Guidance for IT Asset Management
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Preface

Today all organizations aim and aspire for optimum utilization of IT assets, cost reduction, elimination of wastage, effective asset tracking, and appropriate asset disposal mechanism as per the laws and regulations. But with limited resources and knowledge available on ITAM practice, many organizations are very desperately seeking for help, guidance, and directions for effective management of IT assets.

Many organizations and consultants are very interested to understand and implement ITAM practice and its processes. Professionals and students are enthusiastic to know the importance, differentiation between ITSM & ITAM, and benefits for IT department & organizations through ITAM.

While understanding the need, demand, and enthusiasm for ITAM from varying audiences (CXO’s, IT managers, Operational managers, Analysts, and Students), this book has been designed in a very easily understandable approach through procedural instructions. This book doesn’t only talk about the theoretical concepts (like overview of the ITAM practice, goals, benefits, and activities), but also provides overall view on ITAM processes, implementation steps for ITAM processes (Strategy generation for IT Assets, Financial Management for IT Assets, Asset Procurement, Asset Inventory, Asset Catalog Management, Software License Management, Asset operations and maintenance, Asset Disposal, Asset Reporting, Asset Auditing), guidance for designing workflows to ITAM tools, and details the checklists for management and operational teams (which can be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of different ITAM processes and operations).

Guidance for IT Asset management is not a 'run on the mill' book with convoluted theoretical concepts which beats around the bush about same concepts. It aims at providing a concise and clear direction in a user friendly and understandable approach for all the ITAM audiences (newbie’s, intermediates, and experts) and IT stakeholders.
Acknowledgments

My eyes established a vision for my life,
After seeing the beauty of Lord Shri Krishna (with belief, devotion and love).

My senses started working intelligently,
After understanding the morals of Lord Shri Krishna’s stories and his past times (with belief, devotion and love).

My hands started writing good books,
After folding hands in front of Lord Shri Krishna (with belief, devotion and love).

Oh Lord Krishna, what am I without your blessing,
Oh Lord Krishna, your blessing is the reason for my breath, for my actions, for health, for prosperity, for peace and everything that I possess.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

I am grateful and would express my sincere thanks to my lord Shri Krishna, who has blessed me by giving the knowledge, knowledgeable friends, colleagues, and strong IT experience in world’s best conglomerates which helped me in writing this book. Without his mercy, help and will, I wouldn’t have been able to write and publish this book.

I am very thankful to my spiritual alma mater ISKCON (International Society For Krishna Consciousness), His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada (Founder and Acharya of ISKCON), His Grace Kalakanta Prabhu who is my spiritual guide.

My special thanks to my CEO Xiaogang Wei (Simon) for encouraging me to write books and also helping me in getting most of my certifications. Also my special thanks to Angel Berniz and Thomas Wells for editing, formatting and structuring the manuscript.

Big thanks and very much indebted to Servicemanagers.org for publishing my book with great confidence; even though, it’s my second milestone in authoring IT books.
Guidance for IT Asset Management

About the author

Kiran Kumar Pabbathi has worked for various companies in the IT industry which gave him detailed insight of ITAM, ITSM, and ITIL best practices. Currently, Kiran works as a Quality & Process manager in Shanghai Bizenit Information Technology, China (www.bizenit.com).

Kiran has had the privilege to work in different roles taking care of service desk operations, request fulfillment, incident management, sharepoint administration, project management, ITIL consulting and trainings, and ITAM Consulting.


His other authoring works include:

- “PDCA for ITIL – Metrics, CSFs and workflows for implementing ITIL practices” published by TSO, UK (ISBN 9780117082076) which gives a direction for implementing ITIL processes and designing ITSM solutions.
- “Charm of friendship” published by Pothi, India (ISBN 9789382715924) explaining the importance of friendship for children.
How to read this book

This book will help in understanding the IT Asset Management key processes, concepts and provides an easy approach to implement IT Asset management practice in a process based approach. I have designed this book in an easily understandable way through the Deming’s cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act). This book can be a good reference and provide great value for IT Managers and IT Asset Management consultants (especially for the people involved in planning, design, implementation, and improvement of the IT asset management operations).

