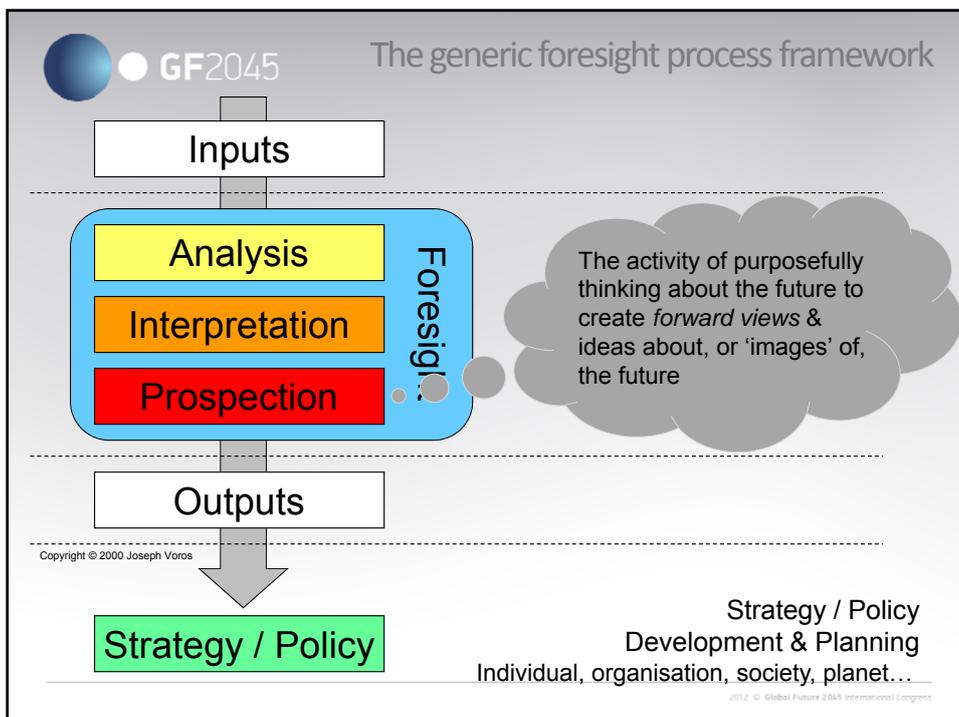


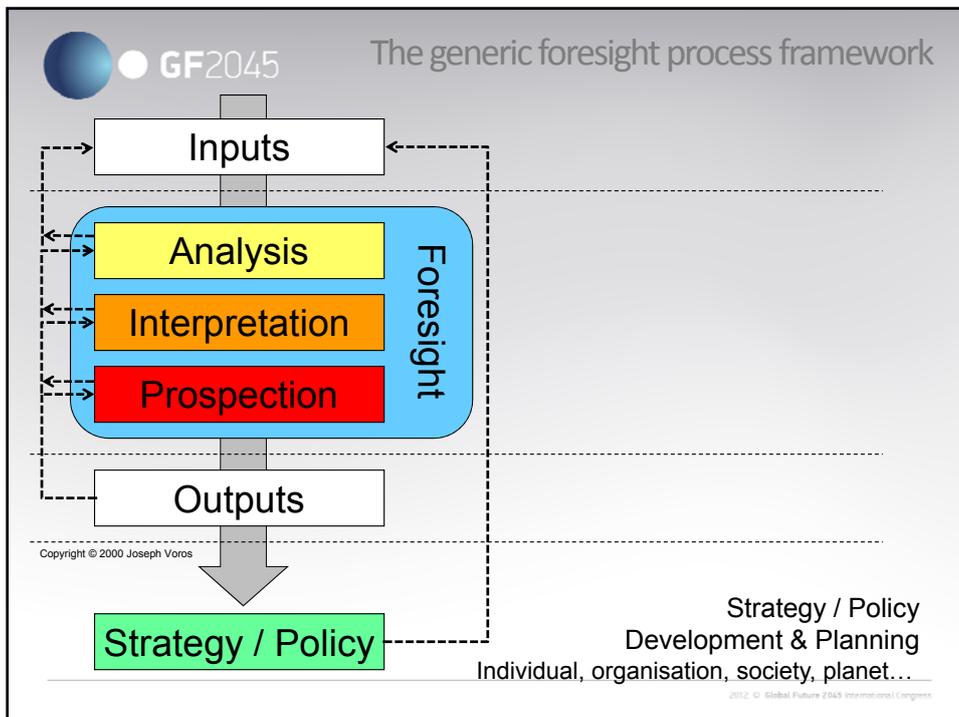
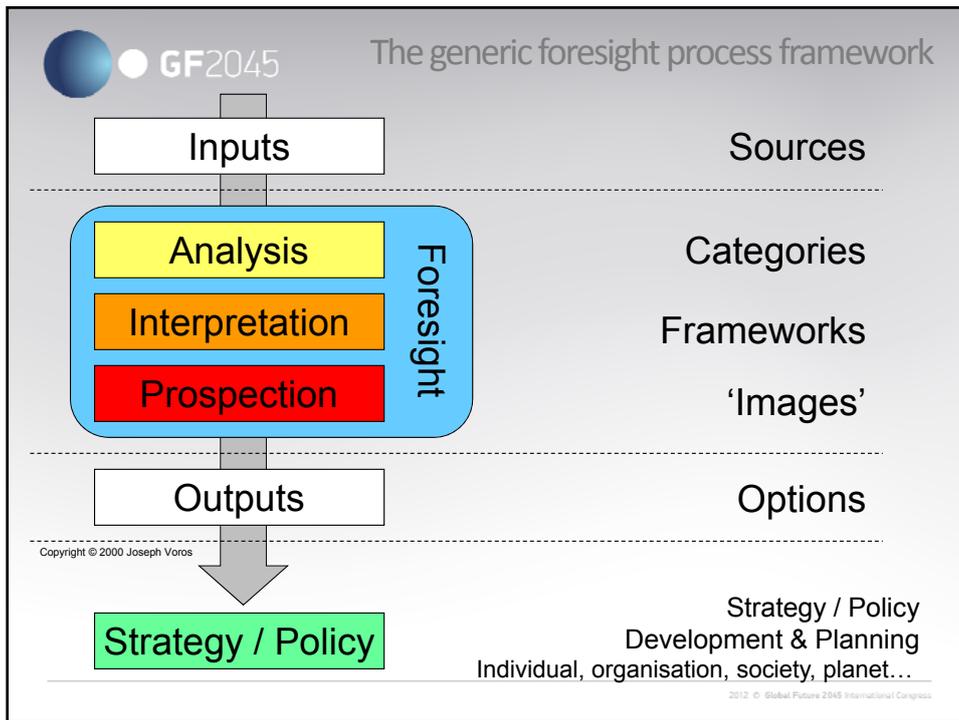


