

## A NEW TV PRACTICE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION IN TURKEY

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### ABSTRACT

Anadolu University, which has been developing constantly since it was established, has determined a new road map considering the mission and vision developed in the search conference for the purpose of AOS "2020 Future design" (17-19 April 2010). In accordance with the outcomes of this study, the following question was one of the questions addressed to the participants in this conference for their answers, "how should an ideal education channel be in AOS?" as TV channels are considered as most basic components of such systems.

This paper attempts to reveal possible answers to that question and also to come up with answers to what stages there should be in such process considering the "strategic plan", which is one of the outcomes of this search conference.

**Keywords:** Distance education, turkey, Anadolu University, Educational TV

### INTRODUCTION

**Open Education and Distance Education System (Açık ve Uzaktan Öğretim Sistemi-AOS)** at Anadolu University, which has been in service since 1982, has been spending all its knowledge, experience and facilities on improving higher education system in Turkey . With regards to educational material, AOS has reached its target students through course books, web pages and courses on TV programmes. However, the needs of a basic education system in Turkey, global changes, the increasing need for experts in employment in Turkey, advancements in communication technologies, the new perspectives in education, the need for promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of education have also revealed a need for developing a new point of view in distance education.

Since it was first established, AOS has been delivering TV courses to target students as support programmes through TRT as legislated by the law. 508 instructors participated in the TV instruction programmes, which were broadcasted on TRT 4 till 2008-2009 education terms. The total of annual broadcast carried out on that channel can be summed as follows; 24 weeks, 37 hours in a week and 888 hours in a year (AOF, 2009c). However, as stated above, the changing needs have made it compulsory to restructure the TV channel and new technological developments have offered many new facilities in the field of broadcast.

### METHOD

Strategic planning is all the long-term works which are performed by top management team for the purpose of achieving the goals and missions of corporate. Therefore, strategic planning can be suggested to be the total of the decisions determining the long-term success of a certain corporate.

Therefore, the strategic planning and the road map prepared with the use of "Strategic Management Approach" with the framework of AOS search conference carried out with the approach of "organizational/learning theory" are considered as the starting point for an "educational TV".

This study functions as a planning and evaluative study for an educational TV (TRT Okul) which will be established with the use of a "new strategic management approach" following the outcomes of the AOS search conference. Within this scope;

- Environmental factors for distance education system will be evaluated (strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities)
- Those issues related to the vision and mission determined for AOS 2020 and main objectives considered to be necessary for an ideal educational channel will be chosen.
- The kind of vision, which AOS 2020 strategic planning will provide for the educational TV, will be evaluated.
- Within the framework of this evaluation, multi-generational plan considered necessary for the educational TV will be presented.

### **Limitations**

TRT Okul TV is a channel established with %50 strategic partnerships. 50% of the programmes to be broadcasted on TRT Okul will be produced by TRT and the other half will be produced by Anadolu University. 70% of the 50% share owned by Anadolu University will consist of AOS content, AOS students and those students receiving formal education. On the other hand, TRT will use its mass education programmes prepared for general mass education.

This study is limited to only those studies carried out by Anadolu University.

### **AOS 2020 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

The analysis of environmental factors within the framework of strategic management is very significant in understanding the issues and factors considered strategically significant. Although the opportunities and threats determined for AOS 2020 are necessary for a long term strategy planning, the fact that education, employment and economic process are very rapidly changing variables makes it mandatory to be flexible. Therefore, the change of such factors should be made constant in time. However, the new educational TV channel to be used in distance education and the factors suggested for future predictions will also be considered.

Within this framework, the environmental factors determined for "AOS 2020" are as follows;

### **Opportunities**

- Life long education
- The number of new professions and formal education related to these professions is increasing.
- The cost of distance education is decreasing, the technology to be used in distance education is developing and becoming more personalized.
- New educational models
- The significance of accreditation is increasing.
- The number of entrepreneurial universities is increasing.
- The significance of ecology is increasing.

### **Threats**

- Unemployment is increasing
- Technological involution is increasing.

