August is here and that means the 7th annual North American conference is right around the corner! Please enjoy Conference Committee Chair Sarah Bidgood’s preview of what to look forward to at this year’s conference. A new feature this year is the COPE meeting August 13, which is free for those who register for the ISMTE meeting. Returning activities include the annual wine and cheese reception and poster presentation as well as last year’s popular speed networking event.

Also in this issue, Kristine Novak and Brook Simpson from the American Gastroenterological Association share how they have made updates to their journals’ blog. Changes included design updates, posting more frequently, and experimenting with different types of posts.

Liz Bury attended the twelfth annual meeting of the Editorial Manager User Group (EMUG) in June. Read her meeting summary to learn about the new features available with EM and what’s coming next.

Does your Editorial Board still have face-to-face meetings? Gareth Watkins, Associate Managing Editor at Wiley, describes how types of “online” Editorial Board meetings can be a positive addition to conference calls and email chains.

Safe travels to everyone coming to the North American conference. We’ll see you in Philly!
The 2014 ISTME North American Conference:
A Preview from the Committee Chair

By Sarah Bidgood
Peer Review Manager
Applied Physics Letters

When Julie Nash, immediate past chair of ISMTE’s North American conference committee, asked me to take over her role in 2014, I admit I was intimidated. Although I’d helped to organize the meeting for the past two years, this would be my first time in charge of programming and logistics for both conference days. It’s not as though the bar was set low, either: Julie left behind some big shoes to fill in the form of two incredible meetings in 2012 and 2013! Several good pep talks later and with Julie’s promise that she would continue to serve on the committee and help steer me in the right direction, I agreed to take on this new challenge. I can hardly believe that we are now a few weeks out from the meeting, and I could not be more proud to share what we have accomplished.

Over the past 12 months, I have learned that having a strong and active committee is central to planning a good meeting. Not only do we have Julie, our immediate past chair, but five fantastic and experienced committee members full of great ideas and an intimate understanding of our membership and its needs. Each member of the committee comes to this project with a different background but the same goal in mind: to make the ISMTE North American meeting as valuable for our attendees as it can be.

Perhaps the most challenging part of planning a meeting is thinking beyond your own interests to what will resonate with a range of attendees. We are lucky to have a wide variety of publishing professionals at our meetings, representing a depth of experience that continues to impress me more each year. Bringing speakers and sessions to a meeting that will inform and inspire all of these different types of attendees, however, is no easy feat. To make sure we do so, we rely on your feedback from previous years, and we work together as a team to be certain we are representing everyone’s known interests. Each committee member has contacts and relationships within the field of scholarly publishing, and we collaborate as a group to find expert faculty we know can deliver great content.

Based on what you told us on your evaluations, we have built this year’s agenda to incorporate the following:

• Professional development information and opportunities
• Practical, day-to-day Editorial Office information
• Distinct tracks for those who are new to the field and those with years of experience
• Sessions for attendees at both big and small Editorial Offices
• Ethics, ethics, ethics!

The result this year is a jam-packed, two-day meeting that will be held at the Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn’s Landing in Philadelphia, PA, August 14-15. Situated along the Delaware River, the Hyatt is a quick cab ride from Philadelphia International Airport, a major US Airways hub with convenient flights from anywhere in the US and abroad. The meeting venue boasts luxury accommodations and a spectacular location near historic Independence Hall, the Constitution Center, and the Liberty Bell. Preceding this meeting on Wednesday, August 13, will be a full-day Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE; www.publicationethics.org) meeting in this same location. A first of this kind of collaboration for the North American conference, the COPE meeting is free for those who register for the ISMTE meeting, giving us three days of exciting panels, breakout sessions, and networking activities covering a range of hot topics.

We will kick off this year’s meeting with our keynote panel, “State of the Art and Profession:
The 2014 ISTME North American Conference

an Editorial Office Update,” in which ISMTE’s founder, Jason Roberts, PhD, will delve into the status of peer review and how the Society has evolved since its founding, and CEO/Publisher of the STRIATUS/JBJS, Inc. and Scholarly Kitchen chef, Kent Anderson, will follow with an analysis of evolving liabilities and legal challenges for publishing professionals. Matt Giampaulo, an Executive Editor at Wiley, working out of the Hoboken, NJ office, will cap the panel off with a segment on new post-publication technologies. These sessions will help us to establish where we came from, where we are now, and where we are going; this theme of evolution and development will be a thread throughout the following two days. (For those of you who can’t get enough of policies and procedures, Mr. Anderson will also be providing a breakout session on navigating policies and mandates later on Thursday.)

