Literature Review – Faculty Participation in Online Distance Education: Barriers and Motivators

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Introduction

Distance education is a medium of teaching and learning that has grown significantly in the past 10 years as indicated by the number of higher education institutions that offer courses and/or full degree programs via distance learning. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (1999), the number of degree-granting higher education institutions offering distance education courses increased from 33 percent in 1995 to 44 percent in 1997-98. More specifically, the use of computer-based technologies has increased from 22 percent in 1995 to 60 percent in 1997-98.

The purpose of this review is to examine the overall attitude of higher education faculty toward teaching via distance education. This review will also note factors that motivate and deter faculty participation in distance education, specifically in a web-based, online format. Information regarding attitudes and specific reasons for participation in distance education can provide insight to administrators attempting to build distance education programming while supporting faculty.

The definition of distance education has been refined and redefined over the years. This is seen in the evolution of Moore 's distance education definitions. In 1990, Moore described distance education as "all arrangements for providing instruction through print or electronic communications media to persons engaged in planned learning in a place or time different from that of the instructor or instructors" (p. xv). Later, Moore and Kearsley (1997) refine the definition to specify that the learning is planned and includes "organizational and administrative arrangements" (p. 2). Most definitions specify that distance education is teaching and learning that occurs asynchronously – the learner(s) and instructor separated by time and space – using a variety of technical media to support the teaching and learning (Keegan, 1996; Eastmond, 1998; Locatis & Weisburg, 1997). For the purpose of this review, distance education will refer only to this asynchronous, web-based, online format.

Degree programs via distance education offer a variety of benefits to faculty, students, and school administrators. In an online environment, interaction between faculty and student increases as does the ability to reach a greater number of learners, resulting in increased diversification and globalization (NEA, 2000). Other benefits include meeting the needs of non-traditional students, who typically have responsibilities like career and family which keep them from taking traditional daytime college courses, and traditional students who may have a preference for learning in an online environment. Furthermore, as public colleges and universities experience decreasing financial state support, distance education provides a new audience and a new stream of revenue without the needs of additional on-campus facilities, such as residence halls and classroom space.

Even with the growth of distance education offerings and enrollments, many faculty members are still hesitant to teach online. In fact, 50 percent of faculty in a National Education Association survey conveyed negative or uncertain feelings towards distance learning (2000). Much of the distance education literature focuses on technology, curriculum, and students' needs. While the amount of research focusing on faculty and administrator's perceptions of distance education is growing, there is a need to focus on faculty attitudes and specific factors – motivating and inhibiting – affecting participation in online, web-based teaching (Williams, 2002; Dillon & Walsh, 1992).

Methodology of Review

The research studies chosen for this literature review focused on attitudes of faculty teaching via distance learning and more specifically, the perceptions that faculty have regarding motivators and inhibitors of teaching via online distance learning. Three main databases were employed to search for relevant research studies. These databases included Dissertation Abstracts, Education Abstracts Full Text – Wilson, and ProQuest Direct. In addition, the following online journals and organizational websites were reviewed for online research articles: the *Journal for Asynchronous Learning* , the *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* , the *American Journal of Distance Education* , and the Sloan Consortium. In selecting literature to review, the author attempted to review research that was relatively current and no older than 10 years. Thus, the range of dates for the research studies was between 1993 and 2003, with the majority of studies chosen from 1997 to 2003.

The keywords used in searching these databases and websites were: faculty, distance education, distance learning, participation, motivators, deterrents, barriers, attitudes, and factors. This initial search yielded a total of fourteen articles. After including additional keywords (satisfaction, inhibitors, asynchronous learning, online learning, perceptions, web-based learning and computer-mediated learning) paired with initial keywords and searching the reference lists of those articles already found, an additional search yielded thirty one articles, some of which were actual research studies and others that were descriptive articles or summaries. Eight dissertation abstracts were also located but results of the studies were not included in this literature review.