- Not to be able catch up with technology and insufficient education.
- Considering distance education as second-class education.
- The decrease in the belief in law.
- Practices violating ethical rules

### **Strong Points**

- Infrastructure, gaining experience (physical and human, academic, technical technology and financial) self-sufficiency.
- Prevalence (exhaustive organization, providing national and international students on site service)
- To be the first in the field of mass education (non-rivalness, being preserved)
- Diversity in service, programmes in multimedia, channel, providing diversity in technologies, producing various materials, broadcasting.
- Reliability (exam and other systems)
- High demand for education/ higher chances for equal opportunities.
- Weak points
- Research development and self-evaluation, accreditation-macro, micro self-evaluation, different assessment and evaluation.
- Deficiency of infrastructure (administrative, academic, human resources, weaknesses in legal structuring- interaction among units, not being able to use human resources rationally or lack of enough staff, legislation problem)
- Image and prestige problem
- The status quo, reluctance for renewal.
- Updating and renewal (in pedagogy and instruction materials, content, programme development, not giving significance to individual differences)

### **THE ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS FOR EDUCATIONAL TV**

The AOS environmental factors for the educational TV of Anadolu University within the body of distance education system are as follows;

- The most basic understanding for the educational TV of Anadolu University within TRT Okul should be within "Life Long Learning" projection.
- It is significant not only for those students taught in AOS system, whose number is 1.100.000 in total, but also for every segment of society with regards to equality in education. It is very important for developing countries including Turkey to expand education to every phase of life without restricting it within the concept of "school". According to the data of Human Development Index, the low average education year per head in Turkey, which ranks in 84? Therefore, it is important to reach information and ensure its continuity.
- Messick (1988) suggests that future education curriculum should be based on "individual" "applicable" and "dynamic" content. As the increase in the field of profession and field of interest reveals the fact that more individualized education should be offered to students, the quick transformation of information in today's world has made it mandatory to apply information to new forms and new communication technologies. Thus, information remains updated and with the help of communication technologies (new media), it should be accessible to "everywhere" and every time". Thus, "new educational models" can be tried.

- Although new technologies mean easier access to information for those who own relevant technology, it becomes a threat for those who do not have that technology. Therefore, it is important to continue traditional broadcasting as well as integration of new technologies into educational settings.
- Comprehensive broadcasting is a big opportunity for distance education which is perceived as second-class education. There is a real need just to improve that image through mass broadcasting.
- It is very eye-catching for high technological infrastructure, mass organization and economical resources to be able to back up TV programme making processes. It will be possible to transform scientific information into media content if experienced academic staff in the field can be combined with experienced TV organization.
- It is very important to be able to be creative and innovative in a competitive media. Therefore, there is need for new structuring to be able to develop new contents and TV programmes. Young and dynamic human resources to be owned should be considered in research-development units to be established. Thus, it becomes possible to produce innovative, creative and viewable TV programmes.
- The most important field of study of TV, which is an expensive organization, is assessment and evaluation. Assessment and evaluation of organizations should be done to determine the needs, demands and interests of target audiences, to carry out focus group studies, measuring the ratings, to see if the demands of target audiences are met and if the objectives of programmes are achieved, to evaluate course outcomes with regards to learning process.
- For TV programmes, active learning should be encouraged in programme design using pedagogical approach depending on target audiences

## **AOS 2020 DETERMINED VISION, MISSION AND MAIN OBJECTIVES**

### **Vision**

- To be a pioneering corporate in the world in massive and qualified open and distance education services, providing life long learning alternatives on national and international scale.
- **Mission**
- Designing need sensitive (demand sensitive, requested) and learner centered programmes. Developing qualified programmes which are flexible with regards to learning alternatives and processes.
- Integrating new technologies to system and making it effective one.
- Dynamizing research-development and self-evaluation activities which support being innovative and creative in all processes.

### **Main Objectives**

- Adapting to the system on credit.
- Providing adequate number of qualified human resources needed in the field.
- Developing teaching technologies in product, method, programme and process: academic consultancy (simultaneously, non-synchronously, face to face), extending nonformal and formal learning opportunities and e-learning services in mobile setting.
- Increasing international student registry at Open education system aimed at the Balkans, Central Asia Turkish Republics, Middle East, Caucasus reinforcing qualitative and quantitative leadership position.

