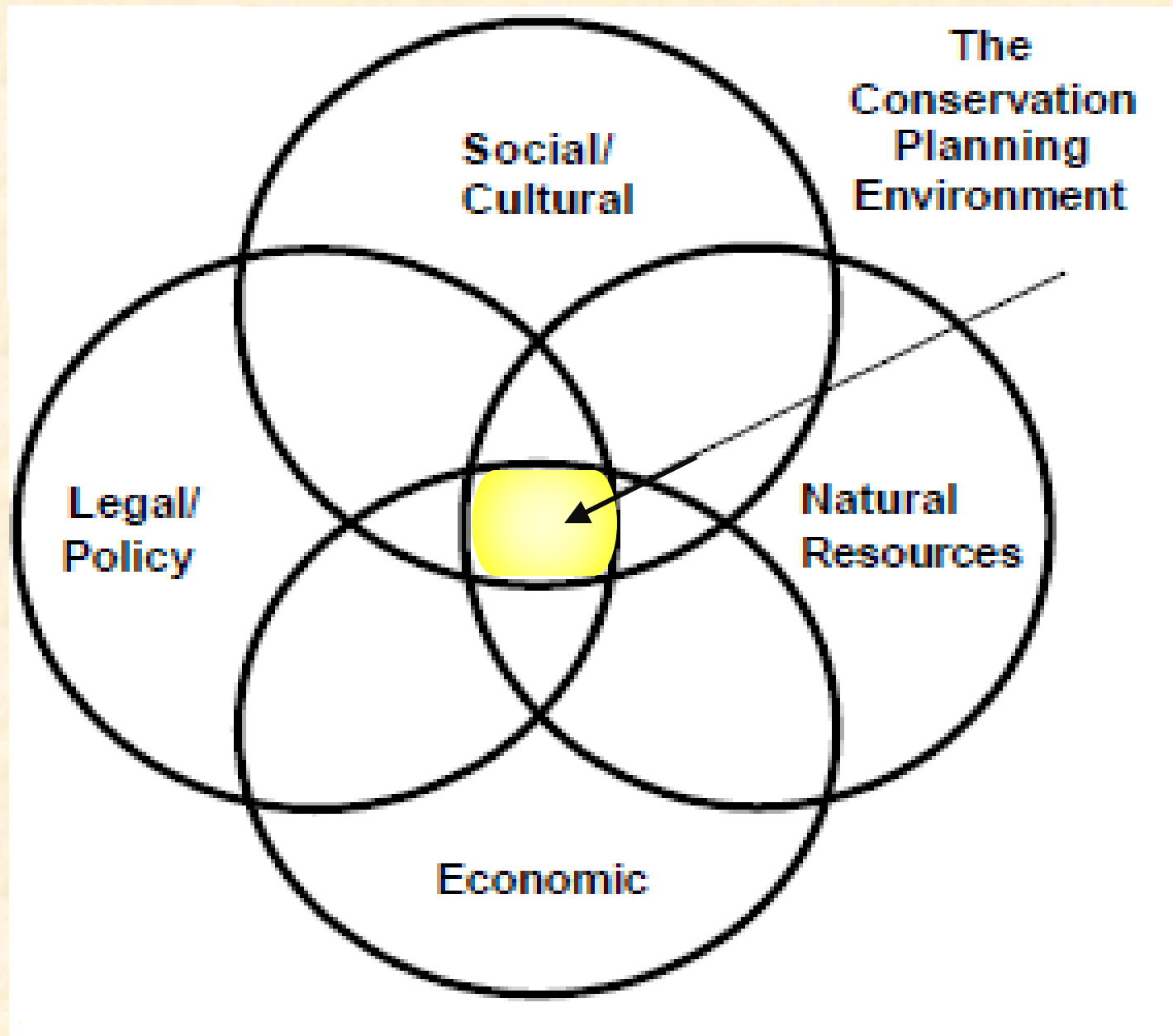


Integrating Social and Physical Factors in Conservation Planning

How do our customers make decisions?
What factors influence their decisions?





Farmers may not be aware of:

- On-site and off-site **causes and consequences** of erosion and other natural resource problems
- The short- and long-term **benefits of conservation**
- The types and sources of **available assistance**
- The nature of NRCS conservation plans: ***voluntary implementation***
- That alternative practices/systems can be **custom designed** to meet their needs and site-specific conditions



Farmers may not have enough info:

- Economic, agronomic, and environmental costs and benefits of alternative practices, assistance, or agency programs.

