

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Keyword Research



But Were too Afraid to Ask

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

First off, let me congratulate you for downloading and reading this guide. Why am I congratulating you? Because you chose to take a look at a product that promises nothing more and nothing less than teaching you one of the fundamentals of online marketing. Among all the thousands of ebooks and courses out there, promising fast riches and incredible money-making secrets, you went for a humble little guide about keyword research that comes with absolutely no income promises and features zero “earnings-proof” screenshots on the promo page.

One of the reasons I created this guide is precisely because there are so many “how to make money” products available and most of them focused too much on a specific trick or technique and not enough on the fundamentals.

Keyword research is a major cornerstone of almost any online business endeavour. In many ways, keyword research represents what makes such a big difference between online and offline marketing. If you know how to do proper keyword research, you can launch websites and products with confidence, having a fairly clear picture in advance, of what kind of results you can expect. If you don’t know how to do proper keyword research, then even if you offer the best products and services, or create the most awesome content, chances are, no one will ever know about it.

This guide consists of three main parts:

The first part is all about keywords themselves. We will look at what keywords are, we will explore all of the metrics, all of the data that we can find out about keywords, we will look at the psychology behind keywords and we will learn how to evaluate keywords.

The second part is about the challenges you face when you are trying to “compete” for a particular keyword. We will learn how to evaluate competition strength and how to find out whether or not we stand a chance in the battle for top search-engine positions.

Finally, we put it all together in the practical quick-start guide, which walks you through the step-by-step process of uncovering and evaluating great keywords.

WHAT ARE KEYWORDS?

Let's start with the most basic of all questions: what are keywords?

A keyword is any term or phrase that someone enters into the search field of a search engine like Google. The term "keyword" can be slightly misleading, because it doesn't only refer to single words typed in as search queries, but also to phrases and entire sentences.

And what makes keywords so important? Search-engines have become a pivotal way for us to interact with information. Millions of people use Google and other search-engines (mainly Yahoo! and Bing) many times a day, to find out about all kinds of things. Since we can find out *what* people look for, *how many* people look for it and *what words* they use to look for it, this offers an unprecedented insight into human psychology and at the same time, represents an incredibly valuable marketing and market research opportunity.

THE PERFECT KEYWORD

When we do keyword research, we're basically hunting for that "perfect keyword" in our niche. Here, I will outline what that perfect keyword would look like, what kind of characteristics it has. This will provide you with an overview of what we're after in keyword research.

The perfect keyword is one that...

- ...has a high search volume, meaning many people are typing in that search term every single day.
- ...is on an upwards trend or consistently searched for, meaning that people will still be searching for it months and years from now.
- ...has low competition, meaning the websites currently ranking on top for that keyword are badly optimized and can be easily displaced by a website of our own.
- ...is very specific, meaning that it's very clear what the searcher is looking for, so we can provide the optimal solution.
- ...is a buying keyword, meaning that people who search for it are ready and willing to pay money, not just on the lookout for free information.

In short, we're looking for a high volume, low competition, specific, buying keyword with an increasing or stable trend.

As you can imagine, keywords fulfilling all of those criteria are generally hard to come by. This guide will show you the best ways to evaluate each of the factors mentioned above and provide you with a concrete plan for uncovering great keywords.

SEARCH VOLUME

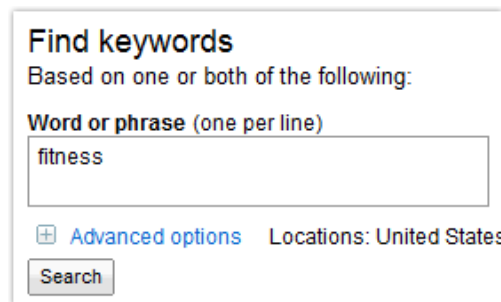
Since I want this to be a practical and action oriented guide, let's dive right in and introduced the first free tool that we will be using for our keyword research: the Google keyword research tool.

To access this tool, follow this link:















<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

Another way to access it is to simply do a Google search for "keyword tool" and selecting the first result.

Let's just take a look at the results for a really generic keyword like "fitness", "weight loss", "car rental" or anything else you can think of, that is bound to be searched for very often.



