

Fighting Like Cats and Dogs: Conflict in the Animal Welfare Field

Karen Green, March 2009

Conflict is inevitable. Conflict is experienced in every aspect of one's life. Organizations can serve as a kind of Petri dish for conflict, combining groups of people with limited resources and high expectations, often without clear direction. The nonprofit sector is no exception; resources are often stretched even tighter and workers are often intensely passionate about achieving organizational goals. Though many people experience conflict as negative, it serves an important role in organizations, with the potential to lead to greater creativity and more effective decisions. However, many organizations lack the skill to leverage conflict into growth, and instead suffer the consequences: lower productivity, employee disengagement and turnover, ineffective programs and teams, and (increasingly) lawsuits.

The intent of this research project was to advance understanding of conflict in the U.S. animal welfare movement. A survey of 227 employees and volunteers of U.S. animal welfare organizations was conducted to answer key questions about conflict in this field: What types of conflict are these organizations experiencing? What is the impact of conflict on these organizations and on the people working for them? What resources are these organizations and individuals using to facilitate effective conflict resolution? Where do we go from here?

Terms

“Animal welfare” refers to the efforts of individuals and organizations to protect or advance the welfare of companion animals such as cats and dogs. “Animal welfare organizations” include municipal and private organizations such as animal shelters, spay/neuter clinics, advocacy organizations, and rescue and adoption groups.

Volunteers perform a great deal of work in most animal welfare organizations. Throughout this paper, except where otherwise noted, reference to “work”/“worker” in animal welfare will include both paid employees and volunteers.

Literature Review

In order to be able to put the frequency and impact of conflict in the animal welfare field into context, quantifiable data was sought on organizations in other sectors. Unfortunately, most data is either highly general (to all types of organizations) or highly specific (i.e. to one type of conflict within one particular team). Data which would allow for a more direct comparison between conflict in animal welfare (as understood through this project's survey results) and conflict in other fields could not be identified by this researcher. No relevant research on conflict in animal welfare was discovered. Despite these limitations, a review of available research offers some perspective.

Costs of Conflict

The broader field of conflict research indicates significant levels and costs of organizational conflict. According to a U.S. Department of Labor study, “unresolved conflict costs the average nonprofit organization between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year”. Data from this study indicates that efficiency losses in the areas of manager time, absenteeism, and turnover are twice as high when conflict skills are absent (qtd. in Mediate•Facilitate). A study by the Center for Continuing and Professional Education at Mercy

Note: This research was conducted as part of a course in communication research and inquiry within a degree program in Organizational Communication and Certificate in Conflict Resolution and Mediation. Please contact the author with questions or to request sub-sets of survey results: Karen Green at karen@thesingingturtle.com.

College found that conflict takes up 30-42% of manager's time and that over 85% of employees who quit their jobs say that internal conflict was a factor (Mertha 46).

Positive and Negative Impacts of Conflict

"Many times we are pushed to find better practices through the conflict so it isn't always all bad..."—survey respondent

"While not enjoyable, conflict is sometimes absolutely necessary."—survey respondent

Though conflict is often viewed as a negative, there are positive influences of conflict as well. De Dreu, Harinck, and Van Vianen discuss negative impacts including absenteeism, damage to relationships, and hampering of organizational processes. However, they go on to say that conflict can stimulate creativity, improve communication, and result in better decisions (369).

Conflict in the Nonprofit Sector

Though little available research compares conflict in the nonprofit sector to conflict in the private sector, researchers have suggested that the nonprofit sector is particularly vulnerable to conflict. Several explanations for this have been posed. Mottner and Ford suggest that "...the concept of internal competition in nonprofit organizations is underdeveloped; yet, of all organizations, the nonprofit organization is most likely to operate in an environment of competition for very scarce resources." (178). They go on to discuss internal conflict in particular, noting the impact of factors such as "differing staff goals and objectives, disagreements among staff and other stakeholders (e.g., patrons), competition for limited resources within the firm,...and potentially political conflicts between departments and management." (180)

In her book, "Resolving Conflict in Nonprofit Organizations", Marion Peters Angelica references the work of researchers who focus on conflict in nonprofits, reporting four ingredients for organizational conflict: change, diversity, limitations, and innovation. These factors are often in play in nonprofit organizations. Angelica goes on to suggest further explanations for conflict in nonprofits, writing that "the expectation is that nonprofits are utopian agencies 'above' conflict" and that "...nonprofit employees' creativity, individuality, and passion make them likely candidates for conflict."

