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# **Recent Trends, Major Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Banking in Indian Context**

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## ABSTRACT:

By enabling clients to carry out their daily financial activities at their convenience, digital banking has opened the door to a new range of banking services. In developing nations like India, digital banking systems are expanding quickly as a result of the widespread use of mobile phones and the internet. The banking transaction landscape has quickly evolved from traditional to convenience banking, which presents a huge opportunity to transition to a cashless and cash-lite society. With the goal of promoting "Digital India," the Indian government has made a number of efforts to improve and strengthen the digital banking system. The GoI wants to create a "digitally empowered" economy that is "Faceless, Paperless, and Cashless" as part of the plan. The banking sector has gone through several major stages of digital transformation during the past few decades. The purpose of this change is to make banking more affordable, efficient, and accessible for all of the nation's residents. This transition was aided by increased competition among public sector, private sector, and international banks. In an economy's financial system, the banking sector is extremely important. It makes it easier to build and maintain a reliable payment system that satisfies the needs of enterprises, the government, and the general public. It also functions as a method of delivering credit that people who require money can use. The center of an economy is generally represented by the banking sector. Consequently, the development of the banking system depends on its strength and health. Currently, the Indian banking industry is going through an IT revolution and is moving toward digitization. The way that banks and other financial institutions operate has been completely altered by the internet and IT. In the late 1980s, information technology was introduced to the Indian banking industry. However, the IT revolution is currently in a more intensive and significant phase, which may have the ability to alter not only the banking environment but also the general composition and course of the economy. Both customers and banks have benefited from the modernization of the banking industry following the arrival of IT and the internet. The banking industry has expanded to include transactions outside of the branches as well, including via mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. The term "Digital Banking" may be an adequate description of the current stage of banking. In addition to the variety of digital banking channels and their availability at the right time and place for the customer, as well as their advantages of comfort and safety, several conclusions were drawn, the most crucial of which is that digital banking services are an important way to lower costs for the bank and the customer together, helping to lessen customer concerns and increase their faith and beliefs in the bank. The statistical research also revealed a statistically significant positive association between the use of digital banking services and client trust. The development of a safe digital ecosystem to offer clients adaptable solutions when necessary, the bank's interest in marketing the goods and services it offers, and raising customer awareness of banking were the most crucial recommendations.

Keywords: Digital banking, Digital India, banking environment, banking sector, opportunities, trends, challenges

## Introduction:

The world in which we currently reside is always in motion. It is evolving every day, which compels us to alter our lifestyles. Every now and then, a new breakthrough, invention, or piece of technology makes its way into our lives and transforms how we live. Our lives now revolve on technology, which has a significant impact on every aspect of them. We are depending more and more on technology for our daily requirements as time goes on. Internet is without a doubt the one technology that, in the past 50 years or more, has had the most profound impact on society. Nearly all inventions and improvements have been centered on the use of the internet since its introduction and subsequent broad acceptance and use. The world of electronic communications has undergone a complete change thanks to the internet. It serves as a platform for global broadcasting, a method of information transmission, and a way for people to collaborate and communicate using their computers regardless of where they are physically located. One of the best examples of the advantages of continued investment and dedication to information infrastructure research and development is the internet. The way business is conducted has been completely transformed by the internet and IT. The way that customers view the company has also altered. They anticipate that businesses will not only deliver high-quality goods and services, but also do so quickly. Businesses must take proactive measures and consistently improve in order to fulfill the always rising customer expectations, increase market rivalry, and thrive in a world of technological breakthroughs. The financial sector plays a very important part in a country's economic development. And the banking industry can be viewed as an economy's support system. It makes it easier to build and maintain a reliable payment system that satisfies the needs of enterprises, the government, and the general public. For the economy to grow, the banking system must be robust and stable. Currently, the Indian banking ind

thanks to the internet. In the late 1980s, information technology was introduced to the Indian banking industry. The IT revolution is currently in a more intense and significant phase, which might potentially alter not only the entire banking industry but also the entire economy. Both customers and banks have benefited from the modernization of the banking industry following the arrival of IT and the internet. Banking transactions increasingly take place on mobile devices like smart phones and tablets as well as in brick and mortar locations. The term "Digital Banking" may be an adequate description of the current stage of banking.

