Genetic Algorithm as Machine Learning for Profiles Recognition

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Abstract: Persons are often asked to provide information about themselves. These data are very heterogeneous and result in as many "profiles" as contexts. Sorting a large amount of profiles from different contexts and assigning them back to a specific individual is quite a difficult problem. Semantic processing and machine learning are key tools to achieve this goal. This paper describes a framework to address this issue by means of concepts and algorithms selected from different Artificial Intelligence fields. Indeed, a Vector Space Model is customized to first transpose semantic information into a mathematical model. Then, this model goes through a Genetic Algorithm (GA) which is used as a supervised learning algorithm for training a computer to determine how much two profiles are similar. Amongst the GAs, this study introduces a new reproduction method (Best Together), and compare it to some usual ones (Wheel, Binary Tournament). This paper also evaluates the accuracy of the GAs predictions for profiles clustering with the computation of a similarity score, as well as its ability to classify two profiles are similar or non-similar. We believe that the overall methodology can be used for any kind of sources using profiles and, more generally, for similar data recognition.

1 INTRODUCTION

For several years, we have witnessed the exponential growth of data worldwide. According to the experts, 90% of world data had been generated over the last two years. Human cannot handle this large amount of data, hence machine comes in the foreground for processing and extracting meaningful information from them.

In this paper, we will focus on a special kind of data: those concerning people. These data can be very heterogeneous due to the diversity of their origin. Data comes from several sources: public (social media, forums, etc.) or private (employee database, customer database, etc.).

Despite their diversity, collected data are processed the same way: each user (a real person) is matched with one or several profiles. A profile could contain global information (city, gender ...) or specific information (work history ...). The information volume could also be dense or sparse.

This paper differs from existing studies about profiles recognition in social networks (Rawashdeh & Ralescu, 2014) because it does not focus on similarity between profiles within a social network but between different social networks. Even if existing solutions, such as the use of Vector Space Models (VSM) for information retrieval (Salton, 1968), inspired our study, they are not straight related.

The problem is to identify the same real person between different profiles from different sources.

To do so, the objective is to teach a computer to automatically answer the question: "Are these two profiles about the same real person?". Just like it would be for a human, the teaching will be split in two phases. During a first phase, the computer will use a human-made set of data to train. Within this training set, for each possible combination of profiles, the question above had been answered. The training should be done with various profiles from different sources to be relevant. After the training phase, the computer will be able to predict a similarity score between two profiles. The performances will be determined through the analysis of predefined criteria for predictions.

In this study, we investigate how to determine a person profile using a combination of natural language processing, genetic algorithm and machine learning. In addition, we propose a new reproduction mechanism, named here Best Together (BT). The

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new reproduction is compared with other methods such as Wheel and Binary Tournament. Results indicate BT as a promising strategy for profile recognition.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces how to convert a profile (a set of semantic information) to a mathematic model, understandable for a computer. Section 3 describes the overview of the genetic algorithm used to train the computer for profile recognition. Section 4 analyses the results of the prediction made by our model and it will be followed by our conclusions.

2 MATHEMATICS DESIGN FOR PROFILES

2.1 Representation of a Profile

First of all, let us introduce the mathematical model used for profiles representation. A profile will be considered as a set of labelled semantic information. For example:

Information	Label
Foo	firstname
Bar	lastname
Paris	city
beer	like

Table 1: Profile example.

In order to be able to compare several profiles on a same frame of references, we will use the *Vector Space Models* (VSM) of semantics.

Indeed, computers have difficulty understanding semantic information but VSM provides a solution for this problem. They have widely been used in different fields as a recent survey highlights (Turney and Pantel, 2010). In particular, they have been successfully used in the field of Machine Learning for classification (Dasarathy, 1991) and also for clustering (A. K. Jain, 1999).

Within a VSM, each profile P_x will be transposed as a vector V_x with N_x dimensions which are all the information in the profile P_x . For example, the profile above will be a vector with the dimensions: "Foo", "Bar", "Paris" and "beer".

The value of V_x in a specific dimension δ will be a weighting from the label matched with the information δ .

The VSM consists in creating a new vector space of M dimensions. For two vectors V_x and V_y , the dimension M is set as:

$$M = N_x \cup N_y \tag{1}$$

Whenever transposing a vector into a VSM, the vector has a value 0 on its non-existing dimensions.

