when someone does the coverage to meet the sources and talk from heart to heart so that from that closeness, they have access to photographing the sources compared to compiling pieces of data into a news story such as infotainment news which is almost the same concept as the AI prompt. In journalistic ethics, the visual formation of AI results can be interpreted as cloning because the writing of the prompt forms an image based on the reading of verbal letters and algorithms due to the absence of a journalist in the field. The cloned news is prone to press offenses if the information turns out to be untrue, for example containing defamation of someone in the form of lies about an event (Zaenudin 2011, 146).

In mid-2023, we can find it on social media or journalistic forums, making media workers and several parties inflamed. Some photo news agencies are worried because the work in them is often used, even though they have used a disclaimer. It is fundamental and difficult to find the point of error and the truth about who owns the photographic work because copyright has changed ownership to artificial intelligence. In Hypeabis id's notes, Getty Images was once mentioned as prohibiting the upload and sale of illustrative images produced through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) art tools such as DALL-E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion. Every editor and media entrepreneur has concerns related to the copyright of works produced using artificial intelligence tools because the illustrations and photojournalistic works commonly taken by print and online media are not all made by the photographer staff of the media company but also, they hire freelance and contributors with certain conditions to regulate and protect their royalties.

Previously printed forms then evolved into various forms of digital applications to display narratives and visuals. Meanwhile, the doctrine of print as the idealism of conventional photojournalism until the end of blood that has always been echoed is no longer relevant in recent years because it has been eroded by the delivery of photo media on social media. The instant revolution will not work if there is no consumer market in the age of 18-40 years old when they need news and entertainment facilities on social media on one hand. However, it becomes a new problem when the process of presenting fast paced and instant news on social media is not balanced with in-depth news search and confirmation, resulting in awkward journalistic work.

AI has many shortcomings, one of which is the absence of confirmation and recording of source data directly so that the visual work produced is not the result of data coverage and shooting but from the results of taking visual pieces combined through prompts that produce an array of algorithms. As with photographing a human profile interview should be conducted directly to get the originality of a news source to get accurate and not misleading information results, news source information can be recorded or recorded at length, including the movements and atmosphere that colour the interview process because it becomes important in an interview process (Zaenudin 2011, 106).

In the Asian press system, although it has embraced the libertarian press system, writing or covering photos related to religion, law, ethnicity, race, class, and finance is very sensitive, therefore the AI process is not extended in the formation of visuals with reality and is only extended as infographics because the function of photojournalism is also a tool of social control. The duties and functions of the press in photojournalism are responsible not only for that but even deeper, namely securing the rights of citizens in their national life (Kusumaningrat 2017, 27).

Sometimes the visual work made by AI that is published shows the face of a figure who is doing activities outside his field so that it is beyond human reason so that the visual work can lead to someone's argument that is not necessarily good from the truth value of the information. According to Hikmat (Hikmat 2018, 158), Artificial actuality

is a publication that has no element of attracting public interest and/or attention but is published. To be interesting, even though it is not something that attracts public attention, often the media must add seasoning or enter the field of personal fields generally by reporting on the personal life of a figure.

Leading opinion through the appearance of public figures will be biased for an AI and Digital Imaging artist because through visual senses many people are not accustomed to or trained to distinguish between real photos and digital editing results. Not everyone can survive this opinion leading with a mature mind, sometimes indirectly it has become a visual interpretation that only adheres to temporary opinions and analysis. The wider community has different levels of education, this affects their various visual interpretations, of course, the higher the level of education, the better they will be at translating a visual work so that it is not easily led by social propaganda issues through visual media.

Words that are imagined based on experience are to be written in a prompt sentence before realizing AI visual work cannot reflect visual information because it is still a picture of a news photo value that is required by the presence of a photojournalist. According to Derrida (in Sobur, 2015:44), meaning cannot be arranged anywhere in the human mind, as long as that meaning is a product of experience. Algorithms as elements that form visuals only work based on prompt sentences so that the work performance of an intelligent machine cannot represent reality.

In describing the problematic presence of AI in the realm of photojournalism, every concept of work in creating journalistic products must be based on several things, namely upholding the code of ethics, credibility, honesty, and facts in the field. None of the guidelines explain the process of creating visuals by AI, so it will be a new problem for journalistic products that implement AI. The media business is a business trusted by the community, media consumers, news agency consumers, and advertisers from this, it gives meaning to integrity that a photojournalist should not do when creating photojournalism.