Overview of Research Studies

Methodologies and Educational Settings

The research studies chosen for this review included thirteen studies, eight of which used both quantitative and qualitative methods, typically employing surveys that included short-answer questions or interviews which represented the qualitative aspect of the studies (Berge, 1998; Betts, 1998; Jones & Moller, 2002; McKenzie, et al, 2000; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002; Parisot, 1997; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000). Four studies were purely quantitative with all employing standard surveys either sent via campus mail, regular mail or on an online website (Bonk, 2001; Chizmar & Williams; 2001; Lee, 2001; Wilson, 1998). Finally, one study was purely qualitative using interviews as the method of data collection (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000).

The studies are all set in higher education institutions, ranging from community colleges to four-year institutions. Only a few studies noted a public or private institutional affiliation. Of those studies, two included both public and private (Bonk, 2001; Wilson, 1998) and four included only public institutions (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Jones & Moller; 2002; Parisot, 1997; Schifter, 2000).

Purposes of and Participants in Research Studies

The thirteen studies contained similar purpose statements and tended to focus on identifying factors that either motivated or deterred faculty participation in online teaching. The majority of the studies discussed both motivating and deterring factors, while four studies discussed either motivational factors (McKenzie, et al, 2000) or deterrents (Berge, 1998; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002; Wilson, 1998).

In seven of the thirteen studies, the participants included faculty who taught online courses or programs (Berge, 1998; Chizmar & Williams, 2001; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Lee, 2001; McKenzie, et al, 2000; Parisot, 1997; Wilson, 1998). Betts (1998), O'Quinn & Corry (2002) and Schifter (2000) divided the faculty in their studies by those who had participated in teaching an online course and faculty who were considered non-participants – never have taught via distance education technologies. Three studies did not distinguish between faculty who had or had not participated in distance education (Bonk, 2001; Jones & Moller, 2002; Rockwell, et al, 1999). Four studies included administrators, as well as faculty, as participants in the studies (Betts, 1998; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000) and Dooley & Murphrey (2000) added support staff to the mix as well.

Findings of the Review

Concerns of faculty regarding participation in teaching online include a lack of standards for an online course, the threat of fewer jobs, and a decline in usage of full-time faculty which faculty believe results in a decline in quality of faculty (IHEP, 2000; NEA, 2000). In addition, faculty note lack of time, lack of institutional support, lack of scholarly respect in the areas of promotion and tenure, and a lack of training as other obstacles in participating in distance education (Baldwin, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Lee, 2001; Northrup, 1997; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002; Parisot, 1997).

Specifically, the list of motivating and inhibiting factors for faculty participation in distance education is lengthy. Therefore, the author formatted a chart (see Appendix) to record the various factors found within the chosen thirteen studies. Once the factors were charted, they were grouped into categories which included personal, external, technical, pedagogical, and institutional. Upon further reflection, the technical and pedagogical categories seemed to fit best within the institutional category. Thus the final categories were intrinsic or personal, extrinsic, and institutional. Within the institutional category, the following two subcategories were recognized: 1) technology and teaching and 2) technical and administrative support. The factors within these categories are outlined in the next section of this review.

Intrinsic Motivators

Much of the literature supports that intrinsic motivators are stronger than extrinsic motivators when it comes to participation of faculty in online teaching. Intrinsic motivating factors include a personal motivation to use technology (Betts, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Lee, 2001; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000) or perceiving teaching via distance learning as an intellectual challenge. Some faculty stated that teaching via distance learning added to their overall job satisfaction (Betts, 1998; Schifter, 2000) and that teaching online provided optimal working conditions, as they were able to "teach" at any time and from any place. Faculty also stated a feeling of self-gratification from teaching online (Rockwell, et al, 1999).

Extrinsic Motivators

External incentives in the form of tenure and promotion would also increase the level of job satisfaction as well as the amount of support and recognition faculty receive from peers – another factor that motivates faculty participation (Bonk, 2001; Parisot, 1997; Rockwell, et al, 1999). Faculty look to their peers for role modeling distance education technologies, sharing their online experiences, and online peer "observations." Chizmar & Williams (2001) note that 63% of their faculty respondents "would like more faculty showcases in instructional technology that demonstrates real-world applications in the classroom" (p. 22). In Parisot's (1997) study, "role modeling was a primary motivational factor in the adoption and diffusion of technology" (p. 6).