Community constraints:

- The absence of support from leaders, family, friends, and neighbors
- Absence of active community support structures such as districts, salespeople, or local USDA offices
- Unequal access to information, financial and technical assistance and support



Organizational barriers:

- Conflicting messages from different sources
- Confusion over the roles and responsibilities among the various agencies
- Lack of coordination between and among agencies

Economic obstacles:

- **Lack of cash or credit** for producer's share of cost
- **Limited cash flow** while waiting for government reimbursement



Landlord-tenant relationships:

- Short term leases may serve as obstacles to installation and maintenance of practices or systems
- Program participation may require long term commitments



Buying vs. Renting
Agricultural Equipment



Practice Preferences

- economically feasible
- observable, simple to use and divisible into manageable parts
- compatible with a farmer's beliefs, ideas and management style
- flexible, fits easily into the management of the operation

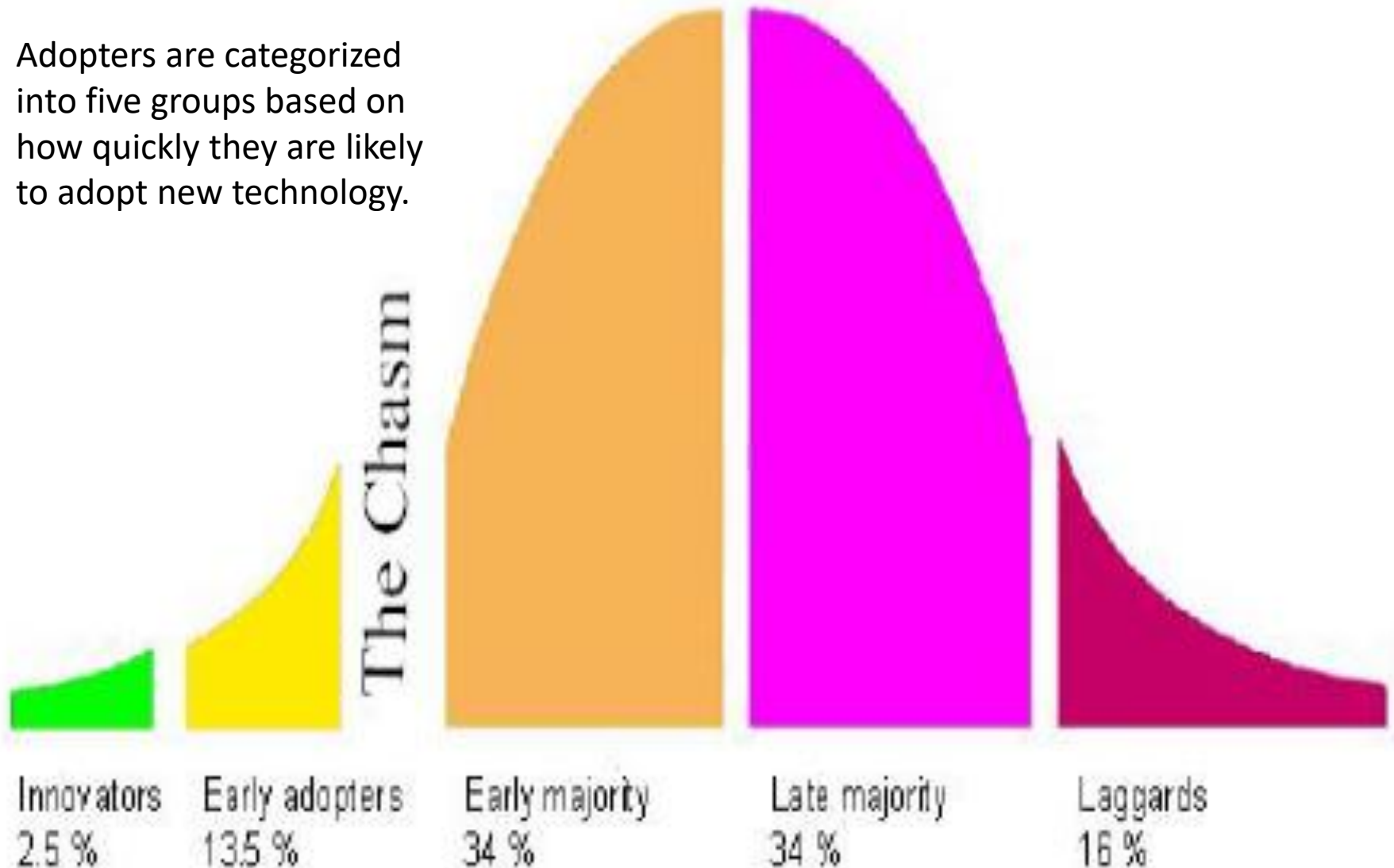
Stages in the adoption process:

- 1. Awareness
- 2. Interest
- 3. Evaluation
- 4. Trial
- 5. Adoption
- 6. Adaptation

