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NomCom Chair's Report: 2009-2010
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Abstract

This document reports on the activities of the 2009-10 IETF Nominating Committee (NomCom). This document summarizes the overall process used by the committee. Some specific issues and concerns that arose during the process are also discussed, some of which require consideration by the community and others that could be helpful to future NomComs.

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1. Introduction

[RFC3777] defines how the NomCom is selected, and the processes it follows as it selects candidates for the IAB and IESG positions. [I-D.galvin-rfc3777bis] adds the selection of the candidate for the IAOC position to [RFC3777]. [RFC5078] updates the non-normative scheduling aspects of the NomCom process, allowing for additional time between various decision points and public announcements.

This document summarizes the operations of the 2009-2010 Nomcom. This document highlights some process considerations, identifies issues encountered for consideration by the community and future NomComs.

This document reflects the views of the NomCom chair and while it describes the process used the NomCom and incorporates feedback from the NomCom, it does not necessarily reflect consensus views of the NomCom as a whole.

2. Getting Started

The 2009-2010 IETF Nominating committee, like all nominating committees for this community constituted since June 2004, was appointed and operated according to the rules defined in [[RFC3777](#)]. Lynn St. Amour (ISOC President and CEO) announced the appointment of the NomCom chair on May 19th, 2009.

The first task of the chair was to determine the timeline for ensuring the selection of the voting members before the 2nd IETF meeting starting on July 26th, 2009. At the same time, the secretariat also setup permissions for the NomCom chair to post to the IETF-Announce list. The list of open positions and liaisons were requested from the IESG, the IAB and the IAOC. The overall timeline for the 2009-2010 NomCom was announced on June 27th, 2009 and developed during the call for volunteers.

2.1. Voting Member Selection

The NomCom chair sent out the first call for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee on May 28th, 2009. The call for volunteers included a summary of the requirements to serve on NomCom and the list of positions to be filled. Several additional calls for volunteers were made with a final call made on June 27th, 2009. The deadline for volunteering was set for 5:00 pm CDT on July 3rd, 2009. The secretariat verified the eligibility of all the volunteers in a timely manner and helped to deal with exceptions, such as IETF participants registering with different email addresses, etc.

An announcement was sent on June 27th, 2009, including the random seeds to be used in conjunction with the procedure described in [[RFC3797](#)] for selecting the 10 voting members of the NomCom. The seeds were similar to those used by the NomCom Chair the previous year, specifying the dates such that the numbers to be used as seeds were not available until after the deadline for challenging the list of volunteers, but as soon as possible after the numbers were available (i.e., within 24 hours). The seeds included specific digits from the U.S. National Debt, the UK Lotto and all 6 numbers of the Megamillions Lottery results.

The list of volunteers, sorted alphabetically by last name and numbered in ascending order, was announced on July 8th, 2009, with a deadline for any challenges set for July 15th, 2009. An update to the list was published on July 13th, 2009. The algorithm for randomly selecting the numbers identifying the volunteers that were selected was run twice using the software developed by Donald Eastlake, based on [[RFC3797](#)]. In order to allow for the cases whereby a volunteer was not able to accept the position, 15 numbers

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were output. The volunteers matching the first ten numbers were able to accept the position. This list was published on July 16th, 2009. The final list of voting members to serve on the 2009-2010 NomCom, as summarized below, was published on July 24th, 2009:

Scott Brim, Cisco

David H. Crocker, Brandenburg InternetWorking

Roque Gagliano, LACNIC

Randall Gellens, QUALCOMM, Inc.

Dorothy Gellert, No Affiliation

Wassim Haddad, Ericsson

Stephen Kent, BBN Technologies

Dimitri Papadimitriou, Alcatel-Lucent Bell

Simo Veikkolainen, Nokia

Lucy Yong, Huawei

The 2009-2010 NomCom, including liaisons as identified in [Section 2.2](#), officially held their first meeting on July 26th, 2009 at the start of IETF-75. Meeting for the first time face to face was an excellent way to start the process. Details for the organization, scheduling and planning are described in [Section 3](#).

