RESEARCH ARTICLE

Digital Streaming Platforms and Ramadan Content Production: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Audience viewing patterns have undergone a radical shift in recent years, with digital platforms emerging as a major alternative to traditional media such as television. This transformation has been accompanied by an evolution in the nature of media reception, as viewers have become more interactive, selective, and in control of content in terms of both time and place. The media landscape has witnessed an unprecedented shift from the silver screen to the digital screen, where audiences are no longer just passive recipients but active participants in the process of reproducing and redistributing content.

Introduction:

Every year, once Ramadan draws near, television networks across the Arab world engage in a frenetic race to broadcast the season's most compelling dramas, comedies, and variety shows. Millions of viewers, long accustomed to reserving a large slice of their evenings for these special programmes, eagerly await the new line-ups. Over the past decade, however, viewing habits have undergone a profound shift. Traditional television is no longer the sole gateway to content; digital-streaming platforms have stormed onto the scene, seizing a broad—primarily youthful—audience.

The centre of gravity has moved from the living-room set to phones, tablets, and laptops. Freed from rigid broadcast grids, viewers now decide what to watch, when to watch it, and on which screen. Platforms such as Netflix, Shahid, and YouTube have normalised this watch-anywhere, watch-anytime culture. The trend has only intensified with the spread of smartphones, faster internet connections, and on-demand technologies.

In this new landscape, legacy broadcasters face an urgent challenge: reinvent or risk fading into irrelevance. The question is whether the digital shift can preserve overall quality and credibility while safeguarding the core public-service mission of Arab media—especially as streaming services continue to dictate fresh rhythms and styles of consumption.

First: Methodological Framework

1. Research Problem This paper sets out to explore the shift in viewing patterns ushered in by digital platforms and, more specifically, to understand how Ramadan viewing habits have evolved. Over the past decade, the media landscape has undergone a radical transformation. Audiences who once treated television as their primary source of information and entertainment now drift toward a digital sphere that delivers content quickly and in countless

forms.

This change did not happen overnight. It unfolded in stages shaped by wider internet access, the rapid spread of smartphones, and the rise of both streaming and social-media services. In the early years, traditional outlets still held sway. Television producers fixed the schedule, and viewers had little choice but to tune in at set times for news bulletins, drama series, or variety shows. Once the internet gained traction in the late 1990s and early 2000s, digital media began to crystallise. Online news sites emerged, granting the public real-time access to events without waiting for scheduled newscasts or the next morning's paper.

This gradual migration to on-demand viewing has created new complications for television networks, which long treated Ramadan as a golden window for high ratings and premium advertising revenue. Yet the digital turn brings risks as well as opportunities. Against that backdrop, the study poses one central question:

How have Algerian university students altered their viewing and reception of drama series during Ramadan with the advent of digital streaming platforms?

From this main question flow three subsidiary questions:

1. To what extent have streaming services influenced television ratings during Ramadan?

2. What new viewing practices have emerged on digital platforms?

3. How have timing and viewing habits among Algerian students shifted during Ramadan under the sway of streaming?

2. Research Objectives The study seeks to understand how university students, a highly visible group in the consumption and reception of digital content—especially drama series—actually engage with what they watch. To do so, it adopts a digital-reception approach that foregrounds three elements: the audience's interaction with material, the freedom each viewer exercises in selecting titles, and the personal meanings they attach to the content they consume.

3. Method and Sample Moving to the research design, the project adopts an exploratory stance that maps, analyses, and interprets emerging trends in streaming. A survey was carried out among students in the Faculty of Media and Communication at the University of Algiers 3. Using a purposive, non-probability approach, the sample included 100 respondents, all between 18 and 25 years old, who followed Algerian drama series on digital platforms during Ramadan 2025.

4. Data-Collection Tools The principal tool for gathering evidence was an online questionnaire that blended closed and open items. Questions covered platform preference (YouTube, Netflix, Shahid, and others), total viewing hours, content categories, and reception practices such as interaction, sharing, and either group or individual viewing. The instrument was disseminated in April 2025, directly after Ramadan, in order to register students' assessments of watching television programs on digital platforms during the holy month. Distribution relied on Facebook groups commonly used by students in the Faculty of Media and Communication.