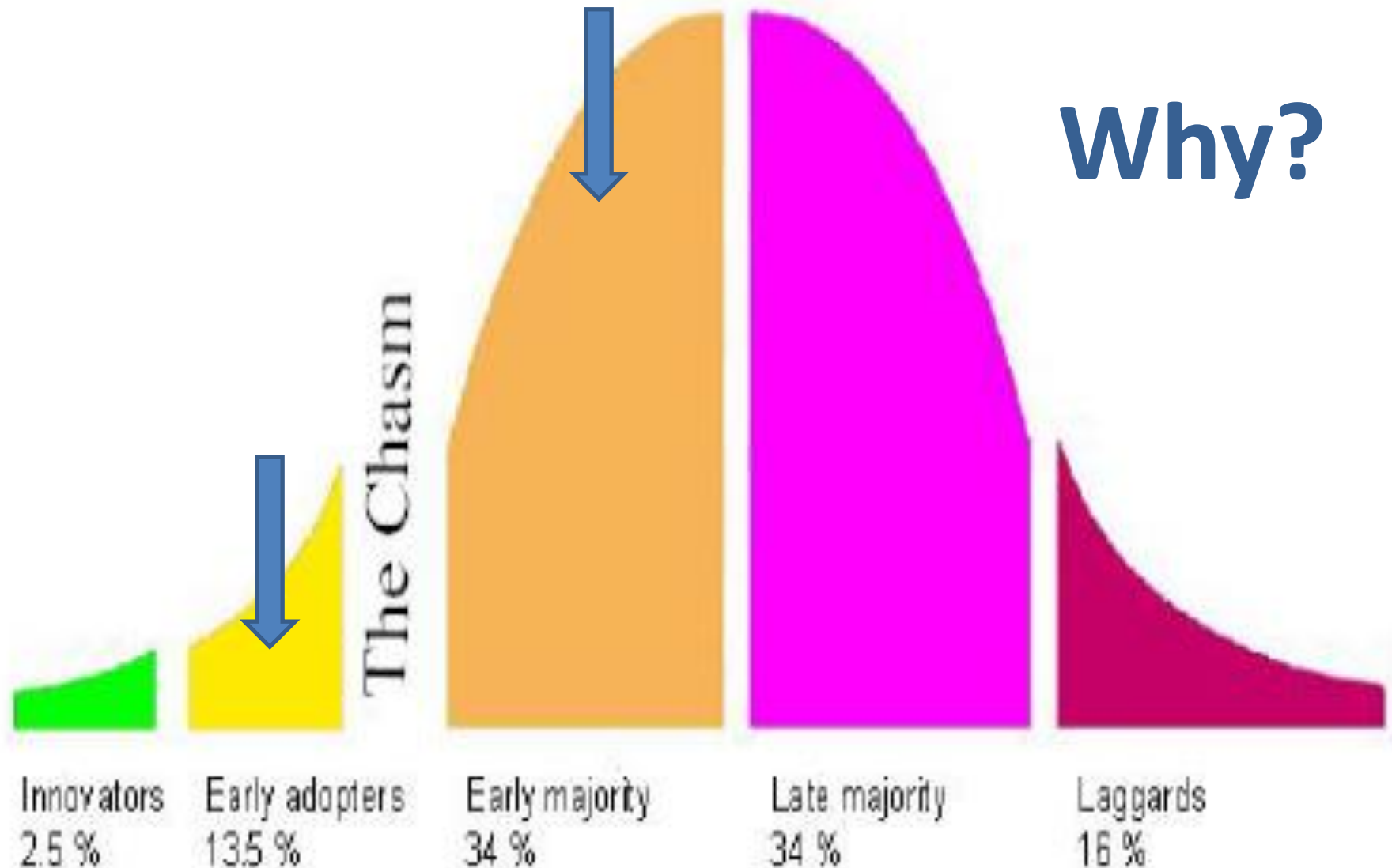


Adopter Categories

Adopters are categorized into five groups based on how quickly they are likely to adopt new technology.



Who do we work with?