Personally, the performance of photojournalists begins with a calling of the heart because doing everything full of risk by coming to the conflict area and taking pictures there, not just sitting in front of a computer and typing prompts to spread illustrations and images of a community conflict. The ethics that are built personally by a photojournalist are certainly inseparable from wisdom, perspective, emotion, values and, and the relationship of the five aspects certainly cannot be found in the prompt typing. The history of photojournalism that has been built for more than a century provides an overview for younger photojournalists of the importance of integrity because the beginning of the journey of photojournalism in the world is certainly inseparable from war coverage that requires integrity, sacrifice, and honesty from a photojournalist to report the truth.

Discussion

Realistic photos become an improvement when a journalistic visual work is made from AI, even though it is only an illustration medium, but the concept of the community's mindset is already embedded in what is being done in a photographic work. The reality of a work does not only depend on how the object is created and the research of a photojournalist but also demands the presence of a journalist at the scene so that he can provide his emotions to form a photographic work that has news value.

A. The Concept of Presence and Reporting is Not Owned by AI

If a photojournalist does not come to the scene, how can he describe the reality of an event? Likewise, the basic illustration is also made from journalistic photo work because an illustrator must retranslate the photos he sees from the actual event and an illustrator is certainly strengthened by the writing of a journalist who is actually at the scene. Therefore, there is no definite place for the position of AI in journalistic products because journalistic photos require presence, and illustrations require the actual reality of the event.

When lots of cues are exchanged (especially nonverbal cues), as in face-to-face communication, you feel great social presence the whole person is there for you to communicate with and exchange messages. When the bandwidth is smaller (as in e mail or chat room communication), then the communication is largely impersonal. For example, personal communication is easier to achieve in face-to-face situations (where tone of voice, facial expressions, eye contact, and similar nonverbal cues come into play) than it is in computer mediated communication, which essentially contains only written cues. It's more difficult, the theory goes, to communicate supportiveness, warmth, and friendliness in text-based chat room or e-mail exchanges because of the smaller bandwidth. Of course, as video and audio components become more widely used, this distinction has faded (DeVito 2016, 222).

The explanation and emphasis from De Vito above are very clear when associated with the concept of a photojournalist's work that requires presence at an event. The concept of interpersonal communication provides the widest possible space for a photojournalist to approach the source so that the source is willing and not awkward to be photographed as Robert Capa said: "If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough". Good interpersonal communication can open the barrier between the photographer and the subject because the pattern can penetrate the personal spaces of a source. AI does not have a presence in an event because AI only summarizes existing visual sources through algorithms and is based on the command of prompt words.

Images that are already scattered on the internet become a reference that is rearranged by AI into a patterned visual interaction and forms an illustration. Why can't AI visuals be used as photojournalism and illustrations? This can be explained by the logic of photojournalism which requires presence and eyewitness testimony at the location of the event, while illustrations are descriptions of information that are easy to understand

personally. Of course, to make that happen, you have to see the actual event either directly or through a medium that has been realized. It is feared that if it is made with AI, it will not be by the actual incident because the background of the incident does not record the cause and effect.

Journalistic business in the form of news photos is the result of a report so there is a journalist's responsibility attached to it. Journalists and professional media should be responsible to the community and also to their superiors and the market (McQuail 1987, 112). This responsibility should be presented in a journalistic work that demands the presence of a journalist so that photojournalism is not presented that is imaginary because of the performance of the visual machine.

Social responsibility is reflected in journalistic work because the image results must be by reality. Photojournalism is a representation of reality and is articulated as symbols that have an information message so that it is hoped that there will be information that enters the audience or an exchange of information. Using symbols that represent what they mean to communicate with each other and also the influence caused by these symbols on the behaviour of the parties involved in social interaction (Mulyana 2001, 71).

If there is a visual misinterpretation of journalistic work, a media consumer cannot sue someone who makes the prompt because he only types of imaginary writings, not thoughts from data. Media consumers also do not have a strong basis if there is a misinterpretation of journalistic messages on the providers or creators of these AI applications because they work to collect images that have flown in cyberspace, not to present the reality produced by their cameras. AI does not fulfil the main elements of social responsibility in the photo press because there is no presence of reporting based on interviews and direct recordings.