5. Conceptual Framework

Digital streaming platforms Web-based services that enable users to search for information, data, or any form of digital content. Owing to their rapid and user-friendly access to vast stores of material, these platforms have become integral to digital transformation, reshaping how individuals interact with information and services and redefining patterns of consumption and communication (Toumi, 2022, p. 289).

Viewing patterns The behaviors and preferences that guide audiences when consuming visual content, whether through traditional television or digital platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, and TikTok. Key analytical dimensions include:

- **Time:** when people watch (morning, evening, weekends).

- **Duration:** the daily or weekly amount of time devoted to viewing.

- **Genre:** preferred content type (series, films, short videos, educational material, and so forth).

- **Platform:** the device or outlet used (television, smartphone, computer, tablet).

- **Mode:** individual or group viewing, continuous binge-watching or episodic engagement.

Digital reception approach An analytical perspective within media studies that focuses on audience behaviour and interaction in digital environments, particularly on the internet and social-media platforms. During Ramadan, for example, a series is measured not solely by conventional ratings but also by shares, trending status, and the volume

of engagement on YouTube and Facebook (Kredell, 2019, p. 81). The approach encompasses:

- analyzing viewing and interaction across digital platforms,

- mapping consumption according to time, genre, or device,

- recognizing audiences as active partners in meaning-making rather than passive recipients,

- accounting for recommendation algorithms and their role in shaping choices.

The digital audience An audience that does more than passively consume content. Digital users produce, evaluate, redistribute, and interact with material through comments, likes, shares, or counter-content (Asemah et al., 2023, p. 246).

Second: Theoretical Procedures of the Study

1. Digital reception in the context of media transformation

Recent scholarship on media has revisited the audience's role in light of expanding digital platforms. Under what is now called the *digital-reception approach,* the user is no longer portrayed as a passive receiver. Instead, each viewer acts, interacts, and even produces content, thereby reshaping the communicative circuit.

Specifically, the digital environment gives audiences broad autonomy: they select content, fix viewing times, and amplify reach through likes, shares, and comments. Algorithms add another layer by recommending material that reflects personal habits and preferences, converting the audience from a general mass into a digitally profiled set of individuals.

Furthermore, this model has produced a new category—the *audience-influencer.* Such participants move beyond mere consumption to shape digital public opinion through continual engagement and original productions, sometimes eclipsing traditional outlets in impact.

These shifts pull the audience inside the production loop. Meaning is no longer stamped at the studio gate; it is negotiated in timelines and comment threads. For anyone studying or working in media, that reality demands fresh ways of planning messages and measuring impact (Asemah et al., 2023, p. 250).

Distinctive features of the digital-reception approach (Ameur, n.d., p. 1)
- **Audience as participant:** users' comment, repost, and produce original material, actions that affect content visibility and ranking.

- **Personalization and interactivity:** algorithmic curation supplies tailored selections and lets viewers manage playback—skipping, rewinding, or re-watching at will.

- **Shift from collective to individual receiver:** whereas legacy media addressed broad, anonymous groups, digital services speak to profiled individuals whose data guide delivery.

- **Audience–production nexus:** audience feedback prompts producers to refine content in line with viewer expectations.

- **Emergence of the audience-influencer:** digital users can evolve into influencers who command their own followings and exert measurable impact.

   Taken together, these elements signal a qualitative leap in audience–content relations: members of the public now participate in constructing meaning, circulating messages, and even shaping production choices.

2. Impact of Digital Streaming Platforms on Ramadan Identity

As Ramadan draws near, both Arab and international streaming services begin to assemble an unusually broad mix of dramas, comedies, and talk programs, each platform hoping to tempt new subscribers by touting exclusive rights and superior production values.

At the same time, social-network sites—Facebook and Instagram chief among them—turn into lively exchanges where users trade tips on fasting routines, share Qurʾān recitations, and repost cultural snippets. The steady back-

and-forth of comments and reacts keeps alive, and often deepens, a month-long sense of communal solidarity.

Yet abundance carries a price. A constant stream of on-screen alerts can chip away at spiritual focus; watching clip after clip may pull attention from prayer or limit involvement in religious events.

Even so, the same platforms offer considerable promise when content is guided toward reflection and learning. Consequently, streaming and social media, when used with intention, become practical tools for circulating Ramadan culture and widening its positive reach across households and communities alike.