Conflict in the Animal Welfare Field

"I see conflict and lack of conflict resolution as a system issue in our field."
—survey respondent

"Conflict among animal welfare stakeholders is a pervasive issue everywhere I have been. People who claim to be seeking the same goal can be ruthless in their character assassination of others."—survey respondent

"In life [and] death situations, there is no room for compromise."—survey respondent

Though prior research on conflict in the animal welfare field is essentially nonexistent, several factors characteristic of animal welfare work may lead to more difficulty with conflict:

- Animal welfare workers have dual roles which may challenge their abilities to relate effectively with the public. They must protect animals from those who abuse, neglect, and abandon them. They also carry responsibility for protecting the public from animals (such as aggressive dogs). Animal welfare workers must relate to individuals who cause harm to animals, but at the same time, these organizations depend on the good will,

responsibility, and compassion of members of the public who serve as adopters, volunteers and donors.

- Those who pursue volunteer or paid positions in animal welfare are often intensely passionate about helping animals. However, their convictions about what strategies are most helpful to animals are frequently in opposition to their colleague's.
- Animal welfare workers sometimes elect animal work because they dislike or have trouble relating to other people.
- Animal welfare work often involves a great deal of emotion. For those dedicated to protecting animals, the frequent exposure to animals which have been terribly abused and/or are suffering can cause stress and even trauma.

Conflict Resolution Resources

"I come from a technology and business related background and initially thought that the animal welfare field would be different, fundamentally. Though the issues it deals with are different and often emotionally charged, the basics are still the same. Conflict resolution and its central principles are as applicable to this industry as any other."

—survey respondent

A wealth of conflict resolution resources is readily available. Resources include books, articles, websites, consultants, and a host of associations and nonprofit organizations operating a national, regional, and community level. Book stores, libraries, telephone directories and Internet search engines provide ready access to resources for those who wish to learn more. Topics include interpersonal conflict, organizational conflict, conflict in small groups and teams, conflict in families, international and political conflict, negotiation, and mediation.

Although resources on conflict abound, resources tailored to the animal welfare field are practically nonexistent. The national and trade organizations which typically produce resources for this field offer little on the topic of conflict resolution. A thorough review of the resource offerings of these organizations turned up very little. However, three findings are notable:

- While conflict resolution is rarely addressed, compassion fatigue (or "burnout") is a frequent topic of conferences, workshops, booklets, and other types of resources.
- The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), in partnership with the University of North Carolina, has developed the Shelter Diagnostic System (SDS). According to an HSUS article about the SDS, the program is "...designed to analyze employee attitudes, perceptions, and opinions on key issues related to organizational health and well-being. Topics include communications effectiveness, supervisory style, teamwork, peer support, euthanasia practices, morale, trust, and the stress of hands-on work in a shelter environment." (AnimalSheltering.org)
- The Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in Lynnwood, Washington, has implemented a Workplace Culture Agreement which is posted in the shelter and included in employee manuals and agreements. These are just some of the statements related to how employees agree to engage in conflict:
 - Agree to resolve outstanding conflict NOW
 - Be active in resolving conflicts
 - Deal with conflict directly—with the persons involved
 - Show respect—keep your voice calm and your language clean
 - Promote healthy conflict—view it as an opportunity to explore differences and increase understanding (Animal Sheltering Magazine 29-30)

PAWS' Workplace Culture Agreement can be found in Appendix E.

Methods

In order to better understand the conflict perspectives and experiences of individuals working in the animal welfare field, a survey was developed. Recognizing that those working in the field often carry a heavy workload, it was determined that brevity and ease of access were essential in order to facilitate participation. Therefore, the survey was limited to ten questions and designed such that it could be completed in less than ten minutes. The survey was administered online through the Internet-based survey system, Survey Monkey.

Responses were gathered during the one week period between February 25 and March 4, 2009. An invitation to participate in the survey was distributed electronically to approximately 100 animal welfare contacts of the researcher. Survey respondents were asked to forward the invitation to their colleagues as well, especially colleagues from other organizations.