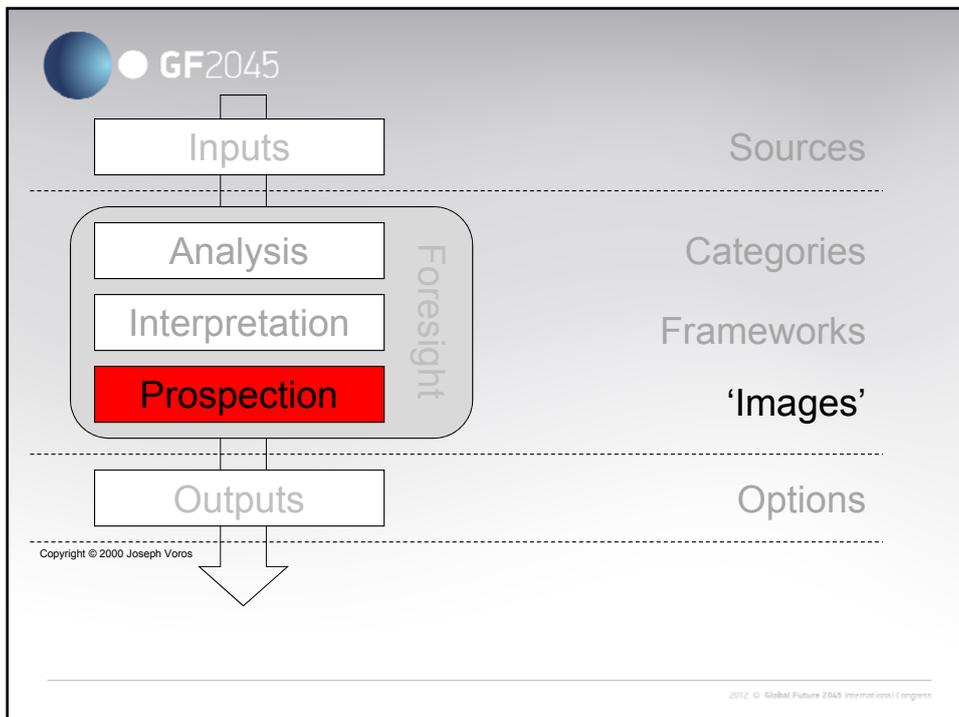
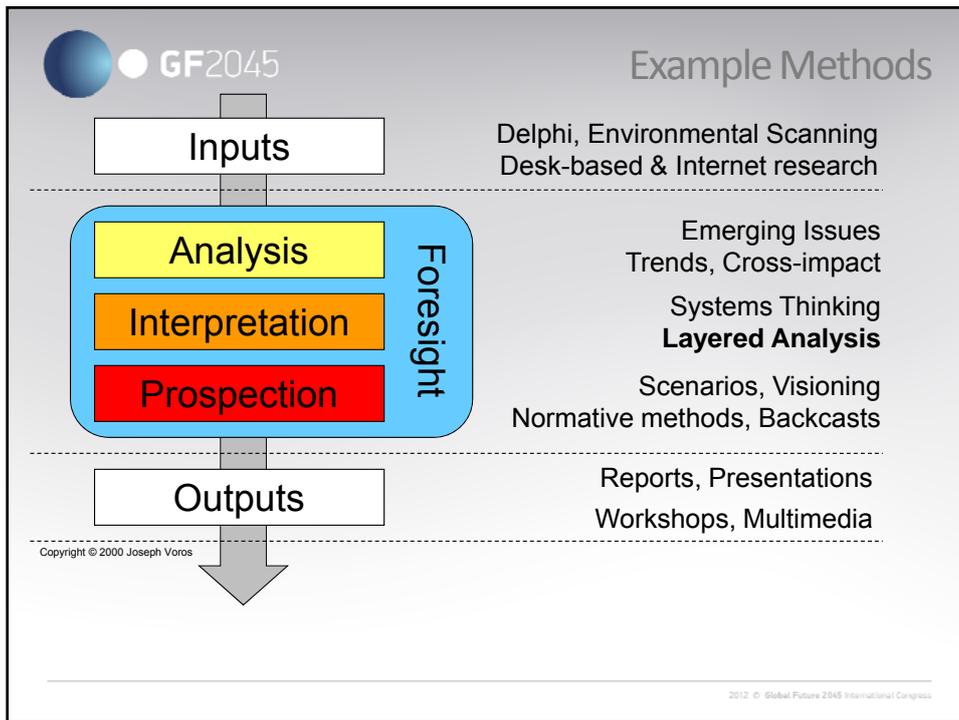
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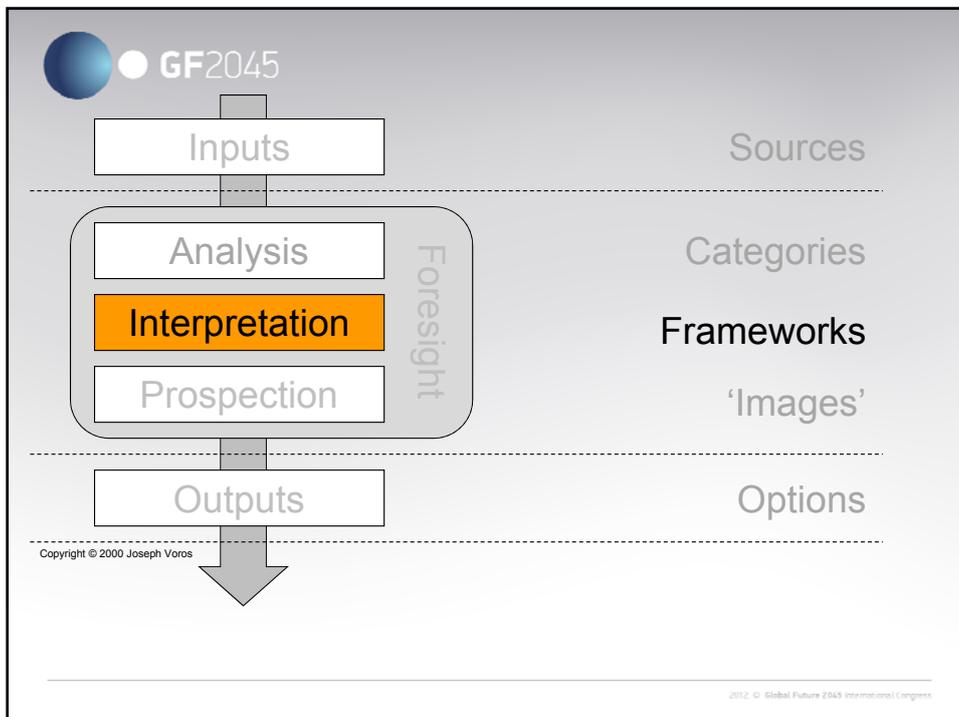
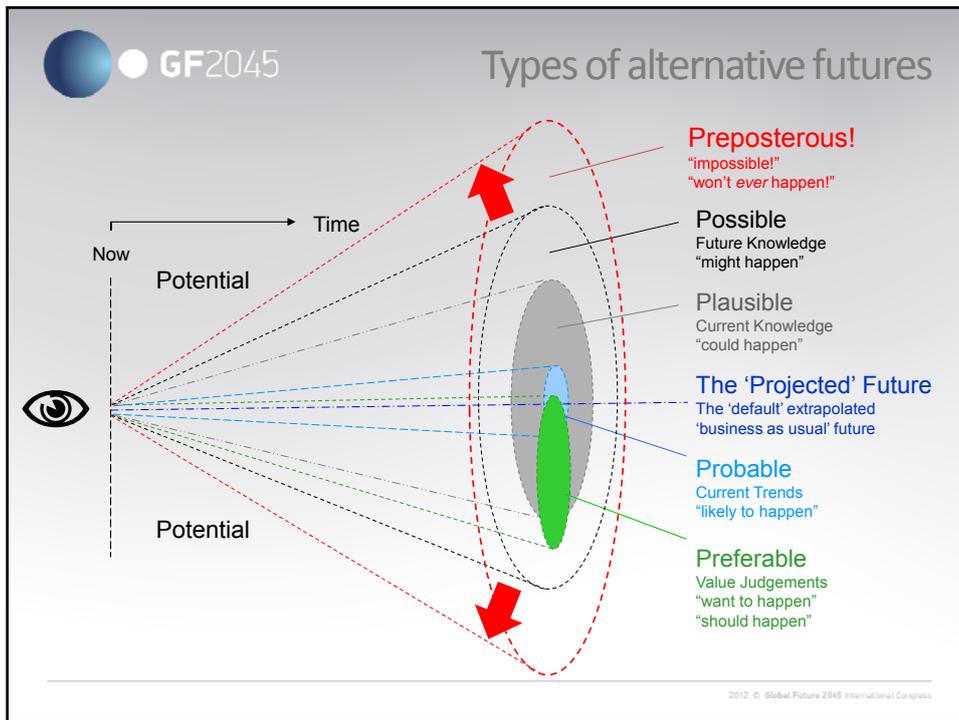
- The starting point of Futures Studies is to ask the sorts of questions that may stimulate and generate new and deeper insights into the situation being studied (and maybe more questions...)
- Today I'll talk about some types of questions we can ask about the global future ...