3. New Modes of Digital Viewing on Streaming Platforms

Viewing patterns on streaming services describe the ways users engage with digital content, and they differ from traditional television in timing, device, interactivity, and even motivation. During Ramadan, audience habits have shifted noticeably. Many viewers now prefer to watch programs on phones or tablets, taking advantage of ad-skip options and high-definition streams. Social networks have accelerated the shift: entire episodes climb "most-watched" charts, while eye-catching clips circulate on TikTok, Reels, Facebook, and Instagram, fostering direct exchanges between audiences and content creators.

These platforms have also opened unprecedented space for creativity and experimentation, delivering a wide variety of content tailored to individual interests. On the other hand, this openness allows unregulated material of inconsistent quality to spread, shaping public taste and local culture—especially during Ramadan, a season long associated with family-oriented viewing. As audiences scatter across multiple services, producers struggle to finance large-scale projects, and advertisers redirect budgets to outlets such as Shahid and YouTube, where targeting is sharper. Even so, that shift has not yet generated funding comparable to the sums once devoted to marquee television productions.

A combination of technical and social factors has moved Ramadan viewing from conventional broadcasting to digital platforms. The change can be summarized as follows:

1. **From collective, live viewing to individual, on-demand consumption** In the past, most households watched Ramadan programmes at the moment of broadcast, gathering after iftar around a single TV set. Now, younger viewers press play whenever they wish—often alone—on phones or laptops.

2. **From channel control to content control** Traditional television offers a fixed schedule. Streaming services, by contrast, let users choose the episode, the hour, and even the playback speed, whether pausing, rewinding, or skipping.

3. **From waiting to instant interaction** Viewers once waited for a repeat airing. Today they locate a missed episode immediately on YouTube or Google, watch it on the spot, then comment and share their reactions across social platforms.

4. **From national broadcasters to global platforms** Watching Ramadan content is no longer confined to local channels. Audiences now access Arab-language and international productions with equal ease.

5. **From ratings to likes and view counts** Success is measured primarily by YouTube views, shares, and trending positions, not solely by conventional television ratings.

Most-Watched Programs and Series during Ramadan 2025

Echorouk TV

- Drama **"Banat al-Mahrousa"**: 13 YouTube clips, each topping one million views.

- Miniseries **"Al-Rabaa"**: 10 clips surpassing one million views.

- Comedy short series **"Safia"**: 6 clips above the one-million mark.

- Game show **"Dima Rabehin"**: 4 clips over one million views.

- Tv show **"Hada Waketha"**: 2 clips exceeding one million views.

Samira TV

- Drama **"Dumouʿ Luliya"**: episode 1 reached 3.6 million views; episode 2, 2.3 million.

- Series **"Dar Lafchouch"**: episode 1 logged 2.4 million views.

- Talk show **"Kadatna Jazairiya"** attracted a wide audience.

Ennahar TV

- Thriller **"Al-Rihan"**: episode 1 amassed 4.2 million views.

These figures confirm that digital outlets—especially YouTube—are now the main destination for following

Ramadan productions in Algeria, with many clips crossing the one-million-view threshold. The 2025 lineup stood out for its range, mixing social drama, comedy, and light-entertainment formats that appealed to diverse audience segments.

5. Digital Streaming Platforms and the Advertising Market in Algeria

Algeria's digital advertising sector is expanding, propelled by growing internet and mobile-phone usage. With continued improvements in digital infrastructure, this growth is expected to persist, giving advertisers and companies significant opportunities. As consumers increasingly learn about products and services through online channels, firms have shifted attention to digital campaigns as an efficient way to reach target groups. Streaming services thus serve individuals and institutions alike for accessing information, products, and services. Search engines such as Google dominate, alongside social-media outlets and e-commerce portals.

- Internet users in Algeria numbered 36.2 million in January 2025, equating to a penetration rate of 76.9 %.

- Challenges remain—among them infrastructure gaps, varying digital literacy, and foreign competition entering the market online—yet forecasts point to continued expansion as technology advances and companies deepen their commitment to digital marketing.

Key platforms include:
1. **Google (Google Ads)** Google captured 98 % of Algerian search traffic in November 2024, making it a cornerstone for advertisers.

