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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING MULTI-MODAL BOOKMARKS**

Publication Classification

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system for enabling multi-modal bookmarks comprises a bookmark repository coupled to two browsers. A user bookmarks content using a first browser, and a bookmark is stored in the bookmark repository. The user subsequently uses a second browser and requests that the bookmark be de-referenced to point the second browser to the bookmarked content. The second browser accesses the bookmark in the content repository and is directed to the bookmarked content. The first and second browsers may be visual and voice browsers that render Wireless Markup Language (WML) and Voice Extensible Markup Language (VXML) content, respectively, wherein a mapping is provided that links a given piece of visual content to an equivalent piece of voice content.

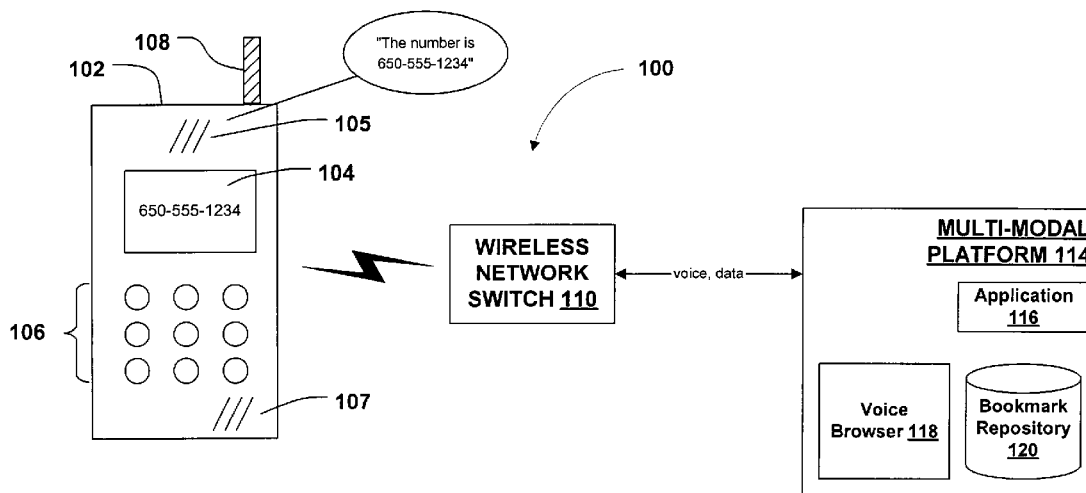
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(60) Provisional application No. 60/310,610, filed on Aug. 7, 2001.



