Authorship Statement for Generative Artificial Intelligence: Assuring Trust and Accountability [Editorial]

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Authorship Statement for Generative Artificial Intelligence: Assuring Trust and Accountability

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Abstract

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has accelerated the production of academic text, images, and analytic outputs, while simultaneously destabilising long-standing cues used to infer human authorship and accountability. As a result, manuscripts increasingly arrive with unclear boundaries between human contribution, tool-assisted editing, and tool-generated content, and these distinctions are rarely made explicit. This is a reader and reviewer issue and a governance challenge for journals seeking consistent peer review and editorial decision-making. Since our last policy in 2023, there have been new practice evolutions: GenAI's entangled and multimodal workflow integration, partial convergence in publishing standards, heightened confidentiality and data governance risks, the post-plagiarism imperative to prioritise transparency over detection, and the increasing conceptual complexity of defining what constitutes 'AI use'. We set out six commitments covering: specific disclosure requirements, prohibition of GenAI generating the manuscript's substantive scholarly contribution, human centrality and confidentiality in peer review, conditions for transparent use of synthetic media, mandatory reflexivity when GenAI is used in methods or analysis, and the non-transferability of accountability away from named authors. This position aims to preserve trust by making responsibility legible again.

Editors

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Practitioner Notes

1. Clearly disclose any use of GenAI: State the tool, version/date, purpose, and what it shaped.
2. Use GenAI to support expression, not scholarship: Do not allow GenAI to generate a core contribution.
3. Human-centric peer review: Never upload manuscripts into GenAI tools during peer review.
4. Use synthetic media responsibly: Only use synthetic images, audio, or video when clearly labelled and never present it to mimic evidence.
5. Apply reflexivity to methodological uses of GenAI: Explicitly reflect on GenAI use and include robustness checks.
6. Retain full author accountability: Named authors remain responsible for the work in its entirety, regardless of the tools used.

Keywords

GenAI, artificial intelligence, authorship, academic integrity.

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Introduction

Despite growing calls for slower research, particularly in terms of less volume per academic (Kaufman et al., 2024), generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has accelerated the production of scholarly text, images, and analytic outputs. It has also destabilised traditional avenues to increase confidence in human authorship, accountable scholarship, and the way that we relate as humans (Hou et al., 2025). In practical terms, many manuscripts now arrive with ambiguous boundaries between human contribution, tool-assisted editing, and tool-generated content, without any explicit statement of distinct use. These omissions persist, at least in part, because there is a lack of clear practice to guide authors in how to describe GenAI tool use. This creates both an accountability challenge for readers and reviewers, and an emergent authorship risk for those whose work may be interpreted through suspicion rather than evaluated on its scholarly merit. Indeed, among recent reviews to our Journal, we have seen heightened allegations of undeclared AI use by reviewers, without any clear evidence thereof: just suspicion, which is a terrible symptom of a post-plagiarism, post-truth world (Eaton, 2025).

The scholarly landscape that now prevails might be seen as existing on a spectrum between those fearful or avoidant of GenAI use to those who use it without declaration or concerns in relation to the ethicality of use. The result is a widening disparity between how research is produced in practice and how authorship is represented in publication conventions (Islam & Greenwood, 2024). At its core, our scholarly record depends on identifiable human responsibility for claims, interpretations, and ethical decisions, and that responsibility must remain visible. It relies on us understanding the narrative and powers that led to particular insights being made. Inconsistent and opaque adoption of GenAI can threaten this aspiration. Scholars uncritically leveraging GenAI for greater publication volume are unlikely to have long-term impact on practice; their actions may enable a temporary bubble of citations and paper volume that will eventually burst. Indeed, for the knowledge economy, the AI-manufactured knowledge bubble will likely burst much harder than that of dotcom (Floridi, 2024). At this juncture it is critical to remind the reader that our position remains positive yet cautious of the role GenAI can play in research. We advocate a need for a more circumspect framing of our relationship with GenAI technology; one that provides trust, transparency, and human centredness.

