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ABSTRACT

This manual, prepared for the UCLA Law School Library, outlines sample policies, procedures, and rules for a law school reference department. The manual consists of (1) a discussion of patron categories and priorities; (2) a statement of the kinds of services to be offered; (3) determination of the means of providing these services via procedures and rules; (4) a plan for staff development and a statement of staff needs; and (5) guidelines for improved interaction among library components. The last two segments apply particularly to one library, but may extend in theory to other situations. The appendices include a sample statistical form for tallying reference requests, and sample pages of the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications. A bibliography and subject index are attached. (Author/KP)

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A Model Reference Service Manual

for a Law School Library

by

Jenifer Stone Abramson

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June, 1977

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Jenifer Stone Abramson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND  
USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM "

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the M.L.S. Degree,  
Graduate School of Library and Information Science,  
UCIA

FR005669

## ABSTRACT

Sample policies, procedures and rules for a law school reference department are herein discussed. Patron categories and types and hours of service are outlined; a checklist to be used in compiling California legislative histories is also included. Rules governing the extent of reference service in particular cases follow. A plan for staff development is proposed to be used in conjunction with the rotation of professional reference and cataloging personnel. A sample statistical form designed to record reference questions is appended.

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## PREFACE

This manual has been prepared specifically with the UCLA Law School Library in mind. However, the general framework may be helpful to other law libraries as well.

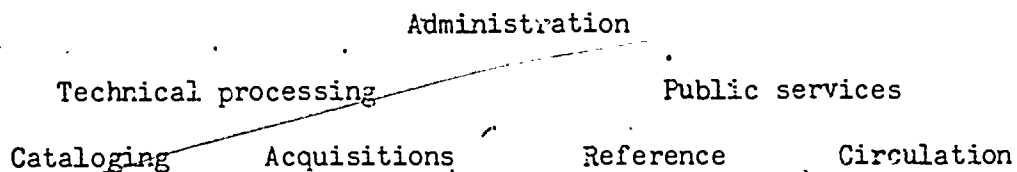
The UCLA Law School Library, though a part of the University Library system, exists primarily to meet the needs of UCLA Law students and faculty. As such, it falls into the category of a special library: it is organized and oriented toward the interests of a specialized, carefully defined group of users and aids them "in exploiting [their] information resources as effectively as possible."<sup>1</sup> Acquisitions are made in support of the curriculum, faculty specializations and legal research in general. The reference staff supplements the law collection through in-person and telephone service. However, as lay needs for legal materials have grown; as other law students have come to rely upon this library as a supplement to their own schools' collections; as attorneys have begun to make use of UCLA legal resources, the volume of use by those outside the UCLA Law School community has increased. Use by non-law UCLA graduate students and faculty has as well expanded. Thus, the scope of service has had to be enlarged while resources have remained fairly static.

Two departments make up the Law Library: (1) technical processing -- cataloging and acquisitions; and (2) public services -- reference

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<sup>1</sup>See Bibliography, item 8, p. 532.

and circulation. Seen diagrammatically, the library appears in this manner:



A policy of job rotation, or resource allocation, is planned for the library to enable both cataloging and reference to share personnel. This will make special demands upon the staff to round out their capabilities and upon the departments to improve communication channels and procedures.

A number of people assisted in the creation of this manual. Dr. Raymund F. Wood, as faculty advisor for this paper, was especially helpful in providing guidance and commentary at all stages. B.T. Davis, Sylvia Merritt, Ann Mitchell, Constance Nyhan and Frederick E. Smith of the UCLA Law School Library as well as Earl C. Borgeson of the Los Angeles County Law Library made comments upon the use of such a manual in their reference departments.

## INTRODUCTION

Departmental manuals are often created to train new personnel and to give the staff guidance in the performance of their work. This manual presents one view of staff training, guidance and development in a law school library reference department; it aims to effect a high, uniform level of service in line with departmental resources.

