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Abstract

The Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIA) is a public research centre, belonging to the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), dedicated to AI research. We focus our activities on a few well-defined sub-domains of Artificial Intelligence, positively avoiding dispersion and keeping a good balance between basic research and applications, and paying particular attention to training PhD students and technology transfer. In this article, we survey some of the most relevant results related to Fuzzy Logic and Fuzzy AI Systems that we have obtained since the initiation of our research activities in 1985.

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Keywords (separated by '-')

Artificial intelligence - Fuzzy logic - Fuzzy systems - Multiple-valued logics - Similarity logics - Knowledge-based systems - Case-based reasoning - AI applications

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# A Survey of Contributions to Fuzzy Logic and Its Applications to Artificial Intelligence at the IIIA

Ramon Lopez de Mantaras, Lluís Godo, Enric Plaza and Carles Sierra

**Abstract** The Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIIA) is a public research centre, belonging to the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), dedicated to AI research. We focus our activities on a few well-defined sub-domains of Artificial Intelligence, positively avoiding dispersion and keeping a good balance between basic research and applications, and paying particular attention to training PhD students and technology transfer. In this article, we survey some of the most relevant results related to Fuzzy Logic and Fuzzy AI Systems that we have obtained since the initiation of our research activities in 1985.

**Keywords** Artificial intelligence · Fuzzy logic · Fuzzy systems · Multiple-valued logics · Similarity logics · Knowledge-based systems · Case-based reasoning · AI applications

## 1 Introduction

It all started in 1985 when Professor Enric Trillas, then President of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), asked Prof. Ramon Lopez de Mantaras to found an AI department at the newly established Centre of Advanced Studies located in

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Blanes, a village on the Mediterranean coast about 70 km north of Barcelona. With the collaboration of Dr. Jaume Agustí, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Prof. Josep Aguilar-Martin, from the CNRS, and Professor Settimo Termini, from the CNR, the AI research activities started at this centre. The group grew fast and in 1994 we became the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIIA) and moved to a new building located in the campus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. The IIIA is now one of the leading AI research centers in Europe. Since then, well over 2000 papers have been published by IIIA members, 80 PhDs have been completed, and over 100 research projects—including 24 European projects—and contracts with industry have been done. The total funding of these projects is approximately 20 million Euros which is about 40 % of the total IIA budget for all this period of time. IIIA researchers have received over 40 international awards and recognitions, including 15 best paper awards at international conferences, 6 outstanding PhD thesis awards, the 2012 “EUSFLAT Best PhD Dissertation” award, the 2011 “IFAAMAS Victor Lesser Distinguished Dissertation” award, and the 2011 “AAAI Robert S. Engelmore”. In addition, many IIIA senior members are, or have been, members of the editorial boards of more than 30 international journals, have participated in hundreds of program committees, and are on the board of several governing bodies of international AI organizations such as IJCAI, IFAAMAS, ACP and EUSFLAT.

Intensive collaborations take place with academic institutions from numerous countries and particularly from France, UK, Italy, Australia, USA, Germany, Argentina, Czech Republic, Japan, Israel, Brazil, and Austria. As a result of this collaborations, about 50 % of our publications have international co-authorship.

Our research has been and is always guided by concrete and challenging applications in fields such as health, e-commerce, automated negotiation, conflict resolution, music, tourism, logistics, supply chain management, transport, energy, data privacy, and social networks, among others. Several of our systems, tools and applications have been distributed outside the institute and in some cases have been commercialized. Among the many AI applications developed, the most recent ones are: Prediction of energy demand in intelligent buildings; early detection of potential failures in windmill turbines for electrical power generation; improving the customers shopping experience in supermarkets; managing safe personalized tourism for disabled persons; AI tools for social networks-based music education; on-line digital games that are worth playing by older people for active and positive aging; social networking using autonomic software agents to enrich, encourage, and enliven online cultural experiences in virtual visits to museums; recruitment intelligent matching system to improve online job searching; and automatic generation of audiovisual narrative such as summaries of soccer matches or other types of TV events.

Our focus is on a few well-defined sub-domains of Artificial Intelligence, positively avoiding dispersion and keeping a good balance between basic research and applications, and paying particular attention to training PhD students and technology transfer.