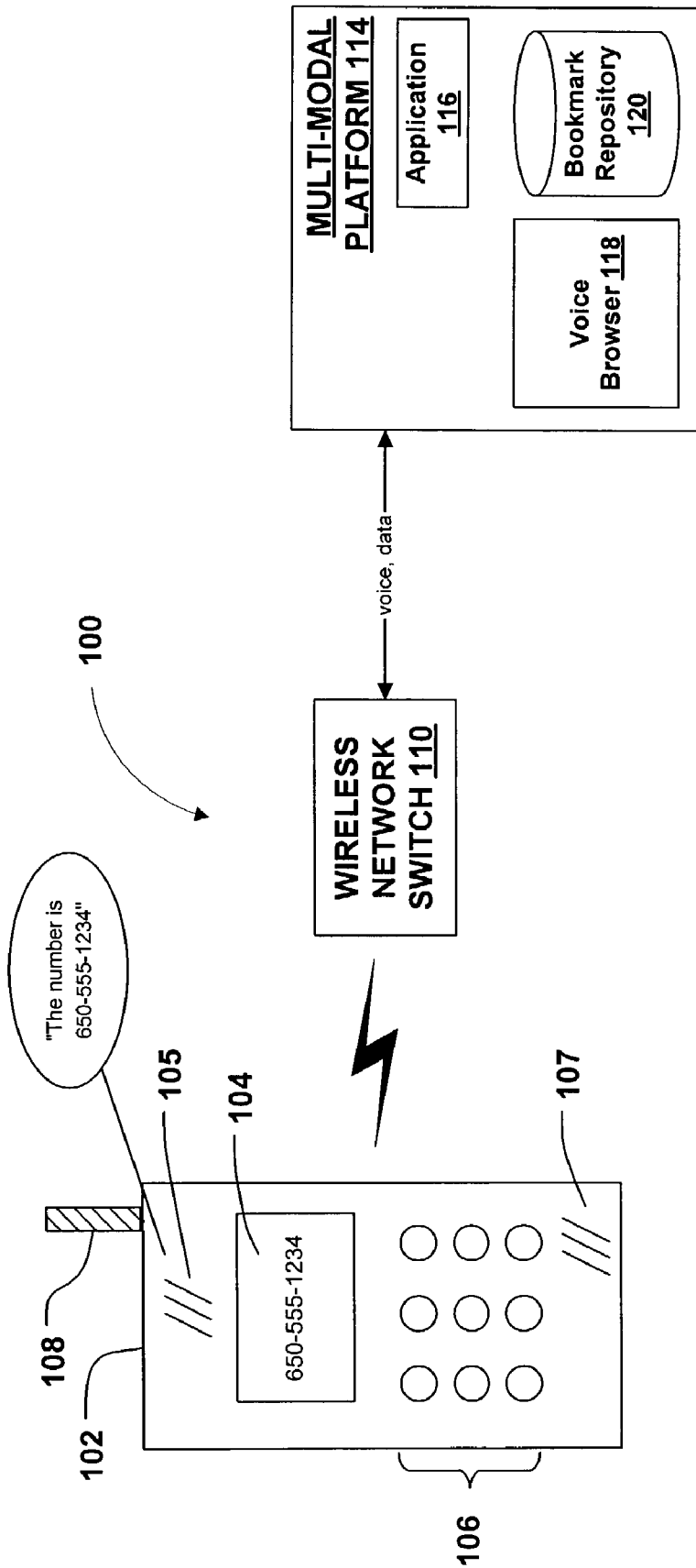


FIG. 1

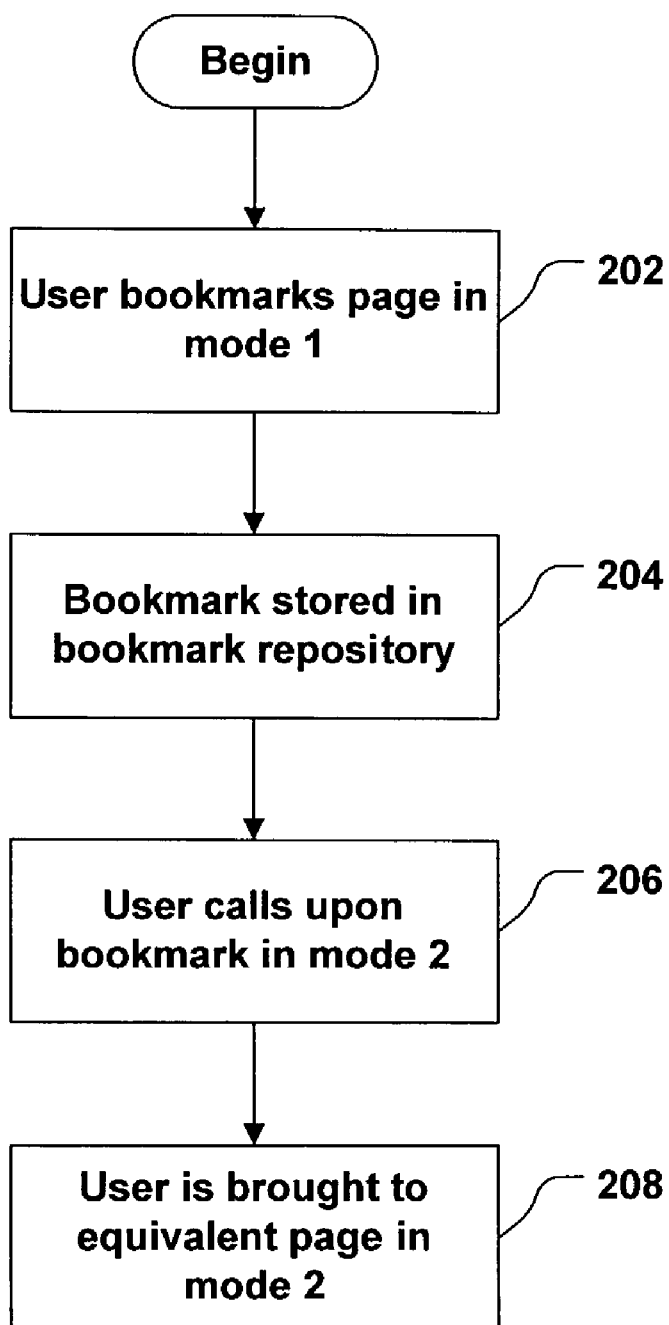


FIG. 2

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING MULTI-MODAL BOOKMARKS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/310,610, entitled "System and Method for Providing Multi-Modal Bookmarks," filed Aug. 7, 2001.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to the field of telephony. More particularly, the invention provides a technique for providing multi-modal bookmarks. In accordance with exemplary aspects of the invention, a user who browses the web using a visual browser may bookmark a page, and that bookmark is later available to the user for browsing the web in voice mode.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] As computer technology becomes more widely available, the transmission of voice information has become increasingly intertwined with the transmission of data. Thus, many telephones enable a user to interact with content either in an audio mode (i.e., using a speaker and microphone), or a visual mode (i.e., using a visual display and some type of input device such as a keypad).

[0004] One application of modem telephones is the use of the "wireless web." By using a telephone (e.g., a wireless telephone) with a WAP browser that renders Wireless Markup Language (WML) content, a user can access the Internet. Similarly, the user can also access the internet by telephone using a "voice browser" that allows a user to interact with Voice extensible Markup Language (VXML) content. Content is not always amenable to a single mode of communication. That is, in some cases it is most convenient to allow a user to interact with content either in voice mode or visual mode, rather than to restrict the user to a particular mode. An architecture that permits a user to interact with a single application (or item of content) in both voice and visual modes can be referred to as "multi-modal."

[0005] One problem that arises when a user wishes to access the web in both visual and voice modes is that a user may bookmark a page using a first browser (e.g., a visual browser), and, when the user accesses the web using a different browser (e.g., a voice browser), that page is no longer bookmarked, because the bookmark is accessible only by a particular browser.

[0006] In view of the foregoing, there is a need for a bookmark system that overcomes the drawbacks of the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention provides a system for storing bookmarks, such that the bookmarks can be accessed using a plurality of browsers. For example, a user may browse the wireless web with a visual browser (e.g., a WAP browser), and may bookmark a particular page. The bookmark is then stored in a bookmark repository, which is accessible to both the visual browser and a voice browser. When the same user browses the wireless web using a voice browser, the user

may access the bookmark that was created with the visual browser. The content used with the visual browser need not be identical to the content used with the voice browser; a relationship may be defined that links bookmarked visual content with equivalent voice content. The use of bookmarks in the context of the wireless web, visual browsers, and voice browsers is merely exemplary; in accordance with the invention, bookmarks may be used in connection with content other than wireless web content, and in connection with applications other than visual and voice browsers.

