

The Digital Entertainment Shift: Evaluating OTT's Impact and Potential in India

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Abstract - One of the many positive effects of digital platforms is the increased sense of community they foster. In terms of global economic growth, few industries can compete with the OTT market. Indians are increasingly turning to over-the-top (OTT) platforms after COVID19. That, and the fact that these OTT services are optimised for mobile devices, is why they've become so popular. The advent of major international players like Netflix transformed India's entertainment sector by providing a foundation for other international and domestic over-the-top (OTT) service providers. Many foreign OTT platforms operate in India, and this research looks at how successful they are in the Indian market. The research analyses the trends in OTT platforms around the world and the elements that influence their success in India with regards to the types of shows that customers want to watch. People favoured Netflix the most, followed by Disney HotStar and Amazon Prime Video, according to the report. Respondents seem to like Netflix-style OTT services that offer more frequent content updates and focus more on original shows than on repetitions. Also mentioned was the fact that Disney HotStar is the platform of choice for digital broadcasts of major cricket tournaments like the IPL and the World Cup. Indian OTT platforms are expected to grow and diversify by adding new features and services and more content. To retain and attract customers, data analytics, machine learning, and personalisation will become essential. No rules, limited rural penetration, and inadequate internet access are obstacles to OTT growth in India, but the sector has a promising future.

Keywords: Over-The-Top, Video Streaming, OTT platforms, Viewership, Digital Entertainment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Audiences have observed a seismic shift in the quantity and caliber of content between Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana (1987) and Hwang Dong-hyuk's Squid Game (2021). Brand marketers are utilizing trendy OTT content to increase

engagement on digital media as a result of the impact reaching various social strata. The minutes of consumption have increased from 181 to 204 billion minutes in 2021, according to the size of the OTT market in India. There is no denying that OTT is assuming control. Digitalization has increased significantly over the past few years, but why? and how does it impact India's diverse audience? While consumption of the OTT range is highest among the 15-35 age groups in India, the pandemic alone caused a massive increase in viewership of OTT outlets. In India, OTT subscribers will significantly increase by 2023, according to a report by MICA's Center for Media and Entertainment Studies (CMES). There are currently 350 million users, but that number could eventually reach 500 million. Disney Hotstar, which has 43 million subscribers, is India's most popular OTT outlet, followed by Amazon Prime (17 million subscribers), Netflix (5 million), and Google Play (8 million). Hotstar has dominated the OTT market and commands 29% of all viewers. Around 16 billion Indian rupees were made by the platform in 2020. By the end of 2023, 85% of Indian customers will be Internet-ready. Between the ages of 35 and 44, the average age of OTT paying users. Several venture capitalists and business tycoons are currently investing USD 1 billion in the OTT sector. Recently, male audiences have increased by two times more than female audiences. Younger people are more likely to use OTT outlets than older people. The majority of OTT content is consumed by men, especially those in the 15-30 age range. Among women, the 25 to 35 age group has the highest rate of OTT content consumption, and this number has increased throughout the pandemic. Nevertheless, compared to men, they represented less than 50% of the total consumption.

II. ORIGIN OF OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA

OTT is an abbreviation for "over-the-top," as in going beyond streaming cable networks or YouTube. Reliance Entertainment established BIGFlix, India's first independent Indian OTT platform, in 2008. Digivive, situated in Gurugram, developed the first OTT mobile app in India, nexGTV, in 2010. It provides live TV as well as on-demand material. In 2013 and 2014, nexGTV was the first app to