The existence of the Technological Development Unit (UDT) provides technological support to our research activities and improves our technology transfer capabilities by channeling contacts with industry. In particular, we keep strong ties with

61 our three spin-off companies: iSOCO (<http://www.isoco.com>), STRANDS ([http://](http://strands.com)  
62 [strands.com](http://strands.com)), and COGNICOR (<http://cognicor.com>).

63 Our first spin-off, ISOCO, was set up in 1999 dedicated to the design of intelligent  
64 software components for Internet-related applications. Today, ISOCO is a leading  
65 company within its sector in Spain. STRANDS, was started in 2004 dedicated to  
66 recommendation Systems particularly in the finances sector that nowadays is also a  
67 leading company in Spain. COGNICOR was founded in 2011 based on the results  
68 of a large, over five million Euros, project called “Agreement Technologies”. This  
69 company develops software products for the automatic resolution of customers’ com-  
70 plaints using machine learning and case-based reasoning techniques. COGNICOR  
71 has received several awards, including the prestigious “2012 European Union Tech  
72 All Stars Competition”.

73 At present, our research activities are structured around three departments: Learn-  
74 ing Systems, Multi-agent Systems, and Logic, Reasoning and Search. However, in  
75 what follows we will focus on the activities related to the area of Fuzzy logic and  
76 Fuzzy systems, area in which Prof. Enric Trillas was the pioneer in Spain. We have  
77 structured these activities in three periods: The first 10+ years from 1985 to 1995,  
78 then the next 5+ years, from 1996 to 2001 and finally from 2002 till now. For addi-  
79 tional information regarding all our contributions to AI we refer the reader to the  
80 “History” section of our website: [www.iiia.csic.es/en/about\\_iiia/history](http://www.iiia.csic.es/en/about_iiia/history).

## 81 **2 The Beginnings: 1985–1995**

### 82 **2.1 Knowledge Based Systems**

83 The research on Knowledge Based Systems has been one of the initial interests of  
84 the group that has had continuity till today. Motivated by several real applications,  
85 we created, formalized and implemented languages to better represent uncertainty  
86 and imprecision, based on fuzzy and multi-valued logics. These languages have been  
87 integrated in a two-generation tool (MILORD and MILORD II) on top of which most  
88 of the applications to real domains have been built.

89 MILORD [32] was an expert system building tool developed between 1985 and  
90 1989 within the framework of Carles Sierra’s Ph.D. thesis [49]. It allowed to perform  
91 different calculi of uncertainty on an expert defined set of linguistic terms expressing  
92 truth degrees. Each calculus corresponded to specific conjunction, disjunction and  
93 implication operators. The internal representation of each linguistic truth value was a  
94 fuzzy subset of the interval  $[0,1]$ . The different calculi of uncertainty applied to the set  
95 of linguistic terms, resulted in a fuzzy subset that was approximated to a linguistic  
96 truth value belonging to the set of linguistic terms. This linguistic approximation  
97 kept the calculus closed. This had the advantage that, once the linguistic truth values  
98 had been defined, the system computed, the conjunction, disjunction and implication  
99 operations for all the pairs of linguistic truth values in the term set off-line, and stored

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100 the results in matrices. Therefore, when MILORD was run, the propagation and  
101 combination of uncertainty was performed by simply accessing these pre-computed  
102 matrices. This tool also used a meta-level language to represent the strategies of  
103 execution of modules containing domain rules. This meta-control language was the  
104 inspiration of some work done in Case-Based reasoning as well. MILORD has been  
105 used in the development of several real applications. The first application was the  
106 expert system PNEUMON-IA, on the diagnosis of community-acquired pneumoniae.  
107 This problem required extensive research in the area of uncertainty, to satisfactorily  
108 represent the lack of precise diagnostic procedures of the domain. It took two years  
109 to complete it. In 1988 it was validated, and the results presented in 1989 in Albert  
110 Verdaguer's M.D. thesis [52]. In 1987 we started another application in the area of  
111 rheumatological diseases and collagenosis [10]. The more heterogeneous nature of  
112 the set of diseases included in this application forced us to develop more complex  
113 and declarative control structures to represent the dynamics of the reasoning that the  
114 expert needed to model the diagnostic processes. The application was validated in  
115 1989 and the results published in Miquel Belmonte's M.D. thesis [9].