For this example, I use the keyword "fitness". Here are the first few rows of data that the keyword tool returns:

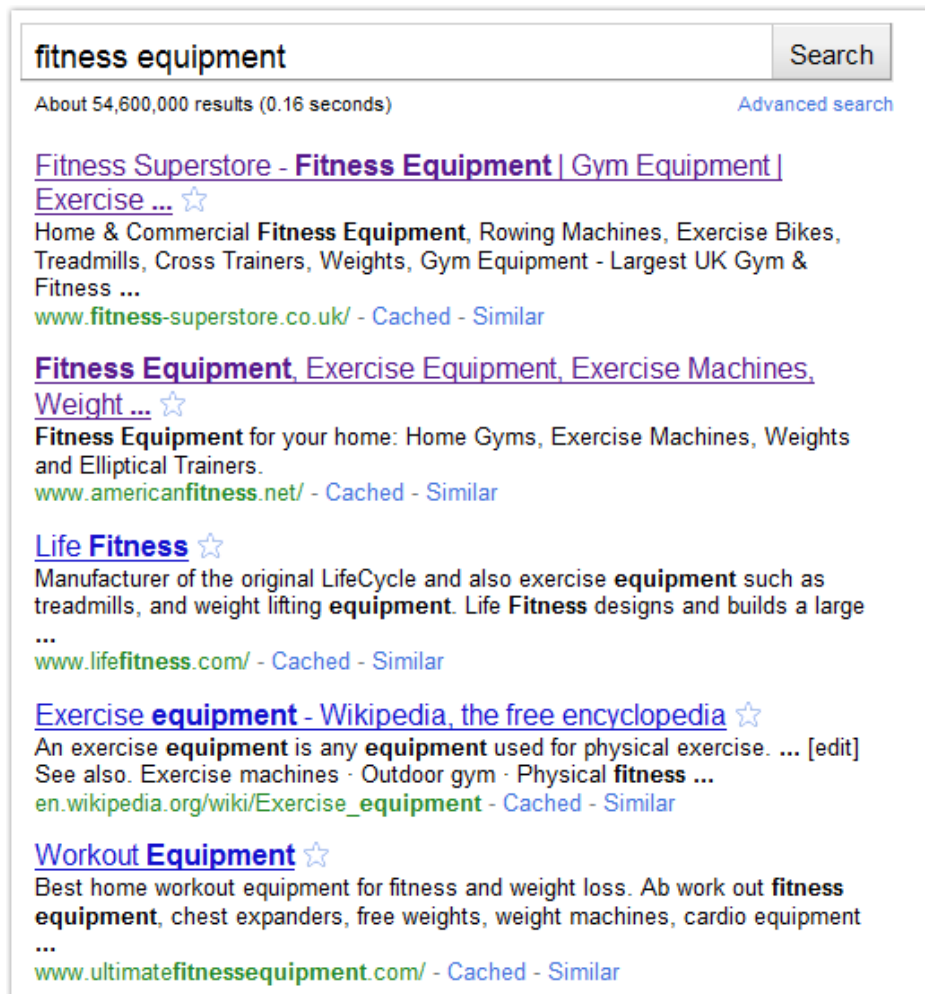
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches	Local Search Trends
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness equipment		2,240,000	1,500,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness		55,600,000	30,400,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness exercise		4,090,000	3,350,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness workout		450,000	450,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness program		301,000	201,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness programs		110,000	74,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	fitness training		673,000	301,000	

As you can see, the keyword tool automatically lists results for the keyword you entered as well as further, related keywords.

For now, we're primarily interested in the search volume. The number below "Global Monthly Searches" is simply an estimate of how many people type a keyword into Google

each month. As you can see, some terms get lots of searches. Literally millions of people look for “fitness equipment” on Google each and every month, for example. So many people searching for the same thing in the same place (Google) represents a substantial traffic stream. Now, wouldn’t it be nice if we could present an offer to this traffic stream, to all of these millions of people searching for fitness equipment?

Let’s go ahead and do a Google search for this term. Here are the top few results (for my region – depending on where you are, your results could look different):



As you can imagine, the owners of the websites listed above are mostly very well off, because they get to offer fitness equipment to a couple million people looking for fitness equipment every month. Not a bad position to be in.