[2.2. Liaisons and Confirming Bodies](#)

The following served as liasions and other non-voting members for the 2009-2010 NomCom:

Mary Barnes - Nomcom chair

Joel Halpern - Past Year chair

Jon Peterson - IAB liaison

Tim Polk - IESG liaison

Henk Uijterwaal - IAOC liaison

Bert Wijnen - ISOC BoT liaison

The role of the liaisons is defined in [[RFC3777](#)] and [[I-D.galvin-rfc3777bis](#)] for the IAOC liaison. The IAB, IESG and IAOC provided emails describing the role of the relevant liaisons which the NomCom chair agreed was reasonable. The NomCom chair also had discussions with the liaisons to agree the level of participation and involvement of the liaisons. In general the liaisons participated in the majority of conference calls and had visibility to all the information available to the voting members. The liaisons were made aware of all office hours and interview slots and had access to summaries and feedback from the office hours and interviews, but in general were not directly involved in those activities.

The IAB provided a detailed format for the candidate write-ups.

The 2009-2010 NomCom followed the model used by the 2008-2009 NomCom in agreeing upfront to share the majority of the nominee questionnaires, as discussed in [Section 3.2](#), with the confirming bodies. The questionnaires were formatted such that the nominees were aware of which information would be shared with the confirming bodies when they filled out the questionnaires.

[2.3.](#) Tools

One of the most important aspects in practice for the NomCom and the NomCom chair are the tools. Henrik Levkowetz built and maintains an extremely useful tool suite for the nominating committee. Henrik does not participate in the nominating committee activities and does not have access to the private data. However, nominating committee chairs may wish to ask him to officially serve as an advisor to the committee. This allows him to see information needed to diagnose problems with the tools.

The tools need to be configured properly each year. The first piece of configuration required is a public/private key pair created by the NomCom chair with the assistance of Henrik. The public key is used to access the data on the private webpage. The chair must arrange to deliver the private key to the NomCom members. Thus, configuring the key at the start of the 2nd IETF meeting would facilitate the distribution on a flash drive. An alternative is to store the key in an encrypted file on a server and provide the password verbally or via secure email.

The usual practice for the email list has been, and is recommended to be, the use of a two part list. The public list is maintained by the secretariat, without an archive. It copies all received email to all members of the NomCom, and to a private list on the tools site. The

private list is indexed and archived, and stored encrypted with the public key. NomCom members can access the full indexed and processed email information on the private webpage through the use of a tool on the private webpage which requires the private key provided by the NomCom chair.

The tools assist in keeping track of nominations, acceptances (or declines), questionnaires, and feedback. They are extremely useful, but the data does require frequent monitoring and manual annotation of the data cached for each nominee based on email addresses. Multiple email addresses also require special handling to ensure there is a single set of data maintained for each nominee. The 2009-2010 NomCom chair found it very useful to keep a separate spreadsheet to track all the nominations. The spreadsheet including links into the data on the tools page. The data was maintained in an encrypted file on a server, however, the wiki on the private webpage was found to be a very convenient place for storing these sorts of files.

3. Organizing, Scheduling and Planning

The 2009-2010 NomCom began self-organizing on July 27th, 2009 with the initial focus on gathering information during the week of the IETF-75 meeting. The group brainstormed a set of questions to gather information from the community, potential nominees and the current IAB, IESG and IAOC members during the office hours scheduled in the second half of the week. The group also spent time on the nominee questionnaires described in [Section 3.2](#).

The self-organization period overlapped with the nominations period which started on August 10th, 2009 and is described in [Section 4](#).

In general, there was overlap amongst all the steps of the process. Overall, the 2009-2010 did an exceptional job meeting the deadlines with a 3 day delay in announcing the IAB appointments and a 4 day delay in the announcement of the IESG appointments. This was just over a week prior to the requisite deadline of one month prior to the 1st IETF meeting of 2010. In general, while this NomCom started earlier (i.e., before the 2nd IETF meeting of 2009) the schedule is really bound by the timing for the 3rd IETF meeting which is crucial in gathering the final set of feedback from the community and nominees to allow the NomCom to complete their final deliberations.

Starting earlier, however, did allow the 2009-2010 NomCom to spend more time earlier in the process fine tuning the questionnaires as described in [Section 3.2](#), as well as receiving the completed questionnaires in time to do a very conscientious job of reviewing and evaluating the nominees along with community feedback as described in [Section 4.2](#), such that the office hours held during the 3rd IETF were quite effective.