B. AI Cannot Currently Compose Images Perfectly

There are many versions of how AI works, but in general, many experts argue that models or systematically called (mathematical representations of machine learning algorithms used to process data) AI is trained using very large data, which contains the ability to combine text-image pairs. The written prompt connects the text description with the appropriate image and technically can be called training to move algorithms such as natural language processing (Natural Language Processing, NLP) and convolutional neural networks (Convolutional Neural Networks, CNN) that process text and images in computers. Data consisting of parallel text and images that have been collected and labelled manually, then the models correlate between the text that describes an image and the image itself to then be arranged or made into a new image as desired by a visual creator.

In another version, the model is trained to understand the correlation between the text description and the appropriate image so that AI is tasked with reading first before

showing the results. Next, the AI's task is to connect words and phrases in the text with visual attributes that may be present in the image into a complete visual form.

Images composed by the AI model, although not all of them use images from the dataset, will also create new images based on the text descriptions provided, but the accompanying elements in the visuals, namely symbols, cannot be represented in their entirety by AI because AI models generally do not directly "learn" about symbols or symbolic meanings, but only correlate between text descriptions that include symbols. AI models can only produce images that represent symbolic descriptions based on patterns that are arranged, although the machine system's understanding of symbols may not always match human interpretation.

AI is a text-based machine so the system on the AI device can take sample data or copies from public data that is already spread on the Internet. Some experts have not found a definite logic for how the arrangement of letters and numbers can form a texture, colour, and expression in a photo illustration so that it is possible for AI to get image samples from two types of datasets, namely public datasets and special datasets. In general, it is an image taken from samples that are spread in the public so that it is not easy to identify the copyread, while a special dataset, namely photos or visual works that are privately owned, is collected automatically or manually to be entered into a data bank and processed into certain visual needs.

Public datasets are images collected from various sources, including the internet, collections of public photo works, or special datasets that have been previously curated in the sense of a collection of various images with various themes and contexts. This dataset is used to train search engines to understand the relationship between text descriptions and appropriate images. While the description of how special datasets work is used for special training processes using personal data or when public datasets are inadequate, researchers, individuals, or organizations can create their datasets. So that the process of collecting images and text descriptions that match the needs of model training will be able to produce a dataset using a personal manual or automatic data collection method.

In the rules of journalistic photography to illustrations for journalistic purposes, complete image elements are needed so that there is no bias in the delivery of information. AI currently has the disadvantage that some images cannot be arranged perfectly so it seems strange if used as an illustration. The images presented are of course based on reasoning, but in some of the modes produced by AI, the images do not look proportional, such as certain body sizes that are too large to body parts that are not intact with the following references.

Boris Eldagsen's work, *The Electrician*, from the series *Pseudomnesia*[1], done with AI technology and in a competition in April 2023 won an award in a photo competition held by a camera manufacturer. What happened was that Boris Eldagsen refused the

[1] https://i0.wp.com/www.eldagsen.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/eldagsen_THEELECTRICIAN.jpg

award because the photo was done with AI, not taken and shot with a camera, so it did not have the basic principles of photography. The jury was indeed fooled by the image or indeed already knew that being produced with AI was not the main thing, but Boris Eladasen's principles in photography did attract special attention at that time.

AI is currently not perfect for specific pattern recognition, so it has not been able to compile visual logic properly, as seen in the circle on the left, the shape of the fingers and hands are too large to be owned by normal women in general. It is possible that the prompt command was made like that, but it could not be able to compile and translate perfectly because it does not match the size of women's hands in general.

In the second correction, the circle on the right marks a hand reaching for the woman's chest, it is not known who the hand belongs to. Structurally, the length of the hand is impossible for the old woman behind her because both of her hands are holding the shoulders of the young woman, but it is also impossible for the hand to belong to the young woman in front because it is too long and too low if it belongs to the young woman. From both cases, it can be concluded that AI has not been able to determine the composition of the image completely and logically, resulting in a visual work that has multiple interpretations if used as a journalistic work.

Picture 1. Michael Christopher Brown, Title: From the *90-mile* photo series project
(Accessed 31.03.2024)

An image from the Michael Christopher Brown's *90-mile* photo series (Picture 1) shows the imperfection of visual formation because there are still many image defects that cause multiple interpretations. From this incident, we can draw a temporary conclusion that AI cannot present pure reality. Technology will certainly always develop, just as AI is possible one day to form a perfect image arrangement but cannot represent the presence of a photojournalistic eye at the scene of the incident.