Illustration to the use of VSM with an example : considering two profiles P_1 and P_2 :

Table 2: Contents for profiles P₁ and P₂.

P ₁		P ₂	
Foo	firstname	Foo	firstname
Bar	lastname	Bar	lastname
Google	organisation	Horses	like
Paris	city	Google	like

For the purpose of this example, the weighting for each label are:

Table 3: Weighting example.

Label	Weight
firstname	0.7
lastname	0.8
organisation	0.4
city	0.5
like	0.1

The associated VSM, with the vector V_1 for P_1 and V_2 for P_2 , will be:

Table 4: VSM for V₁ and V₂.

Dimension	V_1	V_2
Foo	0.7	0.7
Bar	0.8	0.8
Google	0.4	0.1
Paris	0.5	0
Horses	0	0.1

The advantage of this representation is to keep the semantic information in the forefront of the mathematic analysis. In the example above, both profiles have the information "Google" but for one, this information is labelled as "organisation" and for the other, it is labelled as "like". Even with these different labels, this model will consider the information important but at a different scale. By intuition, we would like to set the label "organisation" at a higher value than the label "like" because the former is usually more relevant to distinct two profiles than the later. We acquired this intuition through our experience and we would like the computer to get the same "intuition" for any kind of labels.

2.2 Similarity Function

Once the VSM for two vectors V_x and V_y is created, the usual method is to compute their similarity with the cosine (Turney and Pantel, 2010):

similarity
$$(V_x, V_y) = \cos(\alpha)$$
 (2)

where α is the angle between V_x and V_y.

This similarity rate gives a good clue of how close two vectors are within their vector space, therefore how similar two profiles are.

But there is a human intuition in profiles recognition that is missing with this computation. Sometimes, two profiles do not contain enough relevant information to evaluate their similarity. For example, if two profiles like the same singer and these profiles only contain this information, it is not enough to determine they both concern the same person. Through experimentation, we noticed that the norm of a vector is a good metric to evaluate the relevance of a profile. Therefore, the similarity rate is smoothed with the average norm of the two vectors:

similarity(
$$V_x, V_y$$
) = cos(α) * ($\|V_x\| + \|V_y\|$) / 2 (3)

where $\|V\|$ is the Euclidean norm for the vector V. The factor $(\|V_x\| + \|V_y\|) / 2$ goes through a repair function which assures it stays in the real interval [0,1].

This similarity rate is a real value in [0,1] and it can be interpreted as a percentage. For example, a rate of 0.27 corresponds to 27% of similarity.

To sum it up, making use a VSM is an effective process to move from semantic information to a mathematic model which will be used to compute effectively the similarity between two profiles. The next step is to teach the computer to find dynamically the weighting for each label. For this purpose, a genetic algorithm is applied in this study.

3 GENETIC ALGORITHM

Genetic algorithms (GA) are heuristics, based on Charles Darwin's theory of natural evolution, used to solve optimization problems (Hüe, 1997). The general process for a GA is described as follows (Eberhart et al., 1996), (Kim and Cho, 2000):

Step 1: Initialize a population.

Step 2: Compute the fitness function for each chromosome in the population.

Step 3: Reproduce chromosomes, based on their fitness.

Step 4 : Perfom crossover and mutation.

Step 5 : Go back to *step 2* or stop according to a given stopping criteria.

GA can also be used as Machine Learning (ML) algorithm and has been shown to be efficient in this purpose (Goldberg, 1989). The idea behind is that natural-like algorithms can demonstrate, in some cases in the ML field, a higher efficiency compared to human-designed algorithms (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001). Indeed, actual evolutionary processes have succeeded to solve highly complex problems, as proved through probabilistic arguments (Moorhead and Kaplan, 1967).

In our case, GA will be used to determine an adequate set of weighting for each label present in a training set. Our training set is composed with similarities between profiles, two profiles are either similar (output = 1) or not similar (output = 0).

3.1 Genetic Representation

The genotype for each chromosome of the population will be the group of all labels in the training set. Each label is defined as a gene and the weighting for a specific label is the allele of the linked gene. The weighting is a value in [0,1], it could be translated as the relevance of a label and it reaches its best at value 1 and worst at 0.