3.1. Job Descriptions

The NomCom received job descriptions from the IAB, IAOC and IESG. The NomCom reviewed the job descriptions and made them available on the public NomCom wiki. The job descriptions were included as a link in the call for nominations.

The job descriptions were useful to the NomCom in formulating the questionnaires as described in [Section 3.2](#). The NomCom also gathered input from the community augmenting the job descriptions. The community input was extremely useful in helping the NomCom understand in particular the IAB and IAOC positions since many NomCom members do not have as much visibility into those positions.

3.2. Questionnaires

The NomCom started with the questionnaires from the 2008-2009 NomCom and made an initial pass through those during the week of the 2nd IETF meeting (IETF-75). The questionnaires were thoroughly reviewed - the NomCom then analyzed and augmented the questions with more targeted questions and requests for example situations, etc.

The targeted questions were extremely useful for ensuring that the NomCom got specific input rather than more general responses from the nominees. Feedback from the nominees indicated that they found the questionnaires more time consuming to complete, however, they felt they were comprehensive.

As was done for the 2008-2009 NomCom, the questionnaires were clearly labeled as to which information would and would not be provided to the confirming bodies. The specific section that was not shared was more open-ended to allow the nominees to provide any additional information that they wanted considered. Overall, this approach worked quite well.

4. Nominations and Feedback Collection

The nominations and feedback collection phases of the NomCom process require significant community involvement. This stage of the process provided the baseline set of nominees for consideration by the NomCom and gives the NomCom insight into the community's views of and work experiences with the nominees.

4.1. Nominations

The nominations period started on August 10th, 2009. Nominations were input by the community using the tool on the NomCom public webpage or via email. The NomCom chair entered all the nominees received via email using the tool. A list of all nominees was also maintained in a spreadsheet as described in [Section 2.3](#). The tool automatically generates an email notifying the nominee and requesting the nominee accept or decline the nomination. However, often times nominees need a reminder and the spreadsheet allowed the NomCom chair to have direct access to the nominee email address, as well as annotations with regards to dates of responses, reminders, receipt of questionnaires, etc. In addition, some nominees that declined indicated they were willing to serve as ringers, so this information was also maintained in the spreadsheet. Note, however, that the need for ringers is eliminated due to the approval of public announcement of the list of nominees per [[RFC5680](#)].

The nominations period officially ended on Sept 18th, 2009, however, a few additional nominations were accepted after that date. In addition, a second call for nominations for the Transport area was initiated on October 28th, 2009.

4.2. Feedback Collection

Prior to the start of feedback collection, there are a lot of administrative details to be addressed. The nominee data must accurately reflect all the acceptances and declines for NomCom's use and any ringers annotated. The list of nominees for which the NomCom is soliciting feedback (at that point in time), including any ringers, must be configured so that the information is visible on the public webpage. While [[RFC5680](#)] allows for public visibility into the list of nominees that have accepted, this does not necessarily imply that the tools for future NomComs will be configured to gather feedback on all the nominees - the nominees for whom feedback is gathered is up to the NomCom.

The collection of feedback on the nominees started around October 14th, 2009. In keeping with the confidentiality rules in place for this NomCom, the requests for feedback were sent to a subset (a

rather large subset) of the community. The tool adds the email addresses of the individuals to whom the requests are sent to the Access Control List for providing feedback for a specific position. One important note is that individuals that have been nominated will not see their name on the list of nominees for that position even if their name is visible to others. The tool also requires that you have a tools password. In some cases, individuals were using email addresses different from their tools password - the easiest way to fix that was to resend the request for feedback to the email address for which the individual had a tools password. However, this issue should not apply for subsequent NomComs with [[RFC5680](#)] in place.

The 2009-2010 NomCom also announced local office hours such that individuals could contact one of the NomCom members in their geographic location or who might speak a language other than English to facilitate the collection of feedback. The NomCom chair summarized the availability, locations and languages spoken in an announcement to the community. In the end, only a few members of the community took advantage of the local office hours, however, this NomCom recommends that future NomComs provide the community the information described above and be pro-active in the solicitation of feedback. Several of the NomCom members also took advantage of other face to face conferences to gather feedback from members of the IETF community.