The primary objective in creating such a manual is efficient reference service. The resulting work in this case consists of (1) a discussion of patron categories and priorities; (2) a statement of the kinds of services to be offered; (3) determination of the means of providing these services via procedures and rules; (4) a plan for staff development and a statement of staff needs (man-hours, capabilities); and (5) guidelines for improved interaction among library components. The last two segments apply particularly to one library, but may extend in theory to other situations:

The manual does not attempt to deal with the concerns of physical space and arrangement; neither are problems of the funding of such a service model treated herein. Policy formulations have been made without any actual library administrator's approval; however, it is hoped that the important issues involved in administrative decisions of this kind have been well considered. Man-hour needs and hours of service are noted, but the costs are not set forth since they will vary with each library.

In the sections on policies, procedures and rules, a limited number of each are given as examples. Every department will find need for more or less detail in its staff manual and will include such items as it sees fit. This manual serves only to illustrate how a law school library's reference department might be organized to provide better service to its patrons.

Definitions of some of the terms used in this manual may be helpful in clarifying its purpose:

efficiency ("efficient reference service") -- the skillful use of energy or industry to accomplish desired results with little waste of effort.<sup>2</sup>

objective -- ~~something toward which effort is directed~~: an aim or end of action.<sup>3</sup>

policy -- a specific decision or set of decisions designed to carry out a chosen course of action.<sup>3</sup>

procedure -- a series of steps followed in a regular orderly definite way.<sup>3</sup>

rule -- a prescribed, suggested or self-imposed guide for conduct or action: a regulation or principle.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Random House dictionary of the English language (College edition; New York: Random House, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>Webster's third international dictionary of the English language (3rd edition; Springfield, Mass.: Merriam, 1961).



## POLICIES

The reference department has found a need to establish specific policies with regard to providing service as its clientele has grown and its resources have stayed the same. The department does not wish to deny service to any type of patron -- and has no real legal basis for doing so. Therefore, it has defined its clientele and services to better understand the present character of both and to be able to plan future changes that will reflect the interaction between patron needs and the services offered to meet them.

### Clientele

"The reference department is a question-answering service for Library patrons...This service is meant principally for students and faculty of the Law School, but it is also extended to anybody in the University community,...to any member of the legal profession"<sup>4</sup> and to the lay person who needs access to legal materials. The library was established to support the research, study and curricular needs of the school's students and faculty; therefore, the reference department places a high priority on their information needs, as they are the primary users of the library and its resources. Yet the reference department recognizes the information requirements of other patrons as well. Until a clearer legal definition of its service responsibilities is found, the library's

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<sup>4</sup>See Bibliography, item 10, p. 5.

"publicly-supported" status will remain unchanged: it will continue to provide service to all California tax-payers who wish to use legal sources. Thus, attorneys, other law students, the general public, will all be given the service they require, short of legal advice. Their needs are not given the same priority as is given to those of UCLA Law School students and faculty, but the needs are none the less real.

The patron distinctions are made only in theory, for no actual identification is required to receive assistance. The manner in which a request is made, however, will often suggest the character of a patron's need: i.e., whether s/he is an attorney seeking recent changes in a particular tax law, a lay person concerned about his/her rights as a tenant, or a law student completing a research problem.

Telephone patrons, as yet another category of clientele, are given the same priority as in-person users. Although a staff member will not interrupt a request at the desk to answer a call, the telephone query is taken seriously and all reasonable efforts will be made to answer it. Certain restrictions exist in telephone service which are noted under "Rules", however, and should be taken into account in every case.

### Services

While the reference department would like to offer full service to all patrons, the scarcity of resources (staff, time, funding) prevents it. For this reason, the department has decided to specify the kinds of services it will offer. The following discussion applies to the services actually provided; details as to those services not given will be found in the "Rules" section. The policies pertain to all patrons, regardless of status.

Reference service in this department consists for the most part of answering direct requests for information. In-person service may involve, for example, locating information through reference files, in books or other materials, or via bibliographic tools. It may as well include assistance in using bibliographic aids (the card catalog, the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications, periodical indexes, and the like); in formulating search strategies; or in compiling legislative histories. The reference staff is also responsible for the circulation of the reference collection and taped tours of the library. Interlibrary loans fall under the circulation department's duties.