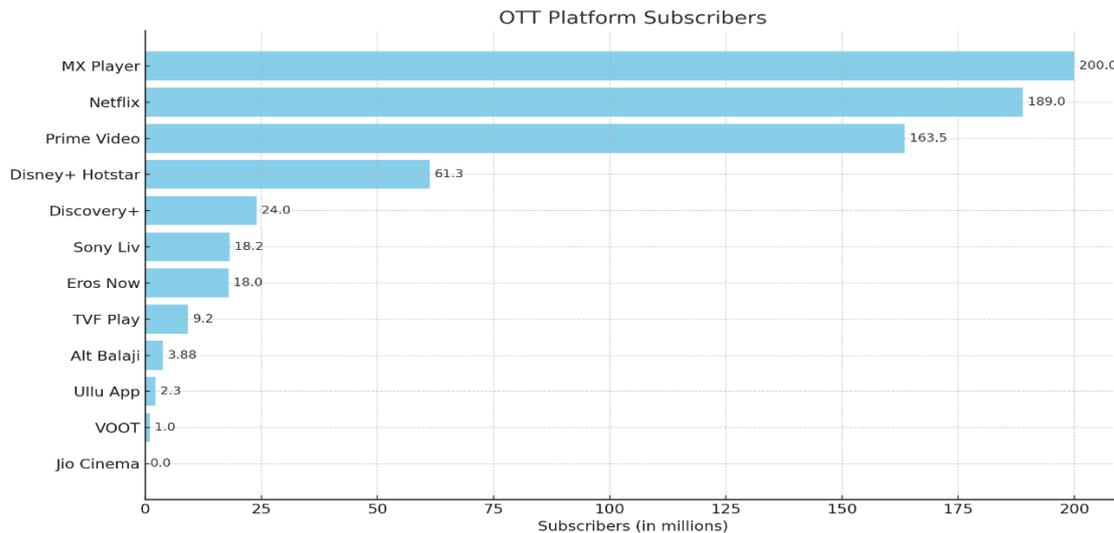
stream live Indian Premier League matches on mobile devices. After securing IPL live-streaming rights in 2015, Hotstar has enjoyed substantial development in India. When DittoTV (Zee) and SonyLiv both arrived in the Indian market in 2013, OTT gained significant traction. DittoTV was an aggregator portal that included programmes from famous media outlets including as Star, Sony, Viacom, Zee, and others. In India, there are now around 46 providers of over-the-top media services that transmit material through the internet.

III. INDIA'S TOP OTT PLATFORMS

The rise of over-the-top media services is being driven by better internet connections and increased demand for a broader

choice of media items such as sports, entertainment, lifestyle, and movies. Deloitte forecasted in a 2022 analysis that Indian OTT subscription customers will grow at a 17 percent CAGR to 224 million by 2026, up from the current 102 million. Streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+/Hotstar provide a diverse range of material. These three provide some of the greatest original series and movies available online, as well as other premium local and international content. In addition, Sony Liv, AltBalaji, Zee5, and Disney+ provide access to a plethora of Indian regional material in Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, and other languages. Voot brings together prominent international series such as Game of Thrones and 777 Charlie.

TOP 12 OTT PLATFORMS IN INDIA



Source: <https://selectra.in/ott/compare/top-12-ott-platforms>

IV. IN INDIAN MARKET, INTERNATIONAL OTT SUCCESS FACTOR

Numerous aspects play a role in determining the level of acceptance enjoyed by international OTT (over-the-top) platforms within the Indian market. One of the most important aspects is localization, which can help in drawing and retaining users in India by providing localised features and content such as subtitles and audio tracks in regional languages. Localization can also help in attracting users from other countries.

- Reasonable prices given that a large percentage of Indians are price conscious, providing aggressive pricing plans or risk-free trials may be an effective way to attract clients.

- Content of a high quality having a large selection of content of a high standard, such as well-known Indian movies and television episodes, will help attract new customers and keep existing ones.
- Formation of stronger distribution alliances: The visibility and usability of the OTT platform can be improved by developing agreements with important telecoms providers and device makers. This can be accomplished by strengthening the distribution alliances.
- Provide a positive user experience by luring customers with an intuitive UI and high streaming speeds in order to keep them coming back for more.
- Efficient marketing and promotion: In a competitive market, it is important to have an efficient marketing strategy in place so that you can bring in new consumers and keep the ones you already have.