3.2 **Population Initialization**

For population initialization, there are two questions : "What is the initial population size ?" and "What is the procedure to initialize the population ?".

About the population size, the goal is to find a compromise between the global complexity and the performance of the solution (Holland, 1992). A small population may fail to converge and a large one may demand an excessive amount of memory and computation time. It turns out that the size of the initial population has to be carefully chosen, tailored to address our specific problem.

As a reminder, in our problem, the GA have to compute weighting for a number N of labels in the training set. We evaluated different values for the population size, compromised between efficiently and complexity and chose to fix the population size to $2 \times N$.

Secondly, to initialize a population, there are usually two ways: heuristic initialization or random initialization. The heuristic initialization, even if it allows to converge faster to a solution, has the issue to restrain the GA to search solutions in a specific area and it may fail to converge to a global optimum (Hüe, 1997). A random initialization is a facilitating factor for preventing GA to get stuck in a local optima.

In our case, the random initialization consists in

giving a random weighting between [0,1] for each gene within the genotype.

3.3 Fitness Function

The main purpose of a fitness function is to evaluate a chromosome, based on how well it fits the desired solution (Hüe, 1997).

In our case, chromosomes are evaluated on how well they fit the training set, using the VSM method to predict similarities. We chose to use a fitness function which is widely used in the ML field (Shen, 2005), as our problem can be related to a regression problem. It is called the *logarithmic loss* which is defined as follows:

$$loss = -\frac{1}{M} \sum_{i=1}^{M} (y_i \log (p_i) + (1 - y_i) \log(1 - p_i))$$
(4)

where M is the number of examples in our training set, y_i is the output (0 or 1) of the *i*th example and p_i is the output in [0;1] from the current chromosome. To prevent the asymptote at 0 from the logarithmic function, the predicted output p is replaced with:

$$p := max(min(p, 1-10^{-15}), 10^{-15})$$
 (5)

3.4 Crossover

Crossover is the artificial reproduction method for a GA. It has to define how two selected chromosomes will produce an offspring. Crossover is crucial for GA, causing a structured exchange of genetic information between solutions which could lead good solutions to better ones (Srinivas and Patnaik, 1994).

We chose to use the *arithmetic crossover* with an alpha parameter at 0.5. This crossover creates children that are the weighted arithmetic mean of two parents:

offspring =
$$0.5 * \text{parent1} + 0.5 * \text{parent2}$$
 (6)

3.5 Mutation

Mutation forces some chromosomes to change and it allows the GA to get away from a local optima (Hüe, 1997).

In our case, the risk to get stuck in a local optima is present. Indeed, the aim for our GA is to find the optimized weighting for a set of labels which consists in finding the relevant labels (high weighting) and the non-relevant ones (low weighting), consequently creating an ordering for the labels. Local optima would consists of a version of the GA detecting that, for example, the label "lastname" is relevant to find some similarities within the training set. This result will lead to a better fitness function. But it would be a local optima due to the necessity to find the right weighting and ranking for each label. The GA should be defined with a sufficient amount of diversity which will allows keeping a good weighting for a specific label but still enabling variation to the other labels.

Therefore, we chose to implement a mutation method which enhances the diversity.

Beside the mutation chance M_c , which determines the chance for an offspring to mutate, we set up a *mutation rate* M_r . If a new chromosome mutates (i.e. if a random number in $[0,1] < M_c$), each of its alleles will vary depending on a random factor F in $[1 - M_r, 1 + M_r]$. Of course, a repair function is applied to ensure that each allele stays in [0,1].

3.6 Reproduction

The reproduction (or selection) method is intended to improve the average quality for a new generation. To fulfill this goal, this method usually follows the Darwin's principle that the fittest chromosomes will tend to reproduce more (Hüe, 1997).

There are two categories of reproduction methods: proportionate and ordinal-based.

The first one is based on the fitness value and gives each chromosome a chance to reproduce proportionally to its value. A typical method is the wheel (Goldberg, 1989). We consider a wheel where each chromosome has a portion with a size proportional to its score. To select partners for crossover, we simply "launch" the wheel. With this method, each chromosome has a chance to be a parent, even so, statistically, the fittest chromosomes might have a better chance than the others.