The collection of feedback was intended to be completed by November 9th, 2009. However, feedback at IETF-76 indicated that many individuals had not yet had time to provide input on the nominees and since the nominations were re-opened for the Transport AD position, the NomCom chose to take advantage of the renewed attention from the community to accept additional feedback on the current lists of nominees (again noting that the lists can be dynamic) until November 27th, 2009. Feedback was requested to be input using the tool, however, the NomCom also accepted feedback via email. Email feedback was input by NomCom chair using the tool. NomCom members also entered feedback gathered during interviews with nominees and the community using the tool. Thus, all the feedback was visible for the nominees in one place.

5. Candidate Selection

The NomCom conscientiously reviewed all the candidate questionnaires and community feedback in evaluating the nominees. The NomCom considered the requirements for the job based on the job descriptions and community input.

The overall selection process is for the most part confidential. The deliberations took place using WebEx conferences and via email and were based on a thorough review of the community feedback, analysis of job requirements and NomCom member assessments of the nominees from the questionnaires and any interviews. Voting mechanisms were used and in cases where there was not a clear majority, secondary votes were taken. All votes were confirmed by the NomCom chair and the previous NomCom chair.

Once the candidates were all selected, the write-ups for the confirming bodies were completed and reviewed by the NomCom. The write-ups were sent to the confirming bodies and clarifications and additional information was provided as requested. The NomCom chair re-confirmed the availability of the nominees to serve in the positions should they be approved and notified them once their appointment was approved prior to the public announcement.

6. Process Considerations: Recommendations and Concerns

This sections highlights some scheduling considerations for use by future NomComs. In addition, concerns with regards to community involvement and potential issues with the application of the open list of nominees for future NomComs are discussed.

6.1. Schedule Considerations

The 2009-2010 started reasonably early in the process - approximately 2 months after the first IETF meeting of the year. However, even with starting that early, the timeline for the process remained aggressive. The NomCom chair took about 10 days to get organized prior to starting the call for volunteers. The sooner the call for volunteers is started the better. It is essential that the timing is such that the NomCom has been formed prior to the second IETF meeting - the face to face meeting time is invaluable for the team cohesion, as well as gathering community input.

The second IETF meeting should focus on gathering an understanding of all the positions to be filled and start development of the questionnaires for the nominees. The 2009-2010 NomCom spent the Sunday-Tuesday getting organized and then held office hours, as well as NomCom member meetings, based on the availability of the NomCom members during the remainder of the week.

While the 2009-2010 NomCom did start fairly early, the completion of the task is still fairly tightly bound to the third IETF meeting, which this NomCom found essential for scheduling face-to-face interviews with selected nominees, garnering additional feedback from the community on requirements and considerations for the positions being filled as well as feedback on specific nominees.

The 2009-2010 NomCom worked aggressively after the third IETF meeting to ensure that for the most part the final deliberations were complete and thus the candidate write-ups could be completed during the first week of the new year. Overall, the schedule had about two weeks padding, which is essential to allow time for handling additional questions from and clarifications for the confirming bodies.

While most NomComs would like more time to make their decisions, it's likely not realistic to start any earlier as it can be difficult with the current timing for nominees to obtain firm commitment to serve in the positions. However, either way, the NomCom does need to plan for the possibility that a candidate cannot accept the position at the point in time the decision is made. The availability of the nominees to serve, should they be selected, needs to be ascertained at several

points during the process: 1) Initial nomination 2) During final deliberations prior to sending candidate slates to the confirming bodies 3) Prior to any public announcement of the approved candidates.

6.2. Community Involvement

Overall, more community involvement is desired in the process. Only about 5% of the community provided nominations. Fortunately, the number of people that provided feedback was higher, however, it was still not a significant percentage of IETF participants. Without community involvement in this stage, the process becomes a matter of a small group of people making decisions as to who will serve as future leaders for the community.

This problem may be less of an issue for future NomComs given that the list of nominees will no longer be confidential in future NomComs per [\[RFC5680\]](#), collecting additional nominees might be easier since individuals will be able to see who has and hasn't been nominated and not assume that their preferred individual is already in the pool under consideration.