An added challenge is an inconsistency in AI use across manuscripts that has created a vacuum in which authors are left to make idiosyncratic judgements about what counts as ‘acceptable’ GenAI use and what requires disclosure (Corbin et al., 2025). Where expectations are unclear, authors may; a) over-disclose in ways that invite unnecessary scrutiny; b) under-disclose in ways that create reputational and ethical risk; or c) avoid disclosing altogether because the boundaries feel contested. From an editorial standpoint, this undermines coherence in the journal’s standards and makes peer review harder to conduct fairly. One may argue that we do not declare the use of a calculator as it, as with similar tools, is not repeating a universal function (Lodge et al., 2023), producing replicable results or clearly providing insight as to what is being used to draw conclusions.

The problem is not about what tools are used, but the absence of a shared authorship and editor expectation that we can all interpret coherently and consistently (Chaka, 2024). A key lesson we

have found from the growth of our publication guidance over time[1] has been that good scholarship relies on an initial shared set of assumptions between authors, reviewers and editors, including a shared vocabulary for coherence and interpretability across the manuscript. In relation to GenAI, authorship transparency is an analogous form of clarity that underpins shared trust in the paper's intellectual and ethical foundations. From an editorial perspective, while the careful balancing of authorship transparency and risk to confidentiality and governance remain important, it is not as central as it was before the rapid development of GenAI. For example, in 2023, there was limited capacity to turn off training datasets using user prompts. Now, users can choose to restrict whether their prompts contribute to future training models for many AIs; mitigating much of the risk, particularly with development of high standards of data protection, security and privacy (Ng et al., 2025). However, we still hold the view that manuscripts with unpublished ideas, sensitive data, or identifiable participant information should not be exposed to GenAI, because such systems may use submitted content in ways that are opaque and potentially impossible to control or reverse. Similarly, researchers using GenAI tools for early-stage works must ensure data privacy by not contributing non-peer reviewed content to AI learning models.

The objective of this note is to articulate a clear and enforceable editorial and authorship position in relation to GenAI, specifying what authors must disclose, what uses are acceptable, what practices are prohibited, and where accountability sits when GenAI is involved in writing, analysis, or producing synthetic media. Herein lies our substantive research problem (Purvis et al., 2024); it remains ambiguous to authors as to how to best engage in ethical GenAI use in publishing and writing. This note is intended to support authors, reviewers, and editors by clarifying expectations so that submissions can be evaluated consistently and on their scholarly merits. It aims to offer ethical leadership on publishing (Crawford et al., 2023a). It is also intended to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the peer review process by establishing explicit boundaries for reviewer and editorial practices.

To address this objective, the note first outlines the key evolutions since the Journal's former 2023 position, including the entangled nature of contemporary GenAI, the convergence of publishing standards, the centrality of confidentiality and data governance, the shift from detection to transparency, and the growing complexity of what constitutes "GenAI use." It then sets out the Journal's position across six commitments, covering: 1) detailed disclosure; 2) limits on GenAI drafting of substantive scholarly contribution; 3) the centrality of human judgement in peer review; 4) conditions for synthetic media use; 5) reflexivity in methodological and analytic GenAI use; and 6) the non-transferability of accountability away from named human authors. The significance of this note is that it clarifies a shared standard for trust in research at a time when cues to understand authorship discrepancies are less observable and difficult to accurately detect, and when publishing integrity increasingly depends on explicit transparency and learned trust rather than inference. This is ultimately about protecting the credibility of scholarship by making responsibility legible again, which is the editorial line we intend to defend.

[1] JUTLP Publishing Guidance for Authors: https://open-publishing.org/journals/index.php/jutlp/guidance

Key Evolutions Since our Last AI Policy

Since our 2023 position (Crawford et al., 2023b), GenAI has moved from a discrete writing aid, with rather obvious use of visible and detectable elements, to a potentially embedded and invisible feature of scholarly work that now affects how research is conducted and how manuscripts are produced, reviewed, and trusted. The rapid evolution of GenAI capabilities and GenAI's integration into everyday research and publication workflows has outpaced policy development across the sector. This has created new ambiguity about what constitutes acceptable use, what must be disclosed, and where accountability rests. In outlining the key evolutions below, we focus on five shifts that together necessitate an updated editorial and authorship position: 1) the entangled and increasingly multimodal role of GenAI in knowledge production; 2) the emerging convergence of publishing standards; 3) the heightened importance of confidentiality and data governance; 4) the post-detection imperative to prioritise transparency over surveillance; and 5) the growing complexity of defining and categorising 'GenAI use' in contemporary scholarship.