This book details IT Asset Management in terms of 10 processes that are depicted in 4 stages: Plan, Do, Check, and Act as defined in Deming’s cycle; the 11th process describes the different methods to improve asset management as a practice.

The following information describes each section:

Basic Concepts

This section describes the Terminology, Overview, and Objectives of the process.

Steps for Implementation

This section describes the step by step implementation of a process through Plan, Do, Check, Act stages:

The plan phase details the important activities that have to be performed before making any investments on the process development and implementation. Hence, process leads will present the business case, goals of the process, project plan, and organization structure to get the confidence and approval from HLM (Higher Level Management).

The develop phase details the important activities that will initiate design, development and implementation of a process. Here, process leads and other supporting roles would take active involvement in executing the process and its activities.

The check phase details the important activities that will monitor, verify, and validate the process implementation and daily ITAM operations.

The act phase details important activities that will give feedback and recommend different ways to improve process and ITAM operations.

Measures
This section describes the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and Best practices.

**Checklists**

This section highlights the action items that have to be maintained for effective management of different IT asset management processes.

Also this book summarizes some important concepts like additional ITAM processes, ITAM for SSB (Small Scale Businesses), Roles and Responsibilities in ITAM, Principles for Effective Asset Management, Criteria for tool selection, Asset Management Process Maturity Framework, Demarcation between ITSM and ITAM, Demarcation between Asset Management and Configuration Management.
Frequently asked questions

If I want to implement ITAM processes in an organization, what is the first process that I should start with?

ITAM is a business practice with a collection of processes and it is up to you to select the process that you want to improve with respect to the problem areas in your organization.

If your organization is not effective in tracking and stocking of assets, you can refer to the asset inventory management process and define/redefine the process for your asset inventory team.

If your organization doesn’t have a procurement team or is working inefficiently, you could refer to the asset procurement process and define/redefine the process for your asset procurement team.

If your organization is having issues with asset disposal activities, you could refer to the asset disposal process and redefine the activities.

If I have to implement all of the processes in ITAM, what is the procedure?

You can read this book and it would give you a fair idea of how to do so. Also, you can see the section Asset management PMF (Process Maturity Framework) and follow the procedure or customize the procedures as per your feasibility.

How can I win the confidence of my CTO/CEO in a way that ITAM processes would help IT in my organization?

Please refer to the Plan section of every ITAM process in this book; it provides all details.

What kind of VOI, ROI and benefits can I see after ITAM processes implementation?

After the implementation of ITAM processes, you would see maturity, improvement, and clarity in requesting, purchasing, stocking, tracking, and disposal activities of every asset. Apart from it, you would have:

- Clearly documented policies and procedures.
- Demarcation of roles and responsibilities, based on a RACI matrix.
- And you will not have to waste time reinventing the wheel again and again.
Guidance for IT Asset Management

How to implement an ITAM process?
This book provides detailed insight on implementation of different ITAM processes. You can refer to the chapters “Steps for implementing <respective process>”.

How much does it cost to implement an ITAM process?
There is no protocol or magical calculator that can estimate the costs; it depends on the organization and how effective they want the process and its team to be developed.

Should I follow everything that is mentioned in ITAM practice?
ITAM is a practice for management of IT assets; best practices and good practices are a collection of successful ideas. Hence, you can customize it how you want as per your company’s feasibility, cost allocation, resource allocation, etc.

Are there any standards for IT asset management?
ISO/IEC 19770 is the only international standard for Software Asset Management (SAM), and organizations can aim for ISO/IEC 19770.
Why this book?

This book answers many of the questions that arise in the minds of beginners, intermediaries, and experts in the ITAM domain. Furthermore, it was written to provide clear direction for implementing ITAM processes while considering questions that came from students and customers in ITIL, ITAM training sessions and workshops. This book clarifies various questions like:

- How does ITAM help organizations?
- Where and how should I start? What is the first process that I should start with? What are the prerequisites?
- What are the most essential ITAM processes for an organization?
- Should I implement all of the processes if I have to manage my IT assets in the organization?
- Is there a step-by-step approach for developing ITAM processes?
- What are the inputs, throughputs, outputs, and outcomes delivered from processes?