The last few years have seen a dramatic change in the banking scene due to digital banking or the digitalization of a bank. Initially restricted to financial channels, digital technologies now cover the whole banking spectrum. Therefore, digital banking supplied through cutting-edge technologies is the way forward for all participants in the financial services business, whether it be back-end operations or customer-facing channels. India is seeing a digital age boom at an astronomical rate. The banking industry now has a wealth of options thanks to our transition into the digital age. The transition from traditional to digital banking has brought about significant changes in the way of life for Indian inhabitants. These new technology and the recent changes in Indian banking and finance are expected to reshape the commercial and financial sectors. Over the past few decades, the banking industry has gone through several distinct stages of digital change. The first change was a shift to computerized operations, which produced an efficient and automation-driven model and made banking more transactional and technology. With programs like "Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana" and "Digital India," which aspires to give every citizen a bank account and turn India into a digitally empowered nation, the GoI is shown tremendous support. Government regulators, nationalized banks, and financial institutions have been under pressure to embrace cutting-edge technology as a result of competition from international and private sector banks in order to stay competitive.

## **Evolution of Digital Banking Services:**

In the past few decades, the banking industry has gone through three major stages of digital change. The initial revolution involved switching from paper-based to electronic processes, which created an efficient and automation-driven model that made banking more transactional and technologically focused. Through the use of ATMs, call centers, and telephone banking, banks began concentrating on enhancing client convenience. A number of SMAC technologies (Social, Mobile, Analytics, and Cloud) that are currently clearly influencing banking services and products served as the gasoline for the subsequent wave. Through the use of these technologies, financial institutions were able to transform from efficient enablers to more specialized providers of banking services. Newer technologies including artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, block chain, API banking, and the internet of things are propelling the current wave of digital transformation and have the potential to significantly change the financial sector. When these technologies are combined, they will be able to offer considerably higher degrees of client personalization and an improved customer experience, transform banking processes, and fundamentally alter how the banking business functions today.

## **Digital Banking:**

E-banking, commonly referred to as online banking, virtual banking, or internet banking, is a concept we are all familiar with. It is a technology that makes it possible to do banking operations including money transfers, loan and EMI payments, cash deposits and withdrawals virtually through the internet without having to physically visit a bank office. A user can take advantage of a variety of services under e-banking, including Internet banking, SMS banking, ATMs, mobile banking, e-cheques, and debit/credit cards. Another phrase that is frequently used as a synonym for e-banking is "digital banking." Both terms are used equally frequently. However, properly speaking, digital banking entails little to no use of paper money. The use of paper money is still prevalent, nevertheless. ATMs are a crucial component of the banking system today since they enable consumers to withdraw cash as needed. In a digital economy, there are hardly any cash transactions. Cash is typically thought of as something that is free. However, using cash has a big price tag. The expense of currency is discussed in a research piece by Harvard Business Review titled "The countries that would benefit most from cashless world." The cost of cash includes costs to the consumer (such as ATM fees, money changer commissions, etc., as well as the implicit cost of time spent collecting cash), costs to businesses (for handling cash, ensuring its security, and transportation to safe locations), costs to banks and other institutions (for moving and storing cash, operating and maintaining ATMs), and costs to the government (from lost tax revenues and printing costs). In a comparison of cash costs worldwide, India ranks among the highest. Imagine a banking system in which the use of cash is extremely limited. Both the banking industry and the clients will benefit from the drastic cost reduction that will emerge from this.