Common Personal Characteristics

- above-average income
- greater number of years of formal education
- higher number of agency contacts
- more participation in agricultural organizations
- greater reliance on mass media
- higher awareness of conservation problems
- greater willingness to take risks
- full-time operator
- desire to pass farm/ranch on to children

Guide to Estimating the Adoption of Conservation Systems

Title: *(Identifying name of group, project, watershed, etc.; date; and other identifying information.)*

Sub - Routines for Financial Assistance (FA), Technical Assistance (TA), Information/Education (I/E), Timing (T), and Management (M)

I. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Sub -
Routines

SCORE

	2	1	0		
1. Inter-generational transfer of Ag. Operation	Children farming/ranching or intending to pass farm/ranch on to family member	Children living on farm/ranch or have limited involvement in the operation	No children on farm or children not involved in operation		
2. Number of days the primary operator works off-farm or ranch	Works less than 50 days off-farm	Works 50 - 200 days off-farm	Works more than 200 days off-farm	M	
3. Has a conservation plan	Yes	Plan under development	No	TA, T, M	
4. Number of agricultural innovations already adopted	Above area average	Area average	Below area average	TA, T, M	
5. Seeks out conservation information (e.g. print, electronic, tours, demonstrations, etc.)	Regularly	Occasionally	Does not seek out conservation information	I/E, M	
6. Awareness of local natural resource problem(s)	High	Medium	Low	I/E	
7. Relevance of resource problem(s) to the Ag. Operation	High	Moderate	Low	T	

conservation activity in the past year (e.g. tours, demonstrations, field days, etc.)	Activity occurred and was highly effective	Activity occurred and had a moderate effect	No activity or had no effect	TA, TE	0
36. Intensity of residential and commercial development on agricultural land	No development pressure	Some development pressure	High development pressure		1
37. Perceived regulatory threat(s)	High	Moderate	Low	T	1
Total Number of Pertinent Indicators	37				
Perfect Score	74				
Actual Score	22				
ESTIMATED PARTICIPATION RATE	30%				

TIMING SCORE	MANAGEMENT SCORE	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SCORE	INFORMATION / EDUCATION ASSISTANCE SCORE	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCORE
20%	15%	5%	32%	19%

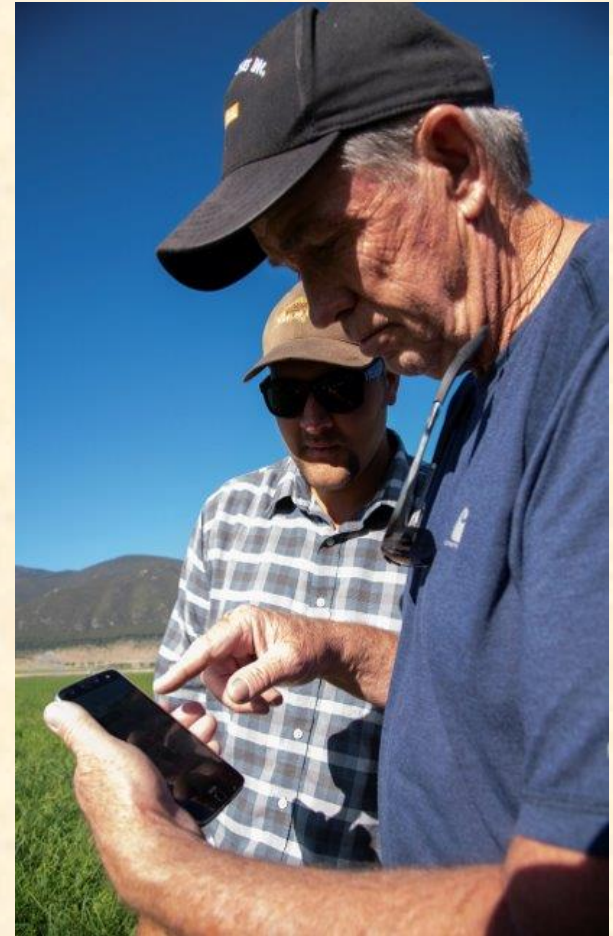
<u>TIMING SCORES</u>
Timing Indicators are: 3, 4, 7, 9, 15, 17, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37
70% and above indicates the likelihood of rapid participation in the <u>first three years</u> of the project.
50 to 69% indicates the likelihood of full participation in the <u>first 5 years</u> of the project with moderate adjustments in technical and financial assistance, and conservation marketing.
Below 50% indicates a need for significant adjustments in technical assistance, financial assistance, and

“The Real World”

- Assume nothing about the farmer or their operation.
- Bring your baseline knowledge to the interaction (*that's why you're there*) but **LISTEN TO THEM**. You will NEVER know their operation as well as they do...
- Treat them with respect, but don't be a doormat. It's okay to say no, tactfully.

“The Real World”

- How people react to you:
 - 25% will automatically like you
 - You remind them of someone they like; good first impression; good reviews by others
 - They’re just ‘easy-going’ and like everyone
 - 25% will automatically dislike you
 - You remind them of someone they dislike; bad first impression; bad reviews by others (true or not); you work for “the government”
 - They don’t like anyone
 - 50% will decide based on your actions



“The Real World”

- Your best tools to achieve change are:
 - Willingness to listen and learn
 - Knowledge and Experience
 - Practicality
 - Integrity
 - Persistence
 - Humor





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