Furthermore, faculty are interested in online collaboration opportunities with faculty from other institutions and would welcome the institution's support of this type of collaboration (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000). Collaboration also includes inter-institutional student to student collaborations. It is important to note that these extrinsic factors could also be categorized as institutional motivators as opportunities for peer modeling and technology sharing showcases could be instigated by administrators and thus be seen as administrative support.

Institutional Motivators

Not all motivators can be considered intrinsic. Factors that are extrinsic have been categorized as institutional motivators as the institution or the administration are perceived to have the ability or power to alter distance education policies or procedures to meet the needs of the faculty. These needs are addressed within the following list of institutional motivators.

Technology and Teaching. Faculty note their interest in getting more of their students involved with technology, as they realize the importance of technology in all areas of today's world. At the same time, they perceive teaching via distance learning as a benefit to them in that it is an opportunity to use technology more innovatively and to enhance course quality (Betts, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; McKenzie, et al, 2000; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000). In addition, technology can lead to the development of new ideas and diversification of academic programming. Furthermore, faculty noted that distance learning helped them in meeting the needs of students at a distance thus increasing student access to college courses and/or degree and certificate programs (Betts, 1998; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Jones & Moller, 2002; McKenzie, et al, 2000; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000).

Administrative and Technical Support. When faculty outline the support issues that would motivate them to teach online, the support issue most noted is that of administrative recognition and encouragement for online efforts. Lee (2001) indicates that when faculty members feel institutional support, their levels of motivation and dedication are increased. Faculty indicate that this support can be demonstrated with credit towards tenure and promotion (Betts, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000). Jones & Moller (2002) also agree with this type of incentive but caution that those determining tenure and promotion "may never have taught distance education courses, and therefore are ill-equipped to properly assign merit and worth to efforts of a faculty member who may have redesigned a course to be delivered via the Internet" (p. 14).

Another type of administrative support is monetary incentives. In Schifter's (2002) study, faculty 60 years old and over indicated more concern over monetary factors than did faculty of any other age category. Faculty, both current participants and non-participants, and administrators indicate that monetary support, either in the form of stipends, continuing education or overload pay, or increased salaries would motivate faculty to teach online (Betts, 1998; Jones & Moller, 2002; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000; Schifter, 2002).

Technological support is also a major motivator for faculty interested in teaching online. Faculty note the importance of the institution in providing training in how to effectively teach online (Bonk, 2001) and to respect the decisions of faculty in deciding what are the most appropriate subjects or courses to teach via the medium. In addition, instructional design and development support is essential for faculty who do not have the time to develop and maintain online courses (Bonk, 2001; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000).

Intrinsic Inhibitors

Just as faculty indicate personal factors that motivate them to teach online, there are also factors that deter them from teaching via distance education. These factors occur less often than motivating factors, typically because deterrents are more extrinsic than intrinsic. The intrinsic factors that do deter online faculty participation include resistance to change (Berge, 1998; Parisot, 1997) and intimidation of technology (Parisot, 1997). Twenty-two percent of faculty surveyed by Berge (1998) "indicated reluctance or inability to deal with the…changes often engendered by online teaching" (Survey Results and Discussion section, ¶ 8). These instructors typically have not used much technology in their face-to-face classrooms or have found a way to get around using email. Thus teaching an entire course online is a daunting consideration.

Other faculty feel threatened by the technology and are concerned that online courses and programs will replace the on-campus learning experience. They worry about their career and the changes within the field and what those changes may do to their job security (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000). Furthermore, they have concerns that "capturing their intellectual property through multimedia might eliminate positions" (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000, Discussion Section, ¶ 4). Another concern regards fully understanding distance education and what subject areas are most appropriate for an online environment (Berge, 1998; Betts, 1998).