This book is going to address all these questions and provides an easy to understand approach on ITAM best practices.
Introduction to ITAM (IT Asset Management)

What is an Asset

Organization’s financial investments or costs on any kind of resources (hardware, software, and people) are called Assets. Assets can be classified into two types: tangible assets and intangible assets.

Tangible Assets: Assets that can be perceived physically can be called as tangible assets. Tangible assets are generally associated with a specific financial value and they can be converted into cash at any point of time. Examples of tangible assets are machines, materials, lands, etc.

Intangible Assets: Assets that cannot be perceived physically can be called as intangible assets. Intangible assets may not be associated with a financial value at all times. Examples of intangible assets are knowledge, processes, people, etc.

What is ITAM

IT Asset Management (ITAM) is a business practice with the collection of processes, people, tools and activities that aids on effective, efficient management of IT assets.

Effective management of IT asset operations can be performed by defining a standardized process for asset management, which encompasses strategy and planning for assets investment, acquisition, tracking, control, optimization, reporting, disposal, and auditing measures.

ITAM defines a standardized lifecycle for the management of IT assets; its lifecycle stages can be depicted as request, procure, receive, stock, deploy (install/ move/ add/ change), refurbish, retire, and disposal.

ITAM enables the IT organization in providing cost effective investment on assets, effective utilization of resources, effective tracking and control, and elimination of waste (Inefficient management of IT assets in organization results in unnecessary and additional costs, time, and resources).

Key important processes involved in IT Asset Management are:

1. Strategy generation for IT Assets
2. Financial Management for IT Assets
3. Asset Procurement
4. Asset Inventory
5. Asset Catalog Management
6. Software License Management
7. Asset operations and maintenance
8. Asset Disposal
9. Asset Reporting
10. Asset Auditing

And one continuous improvement initiative:

11. Asset Management Improvement Initiative

ITAM enables the IT organization to track and maintain accurate financial and technical information about IT assets throughout the lifecycle of an asset. Effective ITAM reduces the waste involved in the management of IT assets for an organization like:

1. Waiting time for assets
2. Unnecessary stocking of assets
3. Unnecessary movement of assets
4. Overproduction or over-ordering of assets
5. Unnecessary spending on assets

Why do we need ITAM

Lifecycle of IT assets, begins with requesting, procuring, identifying, stocking, tracking, auditing and disposing, and all of these activities are meticulously administered and managed by ITAM practice.

ITAM provides an appropriate direction for organizations, on optimum utilization of resources and reduction of costs on the IT assets. It provides an acute view on ‘what assets organization has’, ‘where is it located’, ‘how are these assets utilized’, ‘who
controls it’, ‘what is its financial value’ and ‘how to improve the utilization of assets’. Asset management helps organizations in various activities:

- To plan, control, manage, monitor, evaluate and provide accountability for IT Assets.
- To provide accurate asset information for various business processes.
- To provide real time visibility and status reporting on all IT assets.
- To make appropriate decisions on financial and compliance related areas like procuring and disposal activities.
- To develop single point of contact with accuracy and consolidated view on all IT assets.
- To track and monitor the costs of assets and pay the invoices on time.
- To register, track and monitor every IT Asset uniquely.
- To have better understanding on asset availability and reliability.
- To manage IT assets from requisition to retirement/disposal stage.
- To improve relationships with vendors and suppliers.
- To improve TCO (Total cost of ownership) while measuring all aspects of an asset.
- To gain maximum ROI & VOI from the assets.
- To prevent the non-compliance issues on regulatory and contractual issues.

Scope of IT Asset Management

Many IT professionals and users often have a misunderstanding with the scope and activities involved in ITAM, as they presume that ITAM and ITSM (IT Service management) are the same. Scope of ITAM can be described as:

1. Asset requisition
2. Asset procurement
3. Asset costs tracking
4. Asset receiving
5. Asset inventory
6. Assets contract and license maintenance
7. Asset movement and maintenance
8. Asset retirement and disposal

Out of scope for IT Asset Management

1. Design or development of the assets.
2. Support and training activities on assets.
3. Associating relationship with assets and its associated configuration items.
4. Management of IT services in consideration with assets.
Goals of IT Asset Management (ITAM)

- Effective utilization and optimization of IT Assets
  ITAM provides accurate information of the assets, its location and status. It enables organizations to utilize and optimize the assets appropriately and also enables in making accurate and effective decisions.