- Presenting the first and second year courses at universities through the Internet in 2015.
- Increasing student satisfaction
- Helping graduates in their employment.
- Developing national and international cooperation.
- To be accessible to everybody.
- Creating an educational TV24 hours on the air.

### **THE ANALYSIS OF AOS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN:**

#### **Vision, Mission and Main Objectives for an Educational TV**

The most basic approaches within the mission defined in AOS 2020 strategy report also form a foresight for the design of educational TV and strategic planning. It is significant for a “national and international” broadcasting with regards to its coverage. Local, national or international TV broadcast requires various structures and strategies. Therefore, this is an issue to be decided in establishment stage.

“Life long learning” vision is one of the goals not only for Anadolu University, but also YÖK (Board of Higher Education) as suggested in “Strategy Report for Higher Education in Turkey” in 2007. According to that report, “producing new information and skills, keeping them always updated and managing them appropriately are the major issues leading societies to success no matter in what field they are. The mission which individuals are responsible for is both to gain a seat in their society and to refresh their knowledge level constantly to be able to contribute to their societies. At this point, the formal education and compulsory education may remain incapable.

With the education gathered under the roof of life long learning, individuals have the opportunity to receive education at every phase of their lives about every issue. Today’s, the most practical way of presenting such education is to use technology and especially the internet which is considered to be the most common mass communication means. In time, the significance of life long learning will increase. Therefore, this will also help distance education and open education programmes gain more significance (Strategic Report for Higher Education in Turkey, 2007). While life long learning approach both offers educational opportunities for everybody in AOS, an educational TV will also offer a diversity in the design of educational programmes not only for students in AOS but also for everybody. Thus, it will help offer various alternatives to viewers.

Two of the most basic approaches of the educational TV which will be one of the most basic support elements, qualified massive open and distance education services are “quality” and “reaching large masses”. With this regard, an educational TV on the air for 24 hours can reach different and large audiences. “Being accessible for everybody” can be achieved through “integration of new technologies to existing system not only with TV but also Web TV, IPTV and Mobil TV. Moreover, combining the services, such as “e-learning, e-exam, e-consultancy” with interactive TV will offer new “simultaneous and synchronous” learning opportunities to target audience.

So as to determine prototypes of educational programmes, it is necessary to see what kind of programmes the target audience needs. To do that, needs analysis should be performed initially. This can be done in three different ways: the first, viewers’ demands should be revealed through research to be carried out on target audiences; the second is that, the courses in which students have most difficulty and the sections of these courses in which they have difficulty should be evaluated depending on exam results and students’ demands in e-learning system. Then, with the help of TV ratings, the type of programmes and education that they need, should be revealed.

The obtained results should be evaluated considering learning alternatives and processes, and then relevant TV educational programmes should be prepared. Besides, only for educational TV programmes assisting courses, “course outcomes” should be examined and then should be compared to “those of TV educational programmes”.

#### TARGET AUDIENCES CHOSEN FOR AOS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

- Geography-Middle East, Central Asia, Caucasus, Commonwealth of Independent States and the Balkans where Turkish is spoken very commonly.
- Graduate-undergraduate
- Foreign students (BAP-Azerbaijan)
- Students receiving formal education
- Students studying undergraduate
- Civil servant and private organization staff (in service)
- Life long learning students.
- Those using open instruction materials.
- Foreign students.
- Turkish certificate programme (TSP) students (worldwide)

#### THE ANALYSIS OF TARGET AUDIENCES FOR EDUCATIONAL TV

“The primary” target audiences of TRT Okul is AOS students, “the secondary” target audiences is all higher education students receiving formal education in Turkey. As well as these two target audiences, those civil servants and those who work in private organizations with life long learning goals and those who speak Turkish in other countries except for Turkey are also considered among target audiences. Although the primary and secondary target audiences are considered representatives of the same target audiences, as they are all university students, AOS students differ from other students receiving formal education with regards to demographic characteristics and their needs analysis when we considered that they receive higher education for different reasons. The facilities free from time and space offered by distance education reveal that those who benefit from these facilities are adults living far from universities and who work at home and office all day. These individuals who differ from those receiving formal education are older and can only spare half day to their education (Wallace, 1996). Similarly, it is observed that the programmes broadcasted on BBC for English Open University speak to two main target audiences: Open University students, the students receiving formal education at other universities and educators (King, 1997). Distance education students generally prefer this educational model because of limited time and money to study formal education. (MacBrayne, 1995; Cardenas, 2000). AOS students consist of 42% of the students receiving higher education in Turkey (2010). 53.8% of them are male and 46.2% of them are female and vast majority of them (71.2%) are aged between 19-28.