A second panel presentation, “Journals in Transition,” will be held Thursday afternoon, providing concrete, actionable information to aid attendees who are deciding to go Open Access or online only, or who are launching new journals. This session is designed to provide those of you responsible for advising your societies or editors on journal transitions with practical advice and information that you can take home and apply in your own Editorial Offices. New technologies and services, including PRE-score, will be featured in subsequent breakout sessions to help you learn more about emerging tools that you can deploy at the home office.

Those of you who are new to publishing will find plenty to help your skills evolve at this year’s meeting. On Friday morning, we’ve arranged a breakout session that we on the committee affectionately call Editorial Office Boot Camp (“Publishing 101: What we wish we’d known and how to find out more”). Julie Nash and colleagues from J&J Editorial, LLC will give attendees the benefit of their decades of Editorial Office experience, helping those of you getting started to navigate the field with aplomb. Back by popular demand, Tom McClung will also be presenting a session on using Excel to prepare year-end reports for your society, editors, or publications committee. Tom will be providing individual Excel support by appointment throughout both days to help the experienced and not-so-experienced sort data like pros.

Last but not least, day two of the meeting will culminate with a presentation and Q&A session with the prolific Robert Bazell, who served as chief science correspondent for NBC News for 38 years. Mr. Bazell has recently joined Yale University as an adjunct professor in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, and he will speak on reporting science in the media in an interactive afternoon session that’s sure to be exhilarating.

These are just a few selections from what promises to be an exciting and dynamic three days. While this year’s sessions tackle some weighty subjects, there will be plenty of fun to be had, as well, from a repeat of last year’s boisterous speed networking event to a wine and cheese reception, to nightly get-togethers in the hotel bar, to showcasing the extraordinary research of our colleagues at the annual poster session. The meeting planning committee and I are proud to share the fruits of our many months of labor with you, so be sure to mark your calendars for August 13-15, and come see us in Philadelphia!

For more information, check out the preliminary agenda here: www.ismte.org/default.asp?page=2014NACConf

If you are interested in corporate sponsorship, view our prospectus for opportunities: www.ismte.org/default.asp?page=2014NACConf#Sponsorship2

I’d like to extend a huge thank you to my fellow committee members Diane Drexler, Dr. Sally Gainsbury, Julie Nash, Steve Musser, Kimberly Rosenfield, and Sherryl Sundell.
Many people start a blog and then weeks, months, or years later begin to wonder how they can take it to the next level.

This was our experience with the AGA (American Gastroenterological Association) Journals Blog (http://journalsblog.gastro.org/). We started a blog as an experiment, in 2010, to see if we could use it to promote findings published in the AGA journals *Gastroenterology* and *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*.

The AGA publications team had already been using social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to promote our journals. We thought that a blog discussing particularly interesting features, as well as controversies, of our journals’ articles might be fun and interesting not only for medical researchers but also patients. We decided to write the articles in a newsy yet scholarly format—not too technical, yet not too informal.

Our blog gradually became successful—monthly site visits increased from an average of 1,000 in 2010 to over 8,000 in 2013. Many researchers and patients alike subscribed to the blog and gave us positive feedback. Much of this success can be credited to the marketing plan we established. It included featuring the blog prominently on the AGA and AGA journals’ websites, promoting content on our journals’ Facebook pages as well as on the AGA Twitter feed, and reaching out to authors and reviewers of articles we blogged about via personal emails—we encouraged them to initiate discussion in the comments section.

However, by the end of 2013, we noticed that after three years of increasing visits, numbers were starting to level off. What could we do to attract more readers and make the blog even more exciting?

We decided the first step to revamping the blog was research. We asked other successful bloggers to look at our site and offer advice and read books about blogging. We also decided to work with the web experts in our communications department, who had been involved in the creation of the AGA’s other blogs. We asked them to bring their talent for custom blog creation to our platform.