- Control assets as per the contracts agreed and signed
  ITAM provides complete control on assets with accurate and accessible information to improve transparency throughout the organizational stakeholders, and it feeds the audit systems to meet the contracts and compliance laws.

- Cost effective investment on assets, aligning to the business objectives
  ITAM helps organizations to achieve maximum return on investments and reduces the operating costs while satisfying the expectations and requirements of its stakeholders.

- Minimize the waste involved in management of IT assets
  Effective ITAM practice would eliminate wastage, reduce the capital expenses, risks, and deliver better customer satisfaction.

- Adherence to compliance and regulations
  Management of numerous assets, and its associated contracts would expose organizations to many risks on compliance and other regulations. ITAM practice can help organizations to ensure adherence with respect to compliance and regulations.

IT Asset lifecycle

IT asset lifecycle defines the series of stages that an asset transits from planning and purchasing stage to retirement and disposal stage.

IT Asset management lifecycle can be described through the following stages:

1. Plan
2. Purchase
3. Stock
4. Deploy
5. Dispose or Retire
Guidance for IT Asset Management

Plan

Planning is the activity which communicates the organization’s objectives and drives the execution of operations. In this phase, organizations define a plan with budget estimation, specifications, requirements, conditions, and stipulated time period for purchasing and stocking. Strategy generation for IT assets and Financial management for IT assets processes are greatly involved in the planning phase.

Purchase

As per the plans defined, organizations purchase assets ensuring they are economic in cost, good in quality, and that they meet the desired business objectives. Once the asset is purchased, it is associated with Financial management, Asset Inventory, Software License Management, and Asset disposal activities.

Asset procurement and Financial management for IT assets processes are primarily involved in the purchase of assets.

Stock

After the purchasing of assets, organizations stock the assets ensuring they are identified, categorized, and accounted to specific roles with specific responsibilities. Asset inventory process is primarily involved in the stocking of assets.

Deploy

Deployment of the assets is primarily handled by teams like operations management team (as defined in ITIL) which performs activities like IMAC (Installation, Movement, Addition, and Changes).

Retirement and Disposal

When an asset reaches the EOL (End of Life) period, the asset is either retired or disposed to ensure that the EOL asset doesn’t disrupt any live services. Asset disposal activities should be done meticulously with adherence to environmental regulations and country laws.

Asset disposal process is primarily involved in retirement and disposal activities.
Strategy Generation for IT Assets
Introduction to Strategy Generation for IT Assets

Terminology

**Asset:** Organization’s financial investment or costs on any capability or resource.

**Strategy:** Objectives and direction which lays the foundation for an organization to run its business and operations.

**Capability:** Any financial costs or investments made on intangible benefits like knowledge, process, etc.

**Resources:** Any financial costs or investments made on tangible benefits like hardware, software, etc.

**Policy:** Policies are management directives which significantly influence the processes and procedures.

**Standard:** Standards are rules and conventions that help implement policies and enforce required conventions.

**Process:** Process is a set or sequence of activities that results/achieves an output or business goal.

**Best Practices:** Practices that are well recognized and which have proved the ability for demonstrating success in respective areas, e.g. PMBOK for Project Management, ITIL for IT Service Management, MOF for IT Service Management, COBIT for IT Governance, etc.

**Critical Success Factors (CSF):** Critical success factors are the vital elements necessary for the success of business operations.

**Metrics:** Measurements which quantitatively evaluate the performance of IT operations.

**Key Performance Indicators:** The most important metrics which represent the performance of business operations.

**Asset management policy:** Foundational element for the ITAM practice which sets the direction for the IT asset management staff to perform different activities like managing and controlling the IT assets.

**Asset management plan:** Document which provides the holistic guidance on management of assets and its lifecycle. It provides an overview on service levels, risks, assumptions, roles, etc.

**Vision statement:** Statement that defines the organization’s aspirations for future. It mentions “what do we aim for?” and “when do we want to do it”.
**Mission statement:** Statement that gives an overview of the organization’s purpose, organization’s business, customers, etc. It mentions “what do we do?”, “how do we do?”, and “how are we unique?”