The extent of telephone service is similar to that of in-person assistance. Yet, physical limitations may affect the kinds of services the staff can provide. Assistance in the use of bibliographic materials, for example, is restricted by the distance between patron and reference librarian. In most cases, however, the type of assistance given over the telephone does not differ greatly from that provided to patrons in the library.

The reference staff provides other services that are not directly in response to patron requests although they are instituted to convey information or to improve the resources of the reference collection. The compilation of bibliographies, guides and holdings lists and the selection of reference materials are part of every staff member's responsibilities. Bibliographies are never compiled for individual users; rather it is on the suggestion of the Law Librarian, the department head or in relation to a staff member's personal interests that such work is done. The guides to the library's collection (the tape and manual) are periodically up-dated by the reference staff and holdings lists are

prepared to inform other institutions -- particularly law school libraries -- of the character of the library's collection. Each staff member is assigned specific sources to scan for selection purposes. It is also his/her responsibility, when an item is suggested, to search library records (card catalog, order files, and the like) to verify the information and also that the item either is not already owned or that it has not been previously ordered. A union list of loose-leaf services held by seven area libraries is also updated yearly by the reference staff. Those loose-leaf services containing primary material which are held by the Los Angeles County Law Library, UCLA Law Library, USC Law Center Library, Southwestern University Law Library, Loyola Law School Library, and the libraries of the law firms of C'Melveny and Myers and Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher are therefore made available through this cooperative effort.

Future plans for reference services include the installation of an on-line terminal, to be used in conjunction with the law school's legal research and writing classes. Classroom instruction in the application of on-line retrieval systems to legal research would be supplemented with actual practice at the terminal in the library. The service would be provided as well to other library users for a fee -- the hourly connect cost for the use of the retrieval service. The departmental rule on instruction might be modified if such a terminal were installed in the library. In such an event, staff members could be called upon to supervise the law students' use of the terminal or to assist other patrons in their use of the service if it were indeed made available to the general clientele. Similar responsibilities have been given the reference staff at the Los Angeles County Law Library in the use of

West-Jaw.

In some cases, referral to other collections may be necessary if a patron's request is either inappropriate to or goes beyond the resources of the library. Occasionally, high school students from nearby schools will come directly to the Law Library without first visiting the undergraduate library on campus. The College Library serves to screen the needs of high school and undergraduate students and refer them to other collections if necessary. The reverse procedure should be adopted in assisting such students if they have not already consulted the College Library resources. At other times, the resources of the library may not be sufficient to meet the needs of some patrons. In particular, the foreign, international and U.S. state collections of this library are not as extensive as some research may require. In such cases, the holdings of the Los Angeles County Law Library should be suggested to the patron. LACLL and its branches were designed to serve the bench and bar of the county and have built up sizeable collections along these lines. The holdings for each of the states are sufficient to sustain practicing attorneys in those states; the foreign and international law collections are known nation-wide.

#### Hours of service

The department attempts to provide service to its users when they will be most able to avail themselves of it. The needs of primary users are well met since the reference department staffs the desk on weekdays and at least two evenings per week. The department has attempted to gauge the service needs of other patrons; thus the desk is staffed on Saturdays as well. Sunday desk hours are fewer but they have been

selected in response to past patterns of library use.

Actual reference service hours are posted at the desk to inform patrons when they can expect to find assistance. At the present time, the reference desk is manned as follows:

Monday	8:30 - 5:30
Tuesday	8:30 - 5:30, 7:00 - 9:00
Wednesday	8:30 - 5:30, 7:00 - 9:00 [irregular]
Thursday	8:30 - 5:30, 7:00 - 9:00
Friday	8:30 - 5:30
Saturday	10:00 - 5:00
Sunday	1:00 - 5:00

### Statistics

Records of reference queries are kept by the department for varied purposes. Difficult questions are collected to guide the staff in handling future requests of a similar nature — to save time, effort and frustration particularly. The staff is as well expected to account for the amount of time and expertise used in answering individual queries. Statistical forms used in the past did not indicate the actual amount of reference skill utilized at the desk but merely the number of questions heard and presumably answered. A special form has been adopted to reflect not only the number of reference requests handled in a day, but the effort expended both mentally and physically by the staff in the course of filling the requests. An example of the form will be found in Appendix A.