- Exceptional assistance after the sale: A solid customer support group can be an asset in enticing new users and retaining existing ones.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Ahlawat et al. (2025) conducted a data-driven study to explore the evolving landscape of digital transformation within the entertainment sector, specifically targeting the factors influencing the adoption of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. The findings indicated that content quality, accessibility, affordability, and user-friendly interfaces played a crucial role in shaping consumer adoption patterns. The study highlighted that young adults aged 18 to 35 were the most active users, primarily motivated by the convenience of mobile access and the appeal of binge-watching. Additionally, the research established that demographic variables such as income, educational background, and urban residency significantly impacted both the frequency and intensity of OTT platform engagement.
- Singh et al. (2024) investigated how user-generated ratings on platforms like IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes influence viewer choices and platform success. Their study emphasized the role of predictive algorithms in forecasting content performance and revenues, offering strategic insights for enhancing content profitability and optimization.
- Dwivedi et al. (2024) conducted research using advanced technological models to examine viewer behavior and perception patterns related to OTT usage. Employing surveys and interviews as data collection tools, the study utilized analytical software such as SPSS and SEM-PLS to interpret findings. It concluded that viewer behavior is significantly shaped by factors such as content preferences, user convenience, and prevailing social trends.
- Pinge and Shinde (2023) explored the transformation of the entertainment industry, focusing on the rise of multiplexes and OTT platforms. Their study revealed why audiences continue to visit multiplexes—citing ambiance and social interaction—while also highlighting the growing preference among younger audiences for OTT content due to its accessibility and personalized experience.
- Kishnani et al. (2023) synthesized previous studies, expert opinions, and interview data to understand the growing popularity of OTT communication services among youth. Their work identified key factors influencing consumer preferences and proposed a conceptual framework to analyze OTT adoption behavior.
- Li et al. (2023) provided a comprehensive review of digital media trends across the Asia-Pacific region. The study highlighted diverse platforms such as Facebook and Line, as well as emerging innovations like bullet-screen commenting and mobile-first applications. It also pointed to new commercial opportunities—especially post-COVID-19—for sectors like sports through live streaming and interactive commerce.
- Lu et al. (2021) explored the relationship between Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming services and digital piracy, emphasizing the role of content accessibility. Their findings suggest that gaps in legal content availability may drive consumers toward unauthorized platforms. The study calls for further research into consumer preferences and warns that rapid OTT expansion could inadvertently fuel piracy if demand is not adequately met.
- Kumari (2020) analyzed the disruptive impact of OTT platforms (e.g., Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar) on India's entertainment industry, noting shifts in content distribution and consumption patterns. The study identified key success factors, including affordable pricing, user convenience, and high-quality original programming, while highlighting challenges such as regional content gaps and technological barriers. It concluded that India's OTT sector holds significant potential but must address these hurdles to sustain growth.
- Kaewkhum (2020) investigated Thailand's television industry adaptation to the digital economy, revealing a shift in audience preferences toward mobile-first platforms like YouTube. Despite this, traditional TV retained its role as an opinion leader. The study underscores the need for hybrid strategies to balance legacy media's credibility with digital platforms' on-demand appeal.
- Sundaravel and Elangovan (2020) examined India's transition from conventional media to OTT platforms, attributing this shift to cheaper data plans, widespread internet access, and personalized content. The research highlighted the dominance of global players (Netflix, Amazon Prime) alongside local services (Hotstar) and their transformative impact on media consumption habits.
- Gaoshinde (2020) traced the evolution of digital media and the rising prominence of OTT platforms for branded content. The study emphasized the enduring effectiveness of product placement in shaping brand perception, arguing that OTT's targeted advertising capabilities offer new opportunities for embedded marketing.

- Ahlawat & Ahlawat (2020) provide an insightful analysis into how Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms are reshaping India's traditional entertainment ecosystem. Their work aligns with the broader scholarly consensus that digital platforms are revolutionizing both film and television consumption patterns. They argue that the OTT revolution has not only disrupted content distribution but has also democratized content creation and access, giving rise to new voices, themes, and narratives.
- Fitzgerald (2019) assessed the global expansion of OTT services, with a focus on India. The research linked platform growth to corporate strategies, digital infrastructure, and policy frameworks. It critically analyzed the tensions between platformization, cultural diversity, and national regulations, highlighting how socioeconomic and security concerns influence OTT adoption.