[0008] Other features of the invention are described below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of preferred embodiments, is better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there is shown in the drawings exemplary constructions of the invention; however, the invention is not limited to the specific methods and instrumentalities disclosed. In the drawings:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a telephone network architecture in which aspects of the invention may be implemented; and

[0011] FIG. 2 is a flow diagram of an exemplary bookmark process in accordance with aspects of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention provides a system and method whereby a user who browses content using a first browser (e.g., a visual browser) may bookmark a page such that the bookmark is available to the user for browsing the content with a second browser (e.g., a voice browser). For example, a user may bookmark a particular retail web site using a WAP browser, and then use the bookmark to access that page in a separate session with a voice browser.

[0013] FIG. 1 shows a telephone network architecture 100. Architecture 100 includes a wireless telephone 102, a wireless network switch 110, and a multi-modal platform 114. While architecture 100 is shown, for exemplary purposes only, in the context of wireless telephony, it will be appreciated that the invention applies to any type of telephony or communications architecture including (but not limited to) wired telephony.

[0014] In a preferred embodiment, wireless telephone 102 comprises a visual display 104, an audio speaker 105, a keypad 106, a microphone 107, and an antenna 108. Visual display 104 may, for example, be a Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) which displays text and graphics. Audio speaker 105 renders audio signals (e.g., signals received from other components in architecture 100) in order to produce audible sound. Keypad 106 may be an alpha-numeric keypad that allows a user to input alphanumeric characters. Depending upon context, wireless telephone may respond to input from keypad 106 by displaying appropriate characters on display 104, transmitting ASCII representations of such characters, or (in the case of numeric input) generating appropriate DTMF signals. Microphone 107 captures audio signals, which may, in one example, be digitally sampled by wireless

telephone **102** for wireless transmission to other components of network architecture **100**. Antenna **108** is used by wireless telephone **102** to transmit information to, and receive information from, components within architecture **100**. For example, wireless telephone **102** may use antenna **108** to receive digital audio signals for rendering on speaker **105**, to transmit digital audio signals captured by microphone **107**, to receive data to be displayed on visual display **104**, or to transmit data captured with keypad **106**. Wireless telephone **102** may also contain computing components (not shown). For example, wireless telephone **102** may have a memory and a processor, which may be used to store and execute software (e.g., software that digitally samples audio signals captured with microphone **107**, software that generates analog audio signals from digitally-sampled audio received through antenna **108**, software that enables the browsing of content using visual display **104** and keypad **106**, etc.). In one example, wireless telephone **102** may include a WAP browser that includes the capability to bookmark pages of the wireless web. The structure of a wireless telephone **102** that employs the components shown in **FIG. 1** in connection with a memory and processor will be apparent to those of skill in the art, and thus is not discussed at length herein.

[0015] One feature of wireless telephone **102** is that it can be viewed as having two different “modes” of communication. On the one hand, wireless telephone **102** communicates in a “voice” mode; on the other hand, wireless telephone **102** communicates in a “visual” mode. In voice mode, wireless telephone uses microphone to capture audio (which may be digitally sampled and then transmitted through antenna **108**), and uses speaker to render audio (which may be received through antenna **108** in a digital form). “Voice” mode is exemplified by the conventional usage of a telephone in which a first party uses the telephone to engage in two-way speech with another party. In “visual” mode, wireless telephone uses keypad **106** to capture data (e.g., alpha-numeric data which may be represented in ASCII form), and uses visual display **104** to render data. The captured data may be transmitted through antenna **108**, and antenna **108** may also be used to receive the data that is to be displayed on visual display **104**.

[0016] Wireless telephone **102** communicates with a wireless network switch **110**. Wireless network switch is coupled to a tower (not shown) that engages in two-way communication with wireless telephone **102** through antenna **108**. Wireless network switch **110** connects wireless telephone **102** to various components, such as multi-modal platform **114**, or Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) (not shown). Multi-modal platform **114** is described in further detail below; a PSTN is known in the art and thus is not described herein.