Finally, the issue of competition from peers at private and public institutions is a concern to some faculty. No longer are the classroom walls borders for students; they can pick and choose online courses from one or more institutions and they will register for courses at institutions that will ensure their needs are met. Thus, some faculty from traditional institutions worry about the increased competition from those that offer online courses and programs (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000).

Institutional Inhibitors

According to faculty, many more obstacles to teaching via distance education are found within the institution itself and are not considered to be personal deterrents.

Technology and Teaching. Concerns in the area of technology and teaching are mostly in the area of course quality, yet it is interesting to note that many of the concerns regarding quality of online courses originate from faculty who have yet to participate in online teaching (Betts; 1998; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Jones & Moller, 2002; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002: Schifter, 2000). These faculty members perceive online teaching as sacrificing quality and therefore would rather not teach via the medium. Faculty are also concerned about the misinformation that is found on the internet (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000) and would rather not take the chance of being perceived as having similar content online.

Furthermore, some faculty believe that online learning is inappropriate for traditional-aged students (O'Quinn & Corry, 2002) and support the need for face-to-face, on-campus classroom experiences. They believe that online courses will foster a decrease in student interaction (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Jones & Moller, 2002). Finally, faculty are unclear about the policies surrounding copyright issues and are concerned about the absence of intellectual property rights (Berge, 1998; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002).

Administrative and Technical Support. The majority of factors that are barriers to teaching online are found in the areas of administrative and technical support. One deterrent noted repeatedly was the issue of faculty workload (Berge, 1998; Betts, 1998; Schifter, 2000; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002). According to Bonk (2001), 62% of faculty respondents indicated that "the main obstacle to using the web in teaching was the preparation time required" (p. 8). Time is considered to be an administrative issue because of the institution's ability to offer release time for development and maintenance of online

courses. In Betts' (1998) study, the deans that were surveyed also indicated that the lack of release time would be an inhibitor for faculty participation in online teaching. Faculty feel that time spent on course development alone takes away from time that could be devoted to research (Rockwell, et al, 1999).

A second administrative deterrent is the lack of recognition for teaching via distance education. Time devoted to teaching or developing online courses is not as highly regarded as is time spent on research or even on time spent teaching "traditional" face-to-face courses. Thus the lack of recognition from the administration and peers in the form of credit towards tenure and promotion is another large barrier to online faculty participation (Betts, 1998; Lee, 2001; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Wilson, 1998). Faculty also see the lack of grants for materials, software expenses, design and development of courses as another barrier (Betts, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Chizmar & Williams, 2001; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Schifter, 2000). Another barrier that is monetarily related is the lack of merit pay or financial stipends for faculty who develop or teach online courses (Berge, 1998; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Schifter, 2000; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002).

Of all of the barriers cited by faculty and administrators, the one mentioned most frequently is the lack of technical support (Berge, 1998; Betts, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Chizmar & Williams, 2001; Jones & Moller, 2002; Lee, 2001; Rockwell, et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000; Wilson, 1998). This includes concerns about the lack of systems reliability and access to the online courseware as well as inadequate infrastructure, hardware, and software. Faculty are concerned about developing effective technology skills and mention lack of training as another deterrent to teaching online. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge regarding where to go for technical support while teaching in an online environment. Faculty worry about depending on developers and programmers and are also concerned about security issues.

Discussion and Implications

Discussion

By grouping motivators and inhibitors into one of three groups – intrinsic, extrinsic, and institutional – one can determine what factors may still be missing and can also ascertain which group of factors is more influential to faculty. The literature discusses a broad listing of factors and this author found no specific factors missing in the list of motivators or inhibitors. While not a specific factor, the literature lacks a discussion of cultural and contextual influences regarding distance education in higher education institutions. For example, institutional motivators and barriers can differ depending on the culture and the mission of the institution (Berge, 1998).