We also explored other science and non-science blog sites. We tried to figure out what made some blogs attractive, focused, and easy to read, whereas others seemed uninteresting or too complicated to navigate.

The first thing we decided to do was make the blog more visually appealing. We changed the color scheme and design to not only look more interesting, but to align with the parameters of the AGA brand to ensure a cohesive look among all AGA products.

Because our old blog site had been referred to as “a wall of text,” we incorporated many more images into the homepage. These range from stock art to compelling figures included in the journal articles.

We also needed a major overhaul of the blog’s layout. When readers arrive at the homepage, they now see titles and first paragraphs of the most recent posts, rather than the entire text of the most recent post. This allows readers to quickly scan for topics that might catch their interest.

Finally, we created broad post categories (e.g., “Cancer,” “GI Tract,” “Technology”) to make it easier for readers to easily find all posts on a particular topic of interest. These article categories are noted in the main navigation menu, as well as in a new sidebar. The sidebar features a variety of navigation options, including the most popular posts, recent comments, an option to subscribe to the blog, and covers from the latest journal issues (with links to the journals).

But changing the design was not enough—we also wanted to increase the number of posts we published, knowing that almost all bloggers say the more often you post, the better. We had previously been posting once per week (newsy article...
We Are Blogging—Now What?

We decided to try posting twice per week. We have added one shorter post that presents an interesting medical image, clinical observation, podcast, video abstract, or even a Q&A with an author of an article that we think would be of particular interest to our readership. The idea is to experiment with new types of posts with this second weekly blog post and see which kind generate the most interest (i.e., traffic).

Successful bloggers say that it is important to include many links within the text of the posts. This makes articles more interactive, and can help keep them shorter—we can just link to important background information, rather than using text to explain it.

We added links to the articles we discuss right in the first paragraph of the post (rather than providing a full article citation at the end). We did this with the hopes of increasing traffic to our journal sites (more traffic equals potentially more online advertising). We also added informational links (to the National Institutes of Health and other reliable sites) for terms such as disease names, drugs, and relevant research articles. Posts now also include links to previous posts, to keep readers within our blog site.

Our new and improved blog has only been live for about a month, so it is hard to tell if these changes have increased readership or driven more traffic to our journals’ websites. However, we all feel that the blog looks better and provides more information for readers, which is its overall goal.

If you have any other ideas for ways to improve blog, please send them our way (via KNovak@gastro.org or bsimpson@gastro.org).

Figure 1: Screen shot of the AGA Journals Blog
Congratulations!

ISMTE members Alice Ellingham and Gill Smith, Founders and Directors of Editorial Office Ltd, have been notified that Editorial Office Ltd has been shortlisted for the UKTI Digital Business of the Year award for the 2014 National Business Awards. Editorial Office Limited, based in Overton, Hampshire, provides peer review services to the academic publishing industry. Winners will be revealed on November 11, 2014.

Visit www.nationalbusinessawards.co.uk for all finalists.
Summary of the 2014 EMUG Meeting

By Liz Bury, MFA
Associate Managing Editor
American Journal of Kidney Diseases

The twelfth annual meeting of the Editorial Manager User Group (EMUG) took place June 19-20 in Boston. I hadn’t attended in a couple of years so it was nice getting a grand overview of EM. In addition to a variety of breakout sessions, the meeting had the usual EM boot camp for new users, as well as an Open Access track and a ProduXion Manager user meeting.

Tony Alves, director of project management at Aries, reviewed some of the new features available in version 11.0, including people flag search, ability of editors to edit terminated reviews, and the option to drag and drop files and upload multiple files at once during manuscript submission. Alves also covered upcoming features of EM 11.1, which is scheduled for general release in August 2014. Highlights include:

- Merge fields that pull in user-customized text (signatures, disclaimer, etc.) so that editorial staff can edit/update multiple letter templates at once.
- In select letter types, new merge fields that populate reviewer responses to review questions and comments to author.
- Availability of attachments in all letter families (instead of just for ad hoc and decision letters).
- The ability to make minor edits to author questionnaires (previously even the smallest change required creation of a new question).
- ORCiD single sign-on, so authors don’t have to remember separate login credentials for different EM sites.