## PROCEDURES AND TOOLS

### Checklist of California legislative history<sup>5</sup>

1. Read the STATUTE carefully; look for definitions, references.
2. SHEPARD'S CITATIONS -- under the mural in the alcove -- are important to update the act.
3. ANNOTATED CODES -- in the northwest corner of the reading room -- give legislative histories for later acts; the chapter number is also found here.
4. Convert the chapter number to the bill number. The STATUTES AND AMENDMENTS TO THE CODES -- stack B 16 -- give conversion tables in the first volume for each year.
5. Find the bill's legislative history in the FINAL CALENDAR or FINAL HISTORY -- stack B 15. Committees that heard the bill are listed here.
6. Check the (INTERIM) LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AND REPORTS -- S / C14 / B859c\* or S / C14 / B859ca -- to find if a report was made by the committee(s).
7. COMMITTEE REPORTS and HEARINGS will be found in stack B 15.
8. Other possible sources to consult are:  
SENATE / ASSEMBLY JOURNALS -- stack B 15.

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<sup>5</sup>See Bibliography, items 6 and 22.

\*Call numbers indicate that one must page these materials at the circulation desk.

LAW REVISION COMMISSION REPORTS — stack B 13.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORTS — S / C65.

CODE COMMISSION REPORTS -- S / C40 / C648re.

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS — in the northwest corner of  
the reading room.

STATE BAR / PACIFIC LAW JOURNAL REVIEW OF SELECTED CODE  
LEGISLATION -- in the periodical stacks.

Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications

The Monthly Catalog (MoCat) has had a different format since July, 1976. It is now cataloged by the Library Division of the Government Printing Office and is available on MARC tape. The MoCat follows the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR) and uses Library of Congress main entries. Also, the terms used in the subject index are taken from the Library of Congress Subject Headings list (LCSH).

As for arrangement, agencies and departments are now listed hierarchically. Previously, they were arranged alphabetically. Thus, the Internal Revenue Service will now be found under the Department of the Treasury instead of directly under its title. The departments and their publications follow in the sequence of their SuDoc classification numbers, whereas they once were listed alphabetically and assigned additional numbers which served as access points from the index. Sample pages from both formats will be found in Appendix B.

Four indexes provide access to each issue of the MoCat: (1) subject (LCSH terms); (2) author (personal author or the agency/department when it is designated as such); (3) title; (4) series/report name. Appendix B also includes examples of each index.





Each issue of the MoCat is annotated as to library holdings. In the margin to the left of each publication, an "H" is written to show that it has been received by the documents section. Prior to the new format, access to the documents was by the year of publication, the word "MoCat", and the sequential publication number. Documents which are listed after June, 1976 will be retrieved via the SuDoc classification numbers assigned to them. Sample call numbers for pre-July, 1976 documents will be found in Appendix B as well.

#### Reference shelf list and files

The reference collection has been built up to allow for more responsive and efficient reference service by providing the most frequently used items at close range to the desk. A list of the individual items in the collection was considered inappropriate, for it would require continual revision. Instead, the staff is reminded to consult the shelf list, housed in the departmental office. The list is automatically updated when new items are added to the collection by the circulation staff; as cards are typed for circulation purposes, an additional card is prepared for insertion into the shelf list. Arrangement is, of course, by call number.