An introduction to the survey indicated that respondents should be current paid or volunteer workers for U.S. animal welfare organizations. Respondents were not compensated but could choose to receive a final copy of the research report and/or to be included in a drawing for a conflict resolution book. Confidentiality was assured, and personal information (e-mail address) was required only if the respondent wished to receive the final research report and/or to be entered into the drawing. The survey's introductory message is included as Appendix A. The full survey, including responses, is included as Appendix B.

Results were analyzed via Survey Monkey's response analysis interface. Crosstabs were applied to better understand correlations between certain survey responses. All complete crosstab reports are available upon request.

Results

Two hundred twenty seven individuals participated in the survey with 202 (n=89%) completing all survey questions.

Demographics

The majority of survey respondents (63.9%, n=145) have been working in animal welfare for nine or more years, with another 25.6% (n=58) reporting four to eight years and just 10.6% (n=24) having been involved for less than four years.

About half of respondents work in paid positions (52%, n=115) and the other half in volunteer positions (51.1%, n=115). (The total number is higher than 100% because some individuals hold both paid and volunteer roles.)

Most respondents work in smaller organizations with 30 or fewer employees (66.2%, n=149). This reflects the make-up of the animal welfare movement; it is common for communities to have only one to a few large organizations with dozens (and in some cases, hundreds) of small, private organizations, often operated exclusively by volunteers. 15.1% (n=34) work for organizations employing 31-75 employees, with just 4.4% (n=10) with organizations employing 76-150 employees. 14.2% (n=32) work for large organizations employing more than 150 employees. These are most likely national organizations.

Frequency of Types of Conflict

"The public attacks between organizations that purport to support the same goals is ridiculous and self-defeating. The time one spends in dealing with that rather than attending to one's missions drains one's resources and energy. I've never seen another field like this one that does that."—survey respondent

Survey participants were asked about the frequency of their experience or observation of several types of conflict, including conflict between two or more individual departments within their organization, conflict between their organization and other organizations, conflict observed

among other organizations or individuals within those organizations, and animal-related conflict between members of their community.

Intra-organizational conflict (conflict within the organization) is often cited with 47.2% (n=102) of respondents “frequently” or “sometimes” experiencing or observing this type of conflict. However, another 43% (n=93) say they only “occasionally” or “rarely or never” experience or observe this type of conflict.

Inter-organizational conflict (conflict between organizations) also appears to be common. 46.3% (n=99) of respondents reported that they “frequently” or “sometimes” experience or observe this type of conflict. However, 25.7% (n=55) say they “rarely or never” experience or observe this conflict.

Conflict observed among other organizations, or individuals within those organizations, was reported as most frequent, with 14% (n=20) reporting that they “almost always” observe this type of conflict, and 35.5% (n=76) reporting that they “frequently” observe this type of conflict.

Animal-related conflict between members of the community was also often observed. 57.6% (n=124) of respondents say they “frequently” or “sometimes” observe this type of conflict.

	almost always	frequently	sometimes	occasionally	rarely or never	N/A
Conflict between two or more individuals or departments within your organization (i.e. an employee involved in a conflict with a supervisor, or a conflict between the animal caregivers and the adoption staff).	4.6% (10)	22.2% (48)	25.0% (54)	24.5% (53)	18.5% (40)	5.1% (11)
Conflict between your organization and other organizations, companies, or policy-making groups (i.e. conflict between your organization and another animal welfare organization in the community).	6.5% (14)	20.1% (43)	26.2% (56)	20.6% (44)	25.7% (55)	0.9% (2)
Conflict you observe among other animal welfare organizations or individuals within those organizations (i.e. a feral cat organization in conflict with a bird preservation group).	14.0% (30)	35.5% (76)	23.8% (51)	12.6% (27)	12.1% (26)	1.9% (4)
Conflict between members of your community related to animals (i.e. a feral cat caregiver and property owner involved in a dispute).	9.8% (21)	30.2% (65)	27.4% (59)	18.6% (40)	11.6% (25)	2.3% (5)

Impact of Conflict on Organizations

“I strongly feel that conflict in our field has significant and detrimental impacts on the work we do. It is not uncommon for there to be an us-vs-them mentality and a lack of agreement on whether and how to move forward. I look forward to our field learning better how to work together for our common goals.” –survey respondent

Respondents were asked about the impact of conflict in their organization. A promising 50.5% (n=106) reported that their organization “has a healthy approach to conflict”. However,






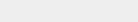
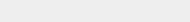
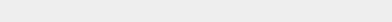
57.2% (n=119) “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement, “conflict has little or no impact on my organization”. About one third of respondents (34.8%, n=73) say that members of their organization “spend significant time ‘venting’ about conflicts”. However, half (50%, n=105) had a “neutral” response or “disagreed” with this statement.

