

Technology and Disability Policy Highlights  

July 2018

July marked the 28th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Government agencies, advocacy organizations, academia, industry, and people with disabilities around the nation honored the day with activities, speeches, and educational materials detailing the gains made in the past 28 years; the current state of access, equity and inclusion; and the path ahead. For example, Autism Speaks highlighted their legislative activities that align with ADA provisions, and extend to areas such as the economic empowerment of people with disabilities. Aira, the company that launched a smartglasses navigation and object identification service for the blind or low vision population, discussed several areas that need improving in order to actualize the spirit and intentions of the ADA, including internet access, transportation access, educational and career access, and access to visual information.

In the regulatory space, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced its approval of FEMA’s request for a limited waiver of Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) rules which would allow them to conduct the first nationwide test of WEA on September 20, 2018. Comcast-NBCU requested a “presumptive waiver” or safer harbor for cable companies to allow for reruns of television shows during non-prime time hours be included in the accounting of the number of hours of video-described programming compliance. For example, television series marathons such as *Mr. Robot* and *Queen of the South* that air during non-prime time hours. NBCU asserts that this would allow for as much as 1,000 hours of video-described content per quarter to be counted towards compliance.

In Wireless RERC news, the Summary Report for the [*Using Technology R&D to Effect Policy Change* *Leadership Workshop*](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless_rerc_leadership_workshop_summary_report_final.pdf) was disseminated with a call for public input on the small group discussion takeaways regarding data sources, disability access policy priorities, and engaging stakeholders. We invite you to review the takeaways and submit concurring or opposing arguments. If you so choose, please send your comments to Salimah LaForce (salimah@cacp.gatech.edu) by August 24, 2018.

This issue also includes news about false Alerts, public awareness, and system testing for EAS and WEA; *Driving New Modes of IoT-Facilitated Citizen/User Engagement*; TechCheck, a quick accessibility assessment for employers; an eye-tracking headset for environmental control; and more.

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legislative Activities

**The ADA Turns 28**

July 26, 2018 - July marked the 28th anniversary of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) [**Pub. L. No. 110-325**]. Government agencies, advocacy organizations, academia, industry, and people with disabilities around the nation honored the day with activities, speeches, and educational materials detailing the gains made in the past 28 years; the current state of access, equity and inclusion; and the path ahead. Codified in 1990, the ADA made it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, telecommunications, and public and private facilities and programs. The 2018 Presidential Proclamation stated, “My Administration continues to encourage research that will lead to advancements in technology, medicine, and other fields and better enable independent living. We are also expanding and promoting equal education and employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities to live and work.“

The ADA National Network, provided an ADA Anniversary Toolkit, encouraging not only annual celebrations and activities but year-round efforts to move the needle forward on the realization of an inclusive society. On their webpage, individuals, governments, organizations, and faith communities can sign the “Pledge to Recommit to Full Implementation of the ADA,” along with information and training materials to inform inclusive practices. Autism Speaks highlighted their legislative activities that align with ADA provisions, and extend to areas such as economic empowerment with the tax-exempt 529A savings accounts made possible by the *Achieving a Better Live Experience (ABLE) Act* [**Pub. L. No. 113–295**] and educational attainment via the P*erkins Career and Technical Education Act* [**HR 2353**].

The U.S. Department of Justice, the enforcement agency for the ADA, featured settlement agreements reached in 2018 concerning employment, childcare access, veterans with disabilities, voting rights, and community integration, among others. Aira, the company that launched a smartglasses navigation and object identification service for the blind or low vision population, discussed several areas that need improving in order to actualize the spirit and intentions of the ADA. Their priorities include internet access, transportation access, educational and career access, and access to visual information. “Aira’s goal is to create a network of Smart Cities, where everyone has free access to visual information – anywhere, anytime. We will make this a reality.” Space does not permit coverage of all ADA celebratory activities and initiatives, but to stay informed and read about other events, visit <https://adata.org/ada-anniversary>.