	%
– 19	7,8
20 – 22	30,3
23 – 25	21,6
26 – 28	11,5
29 – 31	8,0
32 – 34	5,9
35 – 37	4,8

38 – 40	4,0
41 +	6,2
Total	100,0

The viewing behaviors of these young audiences are very significant, and it should be considered with regards to programme production. 30,9% of them is married, 69.1% of them are single. Their social behaviors are different from one another. The fact that vast majority of target audiences is single is very significant for regulating TV schedule and viewers' expectations.

Table: 2 Marital Profiles of AOS Students	
	%
Married	30,9
Single	69,1
Total	100,0

40.5% of the target audiences are not working, 59% of them are working. That causes a big difference between the students in AOS system in Turkey and those receiving formal education at higher education institutions significantly. It is very normal that those working students in AOS will have different expectations from both education and TV programmes.

Table: 3 Working Profiles of AOS Students	
	%
Not Working	40,5
Working in Public Sector	22,3
Working in Private Sector	30,3
Self Employment	6,4
Retired	,5
Total	100,0

The income state of the target audiences (58.7%) (the total income of households) is average (801 TL – 2000 TL), but almost 1/3 of them belong to low-income group (%27,6), some of them belong to high-income group (13,8). Economical statue of target audiences will tell a lot about the type of TV programmes that viewers prefer as well as giving clues to producers in programme designing stage. The positive correlation between economical statue and education, health and cultural indications is very significant for programme makers to determine the framework of the channel.

Table: 4 Total Monthly Income Of Households	
	%
Less than 800 TL	27,6
801 TL - 2000 TL	58,7
2001 TL - 5000 TL	12,6
More than 5000 TL	1,2
Total	100,0

Another evaluation to be made for the analysis of target audiences is to reveal the needs of viewers. To reveal viewers' viewing behavior, it is very significant to reveal viewers' expectations and the needs causing these expectations. With this regard, the causes for students to choose the programmes from AOS are also very important in determining these needs.

	%
To have a university diploma	22,7
To have a profession	18,9
To do short term military service	12,3
To rise in profession	12,1
To get information in the subject of Interest	10,9
No attendance for lessons	7,8
Not to have enough income for formal education	5,7
The family does not allow for formal education	4,1
Not to have enough score for formal education	3,2
To get a chance for education	1,2
To postpone military service	1,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>

As can be seen in the Table 5, the top two causes for students to choose programmes for distance education are “to have a university diploma (22.7%)” and “to have a profession (18.9%)”. Whereas the findings seem to be very similar to those of the students receiving formal education, the causes of 58,4% of them differ from those students receiving formal education. As can be seen in the study carried out by Hugh and Forest (1997) in the field of distance education system, the causes of students to choose distance education programmes are similar to the differing causes of the students receiving formal education. In this study, too, the causes for students to choose distance education programmes, such as that most students are working, that most students cannot attend formal education for some reasons (e.g. economical, social, personal), that the facilities free from time and space offered by distance education programmes can all be considered among the causes for students to choose distance education programmes.

	Disagree e %	Partially Agree y %	Agree %
TV educational programmes have contributed to student's academic achievement	23,1	38,2	38,6
TV educational programmes have comprehend their course books easily	19,5	33,5	47,0
TV educational programmes has higher appeal	36,4	35,5	28,1
TV educational programmes cover actual informations	21,7	39,9	38,4
TV educational programmes has good production quality	22,2	40,7	37,1
TV educational programmes has good broadcast quality	19,3	38,1	42,6
Durations of TV educational programmes is sufficient	43,2	34,2	22,6
Number of TV educational programmes is sufficient	44,5	34,7	20,8