[0017] In accordance with aspects of the invention, multi-modal platform **114** may facilitate communication with wireless telephone **102** in two “modes” (i.e., in voice mode and visual mode). For example, multi-modal platform **114** may be adapted to send audio information to and receive audio information from wireless telephone **102** through switch **110** using a voice channel. Multi-modal platform **114** may likewise be adapted to send visual data to and receive visual data from wireless telephone **102** through switch **110** using a data channel. Moreover, multi-modal platform **114** may be adapted to change between these two “modes” of communicating according to instructions or existing com-

munications conditions. Multi-modal platform **114** may be embodied as a computing device programmed with instructions to perform these functions.

[0018] Multi-modal platform **114** may be or comprise a computing device that includes various types of processing capability and storage. In one example, multimodal platform includes an application engine **116**. Application engine **116** is software that provides content to a user—either content located on multi-modal platform, or content that is generated elsewhere (e.g., at a web site provider’s computing device). Application engine **116** provides the content either in a voice form or a visual form, depending on which mode is appropriate for telephone **102** to interact with the content. (The “appropriateness” of a particular mode may be determined by an express user instruction, an instruction from the underlying application, or some analysis of the operating conditions that weigh in favor of one mode or another.)

[0019] Multi-modal platform **114** may include, or be associated with, bookmark repository **120**. As noted above, telephone **102** may include a WAP browser that allows a user to browse the wireless web and to bookmark content therein. An exemplary process of bookmarking a page is described with reference to both **FIG. 1** and **FIG. 2**.

[0020] In one embodiment, when the user bookmarks a page (**FIG. 2**, block **202**), the bookmark is stored in bookmark repository **120** (block **204**). That is, executing a bookmark function on telephone **102**’s WAP browser causes telephone **102** to generate data indicative of the bookmark, and to communicate this data to bookmark repository **120** (e.g., by using antenna **108** to transmit this data to multi-modal platform **114** via wireless network switch **110**).

[0021] Bookmark repository **120** is accessible to voice browser **118**. Thus, if the user, subsequent to bookmarking a page as described above, engages in a browsing session using voice browser **118**, the user may call upon the bookmark and return to the bookmarked page (block **206**). Thus, since bookmark repository **118** is accessible to both the visual browser and the voice browser, the user can access the same set of bookmarks regardless of whether he is browsing in voice mode or visual mode. If the user calls upon the bookmark in a mode that is different from the mode in which he originally generated the bookmark, the user will be brought to an equivalent page in the new mode (block **208**), as more particularly described below.

[0022] It will be appreciated that not all visual content has an exact analogue in voice, and vice versa. Thus, a mapping may be created that links visual content with equivalent voice content, such that every bookmark (or at least a subset of all potential bookmarks) has a defined meaning for both visual and voice browsing. The nature of this mapping depends on the relationship between visual and voice content. Every bookmark also is itself multimodal and can be accessed in both voice and visual modes.

[0023] In one example, every visual page has an equivalent voice page (e.g., a content provider provides a given page of content in both Wireless Markup Language (WML) and in Voice extensible Markup Language (VXML)). In another example, every Universal Record Locator (URL) points to plural pages written in various markup languages, and every GET request for a URL includes an identification of the type of browser that generated the request. In this

case, no mapping is necessary, since the server at which the URL is located provides a different page based on what type of browser is identified in the GET request. In yet another example, a complex relationship between visual and voice content is defined, such that every bookmark entered in one mode will have meaning in the other mode, even if there is no obvious canonical relationship between voice and visual content pages. One context in which this type of mapping may be necessary is if a bookmark generated in WML or VXML is to have meaning for Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) content, since HTML content is often structured differently from its WML or VXML counterparts.

[0024] According to one feature of the invention, bookmark repository **120** may maintain a hierarchical structure of bookmarks, as specified by the user. Thus, if a user organizes bookmarks in folders (e.g., "sports," "music," etc.), the voice system may provide menus based on this hierarchical structure. Alternatively, a user may be able to speak the name of a bookmark, which bypasses the menus that support the hierarchical structure (or queries the user as to which sub-tree of the hierarchical structure the user intended, if two bookmarks have a common, non-unique name).