This is what keyword research is about: You want to find something a lot of people are looking for and you want to get in front of them and offer them exactly that thing they are looking for.

In order to make this work, we need to:

- Find an in-demand keyword (i.e. one with a high search volume)
- Be able to offer something (own product/service or as an affiliate)
- Convince Google that ours is the best website to list on the first page of the search results

That last point is the most critical one. Obviously, we are not in control of where our website will show up in the search results. Of course, we can promote our site, but first, we need to be able to make an accurate guess about whether we even have a chance of getting our site to page one of the results, or not.

MATCH TYPES

One very important and often overlooked factor are the match types. When you query the Google keyword research tool (or pretty much any other keyword tool for that matter) for search volume, the numbers displayed are broad match results.

Broad match is one of three match types: broad match, phrase match and exact match.

These terms have slightly different meanings depending on whether we use them to describe a search in Google or use them to describe the search volume (as seen in the keyword research tool). Let's look at the match type significance in Google search, first:

A "normal" search in a search-engine is always a broad match search. For example, let's take the search term "blue vintage car": if you do a search for this keyword, Google will return every page it can find containing those three words, no matter where on the page they are and no matter in which order they appear.

Even a page that talks about *vintage* jeans, *blue* crayons and toy *cars* will be displayed somewhere in the results, even though it has very little to do with the actual search term.

You can narrow the search by surrounding your keyword with quotes. The search for a term surrounded by quotes is called a phrase match search. In this case, Google will only return pages containing the words you typed in, in that exact order. Go ahead and try it out for yourself: type "blue vintage car" or any other string of two or more words into Google, surrounded by quotes and look through the results. You'll find that even the very last result on the very last page contains the exact sequence of words that you typed in.

So much for search options. But what do the different match types mean for search volume numbers?

To illustrate, I'm going to stick with the "blue vintage car" example. For a broad match search volume, every instance of the search that contains those three words is counted, no

matter in what sequence the words were typed and no matter how many other words were typed in the same search query.

This means that searches for:

blue vintage car

blue vintage car pictures

vintage blue jeans with car logo

would all be counted towards the broad match search volume number.

Just as in the search itself, you can ask for phrase match results by surrounding your keyword with quotes when entering it into the Google keyword research tool. In most cases, you see that the phrase match search volume is significantly lower than the broad match search volume. For the phrase match search volume, only searches containing the three words in that exact order are counted. However, searches with those three words in sequence plus some other words before or after are still counted.

This means that:

blue vintage car

blue vintage car pictures

both count towards the phrase-match search volume. However,

vintage blue jeans with car logo

does *not* count towards this volume, because the words are not in sequence anymore.

Finally, you can ask for the exact match search volume by surrounding your keywords in square brackets. For this number, only searches for that exact keyword with the words in sequence and no other words before or after are counted. Once again, this means that the exact match number tends to be significantly lower than the phrase match number.

COMPETITION ANALYSIS

Apart from search volume, the most important factor to consider before starting to pursue a keyword is competition strength. We want to have a good idea of what we're up against and be able to judge whether or not we can promote a site to page one in the Google results.

When analysing competition strength, there are two factors to consider: on-page optimization and off-page optimization. For a brief explanation of these two factors, refer to the cheat sheet.

The easiest way to check both on- and off-page factors is to use Traffic Travis (PC) or SEOquake (Mac/PC, Firefox Plugin). Both these tools are free to use and you can download them right here:

[Traffic Travis](#)

[SEOquake](#)

OFF-PAGE SEO

To get a good idea of how well optimized your competitor's sites are for a particular keyword, you want to answer the following questions:

Is my targeted keyword featured in:

- The page title?
- The URL?
- At least one H1 tag?
- The meta-description?
- The meta-tags?
- The body content?

If the answer is "no" to most of these questions for the top listed sites for my targeted keyword, that's good news for me. If the answer is "yes" in most cases, then the top listed sites are already optimized for the exact same keyword I'm trying to go after and that could make the job of getting my site ranked in the top spot a bit harder.