On the other hand, students' evaluations related to the courses broadcasted on TRT 4 in the past are very significant in evaluating target audiences's expectations from

media. Table 6 Suggests that educational programmes broadcasted on TV have contributed to student's academic achievement significantly and have made it easier for students to comprehend their course books. Therefore, it can be suggested here that target audiences has expected TV programmes to contribute their education. However, the fact that the rate of those students who disagree that education programmes on TV appeal (36.4%) is significantly higher than those who agree that education programmes on TV appeal (28.1%) reveals that programme designs do not meet their expectations sufficiently. That is a significant point to be considered in designing programmes for the new TV channel. Besides, the fact that "the durations of the programmes" and the fact that the "number of programmes are suggested to be insufficient" are also important issues to be considered in production and broadcast strategies of the new channel.

Table:7 The watching to TRT 4	
	%
Did not watch	11,8
Watch	88,2
Total	100,0

Table: 8 Causes of not watching to TRT 4 broadcasting	
	%
There is no TRT 4 broadcasting on their locations	3,6
They have no enough time	39,1
Family is watching another channels	6,3
Programme schedule is not appropriate	21,3
They do not know time and day of broadcasting	12,7
They have no need to watch	16,9
Total	100,0

It is also another significant issue for target audiences to consider the watched to TRT 4 to come up with conclusions for the new education channel. Vast majority of the students (88.2%) were found that they did not watch TRT 4. The most common reason for them not to watch TRT 4 is that they do not have enough time to spare for it (39.1%) and that the programme schedule is not appropriate to them (21.3%). When we examine the schedule of AOS education programmes on TRT 4 and their durations, we see that it is 4 hours a day and they are broadcasted at inappropriate times. As it is not appropriate for the working students, it is very obvious that a new scheduling should be done considering viewers' viewing behaviors in Turkey.

Broadcast schedule should be planned considering target audiences profiles, in different time slot in a day, and they should also be repeated in different slots during the day. The broadcast on weekends should be planned differently from weekdays.

#### THE DESING PROCESS OF EDUCATION TELEVISION WITHIN THE FRAME OF AÖF 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

The "Educational TV Project" of Anadolu University is a project with two steps. AOS 2020 strategic plan is the starting point of this project. As a consequence of the

evaluation of that strategic plan, the following objectives have been chosen for the new education TV;

- Delivering formal-open and distance education programmes to target mass through TV, IPTV, Mobil TV and Web TV.
- Considering these goals, the most basic issues for the new education TV are as follows;
- It will be a thematic channel with educational purposes.
- Besides AOS courses, there should also be programmes for every segment of society as part of "life long learning".
- The needs analysis of the target audiences should be done.
- As well as functioning as a traditional TV, it should be accessible "every time" and every where" through IPTV, Mobil TV and Web-TV
- The programmes should be interactive
- The programmes should be designed to have good quality and high standards as well as having a strong visual structure.
- Programme schedule should be done ensuring that they have repeats and that they are broadcasted in different time slots during the day, considering the profiles and needs of target audiences.

## THE PHASES OF EDUCATIONAL TV PROJECT

### Initial phase: "TRT Okul"

The broadcast of the courses in AOS have to be done by TRT due law. In accordance with this regulation, relevant programmes have been broadcasted at limited times starting from 1982 to 2009. As the broadcast has not received high ratings, authorities have decided to establish a new channel aiming to broadcast educational programmes. As the initial phase of a new education TV project, Anadolu University and TRT have signed a contract related to establishing a new education TV (TRT Okul). TRT Okul, which was established as a consequence of strategic cooperation started its broadcasting life on 31 January 2011 aiming to reach all people no matter at what ages they are. According to the framework determined with cooperation of both corporates:

- 12 hour of 24 hour broadcast will belong to Anadolu University.
- It will be a channel which will broadcast only thematic programmes.
- It will be a direct broadcast satellite TV (Turksat 2-A), covering an area between England to China, as well as Turkey. Therefore, it is aimed that this channel speaks to all Turkish-speaking countries in the relevant region.
- 70% of the programmes of Anadolu University will be about AOS courses and system support programmes, the remaining 30% will be the programmes related to education, culture and art speaking to general viewers.
- The prototypes of broadcast will be determined with coordination of both corporates.
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### The Second Phase: Interactive Broadcast

According to Moore and Thompson (1990), the common point of all distance education broadcasts is that the interaction between learner and teacher is achieved through broadcast carried out through wireless, wired, satellite, ITFS and fiber delivery channels, computer based interactive telecommunication and electronic media, and combination of all these.