Although intrinsic factors are typically the primary determiner of faculty participation (Betts, 1998; Dillon & Walsh, 1992; Lee, 2001; Rockwell, 1999), one could argue that if the necessary extrinsic and institutional factors are in place then intrinsic deterrents may be less influential. Intrinsic factors may also be outweighed by social pressures faculty experience, which either support or deter participation in distance education. These pressures include institutional, peer, student, and community pressure. Institutional pressures can manifest themselves in mission statements, strategic plans, and technology augmentations like additional computer labs, technology enhanced classrooms and a variety of software. Twenty-five percent of participating faculty in Betts' (1998) study believed that there was pressure to participate in distance education and one source of that pressure was the university's administration.

Peer pressure can be seen as a motivator (i.e. peer modeling, inter-institutional collaborative teaching opportunities, union incentives, etc) and as a disincentive (i.e. distance education not seen as important in the promotion and tenure process) (Dillon & Walsh, 1992; Olcott & Wright, 1995; Rockwell, 1999). "The aggregate effect of these institutionally embedded disincentives is to deter faculty participation in and adoption of distance teaching" (Olcott & Wright, 1995, p. 287). Peer pressure exists at the academic department level and departmental support is essential for increasing faculty participation in distance education (Olcott & Wright, 1995). Peer pressure in the form of competitors – other faculty and programs within higher education institutions and other markets – is also a source of pressure according to faculty (Betts, 1998).

Student pressure is exhibited not only by the way in which students communicate with one another (i.e. instant messaging and chat rooms) but also with the professor (via email). Students increasingly choose to conduct research via the Internet, escalating pressure on universities to provide online library access and causing faculty to be more knowledgeable about copyright and online plagiarism issues. In Betts' (1998) study, administrators note that pressure on faculty to participate in distance education came from two sources of pressure – the administration and prospective students.

The community also plays a role in the pressure it can place on faculty. Parents of students (of all ages) and the community at-large expect their local institution to be cutting-edge and responsive to their needs which puts pressure on faculty to not only

be conversant with technology but to use it in their teaching and in their communication to students. Meeting the community's needs may entail offering courses and programs via distance education for rural areas, business and industry, and working adults – generally, a new population of learners (Dillon & Walsh, 1992; Jones & Moller, 2003).

Implications and Future Research

The majority of the data gathered from the studies in this literature review were done so via survey – a quantitative method of data collection. Many of the surveys had an open-ended question portion which allowed for a qualitative aspect. The results provided an extensive list of motivating and inhibiting factors for faculty participation in online teaching but additional descriptive information was not included. Studies more qualitative in nature allowing for in-depth interviews and case studies of "best practices" institutions would inform administrators of distance learning programs and of universities in general thus having the potential to benefit the field. Furthermore, qualitative research could drill down into specific motivating or inhibiting factors for more information and potentially demonstrate interactions or connections among factors. For example, discovering specific reasons behind the intrinsic deterrent of technology fear could lead to focused training sessions and other types of support for faculty.

Another suggestion for future research would be to consider the unrepresented or underrepresented voice of administrators. In less than half (Betts, 1998; Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Lee, 2001; Rockwell et al, 1999; Schifter, 2000) of the thirteen studies reviewed, administrators' voices were represented through survey and short answer responses. These administrators were primarily academic deans except in one study (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000) where support unit employees were added to the mix of administrators and faculty. Administrators in these studies were asked to provide opinions of what motivating and inhibiting factors affected faculty who participated in distance learning.

In a few instances, the administrators' responses were different from faculty responses. In Betts' (1998) study, administrators listed the top five motivating factors for faculty participation in distance education as "(1) monetary support for participation; (2) personal motivation to use technology; (3) increase in salary; (4) credit toward tenure and promotion; and (5) release time" (Deans' section, ¶ 10). The only common motivator with those that faculty listed was that of personal motivation to use technology, an intrinsic motivator. Inhibitors from this same study were listed by administrators as lack of technical support, training, departmental support, release time and concerns about workload (Betts, 1998). Administrators and faculty agreed on three of five of these inhibitors including lack of release time, lack of technical support and concerns about workload.