You can find out about these factors in detail by looking at the source-code of your competitor's sites. However, a quicker way to get a good idea of how well optimized the sites are is to check the keyword competition in Traffic Travis.

In Traffic Travis, select the “Analyse Keyword” option and type in your targeted keyword. It will return a matrix of data covering the top listed sites for that keyword. For the off-page factors, here are the three columns that we’re interested in:

Title	Desc	H1 Tag
✓	✓	✓
✓	✗	✗
✗	✗	✗
✗	✗	✗
✓	✓	✓
✓	✗	✓
✗	✗	✗
✗	✗	✗
✗	✗	✓
✗	✗	✗

These three columns tell us whether the keyword is featured in the page title, H1 tags and the meta description for each of the sites listed. In the above example, you can see that only two of the sites are optimized across all three factors.

If you are using SEOquake to do the analysis, simply do a Google search for your keyword and visit some of the top listed pages. On the pages (make sure SEOquake is activated), select the “Info” option to get the keyword data for the page in question.



You'll see a rundown of lots of keywords and some of them will have the letters T, K and D next to them, representing "Title", "Keywords" (= meta tags) and "Description" (= meta description).

Find your targeted keyword in the list and check to see if it has T, K and D listed to get an idea of the on-page optimization. It's not as elegant as the Traffic Travis solution, but it gets the job done.

For a Mac program with similar functionality to the analysis Traffic Travis does, check out [Market Samurai](#) or the Mac version of [Keyword Elite 2.0](#). Unfortunately, these programs are not free (though they are both worth the money, in my opinion).

DOMAIN AGE

Another metric that factors into on-page optimization is the domain age of a website. Older websites are generally more trusted and tend to rank higher than websites on brand new domains. Also, the older a website the more time it has had to accumulate backlinks, of course.

Since domain age is something we don't have direct control over (unless we're buying aged domains, which is a subject that would warrant a training guide all of it's own), this is not a factor I worry about too much.

OFF-PAGE SEO

Off-page optimization all comes down to backlinks. Here, the question is how many backlinks each of the competing pages has pointing to it.

In Traffic Travis, we see a quick overview in these two columns:

BL	BLS
3	275
1190	1200
49	1200
1960	1970
554	554
0	106003
2800	334000
0	0
45	47
4	17800

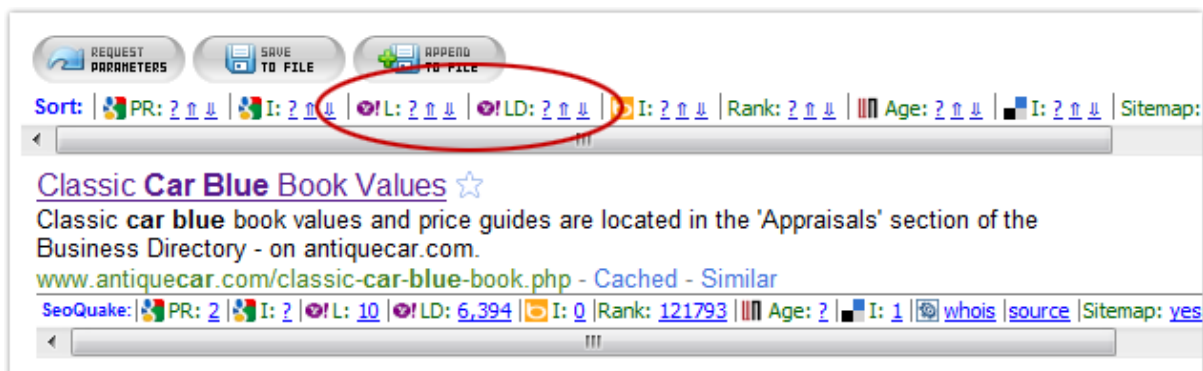
The first column (BL) tells us how many links are pointing to the *page* that is ranking for that keyword and the second column (BLS) shows how many links are pointing to the *entire website* that the ranking page is a part of. The more backlinks a page has, the more likely it is to rank high up in the results. A large number of backlinks to the underlying site also helps.

However, as you can see from the above example, it's not only down to the number of backlinks, otherwise a site with 3 page- and 275 site-backlinks would not rank higher than one with around 1200 backlinks each.