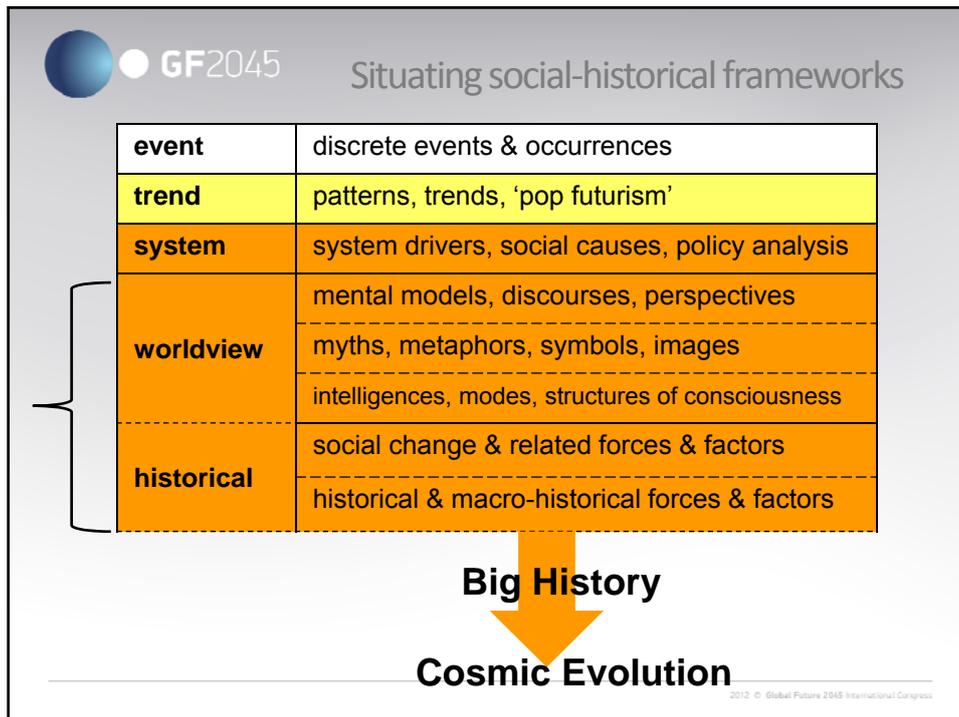
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GF2045 Macro-Prospction