116 We had also been involved in applications to industrial problems. In particular,  
117 from 1988 to 1992, we developed a successful diagnostic system for defects in  
118 TV screens manufactured by PHILIPS. This research was done in the framework  
119 of two projects (IPCES-I and IPCES-II) funded by the ESPRIT I and ESPRIT II  
120 European research programs. IPCES-I was one of the very first European projects  
121 funded in Spain. The diagnostic system was connected to a vision system capable of  
122 detecting different categories of defects, and to an information system that provided  
123 data from the process plant. Using this combination of information a ranking of the  
124 most plausible causes of the defect was generated as output [53]. The work around  
125 the MILORD expert systems building tool had a very significant international impact  
126 and was awarded the Digital Equipment European Artificial Intelligence Research  
127 Award.

128 MILORD was improved and extended, becoming MILORD II [1], an architec-  
129 ture for Knowledge Base Systems that combined reflection and modularization tech-  
130 niques, together with an approximate reasoning component based on many-valued  
131 logics, to be able to define complex reasoning patterns at large. Its development  
132 started in 1989 and constituted the main component of Josep Puyol's Ph.D. thesis  
133 [46]. A Knowledge Base in MILORD II consisted of a set of hierarchically intercon-  
134 nected modules. Each module contained an Object Level Theory and a Meta-Level  
135 Theory interacting through a reflective mechanism. From the logical point of view,  
136 MILORD II made use of both many-valued logic and epistemic meta-predicates to  
137 express the truth status of propositions.

138 An application that was developed and validated using MILORD II was Spongi-  
139 IA, an automatic classification tool for marine sponges. It covered all the atlanto-  
140 mediterranean taxonomy up to the level of family and a part of it up to the level of  
141 species. It passed an international experts validation process with great success. The  
142 main results of this work were presented in Marta Domingo's Ph.D. in Biology [15].

143 Another industrial application using MILORD II was the supervision of production  
 144 in pig farms. The results of this work were transferred to several farms thanks to a  
 145 grant from the Spanish Ministry of Industry.

## 146 **2.2 Fuzzy and Multiple-Valued Logics**

147 According to Zadeh, the Fuzzy logic term is used, at least, with two different mean-  
 148 ings. Fuzzy Logic in broad sense refers to methodologies involving Fuzzy Sets and  
 149 Possibility theories, whereas in narrow sense it refers to the various formal logical  
 150 calculi underlying Fuzzy Set Theory. The theoretical research done in our group  
 151 on Fuzzy Logic has covered both aspects. The main contributions have been in the  
 152 following two subjects:

### 153 *Fuzzy truth values*

154 The work on modeling inference in Fuzzy Logic using the Fuzzy Truth Values  
 155 formalism started quite early in the IIIA with the PhD thesis of Lluís Godo [30].  
 156 This formalism allowed the implementation of some inference patterns without the  
 157 need to specify particular possibility distributions to represent the fuzzy statements  
 158 involved in such inference patterns. It was shown that Fuzzy Truth Values play the  
 159 same role that classical truth-values do in classical or many-valued logic. In this  
 160 direction, we also studied the closure system of inference operators in the above  
 161 formalism as well as a semantic formalization of fuzzy logic as logic with fuzzy  
 162 truth-values.

### 163 *Multiple-valued Logic*

164 The investigation of different fuzzy (or many-valued) logics, in the narrow sense,  
 165 was motivated by a fruitful cooperation since 1993 with the Institute of Computer  
 166 Science of the Czech Academy of Sciences, led by Prof. Petr Hájek. This collabor-  
 167 ation resulted in a number of significant publications [35–37] about different  
 168 systems of many-valued logic and their relation to main uncertainty calculi, such  
 169 as probability theory or possibilistic logic.