On the contrary, for ordinal-based methods, the chromosomes are ranked according to their fitness and the selection is based upon the rank of a chromosome within the population. A classical approach is the use of the tournament method (Miller and Goldberg, 1995). This method needs to get a parameter S (tournament size) which determines the size for a round. In fact, this method proceeds round after round. At each round, S chromosomes are randomly selected, the highest-ranked chromosome wins the round and it is selected for crossover.

However, for this specific problem of profiles recognition, we came up with a new idea which will be presented afterwards. Then, we will show the results in comparison with the state of the art of reproduction method.

Usually, a GA have a low mutation chance (~ 0.05) which leads to a controlled diversity. The

reproduction method also controls the diversity by letting globally a chance for each chromosome to be selected for crossover.

The idea of our GA is to set up a huge mutation factor (Section 3.5) which will ensure the diversity of our algorithm and prevent it to get stuck in a local optima. Beside this point, the tactic is to have a highly selective reproduction method which allows to get rid of all non-adequate chromosomes. To sum up, a generation will have a lot of diversity but will quickly throw non-suitable chromosomes away. The diversity is assured by our mutation method, so we just need the reproduction method to be selective.

Consequently, we created our own reproduction method, labelled as Best Together (BT). It is inspired by the idea of considering only an elite group of chromosomes for reproduction, introduced with the Biased Random-Key incoming of Genetic Algorithms (Resende, 2010). It is an ordinal-based method; thereby it is necessary to rank the population. For a population of size N, this method will select a number X of the best chromosomes. Each of these selected chromosomes will reproduce with all others selected chromosomes. We know that it leads to a number of crossover equals to:

$$X * (X - 1) / 2$$
 (7)

Each crossover producing an offspring, the population size needs to stay approximately the same. To do so, we need the equation 7 to be equal to N, which leads to the following polynomial equation:

$$X^2 - X - 2^* N = 0 \tag{8}$$

The X computed by the BT method is the positive solution of this quadratic form (which always exists because if a = 1 and c = -2, then the determinant ≥ 0). The solution might be a real number, therefore only the floor of X is kept. It slightly decreases the population size but it does not really affect the quality of the GA.

As we explained, once the BT method has computed this value X, it takes a group of X best chromosomes and applies crossover with all combinations, except for a chromosome with itself.

3.7 Comparison

In (Section 3.6), we presented a new reproduction method which differs from the state of the art. In this section, we will compare it with some state of the art GA over our training set.

We compared 3 GA with the following parameters:

1) A wheel reproduction.

- 2) A tournament reproduction with a tournament size 2 (binary tournament).
- 3) Our BT reproduction method.

For the figure 1, we set $M_c = 0.75$ and $M_r = 0.8$, which is considered as a large mutation chance and we saved the best score for the fitness function in each generation.



No. of generation

Figure 1: Comparison of reproduction with a large mutation.

The BT method converges faster than the Wheel and Tournament methods: it reaches a LogLoss value below 0.17 at the 14th generation. The Wheel reaches this threshold at the 27th generation and the Tournament does not reach it within the first 50 generations.

But the BT method is a specific method for a large mutation chance and it performs poorly with a low mutation chance. As you can observe with the figure 2, where we set $M_c = 0.1$ and $M_r = 0.8$:



Figure 2: Comparison of reproduction with a low mutation.

4 **RESULTS**

The real test of our algorithm will be done in a supervised machine learning context. It will be evaluated for the quality of its predictions.

For that, we trained our model with the GA presented in (Section 3) over a training set composed of 3,003 similarities between profiles. In the training set, an output for a similarity between two profiles is either 1 (the two profiles correspond to the same person) or 0. Apart from the training set, we have a test set, composed with 741 similarities and their output with the same format. This set is not used to train the model with the GA; its only purpose is to evaluate predictions for our trained model.

These sets are extracted from different sources. Therefore, each set is really disparate because its contain profiles with different size.

Training set



Figure 3: Distribution of the profiles in the training set.

The distribution of profiles, in the training set, according to the number of information per profile is as follows:

Within the training set, the average information per profile is 14.49 but the standard deviation is 11.13. This standard deviation is really high compared with the average, which proves the diversity in the training set. Even if the test set is smaller, its average is 14.57 and its standard deviation is 11.08, which is almost the same diversity as the training set.