Let us here consider 3 classes of perspective based on Big History to seek ideas & insights about the future

- Big History via a matter-energy-complexity perspective (e.g., Chaisson, Spier, Christian, etc)
- Big History via a material complexity + 'interiority' perspective (e.g., Jantsch, Wilber, etc)
- Big History considered as a *single case* ('idiographic' perspective)

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1. Big History – matter-energy

- eg Christian writes of 8 ‘thresholds’ of (material-energetic) complexity
- Some types of futures analysis which can be used on this perspective are:
 - Extrapolative evolution
 - Disjunctive revolution
 - Reiterative analogy

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Evolution

- Less-available energy for human use
 - Known sources less energy-dense than oil
 - Will this imply a reduction in social complexity and an end to industrial civilisation as we know it?
 - Will “threshold 9” be a smooth (or not?) transition to a less energy-intensive civilisation based on more diffuse energy sources?
 - Energy Transitions (Smil)
 - Long Descent, Eco-technic Future (Greer)
 - Crisis of Civilisation (Ahmed)
 - Effects on agricultural production, population

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Disjunction

- Current high-density energy sources *rapidly* decline in availability or useability
 - Renewable energy sources not enough to power industrial civilisation as we have known it
 - High scarcity and likely disruptions/conflicts
 - Peak Oil & 'Peak everything' (various)
 - Collapse? (e.g. Diamond, Tainter)
- A new source with greater energy-density?
 - Fusion? Thorium? Other 'miraculous' source?
 - Ability to usefully concentrate dispersed energy sources such as solar, wind, tidal, ...

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Reiterative analogy

- Food: foraging (long time) → farming (recent)
- Energy: foraging → farming (just starting)
 - What insights might come from analogy with the agricultural transition applied to energy?
- Is there another energy source analogous to the discovery of fossil fuel → industrialised agriculture?
 - eg Geothermal ~ 'fossilised' from Earth formation
 - Coal & oil → geographic advantages
 - Could access to geothermal energy confer similar advantages to a new group of states; an OGAC?