In Rockwell, et al's (1999) study, "administrators were more likely to see monetary awards as an incentive than were the teaching faculty" (¶ 32). In Dooley and Murphrey's (2000) study, faculty and administrators typically agreed on most motivators and inhibitors. Differences in responses included administrators believing that proximity to technology was a factor that encouraged participation and faculty and support staff listing administrative encouragement and support as an encouraging factor (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000). Schifter (2002) found that administrators considered financial support issues and release time issues to be most important to faculty, while faculty noted intrinsic motivators such as intellectual challenge as their primary motivators. "Overall, the administrators in this study did not appear to truly understand what would motivate faculty who do participate in distance education, but had a clear perception of what would inhibit faculty from DE [distance education] participation" (Schifter, 2002, Discussion section, ¶ 3).

This is significant because many of the extrinsic and institutional motivators and inhibitors can be directly affected by university administrators. Thus, if administrators misunderstand the faculty perception of motivators and barriers, they will be unable to structure appropriate distance education programs. Additionally, it is important to ask both faculty and administrators whether or not administrators are implementing changes in distance learning policies and procedures based on the information about motivators and deterrents.

In order to meet the requests of the various types of students who prefer to attend courses via distance learning, either for convenience, preference of learning style, etc., higher education administrators must find ways to motivate and support faculty in their development and teaching of online courses and programs. Therefore further research should be done to answer the following questions: What are administrators' perceptions of motivating and inhibiting factors for faculty participation in online teaching? Are administrators' perceptions different from faculty perceptions? Once higher education administrators are aware of the motivators and inhibitors of faculty participation in distance education, how do they support and motivate faculty to teach online? How do administrators apply information gained into institutional distance education policies and then effectively communicate those policies to faculty? Answers to the questions above have the potential to provide administrators with the tools to not only increase faculty participation in and satisfaction with distance learning but could also result in increased student learning, improved assessment of teaching and learning, and overall increased productivity for the

institution.

Appendix:

Description	Wilson	McKenzie	Berge	Parisot	Betts	Rockwell	Chizmar	Lee	Schifter	O'Quinn	Bonk	Jones	Dooley
Barriers													
Competition from private and public institutions													X
Career and job security concerns													X
Intimidated by technology				X									
Lack of understanding of DE and what will work at a distance		X											
Resistance to innovation			X	X									
Concern about course quality					X				X	X		X	X
Absence of intellectual property rights										X			
Lack of student interaction												X	X
Limited knowledge re: copyright and intellectual property													X
Concern re: Internet's misinformation													X
Inappropriate for traditional-aged students										X			
Concerns about faculty workload					X				X	X			

Lack of administrative support	X							X					
Lack of collegial support					X								
Security concerns													X
Lack of grants for materials, expenses, design & development					X		X		X			X	X
Lack of knowledge of where to go for assistance							X						
Lack of merit pay or monetary support									X	X			X
Lack of release time					X		X		X	X	X		
Lack of technical support	X		X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Lack of systems reliability			X										X
Lack of training					X	X			X		X	X	
Developing effective technology skills						X							
Difficulty in recruiting faculty			X										
Inadequate hardware and software			X							X	X		X
Inadequate infrastructure			X										
Slow action on critical issues													X
Weak communication	X												X

Time taken away from research						X							
Lack of time to develop and maintain course material	X			X		X	X			X	X	X	
Motivators													
Optimal working conditions					X								
Overall job satisfaction					X				X				
Personal motivation to use technology					X	X		X	X		X		
Self-gratification						X							
Intellectual challenge					X				X				
Desire to get students more involved with technology		X											
Role modeling and peer observation				X			X						
Collegial support and recognition				X		X					X		
Opportunity to use technology more innovatively to enhance course quality and develop new ideas		X			X	X			X		X		X
Increases student access						X							X
Administrative encouragement and support													X

Credit towards tenure and promotion; recognition of work					X	X		X		X		
Training in how to effectively teach online										X		
Increase in salary				X							X	
Instructional design and development support										X		X

Intrinsic = Yellow; Extrinsic = Orange; Institutional – Technology & Teaching = Green; and Institutional – Administrative & Technical = White

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