Notably, respondents indicated that conflict has a significant impact on the ability of their organization to achieve goals. 41.4% (n=87) of respondents said that conflict *sometimes* interferes with their organization’s ability to achieve goals, with 20.5% (n=43) saying that conflict *often* interferes in this way.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My organization has a healthy approach to conflict.	21.4% (45)	50.5% (106)	18.1% (38)	7.6% (16)	2.4% (5)
Conflict has little or no impact on my organization.	6.3% (13)	18.3% (38)	18.3% (38)	47.1% (98)	10.1% (21)
Members of the organization spend significant time “venting” about conflicts.	9.5% (20)	34.8% (73)	22.4% (47)	27.6% (58)	5.7% (12)
Conflict somewhat interferes with our organization’s ability to achieve goals.	7.6% (16)	41.4% (87)	17.6% (37)	21.9% (46)	11.4% (24)
Conflict often interferes with our organization’s ability to achieve goals.	6.2% (13)	20.5% (43)	22.9% (48)	29.5% (62)	21.0% (44)

Impact of Conflict on Personal Satisfaction

Another set of questions asked respondents about how workplace conflict interferes with their personal satisfaction and emotional welfare. 58.3% (n=123) of respondents said that conflict *sometimes* interferes with their work satisfaction, with 14.7% (n=31) saying that conflict *often* interferes with their work satisfaction. Another 14.7% (n=31) said that they have withdrawn emotionally as a result of workplace conflict. A significant number of respondents have left a previous position (31.8%, n=67), or have seriously considered leaving their current position (22.7%, n=48) because of conflict. A significant two thirds of respondents (66.8%, n=141) have a friend or colleague who has left an animal welfare position because of conflict.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Conflict has had a positive impact on my experience.		21.8%	46
Conflict has not had a significant impact for me.		21.8%	46
Conflict sometimes interferes with my satisfaction with my work.		58.3%	123
Conflict often interferes with my satisfaction with my work.		14.7%	31
I have withdrawn emotionally from in my work or personal life because of workplace conflict.		14.7%	31
I have seriously considered leaving my organization because of conflict.		22.7%	48
I have left a position with a previous animal welfare organization because of conflict.		31.8%	67
I have a friend or colleague who has left a position in animal welfare because of conflict.		66.8%	141

Conflict Resolution Support Provided by Organization

Survey participants were asked about their organization's use of conflict resolution resources. About one fourth (25.8%, n=54) say that their organization offers formal training, support, or resources to facilitate conflict resolution.

	Yes	No	Not sure
Does your organization offer any formal training, support, or resources to facilitate conflict resolution (i.e. training in interpersonal communication, retaining a mediator on contract or staff)	25.8% (54)	67.5% (141)	6.7% (14)

Use of Conflict Resolution Resources

"Most hands-on rescuers don't have time for classes etc about conflict resolution. Many are so overwhelmed they get into conflicts because of frustration about not being able to help all animals needing help. For me, the most frustrating thing to deal with are the neglectful people who expect instant service from rescuers any time night or day when they have a problem."
 –survey respondent

When asked about their own use of conflict resolution resources, the most commonly used resources were websites (26.5%, n=54), non-university workshops or webinars (21.1%,

n=43), and books/journals (17.6%, n=36). Those rated as the least likely to be used in the future were university/college programs (48.3%, n=99), national programs, and local programs. The most likely to be used in the future was a (hypothetical) conflict resolution handbook for the animal welfare field; 23%, n=47, said they would be extremely likely to use this resource. The type of resource with the second highest number of “extremely likely to use” responses was web sites (6.4%, n=13).