## 170 **2.3 Similarity Logic**

171 Similarity relations, as generalizations of equivalence relations, were defined by  
 172 Zadeh in the late sixties. Most of the early work dealt with the application of these  
 173 relations to cluster analysis. In the eighties Enric Trillas introduced a generalization  
 174 of Zadeh’s definition [50] and Trillas and Valverde related similarity relations to  
 175 equivalence connectives in fuzzy logic [51]. In the nineties this type of fuzzy relations  
 176 started to be used in order to obtain a semantics for fuzzy logic and to build a logical  
 177 setting for dealing with sentences like “close to p”, “not far from p” or “similar to p”

178 being  $p$  a proposition. In both issues the contribution of our research group was very  
179 relevant.

180 In the early 90s Ruspini published his studies on a semantics for fuzzy logic  
181 based on similarity relations [47]. Based on this, Esteva, Godo and García proposed  
182 a definition of a similarity logic as a propositional logic based on similarity relations  
183 [22]. A complete analysis of the relations between this logic and the fragment of  
184 necessity-valued possibilistic logic and fuzzy-truth-valued logic was also achieved.

185 On the other hand, the concept of similarity was also used by researchers of the  
186 Institute, in cooperation with the D. Dubois and H. Prade, to define graded conse-  
187 quence relations corresponding to different levels of approximation [18]. The main  
188 idea underlying this approach was to approximate every classical proposition  $p$  by  
189 a fuzzy set of interpretations in such a way that the alpha-cuts of this fuzzy set  
190 provide a set of approximations of  $p$ . As expected, approximation in degree 1 coin-  
191 cides with  $p$  and approximation in degree 0 coincides with the classical set of all  
192 interpretations. In this setting,  $p$  entails  $q$  to the degree  $\alpha$  if  $p$  classically entails  
193 the  $\alpha$ -approximation of  $q$ . The results of the work done along this research line  
194 were both theoretical and practical. From the theoretical point of view, we studied the  
195 properties, a syntactical characterization, and a formalization, in a multi-modal and a  
196 multi-valued setting, of these graded entailment relations. From the practical point of  
197 view our results were also of interest. A framework for interpolative reasoning based  
198 on graded entailment was developed [18] and applications to case-based reasoning,  
199 as well as to analogical reasoning, were developed, being the first to incorporate  
200 fuzzy techniques within a Case-Based system [45]. Another result of our activities  
201 in this early case-based research was the BOLERO system [39], developed from  
202 1990 to 1993 by Beatriz López within her PhD [38]. It was an important contribu-  
203 tion to both case-based and rule-based expert systems. The object level knowledge  
204 of BOLERO was represented by rules and the meta-knowledge were the solved  
205 instances of problems conveniently organized in the memory of cases. The added  
206 value of such hybrid system was the capability to learn meta-knowledge by expe-  
207 rience. BOLERO was integrated within the MILORD System and was successfully  
208 applied in a complex medical diagnosis problem using the rules for diagnosing pneu-  
209 monias of the PNEUMON-IA expert system previously developed at our Institute  
210 as object knowledge. This research yielded important insights into the integration of  
211 learning and problem solving.

## 212 *2.4 Fuzzy Logic for Mapping Unknown Environments* 213 *Using Autonomous Mini-Robots*

214 An interesting application of Fuzzy Logic, undertaken in our Institute within the  
215 framework of the PhD work of Maite López-Sánchez [40], was to the problem of the  
216 acquisition of maps of unknown environments by means of a group of autonomous  
217 mini-robots [42, 43]. The problem of collective map generation is to obtain the





218 most plausible position of walls and obstacles based on the perception of several  
219 mini-robots. The mini-robots detected portions of walls or obstacles with different  
220 degrees of precision depending on the length of the run and the number of turns  
221 they have done. The main problem was to decide whether several detected portions,  
222 represented by imprecise segments, were from the same wall or obstacle or not. If  
223 two segments were from the same wall or obstacle, a segment fusion procedure was  
224 applied to produce a single segment. This process of segment fusion was followed by  
225 a completion process in which hypothesis were made with respect to non-observed  
226 regions. The completion process was achieved by means of hypothetical reason-  
227 ing based on declarative heuristic knowledge about the orthogonal environments in  
228 which the mini-robots evolve. Finally, an alignment process also took place so that,  
229 for example, two walls separated by a doorway were properly aligned. All these  
230 operations were based on modeling the imprecise segments by means of fuzzy sets.  
231 More concretely, the position of the wall segment was a fuzzy number and the length  
232 a fuzzy interval. The main advantage of using fuzzy techniques was that the position  
233 and imprecision of the resulting fused segments could be very easily computed. Fur-  
234 thermore, using Fuzzy sets to model the imprecision about the position of obstacles  
235 was very appropriate.