Additional aids have been constructed in the form of ready-reference files which are kept at the desk. The first, maintained on index cards, can be found in the upper left-hand drawer of the desk. Frequently requested telephone numbers, addresses and key sources of information on particular topics are provided here. Citations to landmark cases will be found in this file also. The staff is expected to keep up the file as time permits and it becomes necessary. The second file is housed in

the lower right-hand drawer of the desk in manila folders. When pictures, forms, newspaper articles and the like are found to illustrate points or answer often-asked queries, they are placed in appropriate subject-labelled folders. Again, staff members are expected to maintain the file as they find time or see a need to supplement the information already available. A subject heading list for this file is under preparation.

## RULES

In addition to policies and suggested procedures and tools, certain rules have been set down which staff members are expected to follow as they render reference service. Here are specified those services not rendered by the department, including prohibited services, and limitations on time and frequency in telephone assistance.

Telephone reference service is provided as a convenience to patrons, freeing them of the need to physically visit the library to find the information they seek. So that more patrons may utilize this service, a number of restrictions have been adopted with regard to telephone queries. First of all, the staff should limit the length of calls, both in-coming and out-going. An arbitrary time of five minutes has been established, more as a guide than a stricture. Secondly, staff members may not check citations more than once, nor may they perform more than three card catalog checks for one patron. These restrictions are meant not only to keep the telephone line open; but also to free the reference staff to tend to other responsibilities. Other rules of telephone assistance act to protect the department and staff from charges of practicing law without a license. Even though a staff member may be an attorney, s/he is barred from giving legal advice while at the reference desk. The American Association of Law Libraries has established ethical guidelines that cover the conduct of lawyer-librarians in particular but which apply as well to all librarians in the legal field. Thus, no

primary materials may be read over the telephone; also, the staff may not interpret primary legal materials for patrons. Section titles or headnotes of particular laws may be given to patrons but no further information should be provided. Additionally; no shepardizing will be done for any patron on the telephone; neither will this be done for in-person users of the library. No actual instruction is given by the reference staff; however, if a patron is unfamiliar with the use of Shepard's Citations and is not a law student, the instructional booklet (kept at the desk) will be given to him/her to orient the patron to the tool.

Similarly, no tours of the library will be given by the staff except when the Law Librarian has arranged them and cannot conduct them personally. Taped tours, which are charged out at the reference desk, and the accompanying written guides are available for interested persons.

Also, whenever staff members must leave the desk uncovered during service hours, they should activate the taped message for the telephone and place the appropriate sign ("With another patron" or "Reference staff meeting") in plain view on the desk. At the close of the service day, the staff should post the "Hours" sign in view of patrons to inform them of the next day's service.

Statistics must be kept by every member when s/he assists patrons at the desk. This is the means of justifying reference service to the administration and also indicates to the department what resources are being utilized most -- what staff capabilities, tools and the like are most useful -- and, through the difficult question file, which areas need to be developed.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Every library department, whether stated or not, desires its staff members to keep informed of trends in the subject areas served and in the profession. Information is continually changing and expanding: reference librarians must know where to find answers to patron requests as quickly as possible. The staff must also know of the issues that are of concern to the profession. Cooperation, for example, is a topic of interest to every library; efforts to establish networking should be made in all spheres of librarianship and in all types of libraries. Appropriate referrals can only be made if the reference staff knows which libraries provide what type and amount of information that may be needed by patrons.

The staff of this department and the cataloging personnel have special demands placed upon their professional capabilities. They must be aware of current practices and sources in multiple areas of librarianship. Their dual responsibilities require them to be accomplished in cataloging -- thoroughly familiar with the current rules -- and knowledgeable of legal reference strategies, tools and expert in interpersonal relations. This multidisciplinary familiarity makes the exchange of personnel possible; ultimately, it is hoped, a fluid and flexible use of resources will meet the service needs of each department and of the patron.