2. **Facebook** Facebook counted 32.6 million Algerian users in December 2024, or roughly 69.5 % of the population. Facebook Ads are especially effective for the 18–25 age group.

3. **YouTube** YouTube users totaled 22.8 million in early 2024, about 49.6 percent of the population; YouTube Ads remain a powerful tool for reaching a broad audience, particularly 18–25-year-olds.

Datareportal's 2025 report highlighted fresh digital milestones: mobile-phone subscriptions climbed to 54.8 million—three million more than the previous year—while internet users rose to 36.2 million, compared with 33.49 million in 2024. TikTok registered a jump from 17.42 million users in 2024 to 21.1 million in 2025; Instagram reached 12 million users; and YouTube edged down slightly to 21.1 million users after peaking at 22.8 million last year (Agdal, 2025).

III. Presentation and Analysis of the Field-Study Findings

A. Student Orientations by Gender

Percentage	Frequency	Gender
24 %	24	Male
76 %	76	Female
100 %	100	Total

The table presents the gender distribution of the sample. Female respondents account for 76%, whereas males represent 24%. This imbalance mirrors the broader predominance of women in Algerian universities across academic disciplines and levels. Retaining the gender variable is essential, because the study investigates Algerian students' Ramadan television-viewing practices on digital streaming platforms. A gender breakdown therefore allows a systematic comparison of male and female viewing orientations, given the distinctive nature of Ramadan programming.

B. Viewing Rates of Algerian Students for Ramadan Television on Digital Streaming Platforms

Viewing habits among Algerian students have shifted markedly during Ramadan. Digital platforms and search engines, most notably YouTube and Google, now constitute the chief gateways for discovering and following Ramadan television content. Consequently, young viewers no longer feel bound to linear broadcast schedules; rather, they gravitate toward on-demand viewing and exploit the temporal flexibility afforded by contemporary streaming technologies.

Within this context, the study indicates that searches for drama series, hidden-camera programs, and religious as well as comedic shows point to both diversified interests and an ongoing reconfiguration of media-consumption patterns. Equally significant, students depend heavily on recommendations circulating across social-network sites and on links attached to widely shared short-form clips (Reels) when deciding what deserves their attention. These practices underscore the interactive role digital platforms play in steering collective taste.

Survey data further reveal a viewing peak immediately after iftar; many students dedicate that period to preferred

content, while others postpone viewing to late-night Ramadan gatherings. Taken together, these changes in viewing routines reflect rising technological literacy among Algerian youth and, at the same time, compel traditional broadcasters to recalibrate programming and distribution strategies so they remain aligned with emergent consumption behaviors.