#### Additional Information:

[Presidential Proclamation on the Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2018](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-proclamation-anniversary-americans-disabilities-act-2018/)

[<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-proclamation-anniversary-americans-disabilities-act-2018/>]

[ADA Anniversary Toolkit](https://www.adaanniversary.org)

[<https://www.adaanniversary.org>]

[28 Years of the American with Disabilities Act](https://www.ada.gov/ada_28th_anniversary.html)

[<https://www.ada.gov/ada_28th_anniversary.html>]

Regulatory Activities

**False Alerts, Public Awareness, and System Testing for EAS and WEA**

July 12, 2018 – The FCC adopted a Report and Order (R&O) and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) *In the Matter of Amendment of Part 11 of the Commission’s Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System* [PS Docket No. 15-94]; *Wireless Emergency Alerts* [PS Docket No. 15-91]. The R&O section adopts rules regarding testing the effectiveness and reliability of EAS as well as the prevention of false alerts. The new rules allow for live testing of EAS under certain conditions, including coordination with all stakeholders including PSAPs and emergency responders, that public awareness campaigns are issued in advance of the test, and accessible formats be used to ensure that all members of the public are aware that “this is only a test,” among others. Regarding the latter, public service announcements that use the attention signal are allowable. The ruling stated, “We believe that PSAs are an important tool in preparing and informing all Americans about the EAS in times of disaster, and to the extent the use of the Attention Signal in PSAs can further enhance community awareness, especially among populations with limited English proficiency, we amend our rules accordingly.”

Of note, [Wireless RERC comments submitted to the FCC in 2016](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/wireless-rerc-record-advancing-access-emergency-alerting) were cited as support for the amended rules, and the comments specified the importance of American Sign Language interpretation of PSAs: “Use of real codes should also require the use of several PSA’s explaining the real test code before and after the test. The PSAs should also be in American Sign Language (ASL) due to the fact this might be the only opportunity to explain to the Deaf Community who rely on ASL.”

The FNPRM section requests public input on false alert reporting, state EAS plan revisions, and sending WEA test messages to consumers. Initial comments are due 30 days after the FNPRM has been published in the [Federal Register](https://www.federalregister.gov/) (FR) [<https://www.federalregister.gov/>] and reply comments are due 60 days after publication. Prepared comments for docket number 15-91 can be uploaded via the FCC’s Electronic Comment Filing System at <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings>.

#### Additional Information:

R&O/NPRM: [Doc Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-18-94A1.doc)  -- [Pdf Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-18-94A1.pdf)  -- [Txt Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-18-94A1.txt)

[News Release about](https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-promotes-emergency-alert-reliability) : [Docx Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-352524A1.docx)  -- [Pdf Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-352524A1.pdf)  -- [Txt](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-352524A1.txt)

**First Nationwide WEA Test Scheduled for September 2018**

July 10, 2018 - The Federal Emergency Management Agency submitted a letter requesting that the FCC grant a limited waiver of Wireless Emergency Alert rules which would allow them to conduct the first nationwide test of WEA on September 20, 2018. To reach all states and territories, the test would use the presidential level code. This code was not only designed for nationwide delivery but even handsets that have opted out of other types of WEA messages, the presidential message cannot be overridden. In FEMA’s proposal, they ensure that a public awareness campaign regarding the test will be initiated with content tailored to five key audiences: the public, federal agencies, alerting authorities, the private sector, and nonprofit advocacy organizations. On July 20, 2018, the FCC announced its approval of FEMA’s request.

#### Additional Information:

[Waiver Request Allowing a National Test of the Wireless Emergency Alert System](https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10710162352973/WEA%20Waiver%20Request%20Letter%20%20-%20FINAL.pdf)

[<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10710162352973/WEA%20Waiver%20Request%20Letter%20%20-%20FINAL.pdf>]

Public Notice: [Docx Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-18-754A1.docx)  -- [Pdf Opens a New Window.](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-18-754A1.pdf)  -- [Txt](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-18-754A1.txt)

**NBCU Supports Video Description Rule Safe Harbor**

July 3, 2018 - Video description (VD) provides people with visual impairment access to onscreen actions and other nonverbal content that is visual and provides meaningful detail. VD rules, which took effect on July 1, 2018, require 87.5 hours of described video content per year. Comcast-NBCU suggested in a meeting with the FCC that reruns of television shows during non-prime time hours be included in the accounting of the number of hours of video-described programming compliance. For example, television series marathons such as *Mr. Robot* and *Queen of the South* that air during non-prime time hours. NBCU asserts that this would allow for as much as 1,000 hours of video-described content per quarter to be counted towards compliance. As such, NBCU wants the FCC to approve a safe harbor for cable networks, reducing their need to request a compliance waiver from quarterly to every three years. According to NBCU, “By adopting a presumptive waiver or safe harbor based on the total hours of described programming and described newly produced programming, the Commission will create the right incentives to encourage programmers to expand their video described hours without disruption to the top-rated non-broadcast networks’ established and successful business models.” [Source: Christopher Crosby, Law360]