GenAI's entangled agentic and multimodal role

Since the Crawford et al. (2023b) position, GenAI has shifted from a largely text-focused tool into a more entangled presence across scholarly workflows (Salman et al., 2025). Contemporary GenAI systems increasingly operate as integrated assistants within idea generation/hypothesis development, writing, searching, summarising, translation, proofreading, coding, and content production environments, and their use is often embedded within singular easily accessible platforms rather than discrete applications. This entanglement of purpose, people, and method (e.g., Fawns, 2022) complicates clear boundary-making because GenAI support may occur across multiple stages of scholarly work, sometimes invisibly, and in ways that blend editing, generation, and analytic assistance. The result is that authorship policy must now address not only overt text generation, but also the subtler ways GenAI can shape reasoning, representation, and scholarly voice.

Convergence of publishing standards

The past two years have seen stronger alignment across publishers, editorial organisations, and journal policies regarding core authorship principles. There is growing consensus that GenAI systems cannot meet authorship criteria, cannot assume accountability, and should not be positioned as responsible agents in the scholarly record (Dwivedi et al., 2024). In parallel, disclosure expectations have become more specific, shifting from general acknowledgements of tool use to clearer expectations about where GenAI was used, for what purposes, and how human authors ensured accuracy and integrity (Chelli et al., 2024). This convergence does not eliminate debate, but it provides a clear baseline against which journals can articulate consistent and enforceable expectations.

Centrality of confidentiality and data governance

As GenAI adoption has accelerated, confidentiality risks have become more salient for journals, reviewers, and authors. Manuscripts contain unpublished ideas, sensitive data, and identifiable information, and the use of external GenAI systems can create uncertainty about where content is stored, how it may be accessed, and whether it may be being used in ways that breach confidentiality (see Purvis & Crawford, 2024). Data governance concerns also extend to research

processes, particularly where GenAI tools are used for transcription, coding, or analysis involving participants. In this environment, authorship policy must explicitly reaffirm obligations to protect confidential materials, uphold privacy, and ensure that tool use does not inadvertently compromise ethical commitments or journal trust.

Need for honesty and transparency over detection

The move into a post-plagiarism or post-detection context has sharpened the limitations of detection-led approaches to integrity (Eaton, 2025). In a post-detection environment, where tool outputs are increasingly indistinguishable from human text, integrity must be operationalised through transparent accountability. As GenAI outputs become increasingly fluent and indistinguishable from human-produced text, the sector cannot rely on observable artefact cues as a stable basis for judgement about authorship. This does not lessen the importance of academic integrity, but it changes how integrity can be supported in practice. The most credible path forward is to prioritise honesty, transparency, and disclosure (Tsipursky et al., 2018), reinforcing that integrity is maintained through accountable human authorship, clear attribution, and explicit acknowledgement of GenAI tool use, rather than through an escalating arms race of surveillance and detection.

Complexity of what constitutes ‘GenAI use’

A final evolution is that ‘GenAI use’ can no longer be treated as a single, easily definable act. GenAI use does offer us an opportunity to engage with more complex knowledges and ways of knowing more equitably and transparently (Dollinger & Niemenin, 2026) and authors may use it for a range of tasks including language editing, idea generation, literature scoping, translation, coding support, figure creation, and analytic assistance. These uses differ materially in their implications for authorship, accountability, and validity. Moreover, GenAI functions are increasingly embedded within common software and workflows, blurring the line between routine digital assistance and substantively generative contribution. Policy therefore requires clearer categorisation of types of use, sharper delineation of what is permitted versus prohibited, and more specific disclosure expectations that reflect the diversity of how GenAI may shape scholarly work.

Our Editorial Position on GenAI in Academic Research

We provide a scoping definition for what we constitute generative artificial intelligence as any software system that uses statistical or machine-learning models to predict and generate or transform human-interpretable content in response to user input or context. We exclude from this basic rule-based or database-querying corrective tools like a fixed dictionary spellchecker. Many dictionary tools now, however, use black box machine learning that is not easily replicable by other researchers; the latter of these require disclosure.