Viewing Percentages During Ramadan
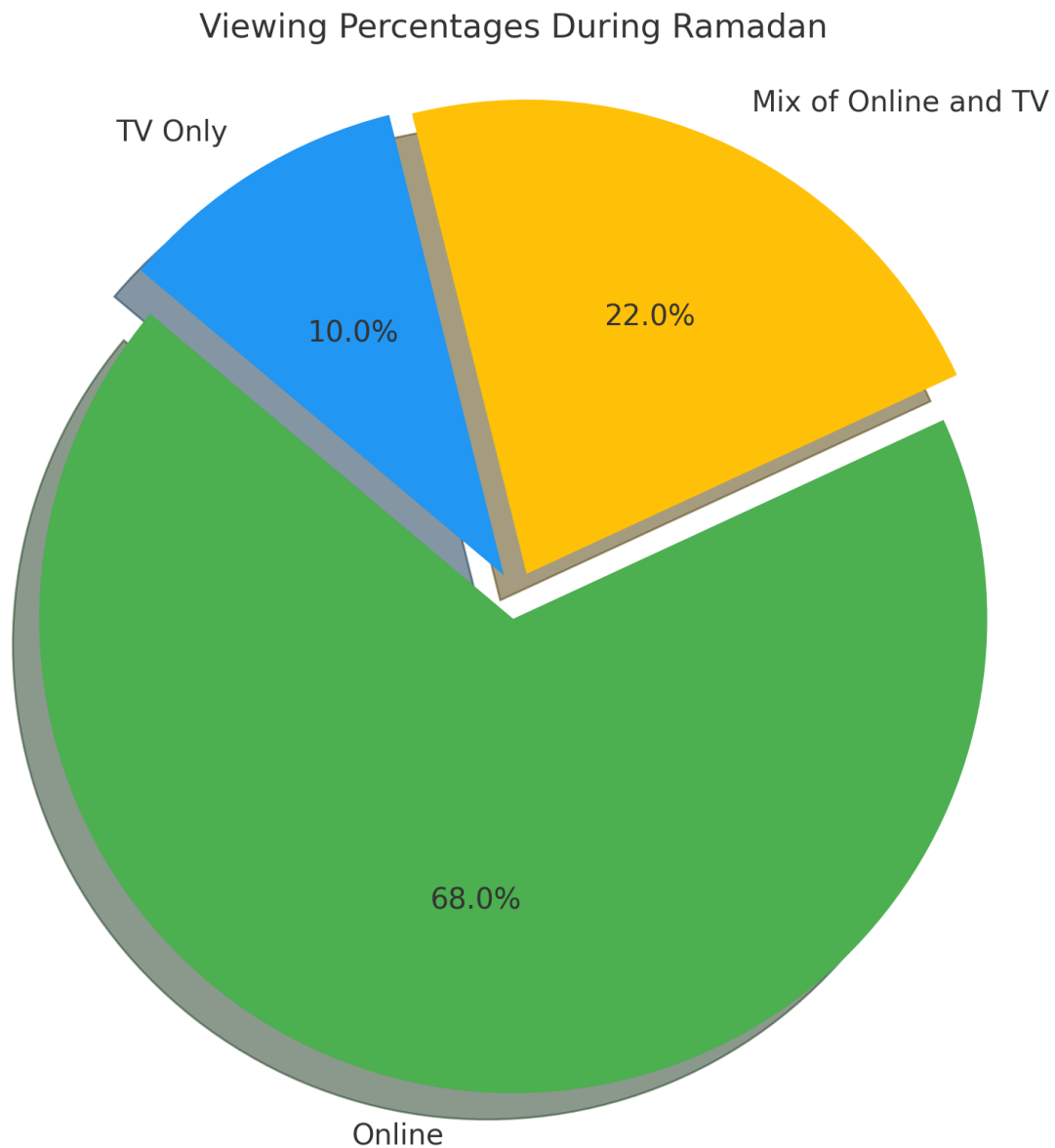
According to the same online questionnaire, which canvassed 100 Algerian students aged eighteen to twenty-five, 68% watch Ramadan programs exclusively online. A further 22% combine conventional television with digital platforms, whereas only 10% rely solely on broadcast channels.