**Overview**

Strategy generation for IT assets defines a standardized process and procedure for defining the strategies with respect to acquisition and management of IT assets. It enables developing vision, objectives, critical success factors, roles and responsibilities, policies, plans and standards for the effective management of assets.

IT Asset strategy generation outlines and develops strategy in consideration with the business needs, profitability, risks, capabilities, resources, demand, costs, priority, technological and other factors. IT Asset strategy generation also helps in making decisions about investments as per business needs. IT Asset strategy generation builds the top level strategic plan that provides the foundation for subsequent planning in the management of IT assets with respect to costs, risks, and maintenance.

Important considerations for developing asset strategy are:

1. Identification of business needs and customer requirements
2. Definition of asset portfolio
3. Risk analysis
4. Cost and benefit analysis

Development of IT asset strategy is based on the IT Strategies and Organizational Strategies. Main deliverables of strategy generation for ITAM are:

- Asset management policy
- Asset management plan
- Vision and mission statement
- Service requirements
- Demand estimation analysis
- Risk assessment results
- Asset optimization model

**Objectives**

1. Develop strategy to manage the IT assets which will create value for the organization.
2. Identify the risks and issues associated.
Steps for implementing IT Asset Strategy

Prerequisite:
- IT Strategy, Organizational Strategy, Identification of business needs

Plan

Prepare the Project Charter consisting of Business case, Goal statement, Project Plan, Roles and Responsibilities.

1. Business Case
   Business case should describe the benefits and opportunities of IT Asset Strategy considering the following areas:
   a) Business needs of IT Asset Strategy.
   b) Who will lead it, and which department will control this project?
   c) What are the short term and long term benefits of this project?
   d) What impacts will this new initiative have on other business units and employees? (Pros and Cons)
   e) What are the risks and issues involved, what are the dependencies?
   f) Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism
   g) Cost and Benefit analysis

2. Goal statement
   Goals statement should define the goals associated with IT Strategy. Goals should be closely associated with Business case prepared. Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Goal statement should:
   a) Define the critical success factors?
   b) Define the key performance indicators?
   c) Define what is the time estimated to see the results?

3. Project Plan
   Project plan should show the timeline and milestones for various activities involved in the development of IT asset strategy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities
   Define RACI model for clarity in roles and responsibilities. Identify the roles needed and hire the human resources. Primary roles needed for IT Asset Strategy can be defined as:
   a) Asset Strategy Lead
   b) Strategy Analysts
Do

1. Develop the SOW for IT asset strategy, defining the:
   a) Scope of services which will be considered by IT asset strategy.
   b) Out of scope
   c) Hardware, Software, People-ware and tools required
   d) Appropriate people for the defined roles and responsibilities
   e) Risks and dependencies for the IT asset strategy team and process
   f) Costs Involved
2. Adopt Porter’s five force analysis, Value chain analysis, and SWOT analysis to define a strategy suitable for the management of IT assets.
4. Develop policies and standards.
5. Develop the relevant planning documents like asset management plan, asset portfolio plan, asset maintenance plan, and other management plans like communication plan, improvement plan, etc.
6. Define classification schema for assets (into groups and hierarchy).
7. Develop Metrics and KPI’s.
8. Perform technical and editorial review on the developed collaterals.
9. Document the feedback and comments on collaterals.
10. Ensure that the feedback is updated on the collaterals.
11. Publish and release the strategic collaterals.

Check

1. Ensure that developed strategy collaterals are in sync with IT goals and business goals.
2. Identify the risks related to each of the planned objectives, vision, and goals.
3. Review and update strategic plans and objectives as per changing business plans and requirements.

Act

1. Publish and release the strategic collaterals.
2. Maintain and store the developed strategic collaterals.
3. Review and update strategic plans and objectives as per the business plans.
4. Develop a continuous improvement initiative to identify and resolve any issues or flaws found in the strategic collaterals.
5. Develop plans to mitigate significant risks.
Guidance for IT Asset Management

Measures

Key Performance Indicators

a) Number of plans defined.
b) Number of templates defined.
c) Number of policies defined.
d) Number of standards defined.
e) Time taken to develop the strategic collaterals (vision statement, objectives, CSF, etc.).
f) Number of human resources needed for developing strategy.