Position 1. Specific disclosure of how authors used AI is mandatory

Our Editorial position is that transparency is the minimum condition for supporting trust when GenAI is used in scholarly work. Authors must disclose GenAI use in a way that enables readers, reviewers, and editors to understand what the tool did, where it was applied, and what human judgement was exercised in the process. Disclosure should therefore include the tool name,

version or access date, and the specific functions it served, such as GenAI-based language editing, translation, drafting assistance, coding support, or figure generation. In our Journal, we expect this disclosure to appear in the manuscript in the Acknowledgments section. Additionally, any potentially substantial use for research should be drawn attention to in the cover letter. For example, Nguyen and Perkins (2026) provide the following long form of disclosure to transparently describe their use of GenAI in their acknowledgments:

> The authors have used GenAI tools to support specific aspects of the research and manuscript preparation, including assistance with data categorisation and thematic analysis, drafting some sections of text which were then revised, summarising and paraphrasing content, providing feedback on drafts, and checking grammar. The tools used were Claude Pro (Opus and Sonnet, versions 4.0 and 4.5), selected for their capacity to support systematic analysis of large literature corpora and provide sophisticated feedback on textual outputs. These tools were used in a supporting capacity and not to replace core author responsibilities. All AI-generated outputs were reviewed, verified, and refined by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final content. All reference management and citation checking were performed manually.

A simpler version for where GenAI was only used for editorial support is provided by Crawford et al. (2026), who acknowledge ChatGPT's involvement in initial brainstorming and the fact that the written submission was developed by the authors and then edited in ChatGPT:

> The author(s) have used ChatGPT 5.2 to support editing of the full manuscript, and to support early-stage idea organisation.

Detailed disclosure is not intended as a punitive requirement, but rather as a support mechanism that protects authors from ambiguous integrity concerns and helps reviewers assess the work on its scholarly merits rather than on speculation about hidden tool use. The aim is to normalise ethical transparency and to reduce the incentives for covert reliance by making expectations explicit for diverse authors, contexts, and future technologies.

Position 2. Authors must generate the manuscript's substantive scholarly contribution

JUTLP permits assistive uses of GenAI that improve clarity, accessibility, or efficiency, but it does not permit GenAI to generate the substantive scholarly contribution of a manuscript. This includes drafting the central argument, producing literature synthesis in lieu of author reading and judgement, generating primary interpretations of results, or writing conclusions that imply human reasoning that did not occur. The reason is straightforward: authorship is not about how well a person can generate robust prompts to regurgitate what is already known (i.e., prompt engineering: Giray, 2023). The scholarly process is a traceable intellectual process that signals how individuals have come to propose a new theory or revision thereof. Scholars likely read the work of our Editor-in-Chief Dr Joseph Crawford with an expectation his work will emphasise human relationships over technologies or alternatives (see Position 3), whereas the work of Dr Averil Grieve (Senior Editor, Educational Leadership) may emphasise the importance of integrating communication and influence strategies into higher education practice. These

positions are based on expertise, which the reader can trace, assess, and understand the critical assumptions of power and history that created the conditions for those ideas to come into being. Ideas generated solely by a GenAI tool are not traceable, and a literature review generated solely by a tool (particularly post-hoc) does not tell the reader what sources were used to inform and influence the author(s)' decision making and judgment. It is also clear that the process of reading and thinking about research in long-form, rather than reading short summaries from an AI tool will aid in deeper and more critical thinking that is needed for the kinds of seminal works we hope to publish in JUTLP.

Our ethical commitment is to the truthfulness, rigour, and accountability of the scholarly claims being advanced; and an understanding of how they came to be. Although GenAI is easy to corrupt (Souly et al., 2025), our position does not assume that GenAI is inherently harmful in ideation. Rather, we recognise that the credibility of scholarship rests on identifiable human responsibility for the work's intellectual content. Where GenAI is used as a drafting engine for substantive contribution (not supported in our Journal), the link between author expertise, evidentiary reasoning, and accountability becomes difficult to defend. We draw a clear line between support for expression as compared to the substitution or outsourcing of scholarship.