To be able to maintain this kind of multiple orientation, the staff must be in touch with their fields. Membership in varied organizations is expected, particularly in the American Association of Law Libraries and in the Southern California Association of Law Libraries. Additional memberships are encouraged as each staff member's interests move him/her (American Library Association, California Library Association, American Society for Information Science, and others). Regular reading of the respective associations' journals and other publications is strongly suggested as well as the various other publications related to each staff member's interests and professional concerns. The staff should request opportunities to attend workshops, conventions, conferences and the like and to visit other libraries to compare methods used. Publication by the staff with regard to departmental practices and areas of professional interest is also encouraged.

The actual rotation of job responsibilities is worked out with the departmental heads according to each staff member's availability and capabilities. Each staff member is nominally placed in either department and his/her individual ratio of reference/cataloging responsibilities determined. Assignments of specific hours of reference or cataloging duties are received through the head of one's department. Requests for modifications in responsibilities, suggestions for procedural changes, discussion of problems related to one's professional duties, should all be directed to the appropriate departmental head. Discussion of procedures with staff members of either department is encouraged, as the sharing of insights often serves to improve the performance of all involved.

To staff the reference desk during all the service hours specified in the section on policies, the reference department requires 4.133 FTE. This figure reflects the allocation of fifteen hours of actual desk duty allowing twenty-five hours for other reference (selection of reference materials, compiling bibliographies, etc.) and cataloging responsibilities per week. This ratio may be altered to fit individual capabilities or interests.

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## APPENDIX A

### Sample statistical form<sup>6</sup>

Record below EACH request, regardless of the amount of time given. If the patron makes several requests, each is tallied separately. If you have the same inquiry more than once in a day, it may be written out the first time and tally marks placed before or after it for each repetition. Be sure to add the tally marks to your daily totals. If you do not find what the patron wants, indicate this by a zero before the inquiry, but include it in your count if you have worked on it at all. Telephone calls are to be tallied below as well and the queries written out. A "T" should be placed next to the query to indicate that it is a telephone request.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.

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<sup>6</sup>See Bibliography, item 5.

APPENDIX B

Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications: sample pages

I. Pre-July, 1976 format . . . . .	20
II. New MoCat format. . . . .	21
III. Author index, new format. . . . .	22
IV. Title index, new format . . . . .	23
V. Subject index, new format . . . . .	24
VI. Series/Report index, new format . . . . .	25

I. Pre-July, 1976, format  
JANUARY 1976

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE, Agriculture Dept. Washington,  
DC 20250

FNS (series)

76. Food stamp facts, recipient responsibility. Revised Oct. 1974 [1974.] [2] p. 4° -  
●Item 74-A-2 A 98 9 76/2
- 01040 145. Annual statistical review, preliminary report. Food and Nutrition [Service] programs,  
fiscal year 1975. [Nov. 1975.] 19 p. d. 4° ([Program Reporting Staff.]) + ●Item  
74-A-2 A 98 9-145

call number = 1975 MoCat 01040

FOREST SERVICE, Agriculture Dept. Washington, DC 20250

- 01041 Floral greenery from Pacific Northwest forests; [by Bernard S. Douglass  
]. [1975.] cover title, [2]+35 p. d. 4° (Pacific Northwest Region.)  
+ (Information incorrect in publication as to sale by Superintendent  
of Documents). A B.2:F 66

call number = 1975 MoCat 01041

Forest pest leaflets

- 01042 74. White-spotted sawyer [with list of references]; by Louis F. Wilson. Revised June  
1975 [1975.] 8 p. d. + ●Item 82-A A B.52.74/2
- 01043 154. Phomopsis blight of junipers [with list of references]; by Glenn W. Peterson and  
C. S. Hodges, Jr. Oct. 1975. 6 p. d. + ●Item 82-A A B.52.154
- 01044 Forest recreation research publications. Dec. 31, 1974 7 p. 4° (Forest  
Environment Research Staff.) [Seventh annual supplement to Bibliog-  
raphy of Forest Service outdoor recreation research publications.]  
+ call number = 1974 MoCat 01044 A B.11/2:R 24/supp 7

- 01045 Forest Service films available on loan for educational purposes to  
schools, civic groups, churches, television [list]. [Revised July 1975.]  
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