VI. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To study and comprehend the most popular types of shows on OTT platforms around the world.
- To look into Indian OTT platform success factors
- To examine the future of OTT in Indian market

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OTT is one of India's fastest-growing sectors. The purpose of this research is to learn how Indian consumers go about subscribing to overseas OTT services, what kinds of content these services offer, what makes them successful, and how they adapt their marketing strategies for the Indian market. Information Origins: The researcher has relied on previously collected information for this study. The sorts of programming on offer across services were gleaned from secondary sources of information.

VIII. OTT'S FUTURE IN THE INDIAN MARKET

Localization: Because Indian consumers continue to prefer local content, over-the-top (OTT) operators will need to focus on developing and disseminating more locally relevant content in order to attract and retain viewers. This is one of the most significant developments in the OTT market in India that is expected to have an effect on the market's future.

Consolidation: As the industry gets more cutthroat, it is likely that we will see consolidation among OTT providers, with larger businesses purchasing smaller players in order to acquire market share. This is expected to occur as the market continues to grow more competitive.

Material Produced in Regional Languages: In light of the fact that India recognises more than 22 languages as its

official tongues, it is expected that OTT operators would start producing more material that is spoken in India's regional languages in order to cater to the country's wide audience.

Marketing and monetization: As the over-the-top (OTT) industry develops, players will look for more ways to monetize their services, including through marketing and other sources of revenue.

Unique material: As over-the-top (OTT) players strive to differentiate themselves from their rivals, the significance of unique content will grow to meet the challenge. It will eventually become the primary differentiator and take the lead role.

Virtual reality and augmented reality: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms are projected to integrate cutting-edge technologies like as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in order to improve the viewing experience that they provide for their viewers. In general, increasing internet penetration, an expanding middle class, and altering consumer preferences are likely to accelerate the Indian OTT market's rapid expansion in the future years. This growth is expected to take place in India.

Market size: USD 5 billion by 2023: According to a study from Boston Consulting Group, the OTT content market in India is at a turning point and is likely to be worth \$ 5 billion by 2023. The main things that have helped the OTT market grow in India are an increase in disposable income, the spread of the internet to rural areas, and the use of OTT video by people of all ages.

Most Indian homes only have one TV. But as part of the Digital India plan, the government has been putting money into high-speed broadband businesses to increase coverage and use of broadband, which is important for the growth of OTT video. So, the fact that data is cheap has given people an alternative way to access any material they want, whenever they want, wherever they want, and on any device they want. With the right infrastructure in place, it's clear that the business will continue to grow at this rate.

India's rural areas are getting a new way to sell things: With the number of people using the internet in rural areas expected to reach 650 million by 2023, OTT players are eager to create regional content for the rural market. Nachiket Pantvaidya, CEO of ALTBalaji and Group COO of Balaji Telefilms, says that viewers (mostly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities) who didn't know about OTT viewing before the pandemic are starting to use these platforms. Most of them are trying the platform for the first time, since the lockdown is still in place. Platform owners are trying to keep customers by adding more content to meet the growing demand for content.

Also, before the pandemic began, 70% of all Alt Balaji viewers came from the top 8 places in India. But after April 2020, the scales will be 40-60, and 60% of the traffic will come from places other than the top 8 areas.

Production houses are going digital. Because of the pandemic, the average amount of time that Indian OTT users spend has gone from 20 minutes to 50 minutes to an hour. In 2012, there were only two OTT platforms. Now, there are about 40 platforms in India that users can use. About 49% of India's young people spend two to three hours a day watching online videos. At this rate, it's clear that the content pipeline won't last long if the audience keeps wanting more material. To meet the growing demand for more content, OTT giant Netflix plans to spend INR 3000 crore to make material that is relevant to India. At the same time, production houses with a lot of experience making material and a good idea of what people like are moving from linear TV to OTT. Many production companies have already put their video on YouTube and other platforms. Most of them have already started reaching out to other OTT platforms like Hotstar, Sony LIV, Hoichoi, Eros Now, and Sun NXT that are becoming more popular in India. In fact, according to a survey by Counterpoint Technology, Hotstar is the most popular OTT app in India.