#### Additional Information:

[NBCU Pushes FCC to Create Video Description safe Harbor](https://www.law360.com/articles/1059893/nbcu-pushes-fcc-to-create-video-description-safe-harbor)

[[https://www.law360.com/articles/1059893/nbcu-pushes-fcc-to-create-video-description-safe-harbor]](https://www.law360.com/articles/1059893/nbcu-pushes-fcc-to-create-video-description-safe-harbor)

Wireless RERC Updates

**Driving New Modes of IoT-Facilitated Citizen/User Engagement**

July 2018 – Wireless RERC researcher, Dr. Paul M.A. Baker, was a co-chair of the Internet of Things (IoT) Thought Leadership Working Group of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), Center for the Development and Application of Internet of Things Technologies (CDAIT). For approximately two years the group met to discuss how “the “Internet of Things” should not be taken literally; [but] as a metaphor that refers to a radical paradigmatic transformation, i.e., the interconnection of intelligent things, which is bound to bring about dramatic economic and social changes.” The efforts of the working group resulted in a whiter paper that not only defines IoT and its dimensions, but also addresses the opportunities and limitations of Smart Cities, IoT deployments, use cases (e.g., public safety, transportation, healthcare, utilities), data ownership and security, business models, ethics, and so much more.

Dr. Baker ensured that the Thought leadership Working Group were thinking of an inclusive IOT. The report states: “With an eye toward increasing the utility of IoT for end users, other aspects that need to be considered are the accessibility and usability of these technologies, which can increase participation for a great number of users. This is a typically overlooked design component and one that designers and developers of Smart City-connected applications, devices, and technologies could facilitate by obtaining input from a wide range of users, especially those who could potentially benefit the most from IoT technologies: people with disabilities, the aging, minorities/underrepresented groups, and other underserved populations.”

#### Additional Information:

[Download the white paper.](https://cdait.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/georgia_tech_cdait_thought_leadership_working_group_white_paper_july_9_2018_final.pdf)

[[https://cdait.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/georgia\_tech\_cdait\_thought\_leadership\_working\_group\_white\_paper\_july\_9\_2018\_final.pdf]](https://cdait.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/georgia_tech_cdait_thought_leadership_working_group_white_paper_july_9_2018_final.pdf)

**Wireless RERC Seeking Public Input on Leadership Workshop Takeaways**

In June, the Wireless RERC completed the Summary Report for *Using Technology R&D to Effect Policy Change* *Leadership Workshop*. One of the key goals of the workshop was to provide pragmatic advice on how to engage in the policymaking process. One aspect of engagement includes providing written comments in response to a call for public input. As such, we would like to offer you the opportunity to provide your input on the Small Group Discussions section (pp. 10-13).

In the afternoon, the attendees had small group discussions on the following topics:

1. Data sources at your disposal – organizational data that could provide support for policy recommendations.
2. Disability access policy priorities - policy domains that should be on the regulatory agenda to improve parity of access by people with disabilities.
3. Engaging stakeholders - strategies for encouraging people with disabilities and non-governmental organizations to participate in federal rulemakings.

Each group was asked to extract from their discussion three takeaways. From your perspectives as advocates, practitioners, academics, government, industry, or consumer stakeholders, we invite you to review the takeaways and submit concurring or opposing arguments. Do you agree with the takeaways that each group produced? Is there a significant issue regarding use of data, disability access policy priorities, or stakeholder engagement that went unaddressed?

We hope that you reply. If you so choose, please send your comments to Salimah LaForce (salimah@cacp.gatech.edu) by August 22, 2018.

#### Additional Information:

[wireless\_rerc\_leadership\_workshop\_summary\_report\_final.pdf](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless_rerc_leadership_workshop_summary_report_final.pdf)

[[http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless\_rerc\_leadership\_workshop\_summary\_report\_final.pdf]](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless_rerc_leadership_workshop_summary_report_final.pdf)

# Tell Us About Your Wireless Devices!

To inform the inclusive development of wireless technologies and services, the[**Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC)**](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/tags/newsroom/wireless-rerc-news)is collecting data on people with disabilities’ user experiences and expectations.

Your responses will:

* Help designers and engineers make more accessible wireless devices and services for people with disabilities.
* Inform recommendations to better ensure inclusive policies and practices.