In a breakout session on email management, Senior Account Coordinator Michael Di Natale discussed configuring and editing EM letters as well as manual and automated options for adding external communications to a manuscript’s correspondence history. Guest speaker Colleen Lobner from the American Meteorological Society shared strategies for taming email inboxes and helpful Gmail tools. She uses the “inbox zero” strategy for managing email and processes email by converting each message into an action: do, respond, delegate, defer, and delete (archive).1 Thus, her inbox is reserved for unread and unprocessed messages only. She advocated clearing the clutter by only holding on to the messages that are actionable, with the rest going into the archive (where they can be easily searched if needed). Lobner suggested enabling more than just the standard yellow star in Gmail, so it’s possible to swiftly flag emails for various actions (stars are searchable). In her experience, the Gmail labs extensions are stable, and she recommended the following: multiple inboxes (grouped lists set apart from the main inbox based on defined search queries, like star applied); quick links (sidebar of links for saved searches); and canned responses (ability to store boilerplate replies).

In a breakout session on incentives to capture and keep manuscripts, Sally Ubnoske and Caroline Webber, senior business systems analysts at Aries, recommended only asking authors for the minimal amount of information at initial submission, deferring additional information/submission steps for the revision, when authors have more incentive to complete them. They also suggested creating a path for rejected manuscript that might be suitable for a publication’s sister journals.

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1 Lobner noted that these concepts were pioneered by Merlin Mann (43folders.com) and David Allen (Getting Things Done).
as a means to retain manuscripts in the publication family, and discussed EM submission transfer workflows and upcoming improvements.

Phil Davis, PhD, an independent researcher and publishing consultant, was the guest speaker to close out the first day of EMUG with his presentation, “Are Journal Editors an Anachronism?” A recap here wouldn’t do it justice, but the talk built upon concepts Davis discussed in a Scholarly Kitchen post.2

Day two started with a panel discussion on research attribution from Micah Altman, PhD, an ORCiD board member, Carol Anne Meyer of CrossRef (speaking about FundRef), and Christine Orr of Ringgold. In brief, each initiative is advocating standard identifiers to help disambiguate authors/researchers, funders, and institutions to enable better attribution/tracking of the flow of funding and research outputs. Standardized metadata also facilitate data mining. Amy Brand of Digital Science was also a panelist and discussed the importance of a new initiative underway to create a contributor role taxonomy.3 ORCiD integration has been available in EM for a while and, as of version 11.0, FundRef can be integrated at initial submission and/or revision. EM users also now have the option to enable institution name normalization using the Ringgold database.

Michael Hambloch, an Aries account coordinator, gave a great live session on Enterprise Analytics Reporting (EAR). Hambloch encouraged users to look up not only which fields are contained in a particular table or view, but also the possible different meanings of a particular field. This information is available via the help links below “Create Report” link in EAR. For those interested in learning more about EAR, in August 2014 Aries will implement quarterly EAR webinars. Attendees will be asked about possible topics, and two or three of the most popular will be covered.

To conclude the meeting, Richard Wynne, vice president of sales and marketing, discussed upcoming features for EM 11.2 (beta testing to begin in September 2014) and 12.0 (beta scheduled for January 2015). Although these are under development and subject to change, a few highlights include:

- Static grids will begin to be replaced with new customizable ones. Options include being able to reorder/hide/resize columns and download onscreen data.
- The reviewer selection summary page will be redesigned to simplify navigation, move the reviewer search area higher on page, and provide customizable instructions front and center.
- The add coauthors step of the submission process will be enhanced by replacing the pop-up window with a more convenient interface, enabling drag and drop for easier reordering of authors, and allowing corresponding authors to edit their own information without having to leave the manuscript submission workflow. Also, improved error messaging will tell users which specific information is missing.
- When editing letters in PolicyManager, users will be able to insert a merge field from a pop-up palette containing a full list of merge fields and their definitions.
- In partnership with STRIATUS/JBJS,4 Aries will develop technology to automatically convert manuscript handling information into a PRE (Peer Review Evaluation)-score, giving readers objective data on the quality of the journal’s consideration process.