Given that [\[RFC5680\]](#) will be in place for future NomComs, there may no longer be a need to selectively request feedback from the community via individual emails (generated by the tool). However, the burden moves to the community to respond to open requests for feedback as opposed to the individual emails.

6.3. Potential Impacts of Open List

As mentioned in [Section 6.2](#) the introduction of [\[RFC5680\]](#) into the NomCom process makes some aspects easier:

1. There is no longer a need to decide whether or not to include ringers.
2. There is no longer a need for a tool to generate emails targeted at a subset of the population to gather feedback on the nominees.
3. There is no longer a concern with sharing of information as to who is under consideration.

There are some potential issues that might be encountered by future NomComs with open list, some of which were discussed at length during the development of [\[RFC5680\]](#):

1. Some individuals may be reluctant to accept the nomination since having been nominated, but not appointed, is visible outside the IETF. Many individuals are okay with the IETF community being aware of this, however, there are concerns that individuals that do not understand IETF process will consider this to be a negative reflection on the individual.
2. Related to the previous point, many individuals are willing to have their names under consideration even though they know they are less likely to get appointed just so that the NomCom can perform due diligence in evaluating the nominees. This is particularly true in the case of incumbents. However, individuals might be far more reluctant to do this in the case that the list is publicly available.

7. Issues

The 2009-2010 encountered several issues which are of importance to the community. These include diversity in selecting candidates, affiliations of the candidates and ensuring the right level and types of management and technical expertise of the candidates. In addition, there have been concerns with regards to pressure on NomCom members to support a specific nominee.

7.1. Diversity

The IETF is an international organization with open participation. It is important that the IETF leadership be a reflection of the diversity of its participants.

The 2009-2010 NomCom was faced with a very non-diverse set of nominees in terms of geographic region, ethnicity and gender at the time nominations were closed. Encouraging the community to consider this factor in the nominations is important and given the applicability of [\[RFC5680\]](#) to future NomComs, the community should have more visibility into this problem earlier in the process. However, diversity should also be considered in the context of the broader concern about the scarcity of folks that are able to serve in IETF leadership positions as discussed in [Section 7.2](#) and [Section 7.3](#).

7.2. Affiliations

As noted in [Section 7.1](#) the IETF is an open organization as such one would expect that no single company or funder of participants would dominate the leadership positions. The 2009-2010 NomCom did find that several companies and funders had a larger number of nominees. While there is no rule with regards to the number of leadership positions held by a specific company, past NomComs had limited the number of IESG positions to two for a single company or funding source and did not allow the two ADs for a specific area to have the same funding source.

Another concern with regards to affiliations was the apparent dominance of vendors in leadership positions as opposed to network operators/service providers and academics. Individuals in the latter two categories most often declined the nominations due to lack of funding and/or lack of time. Thus, the Nomcom was left with a dominance of vendors to consider for the majority of the leadership positions.

The approach used by the 2009-2010 was to evaluate the nominees independent of the funding source and is consistent with the general

credo in IETF that participants act as individuals and opinions do not necessarily reflect those of their funder. The 2009-2010 NomCom did receive clear responses from nominees in the questionnaires with regards to their willingness to make decisions independent of any affiliations and confirmed this with specific nominees during interviews, thus the NomCom was confident that the candidates selected were very willing to perform their roles independent of funding source or any other affiliation.

Following this approach resulted in the selection of two candidates from the same company, bringing the total to three area directors from a specific a company for the IESG. In addition, this also resulted in both ADs in the security area doing work associated with the U.S. Government - one is employed by NIST and the other is an independent consultant who has contracts with the DoD. It was also noted that the IETF chair is also an independent contractor who also has the U.S. Government as a customer. This is of concern due to the potential effects on the actions of other governments and SDOs, especially given the importance of politically charged security topics such as RPKI, DNSSEC, etc. A secondary issue is the potential effects of the affiliations on the current IETF appeals process in the event a security-related appeal arises. The NomCom requests that the IESG will adopt an explicit process for handling appeals in the related area that removes any potential perception of a conflict of interest.

The affiliation issue was far less of a problem for the IAB selection, although concerns were raised about how few network operators/ service providers were under consideration.