On the other hand, as the "interaction" and "being asynchronous" offered by "new media" instruments emerging with the convergence of new communication

technologies has made it easy to access to information “every where” and every time”, it has also extended the coverage of traditional broadcast.

With the emerge of digital TV, economical life has been carried into people’s lives using the facilities offered by the Internet, it has also made it possible to access to the Internet through TV, to use text based information, which then resulted in combination of audio, visual and text based contents with better sound and image (Kucukcan, 2007). Digital and interactive TV combined with digital satellites and wired networks, “internet protocol TV (IPTV) broadcasting broadband based with the use of fiber optical cables have become new mass communication instruments of new media. The latest point of this convergence is mobile phones, PDA-Personal Digital Assistant which are considered to be the latest technology of telecommunication. With the convergence of these instruments with the Internet, it has become easy to exchange all types of digital data (text, sound and video). Therefore, the emergence of IPTV and interactive mobile contents does not tell us about technological change, but it is also considered as a revolution in education.

Although broadband penetration seems to be low and costly for IPTV in Turkey, the use of Mobile TV is not common yet, “the cost of broadband will continue to fall, broadband penetration will increase” (Ruhe, Zumbo, 2009) in the world, and “there will be an increase in devices that can access the internet and a convergence of capabilities” (Watson, 2007). Within this framework, the use of new media in AOS will be an effective method and will also be one of the ultimate goals of AOS 2020 strategic plan. What can be done at this phase is to transfer new education TV into interactive IPTV and Mobile TV using new tools.

The process, which should be followed to achieve that, is as follows:

- The “e-learning contents of present AOS system and TV course support programmes should be regulated to make them meet with IPTV and then they should be adapted.
- The combined contents should be delivered to target audiences with the use of video on demand through IPTV. Thus, the chance for students to access to content will be made possible whenever they want.
- IPTV not only delivers e-learning and TV contents to target audiences, but also delivers some other services, such as e-book, e-practice, e-exam in AOS. Moreover, some banking transactions like re-registration, paying school fee and some students’ affairs will also be performed through IPTV.
- IPTV platform will also be used for delivering feedbacks related to students’ needs demands and interests. This can be done either through questionnaires on IPTV or following the data related to the frequency of access to the course contents on IPTV.
- For Mobile TV application, there is need for an agreement between Anadolu University and a GSM operator. Thus they can produce contents and mobile devices compatible with one another. Thus, it will be possible to “always” access to the content delivered by media as well as accessing it “everywhere”.

## RESULTS

The first phase of these two-phase projects will be as follows:

- Determining the strategic planning of education TV.
- Revealing the organizational scheme and workflow.
- Determining the need for human resources.

- **Determining producing technologies and broadcast related infrastructure.** In accordance with that, investment process should be planned.
- **A planning and coordination between TRT and Anadolu University should be done.**
- **Determining TV editors and forming design groups.**
- **Establishing research and evaluation units. Performing a target audiences needs analysis.**
- **Finalizing the programme designs and new programmes should be produced.**
- **Broadcasting programmes.**
- **Rating should be measured and research should be carried out about target viewers.**

The second phase will be carried out as follows:

- **Forming cooperation necessary for IPTV and Mobil TV, and planning the process.**
- **Determining new media technologic infrastructure and investment plan should be done.**
- **E-learning and TV programmes should be adapted to new media.**
- **Interactive designs should be prepared.**
- **Interactive programmes should be produced.**
- **Interactive applications on IPTV and Mobil TV should be put into practice.**
- **The digital feedbacks should also be evaluated.**

Education TV Project, which is a new step in AOS has put the most basic vision of strategic plan, "life long learning" in the center. With this regard, it can be suggested here that education TV project is a social service project not only for those people within AOS but also the whole society, no matter at what ages they are. Information easily becomes obsolete in today's' world.

This new education TV will offer that service not only in Turkey but also in many other countries in its coverage area when we consider that it will start multi-lingual broadcast in the future.

#### **BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of AUTHORS**



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