Take the survey online at <http://bit.ly/2018UserNeedsSurvey>

Or

Scan the QR Code below to open the survey on your mobile device:

To take the survey by telephone contact:

Salimah LaForce

404-894-8297

Other Items of Interest

## TechCheck Generates the State of Accessibility of Company’s Tech

July 2018 – TechCheck, developed by the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT), is a quick accessibility assessment that employers can use to benchmark their workplace accessibility level. It is free to use and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Companies can use the confidential results to identify areas for improvement and prioritize business policies or practices for remediation. Some of the areas evaluated include leadership, policy and development, training and awareness, specific technologies, and procurement.

#### Additional Information:

[Learn about TechCheck](http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTgwNzIwLjkyNzc2MzkxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE4MDcyMC45Mjc3NjM5MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3NTMyNTI1JmVtYWlsaWQ9c2FsaW1haEBjYWNwLmdhdGVjaC5lZHUmdXNlcmlkPXNhbGltYWhAY2FjcC5nYXRlY2guZWR1JmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&102&&&http://www.peatworks.org/techcheck)

[[http://www.peatworks.org/techcheck]](http://www.peatworks.org/techcheck)

**Eye-Tracking Headset For Environmental Control**

July 4, 2018 - Christopher McMurrough, of the University of Texas-Arlington, has developed an eye-tracking system that should improve upon the limitations of older models (e.g., need for a trained expert to calibrate the system, slow processing time). McMurrough’s system uses a forward-facing, head-mounted camera to generate a 3D map of the environment. This map is transmitted to a computer where together, with the input from the eye-tracking devices can accurately discern at what the user is looking. Inspired by his mother-in-law with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the system is intended to allow someone with a mobility disability to independently control things such as a wheelchair, robotic arm, computer, assistive technology, or conceivably any connected device in the environment. McMurrough has patented his system, and other applications are being considered, such as using it in a gaming environment and as an eye-health monitor [Source: Ben Coxworth, New Atlas]

#### Additional Information:

[Experimental eye-tracking headset could help the disabled](https://newatlas.com/eye-tracking-headset/55312/)

[<https://newatlas.com/eye-tracking-headset/55312/>]

Upcoming Events

**2018 GSMA Mobile World Congress (MWC) Americas**

Connect to a Better Future. The 2018 MWC Americas will convene September 12-14, 2018 in Los Angeles, CA. The event is an international gathering of innovative minds with the goal of creating a better future. Attendees will be amazed, motivated, and optimistic about the future of mobile technology.

Additional Information:

[2018 Mobile World Congress Americas](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRlfhF9uHCf_QJ4YlTcBtDC6-to3KTXA9OLcAEkgvzcxtgTC0eenaJPtX6JKAmWdk80DUjAteJwVWT617HjRQUmuG7T-ne5pP382OqH82AmuFcMLGL0PzwZTt5sLn6p7ovIXmfl-_Byf5iuet-KVHgzs-1zJVMQiIq0x9yg8hRSuf7MG5cs2u5UwhU4B63ynnRbzrnF5qVU3qj6vfAqayiZWDjU3INSON8taTzhjQJ36onEyoFekg68zLUf7-19oKAXkdzhqJxEbtLlbE5H7mEOyHsfSwLBDKTqB8GzlZe2Z-EIbrMZatJopTcDB6LMkHuz&c=ncCEMky7pxAUJ-qcLisXinQVE_vlFE4tzPeJtuLuKsvAhwNq1t6QjQ==&ch=EfoeVXOKTTI6bnIdSCp8NP5GXXKLF0kOtZ-Spmxm552M43qoaEsKMQ==)

[[https://www.mwcamericas.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRlfhF9uHCf_QJ4YlTcBtDC6-to3KTXA9OLcAEkgvzcxtgTC0eenaJPtX6JKAmWdk80DUjAteJwVWT617HjRQUmuG7T-ne5pP382OqH82AmuFcMLGL0PzwZTt5sLn6p7ovIXmfl-_Byf5iuet-KVHgzs-1zJVMQiIq0x9yg8hRSuf7MG5cs2u5UwhU4B63ynnRbzrnF5qVU3qj6vfAqayiZWDjU3INSON8taTzhjQJ36onEyoFekg68zLUf7-19oKAXkdzhqJxEbtLlbE5H7mEOyHsfSwLBDKTqB8GzlZe2Z-EIbrMZatJopTcDB6LMkHuz&c=ncCEMky7pxAUJ-qcLisXinQVE_vlFE4tzPeJtuLuKsvAhwNq1t6QjQ==&ch=EfoeVXOKTTI6bnIdSCp8NP5GXXKLF0kOtZ-Spmxm552M43qoaEsKMQ==)]

**Georgia Digital Government Summit**

The 2018 Georgia Digital Government Summit will convene September 20-21, 2018 in Atlanta, GA. Produced by Government Technology, their passion is helping to spread best practices and stimulate innovation in the public sector. The Georgia Digital Government Summit is designed to do just that. The Summit has an advisory board that gathers public and private sector leaders to create an agenda designed present relevant and actionable session content for the local and state government organizations attending the summit.