#### The evolution of banking



## Figure 1 showing Digital transformation in banking sector

## **Going Digital - Indian Banking Sector:**

Prior to now, banking data was recorded and retrieved manually. These days, electronic banking is used by all banks. Rather from being an exception, it is now the norm. The roles of banks in conventional banking were mostly restricted to receiving deposits and disbursing loans and advances. The banking and financial industry has advanced with the introduction of information technology, and we are now seeing innovation in product design and delivery to meet client expectations. In order to enhance customer service, bookkeeping, and MIS reporting, the Indian banking sector began to feel the need for computerization in the late 1980s. In 1988, the Reserve Bank of India established a Committee on Computerization in Banks, under the direction of Dr. C. Rangarajan. The committee's report served as the most thorough road map for bank automation, paving the path for bank computerization. The implementation of new economic policies in 1991 was the game-changer. The recommendations of the Committee on Financial System, led by former Governor of the RBI M. Narasimham, were carried out in the same year. One of the Committee's suggestions was to let international and private players enter the Indian baking market. The whole banking industry was altered by these actors. Through the use of automated teller machines (ATMs), credit cards, and internet banking, they began providing consumers with technology-based world-class quality services. It was the start of an era where strict IT use in banking would become the standard. Banks started using IT when standalone PCs were introduced, and subsequently gradually shifted to LAN connectivity. As time went on, technology advanced even more, and banks began using the Core Banking platform. As a result, branch banking gave way to bank banking, changing the way that banking was conducted. Banking anytime and everywhere is now more convenient for customers thanks to Core Banking Solutions (CBS), which the banks were able to implement. A variety of CBS platforms, such as FINACLE by Infosys, BANCS by TCS, and FLEXCUBE by I-flex, began to gain prominence. As was already established, the economy's opening up in 1991 significantly aided the banking industry's transition to computers. The public sector banks, which had been operating without incident up until this point, were suddenly met with a hurricane of competition from the newcomers, or private sector and foreign institutions. These new competitors began using cutting-edge technology to deliver smoother, quicker services, which began luring clients away from public sector banks, leaving them behind. In order to be competitive and relevant in the market, they had no choice but to improve themselves in order to offset the actions of private and foreign banks. There is no doubt that the customers were the true winners from the banks' new strategy since they received a greater selection of services that were delivered at a faster rate than before through creative channels. The adoption of newer technologies, however, also benefited banks themselves. Ever-rising operating costs are a significant concern for the banking industry, which was made worse by increased competition as a result of the admission of private and international banks. E-banking has significantly reduced costs while also assisting banks in generating income through a variety of channels. According to estimates, the cost of a bank transaction while using a branch is between Rs. 70 and Rs. 75, compared to roughly Rs. 15 to Rs. 16 when using an ATM, Rs. 2 or less when using internet banks, and Rs. 1 or less when using mobile banking. The following are the trends and development in the Indian banking technology sector: The above illustration paints a very clear picture. After 2011, mobile phones have become the key engine powering the digital banking revolution. The combination of rising smart phone sales, the launch of 4G high-speed internet services, and the large number of young tech-savvy consumers give a clear indicator of the direction the digital banking trend is going. According to a report by the US-based market research company e-Marketer, there were 291.6 million smart phone users in India as of the end of 2017, and that number is projected to rise to 337 million by the end of 2018 and to 500 million by the end of 2020. These figures alone indicate that there is a lot of room for growth for all digital operators, including banks and FLs.

#### **Objectives of the present study:**

- 1. To highlight the recent trends in digital banking services in India
- 2. To evaluate the benefits and opportunities of digital banking system in India
- 3. To identify the hurdles and challenges of digital banking in India

## **Research Methodology:**

The study is of a descriptive kind. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin, annual reports, and numerous reference books on E-Banking, Digital banking, Ecommerce, M-Commerce, information technology, marketing, banking, finance, commerce, and management were the sources of the secondary data used for the study. For the aforementioned research study, secondary data was also gathered from numerous websites and from national and international research journals connected to business, management, marketing, and finance.

## **Review of Literature:**

New technological developments had intensified market competition for banks' service suppliers. However, the altered market realities necessitate a greater comprehension of consumer wants (Beckett, Hewer and Howcroft, 2000). The difficulty with internet banking generally is the delivery service's quality, which includes both delivery speed (i.e., the minimal amount of time needed to place an order in advance) and delivery reliability (i.e., on-time delivery of goods and services) (Furst et al., 2000). The banking business is changing, and Internet banking is having a significant impact on banking relationships. Utilizing the Internet to supply financial services and products is known as internet banking. The internet banking industry is now dealing

with a number of significant problems. The first, and possibly most crucial, issue is security (Ziqi and Michael, 2003). Due to frustration and hassle, many customers have abandoned purchases because there are few options for online payments. Additionally, internet banking has the potential to open up new doors for fraud and online crime. Additionally, educating customers about security concerns can help to safeguard consumers and reduce the danger to the banks' reputation. Finally, it's critical to address the issue of customers who are inexperienced with the internet, which is prevalent among senior persons (Yang et al., 2007).