During our training phase, our model learns from a dataset with discrete outputs. But as we are using a mathematical model (described in section 2) based on cosine to compute similarity rate, the outputs are continuous values.

Therefore, this section will present how our model performs on this test set viewed from two aspects: regression problem and classification. The former will evaluate our original model to predict continuous valued output, corresponding to the similarity rate between two profiles. The second will adapt our model to determine if either two profiles are similar (class = 1) or non-similar (class = 0).

4.1 Regression Problem

In our case, the regression problem is translated into the capacity for our model to determine that some pair of profiles are more similar than others, even if all these pairs correspond to the same person (output = 1). The differences between similarity rates come from the fact that, even for a human, deducing that 2 profiles correspond to the same person is more obvious with some data than others.

But we cannot objectively evaluate the similarity score computed by our model. Imagine that, for a specific pair of profiles, our model sets up a similarity score at 0.7. As humans, a value of 0.7 has no meaning when it comes to decide whether two profiles concern the same person, or two. We expect "yes" or "no". For our model, 0.7 makes sense from a computational point of view.

Actually, what we really need is to find clusters of profiles which correspond to the same person.

In our test set, we have the following clusters:



Figure 4: Clusters within the test set.

Each node represents a profile and each link represents a similarity between 2 profiles (output = 1). The cluster 1 - 2 - 3 means that each profile is related to the same real person.

Our model predicted the following clusters:



Figure 5: Clusters prediction.

Each value matched with a link corresponds to a similarity value between 2 profiles. We removed the links with a 0 value.

The first observation is that each cluster is there, even if some links (5-7, 4-7 and 12-23) are missing. This means that the model allows us to indirectly link profiles which are not similar with the direct comparison of their data.

We can also observe an expected pattern with the first cluster (1-2-3), where the links 1-2 and 2-3 have strong similarities while the link 1-3 is weak. Indeed, when we look closer at the test set, the profile 2 contains more relevant information than both profiles 1 and 3. Therefore, this is really positive that our model is also able to detect both strong and weak similarities.

4.2 Binary Classification

For binary classification, we need our model to be able to classify two profiles as similar (class 1, positive class) or non-similar (class 0, negative class).

4.2.1 Threshold

In order to allow our model to classify two profiles, we need to set up a *threshold*. Two profiles with a predicted value below this threshold will be classified as the class 0, otherwise as the class 1.

As part of the learning phase, this threshold shall be tuned so as to match user's expectation about the model. A high threshold should be used if the user wants his model to be restrictive to determine that two profiles are similar and, in return, a low threshold for an extendible model is needed. To give an example, in the context of our project, we fixed the threshold to 0.075 because we presume that two profiles are similar when some relevant information match.

4.2.2 Metrics

First of all, we need to define the different metrics widely used in binary classification problems.

In binary classification, a model predicts if a data has a class 0 or 1 (predicted class) and a dataset indicate the actual class for this data.

Then, we can introduce 4 metrics as follow:

Table 5: Main metrics for binary classification.

		Actual Class		
		1	0	
	1	True positive	False	
Predicted			positive	
Class	0	False	True	
		negative	negative	

In general, positive = identified and negative = rejected. Therefore:

- True positive (TP) = correctly identified
- False positive (FP) = incorrectly identified
- True negative (TN) = correctly rejected
- False negative (FN) = incorrectly rejected

Usually, a metric *accuracy* is used and defined as:

$$accuracy = (TP + TN)/M \tag{9}$$

where M = size of the dataset.

But in our case it will not be relevant because we can define our class 1 as a skewed class. Our training set is composed with 3003 similarities but only 26 of them (0.87%) have an output of 1. It means that if a model predicts always the class 0, it would have an accuracy of 99.13%.

Therefore, a binary classification problem with a skewed class is defined as an imbalanced learning problem and it should be handled specially (He & Garcia, 2009). Then, we would use other metrics such as *precision* (P) and *recall* (R). Precision is defined as follows:

$$precision = TP/(TP + FP)$$
(10)

This metrics is useful to evaluate how well a model predicts positives values.