Preferred Content Type
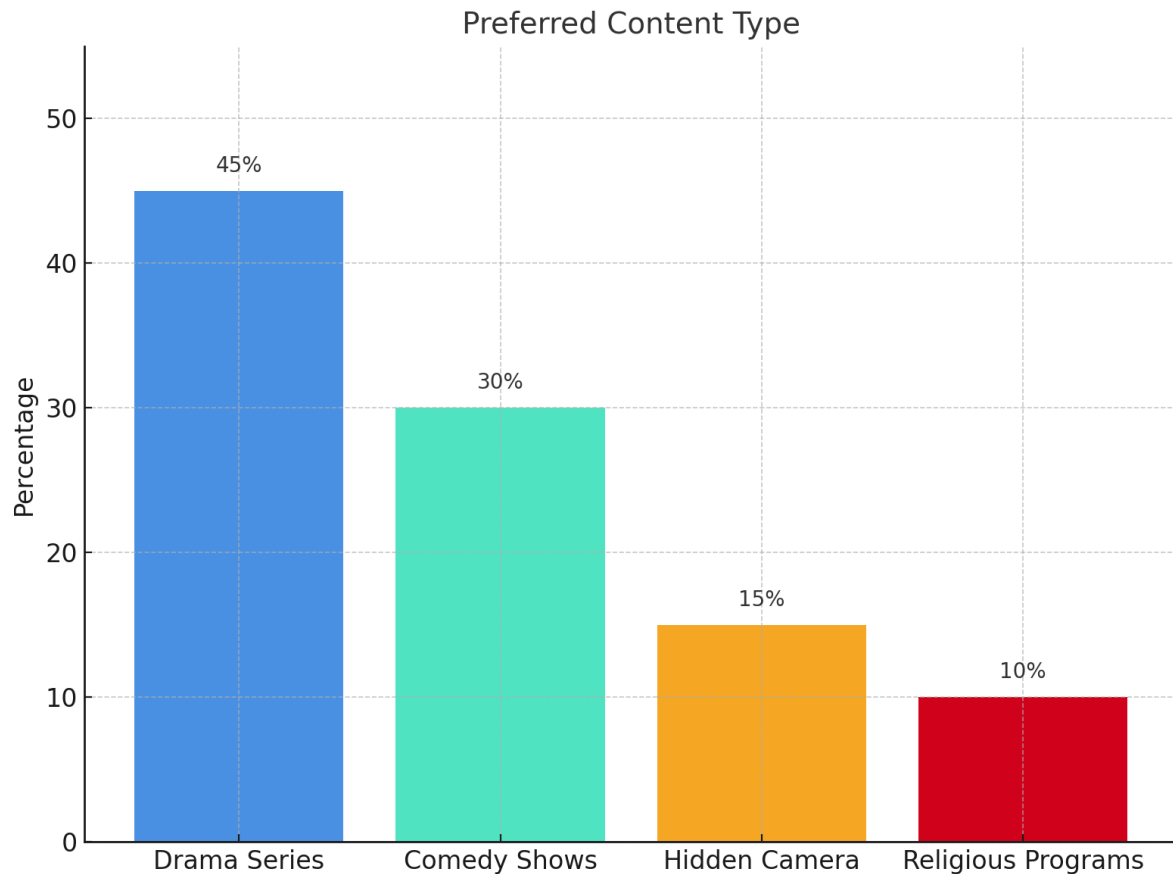
Regarding genre preferences, drama series lead at 45%. Comedy follows at 30%, pranks account for 15%, and religious programs represent the remaining 10%. Collectively, these figures underscore the students' growing digital awareness and, at the same time, oblige conventional broadcasters to reconsider both their distribution models and scheduling practices in order to accommodate new consumption patterns.

C. Peak Viewing Times for Ramadan Programs in Algeria:

Time Slot	Period Description	Approximate Viewing Share	Notes
12:00 – 15:00	Low-intensity rest period	10 %	Work hours
16:00 – 18:00	Moderate pre-iftar window	20 %	Entertainment shows before iftar
19:00 – 21:00	Very high, first peak	45 %	Primary viewing apex immediately after iftar
22:00 – 00:00	High post-tarawih slot	30 %	Follow-up series and talk shows
01:00 – 03:00	Moderate suhur period	—	Individual late-night viewing

The table indicates that the primary viewing peak occurs directly after iftar, when audience concentration reaches its highest level.

D. Analysis through the Digital Reception Approach

The findings demonstrate that university students do not consume content randomly. They select material aligned with their interests, participate in meaning-making, and interact within their digital environment. Consequently, reception has shifted from a linear, one-way process to a dialogic, multi-directional exchange.

Research Findings

1. A clear majority prefers streaming Ramadan series and programs online rather than waiting for scheduled television broadcasts, confirming the ascendancy of digital platforms.

2. Time control: respondents value on-demand viewing, indicating an appreciation of temporal flexibility.

3. Interaction and sharing: most students comment on or repost content across social networks.

4. Multiple devices: 75% use smartphones as their primary viewing tool, underscoring the shift toward mobile and individual consumption.

5. Content activation: each student watches what they want at a personally convenient time and has become accustomed to concise formats. This development has reduced the social, collective viewing experience once fostered by televised Ramadan series, which previously played a notable communal role.

Conclusion

This shift in viewing patterns reveals, first and foremost, a deep alteration in digital culture and audience behavior. In particular, the university cohort stands as a genuinely digital generation; it is reshaping the audience–content bond and, in doing so, offering a fresh angle on the public's growing influence within the media landscape. Consequently, producers and other content creators must attune their strategies to this model of active reception. The sector will not revert to its earlier form; rather, it is moving toward an environment that is fully digital—one in which personal experience, on-demand flexibility, and direct exchanges between viewers and creators take center stage.

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