## **Recent Trends in Digital Banking Services in India:**

#### Digitization:

As digital technology advanced quickly, it was important for India's banking and financial services to stay up with the times and provide fresh digital products for the market's tech-savvy clients. Aside from the banking sector, other significant businesses undergoing the big digital change include insurance, healthcare, retail, trade, and commerce. The banking sector must jump on the digital bandwagon in order to remain competitive. With multiple features like IMPS (Immediate Payment Service), RTGS (Real Time Gross Settlement), NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer), Online Banking, and Tele-banking, modern advancements in digital banking systems make it easier, simpler, paperless, signature-less, and branch-less. Digitization has made "anywhere and anytime banking" convenient. It has decreased costs, increased revenue generation, and decreased human error.

### Mobile banking:

One of the key trends in the digital banking sector is mobile banking. Using a smartphone to perform several banking functions like checking account balances, sending money, and paying bills without having to go to the branch. The traditional banking systems have been replaced by this tendency. Mobile banking is anticipated to improve in efficiency and convenience over the next few years to meet customer demand. Future predictions for mobile banking point to the adoption of IoT (Internet of Things) and voice-enabled payment services as future realities. Smart TVs, smart vehicles, smart houses, and smart everything all have voice-enabled services.

#### **United Payments Interface (UPI):**

One of the quickest and most secure payment gateways is called the Unified Payments Interface, or UPI, and it has completely altered how payments are made. A real-time interbank transaction is provided at anytime and anyplace with the use of a mobile phone. In India, the UPI payment system is seen as the retail banking industry's future. The Reserve Bank of India oversees UPI, which was created by the National Payments Corporation of India. In 2016, this ground-breaking transactions system was introduced. Unlike other internet banking systems, this one makes money transfers possible every day of the year, 24 hours a day. About 50 banks and more than 40 apps support the UPI transaction mechanism. This system was crucial in the post-demonetization India. UPI is anticipated to soon assist banking in becoming more "open."

#### **Block chain:**

In the world of technology, blockchain is the newest buzzword. It is claimed to be the foundational element of cryptocurrencies and the banking and financial services technology of the future. It operates on the concepts of computer science, data structures, and cryptography. Blockchain employs technology to build blocks in order to execute, verify, and record transactions without the capacity to change them. India Chain, the largest Blockchain network in the country being built by Niti Aayog, is anticipated to alter numerous industries, reduce the likelihood of fraud, increase transparency, speed up the transaction process, require less human participation, and create an impenetrable database. The deployment of the India Chain network is anticipated to have an impact on a number of elements of the banking and financial sector, including payments, clearance and settlement systems, stock exchanges and share markets, trade financing, and loans.

## Chatbots:

One of the newest developments in the Indian banking industry is chatbots. Several private and government-run banks in India have begun to use chatbots or artificial intelligence robots to help with customer care services. The application of this technology is now in its infancy, but it is anticipated to expand soon. To increase client engagement and provide more individualized solutions, banks and other financial organizations are anticipated to use more chatbots with better levels of intelligence. The use of technology will lessen the possibility of human error and provide clients with correct solutions. Additionally, it may gather feedback and surveys, spot fraudulent activity, and aid in financial decisions.

## **Fintech Companies:**

Companies in the financial technology sector set the technological direction for the banking and industrial sectors. In India, the fintech industry has grown to be a significant component of the financial services industry. Huge investments have been made in these businesses over the last few decades, and the industry has grown to be worth many billions of dollars worldwide. Fintech businesses and fintech applications have altered how financial services are delivered to customers. Paytm, PhonePe, Policy Bazaar, MobiKwik, Shubh Loans, Lending Kart, PayU, Kissht, and Faircent are a few

notable names that have had an influence. Fintech businesses have significantly improved financial services, the client experience, and cost. The Indian fintech sector may reach 2.4 billion dollars by 2020, according to a report by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), thus things will likely keep getting better.