	Have used/do use	Not likely to use	Might or might not use	Likely to use	Extremely likely to use
University or community college courses or degree or certificate programs	11.7% (24)	48.3% (99)	31.2% (64)	7.8% (16)	1.0% (2)
Other workshops or electronic training (i.e. weekend seminar, workshop at conference, webinar)	21.1% (43)	21.6% (44)	33.3% (68)	20.6% (42)	3.4% (7)
Web sites including resources, advice, guides, articles	26.5% (54)	14.2% (29)	24.0% (49)	28.9% (59)	6.4% (13)
Local conflict resolution or mediation associations, programs or consultants	6.9% (14)	41.2% (84)	36.3% (74)	12.3% (25)	3.4% (7)
National conflict resolution or mediation associations, programs or consultants	4.4% (9)	46.8% (96)	36.6% (75)	10.7% (22)	1.5% (3)
Books, journals	17.6% (36)	22.1% (45)	34.8% (71)	20.1% (41)	5.4% (11)
Conflict resolution handbook for the animal welfare field	5.4% (11)	12.7% (26)	29.4% (60)	29.4% (60)	23.0% (47)

Differences Correlated to Organization Size

There were significant differences in the conflict experiences of respondents working for the smallest organizations (30 or fewer employees) compared with the largest organizations (151 or more employees). Compared to respondents from small organizations, respondents from large organizations

- Experience or observe every type of conflict more frequently than respondents from small organizations.
- Report greater negative impact on their organizations and on their personal satisfaction as a result of conflict.
- Were more likely to say that their organization offers some type of training or resources to facilitate conflict resolution.
- Were more likely to have used almost every type of conflict resolution resource listed.

Though these differences are significant, they are not necessarily surprising. Larger organizations include more workers, more departments, and more programs, so there are more opportunities for intra-organizational conflict. Organizations with more than 151 employees are likely to be national organizations providing resources and support to smaller organizations and

engaging in greater amounts of public policy work. Therefore, larger organizations are much more likely to have greater exposure to a larger number of other organizations. Large organizations are generally better-resourced with a more complex infrastructure, so it is also understandable that they would be more likely to provide conflict resolution resources and support employee participation in workshops and conferences. Complete survey results from small organizations are included as Appendix C. Complete survey results from large organizations are included as Appendix D.

Differences in Paid versus Volunteer Workers

Paid workers were somewhat more likely to report negative impact on their personal satisfaction than volunteers. Several factors may explain this. Paid employees are more likely to spend more hours per week in their animal welfare positions, and demands on paid employees are likely to be higher because they are compensated for their work. Paid workers are also more bound by their relationship to their organization and to suffer greater personal consequences if they perform poorly or leave their position entirely; they may be more likely to stay in an unsatisfactory position than a volunteer. Paid workers who responded to this survey were also more likely to work for large organizations (24.1%, n=28, compared to 4.4%, n=5 of volunteer workers). As discussed above, workers at large organizations report higher levels of conflict and greater challenges resulting from that conflict.

	Paid employee	Volunteer
Conflict has had a positive impact on my experience.	21.8% (24)	21.7% (23)
Conflict has not had a significant impact for me.	18.2% (20)	25.5% (27)
Conflict sometimes interferes with my satisfaction with my work.	66.4% (73)	51.9% (55)
Conflict often interferes with my satisfaction with my work.	19.1% (21)	10.4% (11)
I have withdrawn emotionally from in my work or personal life because of workplace conflict.	18.2% (20)	11.3% (12)
I have seriously considered leaving my organization because of conflict.	27.3% (30)	17.9% (19)
I have left a position with a previous animal welfare organization because of conflict.	24.5% (27)	40.6% (43)
I have a friend or colleague who has left a position in animal welfare because of conflict.	68.2% (75)	67.0% (71)

Reasons for Not Using Conflict Resolution Resources

“Humane work (ie: euthanasia) is such a specialized field. Outside sources (which have been used by a previous humane employer) are often met with contempt, or at least the thought that ‘they don’t understand’.”—survey respondent

Respondents who said they were not likely to use one or more of the types of resources listed were asked to explain why. One hundred and one participants responded to this open-

ended question. The most common reasons cited were time (n=40), not enough of a priority/conflict not posing enough of a problem to justify (n=28), and cost (n=25).