Best Practices

a) Develop strategy with clarity and concreteness.
b) Develop strategy aligning to the business needs and customer needs.
c) Explore the ongoing industry and technological insights to create a value for the business.
d) Development of strategy should be developed with the focus on end-user/customer’s satisfaction.
e) Perform a SWOT analysis after defining the strategy.
f) Centralized and integrated asset management tool encompassing all the ITAM processes.
g) Active participation and commitment from the senior managers and executives.
h) Clarity in Roles and Responsibilities.
Strategy Generation for IT Assets Workflow

Analyze & Assess

An understanding is developed about the business requirements, patterns, organizational strategy, vision, goals and priorities. Assessments and analysis is made on market spaces, customer needs, types of customers (internal customers, external customers, and mixed customers), and risks associated.

Assessments are made in form of: Interviews, Questionnaire, Direct observation, Simulations, etc.

Define

Definition of strategy is done adopting Porter’s five force analysis, Value chain analysis, and SWOT analysis. It defines strategic values like quality standards to be maintained, cost spending approach, utilization of resources, and considerations on warranty. It defines strategy as a closed-loop control system that can adapt to the changes and feedback provided.

Definition of strategy can be evaluated through methods like Brainstorming, Nominal group technique, Delphi technique, Multi-voting, etc.

Execute

It is the process of informing, implementing, and publishing defined mission, objectives, goals, and critical success factors for its stakeholders. Strategy execution has to be implemented into the most important artifacts like processes, products/tools, and people (internal and external).
Checklist for Strategy Generation for IT Assets

An effective strategy generation team should maintain the following data on its processes and operations:

**Management’s perspective**

a) Is your IT assets strategy aligned with your organization’s business needs?
b) Do you have the strategic goals, objectives, vision, critical success factors clearly documented?
c) Is the IT Assets strategy developed with the active involvement of key stakeholders and partners?
d) Are your customer requirements and competitors approach considered, while developing the strategy?
e) Are the emerging technologies and trends considered while developing strategies?
f) Is your previous learning’s and experiences considered while developing the strategy?
g) Did you evaluate the risks associated with strategies?
h) Do you have an estimated time frame for the strategic goals and objectives?
i) Do you periodically review the strategy collaterals?
j) Do you have the roles and responsibilities clearly defined like a RACI matrix?
k) Is there appropriate segregation of duties in the RACI defined?

**Operations perspective**

a) Do you have the strategic collateral (objectives, goals, vision and etc.) accessible for yourself?
b) Are your internal teams and tasks adhering to the strategic plans as defined?
c) Do you know and understand your organization’s strategic goals for the fiscal year?
d) Do you see the strategic execution in your company? Or do you think strategies are only made and never implemented in operations?
Acronyms

CSF – Critical Success Factors
KPI – Key Performance Indicators
IMAC – Install Move Add Change
ITAM – Information Technology Asset Management
FAR – Fixed Asset Register
FAR – Fixed Asset Reconciliation
GAAP – Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
IFRS – International Financial Reporting Standards
SKU – Stock Keeping Unit
RACI – Roles, Accountability, Consulted, and Informed
PR – Purchase Request
RFQ – Request for Quotation
RFI – Request for Information
RFP – Request for Proposal
EOQ – Economic Order Quantity
IMIS – Inventory Management Information System
NLL – Node Locked License
NFRL – Not for Resale License
AMP – Asset Maintenance Plan
AMMS – Asset Maintenance Management System
AKS – Asset Knowledge System
AAL – Asset Average Life
RFM – Request for Maintenance
RFAD – Request for asset withdrawal
RFAM – Request for asset movement
RFAT – Request for asset transfer
RFAR – Request for asset repair
AUP – Asset Usage Policy
BRR – Beyond Reasonable Repair
ADP – Asset Disposal Plan
ADC – Asset Disposal Criteria
ADA – Asset Disposal Assessment
ADA – Asset Disposal Approval
DSP – Data Security Procedure
AMI – Asset Management Improvement
ASR – Asset Summary Report
RCB – Registered Certified Bodies
NC – Non Conformances
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