I really enjoyed my return to EMUG this year and getting a refresher on features old and new, having the opportunity to connect with peers, and, of course, collecting my EMUG mug.

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What's Driving them Crazy!

Usually EON is filled to the brim with practical suggestions about improving the work of editorial offices. That’s not the case here. Instead, this list of pet peeves takes a step back and looks at the things that drive authors and reviewers nuts in their interactions with editorial offices. It’s not especially pleasant reading, but the hope is that knowing what our “customers” really think (but usually don’t say) can help all of us improve our game.

Comments are based on paraphrases from conversations, or, when indicated with quotation marks, are verbatim from emailed responses. Respondents were researchers from a variety of fields, including clinical medicine, physics, engineering/computer science, and computational biology, and ranged from graduate students to tenured professors.

Authors

- Revision letters in which reviewers say opposite things, or that ask you to do impossible things. The editor needs to step in. Editors can’t assume authors will know which reviewer to listen to or which are mandatory revisions and which aren’t.
- No guidance on reviewers’ comments — which are most important, what to do about contradictory advice or unreasonable requests, which revisions are make or break.
- Lack of transparency in decision letters — don’t know what the decision was based on.
- After acceptance, getting a long list of obscure, random, and even contradictory formatting requests.
Editorial Board Meetings 2.0: Moving Online

By Gareth Watkins
Associate Managing Editor
Wiley

We may be on our way out of the recession, but times have been hard in academic publishing for many years. I don’t think it’s a big secret that one of the most costly and time-consuming tasks traditionally faced by journals is the Editorial Board meeting. Gone are the days (generally speaking) of a publisher paying for a dozen or more people to fly in from all over the world, stay in a hotel, sit around a table for a few hours, spend another night in a hotel, and then fly back again.

Cost isn’t the only factor, of course. There’s also the logistical nightmare of finding a date that so many different people—usually from different parts of the world—can make, and making the arrangements for them to be there. There’s the last-minute cancellations and changes of time, date, and location. Then there’s the struggle to achieve anything meaningful during what is really a short space of time given how much there usually is to discuss (especially if the first hour is taken up by people catching up with one another).

Even of those journals that do still have the luxury of a face-to-face board meeting, the majority of them have reduced them to once every two or three years.

One advantage, at least, of this being so consistently the case is that Editorial Board members have now come to accept it as the norm and are less combative when it comes time to break the news that they won’t be getting a free trip this year. Of course, it’s not just the norm when it comes to journal Editorial Board meetings. In the age of email, teleconferences, Skype, and instant messaging, a face-to-face meeting is rarely the go-to option.

But even relatively small journals often have an Editorial Board of a dozen or more. Larger journals can have 30, 50, even 100 board members. Even if it were technically possible, I wouldn’t like to be the one taking minutes during a teleconference of 80 people.

When I first started working in journals publishing, I was introduced to the idea of an “online” Editorial Board meeting. In reality, this was a list of questions compiled in a document and emailed to everyone on the board. Everyone would then reply individually and I had to collate their responses and send those around. And that was essentially the end of the “meeting” as far as the board was concerned; no one responded to that email (apart from a few thank you’s). It was a relatively effective way of getting people’s views, but obviously there was no conversation, no interaction, no meeting, really.

So it makes sense to utilise a different kind of technology to bring a large group of people together. There are, of course, various areas of the internet that lend themselves to this.

When thinking of a suitable platform, my thoughts first went to a blog—or rather, the comments section of a blog. I set up a WordPress blog for the board meeting, set it to private and invited each of the board members to sign up as members of the site. We then posted a series of questions as individual blog posts and encouraged the board members to comment on each of them. One advantage of a blog is the ease with which you can customise the design and layout, and “brand” it with the journal cover and colours. Another is that blogging sites are pretty simple to use, and the big players (WordPress, Blogger, etc.) have comprehensive help pages if anyone does have trouble.

This seemed to work quite well. I replicated the process for several other journals, and some of my colleagues used the same idea for theirs. One error, in hindsight, was not really adapting the questions from those we used to pose in the email. These were quite lengthy, often with several different points. This style worked in the email context as it encouraged comprehensive answers, but here long, point-by-point responses weren’t very helpful—everyone tended to just leave their own,
separate comments, which didn’t encourage others to reply or enter into discussions.