We, therefore, encourage the use of a secure GenAI tool (i.e. one that does not add non-reviewed work into future AI training) to support stylistic editing and linguistic clarity, which could make the roles of volunteer editors easier. Tools like ChatGPT and Claude can legitimately be used to double check manuscript adherence to the Journal Style Guide or request mark-up to help proofread the paper. Indeed, secure tools could be used by both authors and editors to pre-peer review Method descriptions, and critique them against expectations of reporting style guides (e.g. the American Psychological Association's APA 7) and to pre-emptively identify essential elements of research reporting the authors may have missed in first drafting. These tools are useful when authors, reviewers and editors need to compare manuscripts with the expectations set by journals or reporting style guides.

Position 3. Human judgement remains central in the peer review and editorial decisions

Peer review and editorial decision-making are inherently human practices grounded in expert judgement, confidentiality, and responsibility. Therefore, the solution to a mismatch in scientific publishing volume and availability of reviewers (e.g., Hoyt et al., 2025) is not AI reviewers. Reviewers and editors must not upload submitted manuscripts, reviewer reports, or editorial correspondence into external and unmanaged GenAI tools, as doing so can breach confidentiality and undermine trust in the review process. Manuscripts often contain unpublished ideas, sensitive data, and identifiable information, and the Journal has a duty to protect authors from inadvertent disclosure. While human decision making remains flawed (Sallam, 2025), it is also traceable and contestable. Some scholars like Sallam (2025) may argue for a scientific publishing revolution that no longer relies on biased or subjective editorial judgement. However, we contend that knowledge has never been truly objective and AI systems do not provide stable access to past decision logic. For example, we cannot request a GenAI tool that an author used 12 months ago to present its algorithm for finding manuscripts, generating analysis, or providing other types of outputs. We cannot reliably reconstruct, inspect, audit or hold the AI accountable.

Consistent with our earlier comment (Crawford et al., 2024), this policy also reflects the principle that GenAI cannot function as a reviewer or decision-maker. Even though tools may initially appear helpful in critiquing other's work, or even in creating full paper summaries so as to avoid the act of reading a paper in its entirety, they do not hold accountability for errors, bias, omissions, or misuse of confidential material. Review processes must remain anchored in named expert humans whose judgement can be scrutinised, challenged, and ethically defended. We do, however, permit reviewers to draft their own report, and then upload this to a (well-trained) chatbot or similar that can help refine reviewer language to be more developmental or clear. Reviewer reports remain on a wide spectrum, and GenAI tools may support quality elevation and the reduction in the Reviewer 2 trope (Gonzalez et al., 2022). Editors may also use secure tools to assist in clarifying their own writing and notes to enhance the developmental nature of the review, but they should not generate reports. It remains essential that *only* the draft reviewer report is shared for purposes of language refinement; not another person's confidential manuscript and not for the purpose of generating the peer review itself.

Position 4. Synthetic media is acceptable with transparent labelling

We recognise that synthetic media (i.e. audio, visual, or multimodal content generated or significantly modified by AI or other automated system) may have legitimate uses in higher education scholarship, including conceptual illustrations, design mock-ups, and figures that support explanation where no empirical representation is implied (Resnik et al., 2025). However, synthetic or GenAI-altered media must be transparently labelled adjacent to the image, with disclosure attached directly to the relevant figure or artefact so readers are not left to infer provenance or inadvertently miss the fact that some imagery is generated by AI. Where images or graphics are AI-generated, AI-edited, or deep-faked (e.g., Row et al., 2024), captions should state this clearly, and any supporting description should specify the purpose and method of generation or modification. However, there are some caveats to this rule that require consideration (Vallis, 2025), particularly in terms of using AI to generate figures. While the aim of disclosure is to ensure artefacts that simulate an visual experience (e.g., a classroom) are not misrepresented as *real*, creation of a diagram or figure using GenAI, PowerPoint, or Canva are still synthetic by definition, but poses no more risk than hand-drawing on a whiteboard and, therefore, does not need to be declared. However, synthetic media must never be used to misrepresent empirical evidence, participants, data, or observed phenomena. If an image appears to document something that did not occur, or if a figure implies a data-derived result when it is illustrative, it is academic misconduct. Our stance is that synthetic media can support communication but must not blur the line between illustration and evidence.