Additional Information:

[2018 Georgia Digital Government Summit](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRlgk4NYgnyS8MQs9dEIKzdXmArAjvFNq_hC8nKIljjtBh0MaDgwGYMSqEhO4vP5an2ti7hYb4O9vFQh5QuH8NudFoli-5_gApydqPiZxEOGevOu9myRStnfXUf5jUopjnwY3IBXME7AafivJHUK717BJWjTeame1w7RfEwhtegjcUzQoFWyjhmPw3zzrNUrTRojGy5R0v97lfYbJ6vZdsyecUMxYf2FFkD6qMQ9jceZqiAEZVV1wGgkUgVa1qThfPTEJU9WiVV9M5W47fmdGJbFBCCsf7VV0pxtIxg1FFXlVYbs8mcOsmeeJemLRAqJUuSbG3Q3EF1jDHhOquWsr4yy4TUE7IJzkrIaLDVdtzz0Hgl-avTRpKsxw==&c=ncCEMky7pxAUJ-qcLisXinQVE_vlFE4tzPeJtuLuKsvAhwNq1t6QjQ==&ch=EfoeVXOKTTI6bnIdSCp8NP5GXXKLF0kOtZ-Spmxm552M43qoaEsKMQ==)

[[http://www.govtech.com/events/Georgia-Digital-Government-Summit.html](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRlgk4NYgnyS8MQs9dEIKzdXmArAjvFNq_hC8nKIljjtBh0MaDgwGYMSqEhO4vP5an2ti7hYb4O9vFQh5QuH8NudFoli-5_gApydqPiZxEOGevOu9myRStnfXUf5jUopjnwY3IBXME7AafivJHUK717BJWjTeame1w7RfEwhtegjcUzQoFWyjhmPw3zzrNUrTRojGy5R0v97lfYbJ6vZdsyecUMxYf2FFkD6qMQ9jceZqiAEZVV1wGgkUgVa1qThfPTEJU9WiVV9M5W47fmdGJbFBCCsf7VV0pxtIxg1FFXlVYbs8mcOsmeeJemLRAqJUuSbG3Q3EF1jDHhOquWsr4yy4TUE7IJzkrIaLDVdtzz0Hgl-avTRpKsxw==&c=ncCEMky7pxAUJ-qcLisXinQVE_vlFE4tzPeJtuLuKsvAhwNq1t6QjQ==&ch=EfoeVXOKTTI6bnIdSCp8NP5GXXKLF0kOtZ-Spmxm552M43qoaEsKMQ==)]

**Mobile Education Alliance Symposium**

The mEducation Alliance Symposium will convene November 9-8, 2018 in Washington, D.C. This year’s theme is *Using Technology to Scale Support for Teacher and Community Educators in Low-Resource Environments*. Specifically, the Symposium will address instruction in the traditional and non-traditional educational classroom environment, capitalizing on how mobile technology can augment instruction and learning. Some sub-themes include supporting learners with disabilities, delivering instruction in crisis and conflict settings, and coaching and mentoring.

Additional Information:

[mEducation Alliance Symposium](http://www.meducationalliance.org/?page_id=670)

[<http://www.meducationalliance.org/?page_id=670>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** July 2018



The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) is a monthly newsletter that reports on national public policy events and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, researchers, policymakers, industry, and advocacy professionals. The Wireless RERC is a research center that promotes universal access to wireless technologies and explores their innovative applications in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our website at [<http://www.wirelessrerc.org>]. For further information on items summarized in this report, or if you have items of interest that you would like included in future editions, please contact this edition’s editor Salimah LaForce [[salimah@cacp.gatech.edu](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Csalimah%5COneDrive%20-%20Georgia%20Institute%20of%20Technology%5CwiRERC_2016%20-%202021%5CTDPH%5CApril%202017%5Csalimah%40cacp.gatech.edu)].

If you wish to unsubscribe or update your email address, send an email to salimah@cacp.gatech.edu.

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