## **Digital-Only Banks:**

We cannot ignore recent trend in the Indian financial system. Digital-only banks This is a new breed of banking institutions that have emerged to create paperless and branch-less banking systems. These banks provide banking facilities only through various internet platforms that can be accessed on mobile phones, computers, and tablets. It provides most of the basic services to the customers in the most simplified manner and gives access to real-time data at any time. The growing popularity of these Digital-only banks is said to be a real threat to traditional banks. ICICI Pockets is India's first digital only bank. Though virtually, these banks are attractive to the customers because they provide high-speed banking services at very transaction fees. They alleviate the need of visiting the bank and standing in a queue, in today's fast lane life these banks suit the customer needs in best possible manner.

## **Cloud Banking:**

Cloud Banking has taken the banking world by storm. It seems the technology will soon find its place in the banking and financial services sector in India. Cloud computing will organize and improve banking and financial activities. Use of cloud-based technology means improved data security, improved flexibility and scalability, increased efficiency, faster services, solution, easier integration of newer technologies and applications. In addition, the banks will not have to invest in expensive software and hardware as updating the information is easier on cloud-based banking models.

## Wearable Technology:

As wristwatch technology advances, the banking and financial services industry likewise aspires to create wearables that give retail banking consumers more control and convenient access to their accounts. Wearable technology has fundamentally altered how we go about our daily lives. As a result, this technology is anticipated to set the pattern in future retail banking by enabling customers to access key banking services with only a click on a wearable device's user-friendly interface.

## **Biometrics:**

A biometric authentication system is fundamentally changing the national identification policies for security concerns, and the impact is anticipated to be significant. One of the many other areas that may be impacted is banking and financial services. Biometric authentication is anticipated to construct a highly-secure database, guarding it from leaks and hacker attempts, using a mix of encryption technologies and OTPs. Financial institutions in India are investigating the possibilities of this formidable technology to ensure advanced security to consumers' accounts and capital.

## Benefits and Opportunities of Digital Banking System in India:

## Internet Penetration:

Following the debut of Reliance Jio, which began with incredible data discounts, the majority of telecom carriers in India have been providing reasonable data tariff packages. India's internet users are anticipated to reach 62.7 crore in 2019, with strong internet expansion in rural regions being the primary driver. India's growing internet population presents a plethora of prospects for the digital banking sector. They should take advantage of this chance by providing cutting-edge banking services at affordable prices in order to encourage more internet users to embrace digital banking services.

## Usage of Smart phone:

For humans, smartphones have essentially replaced their organs. It has recently evolved into one of the most important aspects of our daily lives. A collaborative research by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India and PwC projects that by 2022, there will be 85.9 crore smartphone users in India, an increase of 84%. Customers can manage their bank accounts at their fingertips with the help of banker's mobile applications. The use of mobile banking is significantly expanding in both volume and value. In addition to having websites, the majority of Indian banks have created sophisticated mobile applications to make transactions simple and quick.

## Initiatives of Government:

Government of India initiated programs like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Digital India, which contributed to the development of the economy through financial inclusion. The government of India has a vision to turn India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. As part of attempts to increase digital transactions, the government has requested that all departments allow electronic payment options, such as Bhim-UPI QR codes, at their cash counters. Nearly all government payments, including taxes, tariffs, and even fines, are now being collected digitally.

#### Digital Banking Solutions:

The GoI and RBI are promoting the establishment of cutting-edge digital banking start-ups. Fintech businesses open the door for a financially astute India with international acclaim. According to NASSCOM, the Indian fintech market could reach 240 crores by 2020, which can only make things better. The fintech ecosystem will need to develop and focus on certain industries in order to build on the current momentum and reach new heights. With intelligent automation, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, that looks most possible and promising.

#### Untapped Rural Market:

Due to the fact that India is the second most populated country in the world and that 34 of its citizens reside in rural areas, it is essential to focus efforts on both urban and rural areas. In an effort to usher the entire nation into the Digital Era, the Indian government wants to digitize banking in rural areas. It may be possible to reduce cash-based crimes in rural areas by using more cashless transactions (e.g. bribes, robbery). Rural communities can become safer and have greater financial freedom thanks to digital banking.