Position 5. Methodological reflexivity is required when GenAI is used in the research process

When GenAI is used in the research process, including for literature researching (e.g., Clark et al., 2025), hypothesis generation (e.g., Banker et al., 2024) or analysis (e.g., Jowsey et al., 2025), transparency alone is not sufficient. Authors must be reflexive about how the tool shaped decisions, what risks were introduced, and what safeguards were applied. This includes describing whether GenAI hallucinated any references, influenced decisions in design and hypothesis development or instrument construction, supported any translation work, or influenced

the analysis process, particularly in qualitative coding, thematic development, and data interpretation. How the research team ensured validity and accuracy is critical for enabling transparency and trust in the output (see Ngiyen-Trung, 2025 for a possible method for reflexive guided AI thematic analysis), including the use of AI to support systematic reviews (Crawford, 2025), or quantitative research (Taylor et al., 2025). Given GenAI systems can produce plausible but incorrect outputs, methodological rigour requires explicit checks, such as human verification, audit trails, triangulation, or inter-rater processes. This requirement positions GenAI not as a neutral instrument but as a methodological actor that must be accounted for. Reflexivity is essential because methodological choices have epistemic consequences. If GenAI use changes the nature of what is being measured, coded, or interpreted, the scholarly contribution can only be evaluated properly when those influences are made visible and their limitations acknowledged.

Position 6. Accountability and responsibility remain with the named authors

Our sixth non-negotiable principle is that accountability for the scholarly record rests with the named human authors. Regardless of what tools are used, authors remain responsible for the accuracy of claims, the integrity of citations, the originality of text and figures, and the ethical handling of data and participants. This ‘human-in-the-loop’ model requires continuous reflection, with the authors as the central decision-makers who interrogate and verify any GenAI content. GenAI systems cannot assume responsibility, cannot consent, and cannot be held to account for errors or misconduct; and consent has always been key to authorship (Barker & Powell, 1997; Davidoff et al., 2001). For this reason, GenAI tools cannot be listed as authors, and disclosure of use does not transfer responsibility away from the research team.

This principle also implies that authors should, where appropriate and ethically possible, be prepared to provide supporting documentation that enables scrutiny of GenAI-involved processes (e.g., by editors or reviewers). Subject to privacy and ethics constraints, this may include prompt logs, model settings, coding procedures, or provenance statements. This practice is consistent with approaches to open science that encourage pre-publishing protocols and submitting open access datasets with submissions. The purpose is not to police authors, but to preserve the credibility of scholarship by ensuring that human accountability remains explicit and defensible.

Conclusion

This position formalises a shift from artefact-based inference to accountability-based transparency in a post-detection scholarly environment. GenAI’s entanglement across writing, analysis and representation means that authorship can no longer be treated as a simple attribute of the final text but must be understood as a traceable chain of responsibility across tools, decisions, and human judgement. By distinguishing assistive AI support from substantive scholarly contribution, the policy reasserts authorship as an epistemic and ethical commitment, not merely an output. It also reframes trust as something produced through disclosure, reflexivity, and governance rather than through detection technologies that remain unreliable in the face of fluent synthetic outputs.

For authors, the policy provides a stable pathway to ethical GenAI use through specific disclosure and explicit boundaries, reducing ambiguity and the reputational risk of misinterpretation. For

reviewers and editors, it clarifies confidentiality expectations and prohibits practices that compromise the peer review process through external tool upload or delegated evaluation. For the journal, it establishes consistent standards for handling synthetic media and for evaluating GenAI-influenced methods and analysis through mandatory reflexivity. Across all groups, the policy aims to prevent silent drift where GenAI becomes default infrastructure without governance, and to ensure human judgement remains central to scholarly evaluation and communication.

The research objective of this note was to articulate a clear and enforceable authorship position, specifying what must be disclosed, what uses are acceptable, what practices are prohibited, and where accountability sits when GenAI is involved in writing, analysis, or synthetic media. The six commitments presented operationalise that objective by making expectations explicit, consistent, and defensible across submission, review, and publication processes. The purpose is not to resist technological change, but to preserve trust in the scholarly record by keeping responsibility anchored to identifiable human authors and by ensuring GenAI use is transparent, bounded, and accountable.

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