[0025] According to another feature of the invention, a bookmark may specify a preferred "mode" for interacting with the bookmark. In other words, the bookmark may be stored in a data structure that includes, as one of its fields, a specification of mode (e.g., voice or visual), wherein, upon re-directing to the bookmarked content, multi-modal platform **114** switches to the mode specified in the bookmark. One variation on this design is that platform **114** may take into account the specified mode, but may override it based on a variety of factors (e.g., the unavailability of the specified mode, overriding instructions generated by the applications that provides the content, an overriding instruction from a user, etc.) Another variation on this design is to allow the user to specify the preferred mode as being the mode that the user is currently using at the time the bookmark is accessed.

[0026] According to another feature of the invention, bookmarks may be sent by a browser to bookmark repository **120** either continuously (i.e., as they are generated by the user), or in a "batch" mode (i.e., once per hour, once per day, once per week, etc.). The repository **120** allows for persistence. In a variation on the invention, repository **120** may be situated at the wireless telephone **102**.

[0027] According to another feature of the invention, bookmarks may be "annotated." That is, the user may provide his or her own description of the bookmark. As one example, the user may type the description when bookmarking content in visual mode, and this description may be "read" (e.g., by a voice synthesis system) when the user accesses the bookmark in voice mode.

[0028] While the foregoing examples have been provided in the context of wireless telephony, it should be noted that the above-described system can also be deployed in any communications context, such as a wired telephone system. For example, wireless telephone switch **110** can be a wired-network telephone switch, such as a "5E," and wireless telephone **102** may be embodied as a wired telephone that is enabled to receive both voice and data.

[0029] It is noted that the foregoing examples have been provided merely for the purpose of explanation and are in no

way to be construed as limiting of the present invention. While the invention has been described with reference to various embodiments, it is understood that the words which have been used herein are words of description and illustration, rather than words of limitations. Further, although the invention has been described herein with reference to particular means, materials and embodiments, the invention is not intended to be limited to the particulars disclosed herein; rather, the invention extends to all functionally equivalent structures, methods and uses, such as are within the scope of the appended claims. Those skilled in the art, having the benefit of the teachings of this specification, may effect numerous modifications thereto and changes may be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention in its aspects.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for accessing a plurality of content items available in two modes, the system comprising:

a bookmark repository which receives, from a first browser, data indicative of a first of the content items and an identifier, which stores said data and said identifier, which receives from a second browser a request to access content associated with said identifier, and which communicates said data to said second browser, wherein said first browser enables the browsing of said content items in a first of the two modes, and wherein said second browser enables the browsing of said content items in a second of said two modes different from said first of said two modes.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said first of the two modes comprises a visual mode, and wherein said second of the two modes comprises a voice mode.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the bookmark repository further stores annotative data descriptive of said first of the content items.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the bookmark repository further stores information indicative of a preferred mode in which to access said first of the content items.

5. A method of accessing content comprising:

accessing a first content item in a first mode;

saving a bookmark to said first content item; and

using the bookmark to access a second content item in a second mode different from the first mode, wherein the second content item contains information in the second mode that corresponds to information in the first mode contained by the first content item.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein a one of the first and second modes comprises a voice mode, and wherein the other one of the first and second modes comprises a visual mode.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

specifying a preferred mode to access the information represented by the first content item.

8. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

providing a textual annotation describing the bookmark.

9. A method of providing content comprising:

receiving a request to save a bookmark for a content item;

storing an indication of the content item;

receiving a request for content pointed to by the bookmark, the request indicating a mode of interaction;

identifying a pointer that corresponds to the content item in the indicated mode; and

providing the pointer to a browser.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the mode comprises either a visual mode or a voice mode.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the bookmark indicates a preferred mode.

12. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

overriding the preferred mode in accordance with the request.

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