Apart from the amount of backlinks, Google also takes on-page factors, domain age and the quality of the backlinks into consideration (among many other factors). For competition analysis purposes, we can assume that we'll start outranking the pages once we get more backlinks than they have, given that we do solid on-page SEO for our sites.

Keep in mind that the number of backlinks displayed is not the absolute total number of backlinks for any of the sites. Not all backlinks are indexed and counted.

With SEOquake, we can get the same number by doing a Google search and querying the *L* and *LD* metrics:



You can request these parameters for all search results by clicking the question marks next to L and LD (circled red above) and the numbers will then show up in the SEOquake bar below each individual search result.

CAN I COMPETE?

When doing competition analysis, the ultimate question we want to be able to answer is, of course: "Can I compete for this keyword?"

In other words, we want to find out if we can realistically get our website to the top of the search results.

I'd love to provide you with some kind of a magic formula that always answers this question precisely, but such a thing doesn't exist, unfortunately. It really comes down to experience. Depending on what kind of link-building and optimization methods you use and what kind of systems you have in place, you can take on more or less competition.

I recommend that you start out by pursuing a very low competition, long-tail keyword (even if it has very low search volume). Use your optimization and backlink building methods and take note of how long it takes you to get your site to one of the top spots for that keyword. If you got there in a reasonable time-frame, take on a slightly more competitive keyword and work your way up from there.

Once you've done this a couple of times, you'll have a very good idea of what kind of competitors you can easily take on, and what kind of keywords to stay away from.

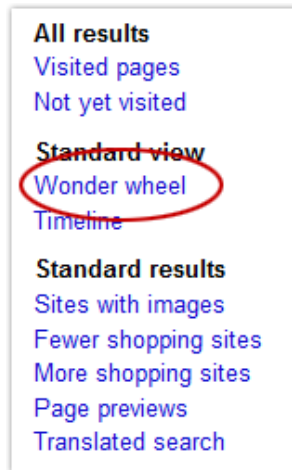
KEYWORD EXPLORATION

In this next chapter, we'll take a look at some methods that help you dig for long-tail keywords and uncover new ones. After all, the most valuable kind of keywords are usually the most difficult to find. Fortunately, there are some very nice tools and techniques we can use to explore new keywords.

The Google keyword research tool that we have used previously will serve as the basis for keyword exploration. In fact, you can do a certain amount of keyword exploration right inside this tool. Once again, start off with your seed keyword.

To get more suggestions, you can simply do a new search for any one of the returned keyword suggestions. Each variation of a keyword that you use as the seed keyword will generate a slightly different list of alternative suggestions. To avoid getting lots of duplicates, I recommend looking for a keyword that is not too closely related to your original seed keyword and then expanding the search based on that keyword.

To get more keyword ideas, one of the best options is to use the Google Wonder Wheel. To access the Wonder Wheel, do a normal Google search, click on "more search tools" in the sidebar and select it from there.