Engagement Levels of Popular OTT Platforms in India:

Survey of the market for OTT video content in India Soon, people will be able to watch new and old quality material for a fraction of the price in the comfort of their own homes. This will turn theatres into places where people go to have unique experiences.

The latest tool in India's telecom war is OTT subscriptions:

India's telecom price war is back after a break, and it's being fought with freebies. The average cost of mobile data in India is the lowest in the world, at Rs 6.7 (\$0.09) per gigabyte (GB). This is according to the Worldwide Mobile Data Pricing report for 2020 from UK-based Price comparison company Cable.co.uk. With the rise of smartphones and cheaper internet access, as well as the effects of longer lockdowns, OTT seems to be the next normal in the entertainment world. In order to win customers in a market that wants more content, telecom carriers are giving perks like subscriptions to Netflix and Amazon Prime. Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., which has the most subscribers in India, has launched a new 399-rupee plan for postpaid users. In addition to 75 GB of data, users get access to Netflix on a mobile device, a one-year subscription to two OTT apps, and access to Jio's movies and songs. Here are some examples of how the Indian customer has too many options.

An explosion of choices for kids to learn and have fun (edutainment): When we were kids, stories were important to us. India is one of the oldest places where people still live. It has a lot of stories about morals, philosophy, society, fantasy, and other things. In this digital age, stories are being remade in new ways to fit the tastes of today and help shape a whole new generation. A 2019 PricewaterhouseCoopers study says that more than 40% of the world's new internet users in 2018 were kids. Every day, about 170,000 kids go online.

Broadcasters in the kids' entertainment area are taking advantage of this change in how people watch content by making characters and stories that are based in India and appeal to today's kids. Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India released a report in 2019 that said the amount of localised material on national kids' entertainment channels went up from 33% in 2016 to 39% in 2018. There is a huge market for kid's content, and Indian brands like VOOT Kids, Hungama Kids, and Zee5 Kids are competing with foreign brands like POGO, Cartoon Network, and Discovery Kids for a piece of it. Due to closed and closed for good schools, there is a Bobble in the field of education for kids. AI report says that EdTech sites like Udemy, Unacademy, and Byjus have increased time spent by 82.73%, engagement by 122.62%, and daily active users by 25.12%. Time spent on Udemy has gone up by 119.05%, and interest has gone up by 36.93%.

Application of OTT in Corporate e-Learning: Learning has changed over time, from Classroom-Based Learning (CBL) to a more fluid, informal, and collaborative process. The size of the global LMS market is projected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14.0% from USD 13.4 billion in 2020 to USD 25.7 billion in 2025. The importance of eLearning in corporate and academic settings is growing because more people are using digital learning, companies are moving towards Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies and enterprise mobility, the government is doing a lot to help LMS grow, and AI and ML are being used in LMS. Organisations can meet their learning goals by using a corporate e-learning option in a time when people rarely go to training in person. It gives organisations the ability to train their remote workers and prepare them for the future.

During the lockdown, online gaming has grown a lot. In the first quarter of 2020, game apps were the most downloaded on both Android and iOS phones. Even after a great year in 2019, online gaming is still growing. During the shutdown, Online Gaming has grown by 12%, according to the All India Gaming Federation (AIGF). In an interview, AIGF CEO Roland Landers said,

"Online skill gaming hasn't had any bad effects because people do it digitally instead of in real life. In the past few

weeks, online card games and digital e-sports have become more popular as people look for things to do inside. The amount of data used for online games is also growing, and if this situation stays the same, it will keep growing.

Gaming could be a big winner in the digital world as a whole, especially among younger people and in places that are good for it. Media companies and OTT providers in particular should think about adding games as a powerful way to expand their ecosystems.