### 236 3 The Take-Off: 1996–2001

#### 237 3.1 Foundations of Mathematical Fuzzy Logic

238 Fuzzy logic until very recently lacked a formal basis. We have done significant  
239 research on fuzzy logic “in the narrow sense” with remarkable results, due in part  
240 to the already mentioned fruitful collaborations with Prof. Petr Hájek and, more  
241 recently, with Prof. Montagna and Prof. Cignoli. The main results obtained concern  
242 the axiomatization of several t-norm based residuated logics: product logic [36],  
243 completeness of Hájek’s basic fuzzy logic BL [14], residuated logics with involutive  
244 negation [25], Lukasiewicz Product logic LΠ [26] and Monoidal t-norm based logic  
245 MTL [24]. Another important result has been the modelling of probability in the  
246 fuzzy logic setting [35] and the expression of fuzzy inference as deduction in some  
247 of these types of logic [31].

#### 248 3.2 Similarity-Based Reasoning

249 The notion of similarity among knowledge states plays an important role in different  
250 inference patterns of approximate reasoning. Two relevant examples are the reason-  
251 ing mechanisms used in fuzzy rule-based systems and in case-based reasoning. A  
252 fuzzy rule-based system interpolates rule consequents according to the degree of

253 match between actual variable values and those in the rule premises. In doing so, the  
 254 system extends the domain of application to system's states that are similar to those  
 255 described in the fuzzy rule base. On the other hand, case-based reasoning techniques  
 256 follow an analogy principle which states that similar problems have similar solutions,  
 257 leading—naturally—to a formalization using similarity-based reasoning. Research  
 258 on similarity-based reasoning, in close collaboration with the group of Profs.  
 259 D. Dubois and H. Prade, has focused on two major issues:

260 *Logical foundations of similarity-based reasoning*

261 We have addressed several fundamental problems ranging from semantic to syntac-  
 262 tic considerations, one being based on two graded similarity-based consequence  
 263 relations [16, 18], which allow an interpolation mechanism to be defined, and  
 264 another on graded logics, both classical [23] and many-valued [33], for which  
 265 completeness results were obtained. Their relation to other types of graded logical  
 266 formalism, like possibilistic logic, have also been considered [22].

267 *Similarity-based reasoning and case-based reasoning and decision*

268 We have used fuzzy set techniques, based on fuzzy similarity relations, to formal-  
 269 ize some common problems which appear in case-based reasoning, such as  
 270 retrieving the most relevant cases, or getting a more flexible adaptation of past  
 271 solutions by interpolating them [16, 17]. A logical modeling of the inference pat-  
 272 terns involved in case-based reasoning, using the similarity-based consequence  
 273 relation formalism, has also been introduced in [44]. Regarding case-based deci-  
 274 sion theory, Gilboa and Schmeidler [29] have recently proposed a new approach  
 275 to decision theory based on similarity, rather than probability, where the utility  
 276 function is defined on partially described situations in terms of their similarity  
 277 with previously experienced decision. Using fuzzy similarity relations and possi-  
 278 bility theory, a new qualitative decision model was proposed, closely related to  
 279 Dubois-Prade's possibilistic decision theory, and with an axiomatic basis [17, 21].  
 280 Extensions to this latter model were also investigated [34, 54].