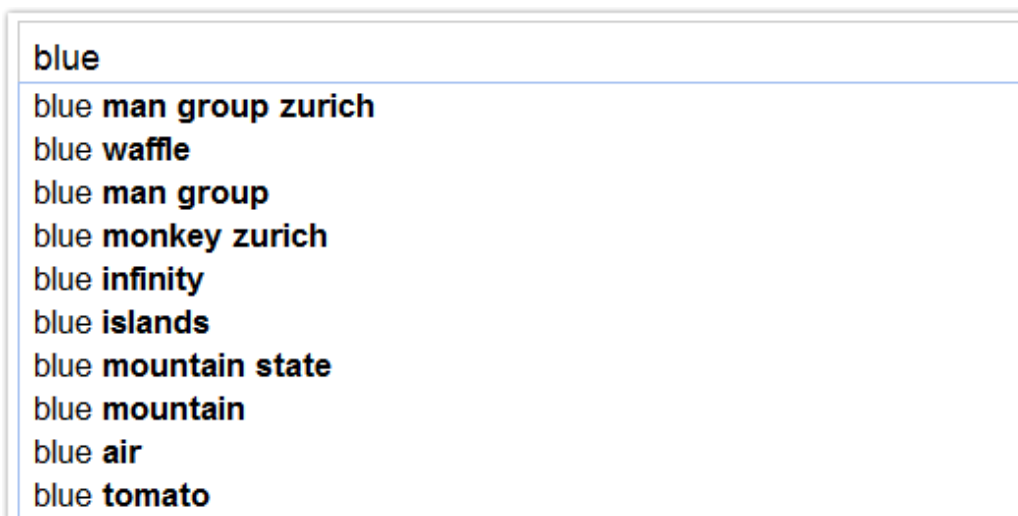


As you'll see, the Wonder Wheel displays keywords in a way that resembles mind maps and you can expand and explore keyword ideas by clicking on any one of the "branches". What makes the Wonder Wheel especially interesting is the fact that it returns a lot of long-tail keywords.

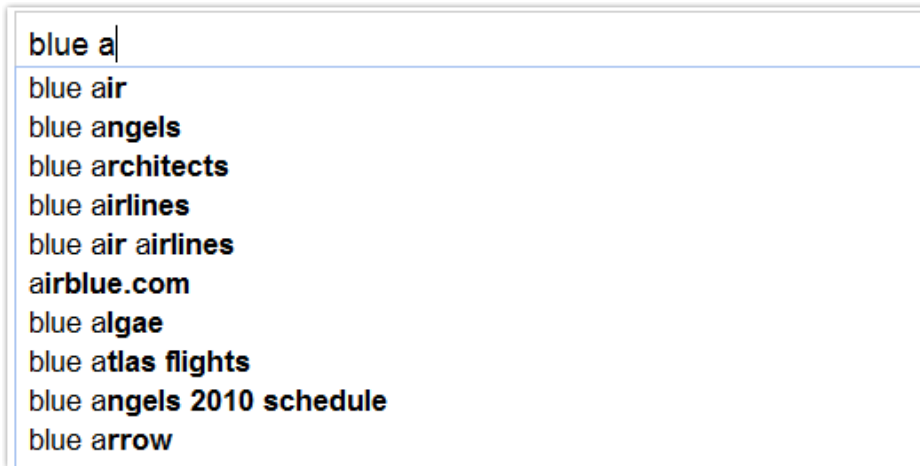
Explore the suggestions and write down all of the most interesting ones. I like to note down the keywords in a simple notepad document, separated by line breaks. Once you've gathered enough ideas, you can copy and paste the entire list into the keyword research tool. Often, the keyword suggestions produced by the Wonder Wheel are not worth pursuing themselves, in terms of search volume and competitiveness. However, used as seed keywords in the keyword tool, they can help uncover new suggestions that *are* worth pursuing.

Finally, you can use the suggestion Google produces in its own search box to explore keyword ideas.

For example, here is the list of suggestions I got after typing in "blue":



To get more suggestions, type in your seed keyword followed by a letter. For example, here are the results for “blue a”:



If you fancy, you can cycle through the entire alphabet like this and get hundreds of suggestions. Once again, you can then copy-paste some of the suggestions into the Google KW tool and get a new list of keyword possibilities, from which you can pick the high-traffic/low competition ones.

THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

This document simply covered the basics necessary for understanding the step-by-step process. To put all of this into practice, watch the process video and refer to the process map included in the download-section.

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS:

[Keyword Elite 2.0](#)

In my experience, this is the best and most complete keyword research tool and it can help you go through the whole process described in this guide much more quickly and effectively. I've been using this tool for a long time and I've found all of my most lucrative keywords with it.

[Market Samurai](#)

If you don't get Keyword Elite, then you should get this. Market Samurai also features a great keyword research section, along with many other features like affiliate-product and content research modules. [Free trial available.](#)

[The IM Advantage](#)

Simply the best Internet marketing membership to be a part of. It's run by the "Blueprint" guys Steve Clayton and Tim Godfrey and the link-building tools alone are worth about three times as much as the membership costs (and that's not a made up value, that's comparing them to prices of products that do the same link-building stuff and are available separately). If you want to get in at a lower price, get in touch with me (shane@richquickreview.com). I can't guarantee anything, but maybe I can get you access at a reduced price.

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[The Money Vine – SEOLinkVine on Steroids](#)

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