Limitations

Time and financial constraints of this research project made reaching a truly representative pool of respondents impossible. However, several strategies were applied to increase the diversity of the respondents. The survey was promoted by e-mail and a large social networking web site to contacts of the author. Targeted contacts varied in a number of characteristics, including organization represented, role within the organization, type of organization, location and geographic scope of organization, education level, socio-economic level, longevity in the field, and relationship with the author. Further, respondents were asked to forward the survey to at least three of their own contacts, preferably from other organizations. Although survey responses cannot be assumed to be proportionately representative, the author believes that the respondent pool is large and diverse enough to provide a relatively accurate picture of the conflict experiences and perceptions of those working in this field.

During the survey response analysis, it was determined that the wording and/or format of several questions made the results of those questions ambiguous or meaningless. The results of these questions were not considered in the analysis of the survey results. Had these questions been affectively worded and formatted, they could have led to better understanding of several areas, particularly the availability and use of conflict resolution resources within animal welfare organizations.

A Call for Further Research

Further research in the area of conflict in the animal welfare field is merited. Other than the research presented in this report, no other research on this topic could be identified by the author. Several particular research questions coming out of this project suggest possible future areas of research:

- What are the differences between the organizations rated as having a “healthy approach to conflict” and their counterparts in terms of organizational culture, organizational structure, and conflict management practices? Do organizations emphasizing healthy organizational cultures (such as PAWS) experience less negative impact from conflict?
- What are the characteristics of conflict resolution resources which correlate to positive resolution of conflict (i.e. which resources successfully prepare employees and organizations for effective engagement in conflict)?
- What role can animal welfare organizations play in facilitating conflict resolution among other organizations and among members of the public?

Recommendations

“It would be absolutely wonderful if a workshop on conflict resolution and mediation specific to animal welfare groups would be presented as part of regular, ongoing workshops offered to the animal welfare industry.”—survey respondent

“[I] would love to see a conflict resolution book specific to animal welfare!”—survey respondent

“...I think that organizations like the Calgary Animal Control and Richmond SPCA that have trained their staff to be professional mediators are way ahead of the curve. They resolve conflicts with owners in danger of surrendering their pets to shelters. This significantly decreases the owner surrender rate because the person doing intake is coming from a non judgmental perspective.”—survey respondent

Conflict is prevalent in the animal welfare field, and the negative impact on organizations and individuals is experienced by the people within these organizations as significant. Conflict resolution resources are readily available to help individuals and organizations understand and respond to conflict in healthy, productive ways. However, individuals and organizations in the animal welfare field are not taking full advantage of these resources. Further research is recommended to better understand how conflict in the animal welfare field can be more effectively managed. In the mean time, results of this survey suggest several priorities for targeting conflict resolution support.

- Responses indicated a preference for a conflict resolution resource designed specifically for the animal welfare field. This, along with several comments submitted by respondents about barriers to their use of conflict resolution resources, suggests that animal welfare workers might be more responsive to resources created specifically for this field.
- Animal welfare workers experience conflict in which they are a part, but are also impacted by conflict between others within their organization and their community. Conflict resolution training should prepare animal welfare workers both for engaging in their own conflict and for facilitating conflict resolution between others, where appropriate.
- Workers in large animal welfare organizations (those with more than 150 employees) are exposed to more conflict and experience more negative impact of conflict than their counterparts in small organizations (those with 30 or fewer employees). These findings indicate that conflict resolution training and support should be a greater priority for these larger organizations. Engaging the services of a consultant skilled in conflict resolution, organizational cultures, and training and development may set these organizations up for greater success. Fortunately, because of their size and infrastructure, larger organizations may be better positioned to provide this type of support.
- Paid workers experience somewhat greater impact on their personal satisfaction than volunteers. This finding suggests that where resources are limited, training and support for paid workers should be prioritized over that for volunteers.

Conclusion

“... this field is filled with passion...and passion breeds conflict. Sometimes in the midst of all the conflict we need to remember that we are here for the animals. That tends to get lost sometimes in the egos and demands from various stakeholders.”—survey respondent

With lifesaving goals to achieve, there is great need and potential for animal welfare workers and organizations to turn destructive conflict into constructive conflict. The result will be not only the improvement of lives of countless animals, but of the very individuals and organizations dedicated to helping those animals.

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