The recall (R) is defined as follows:

$$recall = TP/(TP + FN)$$
(11)

This metric, also named sensitivity, measures the rate of a model to predict incorrect positives classes.

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These two metrics are really useful but there is an issue: they are interdependent.

Supposing that we want the model to predict that two profiles are similar only if it is very confident (i.e. avoid false positives). Then, we would fix the threshold to a high value, like 0.9. Doing so, the model will have a higher precision and a lower recall.

On the contrary, considering we would like a model which avoid missing similarities between profiles (i.e. avoid false negatives). This time, we would fix the threshold to a low value, like 0.1. The result will be a higher recall and a lower precision.

Now, the problem is that we need a good metric that will help to find a balance between precision and recall. As an illustration, considering the following table:

Precision	Recall	Average
0.5	0.4	0.45
0.7	0.1	0.4
0.02	1.0	0.51

Table 6: Use of Average to compare Precision and Recall.

Genuinely, the first pair (0.5, 0.4) seems better than the last pair (0.02, 1.0) which is unbalanced. But the first pair has a worse average than the last pair.

To prevent that, we introduce a last metric, the *F1*-*Score*, as follows:

$$F1Score = (2 \times P \times R) / (P + R)$$
(12)

This metric is a weighted average of the precision and recall and we will use this one to measure our test accuracy.

To show its effectiveness, we updated the table above with this new metric:

Precision	Recall	Average	F1Score
0.5	0.4	0.45	0.444
0.7	0.1	0.4	0.175
0.02	1.0	0.51	0.0392

Table 7: Comparison of the Average and F1Score.

The F1Score, as well as the other metrics, reaches its best at value 1 and worst score at 0.

For our test set, we tried different values for the threshold:



Figure 6: Precision, Recall and F1Score within the test set.

Considering this figure, the first information is that our model is highly precise. From a low threshold (0.075) to the highest prediction within the test set (0.79), the metric precision is always at 1. This level of precision allows to select a low threshold. This low threshold also permits to keep a high value for the metric recall, which gets lower when the threshold rises.

4.2.3 ROC Curve

In binary classification, a *Receiver Operation Characteristic (ROC) curve* is a statistical tool for evaluating a classifier and choosing a threshold. In particular, it is fundamental in medicine to determine a cutoff value for a clinical test (Campbell & Zweig, 1993).

The curve is created by plotting the true positive rate in function of the false positive rate at various threshold settings. In Machine Learning, the true positive rate is the metric called recall and the false positive rate is named *fall-out*. The fall-out is defined as follows:

$$fall - out = FP/(FP + TN)$$
(13)

A high threshold would decrease both fall-out and recall. However, the objective is to get the highest recall and the lowest fall-out. Indeed, a test with perfect discrimination has a ROC curve that passes through the point (0,1) which is called a perfect classification. Therefore, the closer the curve is to the upper left corner, the higher the overall accuracy of the test (Campbell & Zweig, 1993).

The graphical plot of the ROC curve for our test set is as follows:



Figure 7: ROC curve within the test set.

The linear line from the point (0,0) to the point (1,1) corresponds to a random classification and is called the line of no-discrimination.

The elbow of the curve (i.e. the best trade-off point) is explicit and correspond to our selected threshold of 0.75. The curve for our classifier is really close to the perfect classification which proves the high accuracy of our model.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, we proposed and developed a machine learning algorithm based on a genetic algorithm for profiles recognition. Our solution is a combination between natural language processing, evolutionary algorithm and surpervised machine learning.

First, we recalled how to represent a profile in a Vector Space Models, in order to ease the processing of semantic data.

In a second part, the principle of genetic algorithms is described; and used to train the computer to evaluate the significance of each label. This phase still requires human intervention throught a training set.

Finally, we tested the model predictions within a complete new dataset. These predictions revealed a highly precise model.

Our model allowed to automatically determine both a similarity score between profiles and which profiles correspond to the same person.

The solution proposed in this paper is adaptable and generic. This adaptation is due to the fact that the model is not restricted to a fixed set of labels. As long as the labels are present into the training set, both the mathematical model and the genetic algorithm would adapt to a new set of labels.

Therefore we strongly believe it could be used for any kind of sources containing profiles. Moreover, this solution could also be used to other applications of similar data recognition.

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