281 **3.3 Case-Based Reasoning Application to Expressive**  
 282 **Music Synthesis**

283 One of the most successful and widely cited CBR system developed at our institute is  
 284 an application to the synthesis of expressive music performances [7, 8]. The problem  
 285 solving task of the system is to infer, via imitation, and using case-based reasoning,  
 286 a set of expressive transformations to be applied to every note of an inexpressive  
 287 musical phrase given as input. To achieve this, it uses a case memory containing  
 288 human performances and background musical knowledge. The score, containing  
 289 both melodic and harmonic information, is also given. The expressive transforma-  
 290 tions to be decided and applied by the system affect the following expressive para-  
 291 meters: dynamics, rubato, vibrato, articulation, and attack. The similarity reasoning

292 capabilities provided by CBR allow the system to retrieve those notes in the case base  
293 of expressive examples (human performances) that are, musically speaking, similar  
294 to each current inexpressive note of the input. We developed a fuzzy approach to  
295 combine a set of solutions from several retrieved cases into a single solution to be  
296 applied to every note of the inexpressive input in order to render it expressive. The  
297 system is connected to software for sound analysis and synthesis based on spectral  
298 modeling as pre- and post-processor. This allows the obtained results to be listened  
299 to. These results clearly show that a computer system can indeed play expressively. In  
300 our experiments, we have used Real Book jazz ballads. This work has been awarded  
301 the “Swets & Zeitlinger” prize of the International Computer Music Association.  
302 This is the most prestigious award in the field of computer music.

### 303 ***3.4 Automated Deduction in Generalized Possibilistic Logic***

304 Possibilistic logic is a logic of uncertainty that has many applications to plausible  
305 reasoning under incomplete information. Automated proof techniques were also  
306 developed for a classical first order language. Things become much more complex  
307 (both semantically and syntactically) when one allows the language to deal with  
308 imprecise or fuzzy constants, a very natural extension. Therefore, a line of research  
309 was en developed in order to provide both semantic foundations and efficient and  
310 sound proof methods. Some interesting results were obtained [4–6, 48], where two  
311 different extended possibilistic logic programming systems PLFC and PGL were  
312 proposed and fully investigated.

## 313 **4 The Consolidation: 2002–2013**

314 During this last period we have continued to play a key international role in the defin-  
315 ition and development of Mathematical Fuzzy logic and we have obtained important  
316 results in the following topics: (1) General and deep results for completeness of fuzzy  
317 logics either propositional or first order with respect to different semantics (real,  
318 hyper-real, rational and finite) that cover and significantly extend previous results in  
319 the field. Our results have been possible as a consequence of a fruitful collaboration  
320 with researchers from different leading institutions on the topic; (2) Formalization  
321 of t-norm based logics dealing with partial degrees of truth, with algebraic seman-  
322 tics, and axiomatization and completeness results, both for propositional and first  
323 order languages [27], which have high applicability in modeling graded notions [12];  
324 (3) Development of different systems of fuzzy modal logic [11], with applications  
325 to reasoning under different forms to uncertainty on non-Boolean algebras of events  
326 [28]; and (4) Development of a new hierarchy of Fuzzy Description logics, along  
327 with new complexity results based on results of Mathematical Fuzzy Logic [13].



Moreover, in this last period, in collaboration with leading international researchers in the area of computational argumentation, we have also extended the computational argumentation of Defeasible Logic Programming (DeLP), with the treatment of possibilistic uncertainty at object level, allowing to stratify defeasible rules in a DeLP program according to their strength [3] and by defining a new recursive semantics which avoids some undesired side effects of the original semantics based on dialectical trees [2].

## 5 Conclusions

This paper has briefly surveyed the most relevant results obtained at the IIIA in the area of Fuzzy Logic and Fuzzy AI Systems from 1985 till today. We have structured the paper in three time periods: The beginning, the take-off, and the consolidation. We believe that the IIIA has played and is playing a major role in both the mathematical foundations and applications of Fuzzy Logic and Fuzzy AI Systems.

**Acknowledgments** It is fair to say that the IIIA exists thanks to the vision of Professor Enric Trillas that, as mentioned in the introduction, in 1985 he commissioned Ramon Lopez de Mantaras to found the AI department within the Centre of Advanced Studies of Blanes of the CSIC that later became the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute. As early as 1985, Professor Trillas already saw the importance of including the field of Artificial Intelligence among the activities of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). This paper is in homage to him, to his wisdom and his vision.

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Chapter 6

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