The upper circle image shows an imperfect facial arrangement, and the lower circle image shows a shoe that is split in two. There are still visual forms that do not match the reality in the field. The imperfection of interpretation raises concerns that the meaning conveyed could be biased. For example, in the work of Michael Christopher Brown, several imperfections reflect the limitations of AI in providing accurate visual direction.

The imperfection of the image arrangement indicates that AI has not been able to reason well to produce the correct visual arrangement. From one example image, it can be concluded that while AI technology has helped a lot in creating illustrations, there are still challenges in achieving accurate visual interpretation with the appropriate reality.

Picture 2. Michael Christopher Brown, Title: From the *90-mile* photo series project
(Accessed 31.03.2024)

Same, another Michael Christopher Brown work (Picture 2) is in the position of holding the chest. The image above the circle shows a mysterious hand that is unknown where it originally came from, too long if owned by the man in yellow, and too big if owned by the woman in white. The circle below shows there is a hand on the right side whose hand is unknown where it came from. If it is the person's right hand, it is certainly too long and has a different skin colour.

The presence of new object elements provides multiple interpretations even though the essence of journalistic photos is to provide information as easily as possible to fulfill the elements of public insight. To provide visual commands that are crowd-based, AI has not been able to translate into a neater and more complete image because the reading of the prompt command on AI is more directed at the form of individual concepts of profiles, portraits, and atmosphere.

AI works with systematic generative models such as GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks), working by combining various visual elements from the data that has been compiled. In the image synthesis process, AI can make mistakes in combining visual elements. This could be due to limitations in the model or incomplete or unrepresentative training data because all forms of its composition are connected in various kinds of collectively compiled data banks.

Picture 3. Michael Christopher Brown, Title: From the 90-mile photo series project
(Accessed 31.03.2024)

Also, in Michael Christopher Brown's image (Picture 3), a man's hand is wrapped around a rope. One hand goes in, but several hands and fingers come out following the rope. Below the circle is also a hand with unknown limbs. This shows that current AI is not yet capable of building visual logic like realistic images. Consistency in writing does require rigor in prompt writing.

The AI still has difficulty distinguishing between elements that must be displayed in full and elements that must be arranged according to reality, resulting in inconsistent and unrealistic images. Image reality is not that easy to produce, it takes a lot of software development from time to time. AI also provides a variety of platforms, some of which can provide flawless images, but the image quality still looks like an anime work that is forced into a realist work.

Picture 4 and 5. Michael Christopher Brown, Title: From the *90-mile* photo series project
(Accessed 31.03.2024)

In the top photo of the red circle, the formation of the nose and lips is less than perfect. In the bottom photo, the formation of the grandmother's face in the white circle is

also imperfect, which gives a scary impression and can lead to interpretation bias. These two images show that the AI has not been able to translate the prompt commands well and compile the algorithm perfectly to produce a visual work.

In essence, the instruction prompt given to the AI model to produce a certain output is not about how writing can give life to a visual field. Visual logicality gives its own life to the presence of an image translation, but the logicality will be better built with the presence of a photojournalist in the field so that imagining a reality to be typed back in a visual interpretation will be more difficult to translate.

Some things that cause AI to not be able to construct the body's anatomical texture perfectly, such as:

- The limited data bank in the search system makes it difficult for AI to compile an illustration. Limited data entry and copying make the compilation not run perfectly.
- Algorithm limitations make it difficult for AI to understand and translate human anatomy. The crowd image makes AI have to work extra to compose complex elements such as body position, background, expression, and interaction. The complicated process that requires high variables causes distortion or improper proportions.
- To produce a difficult crowd-like image requires a high resolution of each object to create a detailed image. The lack of image data and resolution makes some objects less clear or distorted.
- Body parts become unrealistic because the algorithm has not been able to translate body parts and functions in a complex manner, especially in crowd situations, which affects the illogical form of image preparation.
- The way AI produces images is based on the interpretation of the data it has but translating more than one object often has difficulty in displaying reality because AI has to work extra to compose expressions and interaction patterns between individuals.

In Elliot Higgins' Donald Trump's arrest visual project, the image looks strange seeing a circle of Trump with a baton in his back pocket or a black circle[2]. The baton should be in the hands of the security guard, not in Trump's back pocket. This shows that the current AI has not been able to digest well the logic of commands to be translated through algorithms. The baton should not be used by Trump, but the circled baton should be used by the police/security. The logic is reversed: Trump carries a club for what, a politician carries a club for what, and a businessman carries a club for what.