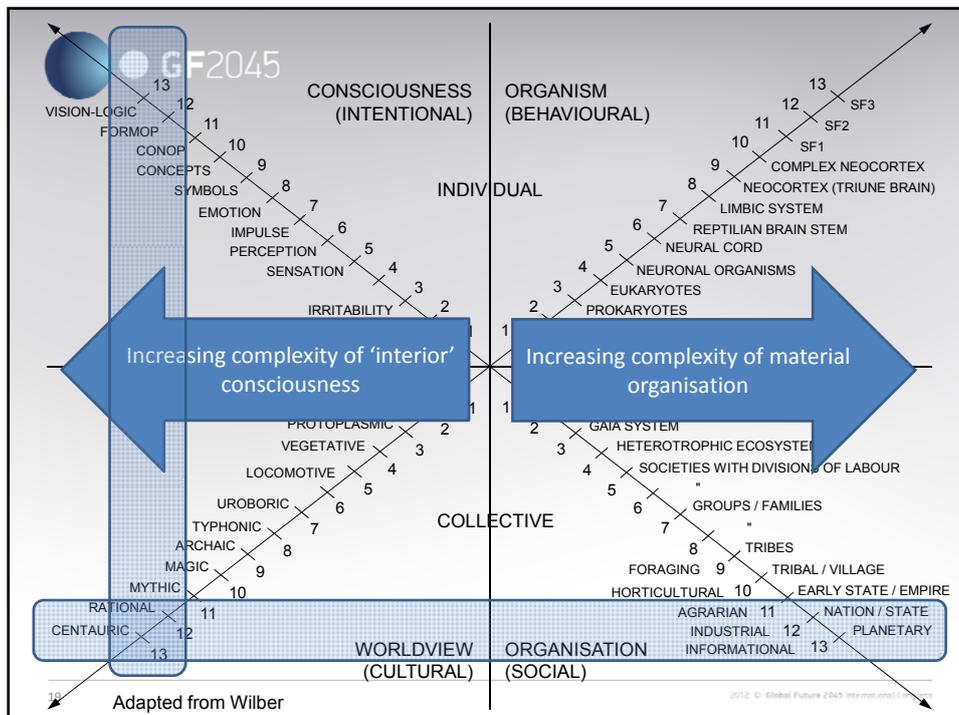
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2. Complexity + Consciousness

- Erich Jantsch wrote of 'information' and consciousness as well as material-energetic complexity
- Others also write of mind and spirituality as well as matter-energy
- Is there a way to combine these views in a single unifying model?
 - eg Wilber building upon Jantsch
 - 'Interior' consciousness correlates of exterior material structural complexity

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2. Complexity + Consciousness

- ‘Precursor analysis’ – ‘early/weak signals’
 - What new forms of consciousness are emerging?
 - eg post-formal (ie beyond “formop”) modes
 - Systemic, Meta-systemic, Paradigmatic, Meta-paradigmatic, ...
 - Many writers consider changes in consciousness, e.g.,
 - Global Mind Change (Harman)
 - Awakening Earth; Living Universe (Elgin)
 - Future Evolution of Man (Sri Aurobindo Ghose)
 - How might these manifest as new forms of social organisation and techno-economic system?

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3. Earth’s Big History as one case

- “One voice in the cosmic fugue” (Sagan)
- Is Earth common or “rare”? (Ward & Brownlee)
- Are there “other” big histories we can use?
 - Astrobiology & SETI
 - Life, Intelligence, Society, Technology, ...
 - Kardashev Civilisations (use of energy)
 - Nature of transition from Type 0 to Type I...?
- How is Earth’s case similar to or different from any possible “general” case which might exist?
 - Much interesting work yet to be done here ...

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- These have been some ideas and questions intended to 'open out' our thinking about the future of our civilisation, species and planet
- We need to be able to imagine a wide variety of futures and *options* to help us navigate our way forward ...
- ... and to decide which futures we *want* to make happen ... and which we do *not*.

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Thank you.

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