## Challenges and Hurdles of Digital Banking System in India:

#### Lack of Digital Literacy:

The digital shift presents challenges for senior and uneducated persons. In India, the literacy rate is just moderate, and there are very few people who are digitally literate. Because they lack the information and are worried about making mistakes that could result in significant financial loss, they are hesitant to engage in digital transactions. There cannot be a digital transition from a cash-based to a cashless economy without sufficient understanding.

## Cash Dependent Economy:

More over half of the population of India is unbanked, disorganized, and lives in poverty. Because they feel more comfortable and secure managing cash transactions, the majority of Indians rely on cash-based transactions. Due to a lack of modern technology and illiteracy, the rural Indian population does not have a strong understanding of digital financial transactions.

## Privacy risk:

One of the main barriers preventing consumers from choosing digital banking services is the risk of releasing private information and worry about identity theft. The majority of users of internet banking services think that doing so makes them more susceptible to identity theft. According to the report, customers are concerned about their privacy and believe that banks may violate it by using their data for marketing and other unrelated purposes without getting their permission.

#### Stiff Competition:

Foreign and new private sector banks compete with the nationalized and commercial banks. Competition in the banking industry presents the banks with a number of issues, including product positioning, creative ideas and channels, new market trends, cross-selling, and managing assets and containing risk at the management and organizational levels. By turning manual labor into machine labor, or decreasing manual power and maximizing machine power, banks are limiting their administrative portfolio. The use of skilled and specialized human resources is required, and appointment of result-oriented, focused staff is planned.

#### Managing Technology:

To reach and maintain high service and efficiency standards while being cost-effective and providing a sustainable return to shareholders, it is imperative to develop or acquire the appropriate technology, deploy it properly, and then use it to the fullest extent possible. Early technology adopters make significant competitive advancements therefore; one of the biggest challenges facing the Indian banking industry is managing technology.

#### Cyber Crime:

The main problem in the field of digital banking is cyber security. The majority of financial and banking applications are vulnerable to cybercrime or cyberattacks. The obvious explanation is that making money is the ultimate goal. Hackers have a reputation for using creative methods to steal money from thousands of accounts over an extended period of time, whether it be in enormous sums or very little quantities. The risk of client data being compromised always exists, even if there is no immediate financial risk. The majority of internet users in India aren't using internet banking, according to IAMAI Reports, due to security issues.

### **Regulation and Legalities:**

Banks and their customers can transact business from any location thanks to digital banking services. As a result, banks' potential clientele is significantly increased. However, the worldwide approach to banking that internet banking allows makes it very challenging for regulatory authorities to enact and enforce regulations. Additionally, laws vary from country to country, and banks are not always compliant with financial regulations in every country where they conduct business. Lack of efficiency puts banks and their clients at risk of breaking the law and facing legal action.

#### Sustainability:

Only through synergy can an organization become a leader and achieve sustainability. Organizational value won't soar to success and stay there until users recognize the worth of the good or service. The impact of social media is sometimes underappreciated in the context of digital banking. Continuously positive ratings advance the organization to a higher rank, yet consistently negative reviews have the power to topple entire empires.

## **Conclusion:**

The Indian banking industry has seen a thorough transformation in recent years. The current environment of digital banking presents both many opportunities and many obstacles for the banks. Convenience, efficiency, and transparency are the primary goals driving the technology-enhanced integration of financial services. Most people are now familiar with technology to the point that it influences their lifestyle. The face of Indian banking has been dramatically transformed by numerous financial technologies like UPI. Internet Banking, Mobile Banking, Mobile Wallet, QR Code, etc. By implementing more cutting-edge solutions and technological security measures, the opportunities may be taken advantage of effectively, and the obstacles can be readily counterbalanced. There is no denying that digital banking has greatly improved consumer experience and the way that banking services are provided. To make digital banking widespread, the Indian banking industry will need to overcome a number of obstacles. To make the digital dream a reality, internet access and the related digital infrastructure must be guaranteed. In addition to hazards associated to confidential client information and internet fraud, there is also the potential of cyber threats, which might seriously impair banking services. It will be interesting to see how the banking industry handles these difficulties. Here, the government and other parties involved must play a significant role. The speed and course of our country's digital journey will be determined by that.

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