Another downside was that, however much we’d encourage them otherwise, board members who signed up to the sites tended to leave their profile picture as the default silhouette and often chose odd-looking usernames. This might seem like a small thing, but it led to a disconnect between the real people and their comments—like anonymous strangers on an internet forum.

This led to the thought that there was already a place online where these people went under their own names, and usually with a photo of themselves. No, not Facebook, although it might be possible to make that work. I’m thinking of LinkedIn.

Love it or hate it (or just don’t see the point), LinkedIn has taken off in recent years among professionals, including, it seems, academics. A quick search revealed that a large number of the board members for the journal whose meeting I was planning already had accounts on the site—an appealing prospect after spending a long time helping people sign up to the WordPress sites.

LinkedIn allows you to create groups, and to choose whether these will be open to all or invite-only. It was therefore straightforward to set up a group called “Journal X Editorial Board” and make it private. I then sent a message to the board asking them to request to join the group (the alternative would be to find them on LinkedIn and invite them one-by-one, but with a big group this is by far the simpler way).

For those board members who aren’t already on LinkedIn, I prepared a short instruction document detailing how to create an account and join the group. Crucially, I also included instructions on managing the number of emails and notifications LinkedIn sends, as I found that was a point of contention with more reluctant users.

Groups then enable you to start “Discussions” with members. We narrowed down our usual questions to a few topics, and posted each question as a separate Discussion—these could then be commented on. Having learnt from previous mistakes, the questions were kept short and sweet in order to encourage conversation, and I’m happy to say this worked: people were soon conversing with each other.

Perhaps seeing their colleagues’ real names and smiling faces beside the comments put people at ease and made them more receptive to the format. Another key detail was encouraging the editors of the journal to (literally) show their faces and join the discussions, replying to people’s points and questions. Another bonus is that you can, if you like, leave this group open permanently as somewhere you or the journal editors can pose questions to the board at any time, share news, and generally have a chat.

Perhaps this is still not the ideal online meeting venue (specialised software is available, but generally at great cost), but it’s an effective, inclusive way of allowing Editorial Board members to join a discussion. This is what they miss when it’s not possible to have a face-to-face meeting. That and the free food, but you can’t have everything.
ISMTE Member Corner
Welcome to our newest members!

Kuntan Dhanoya
Crimson Interactive

Sarah Francom
Transplantation

Michael Arends
Wolters Kluwer

Sarah Forgeng
Journal of Investigative Dermatology

Wendy Newsham
Aries Systems Corporation

Claire Neumann
Clinical Infectious Diseases

Bridget Benn
European Journal of Anaesthesiology

Dorothy Lohmann
Infusion Nurses Society

Helen Chambers
Monash University Department of Rural and Indigenous Health

Sonia Wilson
Wiley

David Smith
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Michele Zimmerman
Journal of Orthopaedic Trauma

Lori Tish
American College of Sports Medicine

Sherry Handfinger
Lippincott/Nursing Research

Pat Oldenburg
DCR Editorial Office

Rebecca Benner
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Yvonne Poindexter
Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine

Liz Ryan
Origin Editorial

Patrick Franzen
Lumina Datamatics
Calendar of Events

COPE North American seminar
August 13, 2014
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
http://publicationethics.org/
ISMTE members attending the ISMTE conference receive complimentary registration to COPE seminar

ISMTE North American Conference
August 14-15, 2014
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
www.ismte.org
EASE and COPE members receive ISMTE member registration rate

ACES Editing Boot Camp, Nashville
September 4, 2014
Nashville, Tennessee
www.copydesk.org/

ALPSP International Conference 2014
September 10-12, 2014
London, England
www.alpsp.org

6th Conference on Open Access Scholarly Publishing
September 17-19, 2014
Paris, France
http://oaspa.org/

ISMTE European Conference & COPE Meeting
October 13-14, 2014
London, England
www.ismte.org
EASE and COPE members receive ISMTE member registration rate

ACES Editing Boot Camp, Nashville
October 30, 2014
Palm Springs, California
www.copydesk.org/

Editing medical journals - short course
November 5-7, 2014
Oxford, England
www.pspconsulting.org/medical-short.shtml

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