AI does not have ethical boundaries, it only binds some rules such as pornography and others, but the free access of the public to AI without visual ethics is not good. Users of the visual industry will certainly learn in advance how to place objects properly

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[2] https://www.thetimes.com/imageserver/image/%2Fmethode%2Ftimes%2Fprod%2Fweb%2F bin%2F17d16574-c957-11ed-abc4-cc01ae8816d9.jpg?crop=1024%2C1024%2C0%2C0& resize=1180

and correctly along with the ethics of how to respect a former head of state. Visual creation in AI does not have binding ethical boundaries because the ethics only exist within the person accessing AI.

AI is conceptually governed by prompts that translate imagination, creativity, logic, and ethics into every piece of writing. AI is only a search engine and visual compiler in each of its works so elements of morality cannot necessarily be filtered properly so that the visual morality is in the human who typed the prompt command. AI gives the widest possible space to compose illustrations to humans, but AI also has a filter for some illustrative presentations that are vulgar and pornographic. It is a weakness in AI today to not be able to present the element of decency of who and what object of public figures will be used as illustrations because that freedom can be translated by the audience into political propaganda media and so on.

Picture 6. Michael Christopher Brown, Judul: From the *90-mile* photo series project
(Accessed on 31.03.2024)

The next visual oddity is the dimensions of the girl in the back seat are too small (Picture 7). There is something odd, namely, the man and woman are sitting in the back seat but behind the glass, there is still a girl sitting on the bench. As if there are still

more seats but if it is a sedan, it is the trunk, if it is a city car it is the engine room. This shows that AI is currently unable to compose images perfectly because its command prompt reasoning is not easy to understand.

The distance between the girl behind the seat and the main object is too close and there is no distance limitation, giving the audience room for reasoning if distance reasoning cannot be translated by AI. One of the requirements for an image to have logic is the existence of dimensions, but the image above does not show the right dimensional limitations. Visual logic can only be created through the medium of photography where someone must come to the scene and press the shutter to produce an existing reality.

Conclusion

Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) has shown significant technological progress, AI cannot yet replace journalistic visual works, either photos or illustrations. Photojournalism requires the presence of journalists at the scene to record the nuances, emotions, and expressions, which are essential for the honesty of the image. Meanwhile, illustrations must be interactive and built based on news or data that is worked on with the reasoning and aesthetic value of a visual creator at the editorial desk.

AI still has limitations in composing images perfectly, often producing multi-interpretive and disproportionate images. This raises doubts about the authenticity and accuracy of the visuals produced by AI, which are the core of journalistic work with integrity. Photojournalism has long been considered an accurate representation of reality, but the AI that is currently present cannot be part of this honest work.

Journalism industry players, including photographers and editors, must carefully consider the role of AI in creating visual content, whether it is just an illustration that helps journalists' performance or a threat to the visual journalism industry if it is used as the main idea of journalistic work. Although AI can be a useful tool in the process of editing and enhancing images, its use must be critical and extra careful, especially in the context of the principles of ethics and integrity of journalistic ethics. The rejection of visual works from AI is a protection against new technology based on journalistic ethics or concerns about the boundaries between reality and fictional visuals that are open to multiple interpretations. So, it can be concluded that visual works from AI are currently still open to multiple interpretations and cannot yet be used as complete journalistic works, either photojournalism or illustration.

The development of technology and photography media has undergone significant transformations with the emergence of digital photography and computer-based editing software. AI has limitations in understanding and composing images logically and by reality. AI also raises ethical issues in journalism, especially regarding the authenticity of images and photo manipulation that can damage journalistic integrity and public trust in the media.

In facing the development of AI technology, photojournalism workers need to maintain the principles of journalistic ethics, such as integrity, honesty, and social responsi-

bility. They must remain present in the field, conduct live coverage, and ensure that the work produced reflects the actual reality. The media also needs to provide training and education to journalists on the use of AI technology ethically and responsibly. With these steps, it is hoped that AI technology can be utilized optimally without sacrificing the basic principles of journalism and public trust in the media. Although AI offers various conveniences and efficiencies in image processing, the role of photojournalists in producing accurate and ethical journalistic work remains irreplaceable.

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