The fitness business wants to have a virtual presence through OTT. When strict lockdown rules were put in place in India, gyms closed. A Bobble.AI report found that the number of daily active users (DAUs) for exercise apps like Lose Weight, Cure.fit went up by 104.53%, the engagement rate went up by 14.72%, and the amount of time people spent on the app went up by 39.50%. Since video streaming companies now have the chance to offer more genres like health and fitness, they have formed strategic partnerships to meet the growing demand and new audience segments. For example, Disney+ Hotstar has teamed up with Brilliant Wellness, a company that makes content about fitness, yoga, and nutrition, to bring 100 programmes of content from fitness experts, yoga teachers, and spiritual leaders, as well as famous nutritionists. Start-ups like Sarva and CultFit also put their workout models on the video streaming service. Viacom18 Media Pvt Ltd's VoD platform, VOOT, has teamed up with Cult.fit, and ZEE5 has teamed up with Dabur Honey to start a chat show called Dabur Honey Hello Fitness and a number of fitness programmes in partnership with its live events vertical, ZED LIVE.

Redefining Sports with OTT: Traditionally, sports programming has been the main source of income for all Pay-TV services. Because Covid-19 caused problems with sports programming, operators and Pay-TV providers have lost a lot of money. Yet, at a time when social norms have made it hard to watch live sports, Star and Disney India's Disney+Hotstar VIP has brought a lot of joy to a cricket-crazy country. Thanks to this project, Indian Premier League fans can now join a virtual community where they can watch the games with their friends and other cricket fans in real time. During this year's Dream11 Indian Premier League, they can share selfies and movies to make it even more interactive.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

Customised pricing: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have the ability to present customers in India with a number of different pricing alternatives in order to make their services more accessible.

Choices for offline viewing: Because many customers in India only have limited access to the internet, over-the-top (OTT) platforms can give offline viewing choices so that users can continue to enjoy content even when they are unable to connect to the internet.

An improved streaming quality: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms can make investments to improve their streaming quality in order to guarantee a seamless playback experience for Indian customers.

Local payment choices: Some Indian clients may want to pay for OTT services using local payment options such as UPI, PhonePe, or Paytm. This is because these options are more familiar to them. These payment solutions can be incorporated into OTT platforms, which will make it simpler for clients in India to make payments.

Advertising that is targeted to specific demographics and interests: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms can use data analytics and consumer segmentation to direct their advertising to specific demographics and interests.

Influencer marketing: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms can collaborate with prominent users of social media to promote their content and increase consumer awareness of their business.

Collaborations with content creators: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms can work together with production companies, filmmakers, and other content producers to create original material and attract a greater number of viewers.

Cross-promotion: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have the ability to cross-promote their content on many channels, such as social media, traditional television, and streaming services.

Free trials: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms may provide free trials in order to entice new customers and provide them with a sampling of what the service has to offer.

Material that can be interacted with: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms may offer material and features that can be interacted with, which can engage users and encourage them to spend more time on the platform.

Creating a community: Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have the ability to build a community of fans and followers by utilising social media, online forums, and other online platforms. This may help in the process of establishing a base of devoted customers.

Customization: Over-the-top (OTT) systems may be able to customise the user experience by employing data analytics to provide individualised recommendations, watchlists, and

viewing histories to customers. The contentment and loyalty of customers will both increase as a result of this.

X. CONCLUSION

India's OTT market is growing and expected to continue. As Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney Hotstar, and others gain popularity, people's entertainment habits are shifting. Movies, TV shows, live sports, and online series are available on OTT platforms without the restrictions of traditional TV networks. Indian content creators have new prospects due to the rise in online series and original content. The Indian entertainment sector has also benefited from OTT platforms, which have raised demand for performers, writers, and other professionals and offered production companies new revenue streams. In these hard times, OTT platforms have been a big source of entertainment that has helped people stay sane. Almost every streaming service offers free trials, and people are taking advantage of them. But keeping customers is the real test. This can be done with great material and great technology. OTT providers need to use technology at all stages of a subscriber's lifecycle, starting with content finding, so that watching content is a smooth process. AI and ML will help customise the search experience by figuring out what the customer wants and giving them the right information at the right time. Indian OTT platforms are expected to grow and diversify by adding new features and services and more content. To retain and attract customers, data analytics, machine learning, and personalisation will become essential. No rules, limited rural penetration, and inadequate internet access are obstacles to OTT growth in India, but the sector has a promising future.

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