Overall, there is a very general problem of determining the source of funding and/or affiliations for nominees, and contractors/consultants in particular. The funding/affiliations can change over time - even during tenures in IETF leadership position. Thus, it is extremely difficult and not particularly effective for the NomCom to make decisions based on affiliations or funding sources. However, the NomCom needs to consider and document any potential concerns in this regard in the write-ups to the confirming body and the community should be made aware of such.

7.3. Expertise

Selection of the IESG candidates requires the NomCom to consider the technical expertise of the co-AD as well as to ensure that the candidate has the appropriate management and technical experience. In the case of the IAB candidates, the NomCom is required to consider the technical and management expertise of the IAB as a whole.

Several individuals in the community emphasized the importance of having a researcher in the Transport AD position, given that the primary focus of current efforts is research based. However, none of the individuals with that specific background or focus were able to accept the nomination. The NomCom carefully evaluated community feedback and discussed at length the accepted pool of nominees, considering the depth and breadth of technical knowledge as well as management experience and strengths. While the candidate selected by the NomCom for the TSV AD position does not have a depth of technical expertise in the transport area, he does have depth and breadth of technical knowledge in other areas and some very desirable management skills and experience and he provides a good balance for his co-AD.

The decision of this NomCom for the Transport area, however, brings into question the future of the TSV area, in particular for the next NomCom which may have to replace the sitting AD. In the past the TSV area had also included the SIP and multimedia related WGs, however, the latter were split out to create the RAI area. The RAI area has continued to grow, whereas, the TSV has remained one of the smaller areas. During collection of community feedback, it was suggested that a single AD could manage the area. However, this NomCom could not make that decision and did not believe they could leave the position unfilled in the final IESG slate. Thus, the advantages and disadvantages were not evaluated in detail, but it is something that might be considered by the IESG. Another important aspect highlighted by the selection process is the need for a leadership development plan for the Transport area. NomCom recommends that the IESG and community consider the current state and role of the Transport area and determine whether actions such as steps to improve leadership development and/or restructuring the area are appropriate.

7.4. Lobbying and Leaks

The 2009-2010 NomCom encountered an issue with regards to individuals lobbying for specific nominees. In addition, there were attempts to exert undue influence on the process by suggesting that NomCom members should support a specific nominee due to business relationships between the NomCom member's sponsor and the organization exerting the pressure.

These attempts did not compromise the outcome of the 2009-2010 NomCom. However, the situation made it difficult for NomCom members to feel that information within the group was being kept confidential. If this type of problem continues or becomes worse, it could be very damaging to the NomCom process. Some individuals will be reluctant to volunteer to serve on NomCom to avoid this situation. In addition, depending upon the makeup of the NomCom, the outcome could possibly be influenced.

To avoid or minimize problems at the outset, the NomCom chair should ensure that each NomCom member is fully aware of his/her responsibility to not share any information that is not publicly available outside the NomCom and that each NomCom member has communicated such to their sponsor. In addition, while NomCom may choose to follow processes that appear to minimize visibility as to who is supporting which nominee (e.g., secret ballots), the mailing list and conference call discussions leading up to any balloting generally make individual positions quite clear. Thus, it is all the more important that the confidentiality aspects of NomCom are taken seriously by all NomCom members (voting and non-voting) to ensure that due diligence is applied to the process.

8. Security Considerations

The 2009-10 NomCom followed the practices of the last several years in order to ensure the confidentiality of the information associated with the Nomcom activity. The archives of the comments, questionnaires from nominees, and other email to the committee are stored encrypted on a server managed by Henrik, with the encryption key known only to the committee members. Distribution of the key was done manually at the 2nd IETF meeting in Stockholm and was also made available using a password protected file on a website, with the password to the file verbally distributed to committee members. Other information was also made available using a password protected file on a website. However, the NomCom protected webpage also has a wiki where such information can be securely made available.

While Henrik Levkowetz did have access to the NomCom private webpage, he did not have the key that was used to access community feedback, nominee questionnaires, etc. Thus, per [\[RFC3777\]](#), the confidentiality of community feedback was maintained and only the voting NomCom members, liaisons and current/past Nomcom chairs had access to the community feedback and nominee questionnaires.

9. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA considerations.

10. Informative References

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