PCs *for* Grown-Ups

Getting the Most Out of Your Windows 8 Computer

que

Paul McFedries

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Paul McFedries

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800 East 96th Street,
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About the Author

Paul McFedries is full-time technical writer and passionate computer tinkerer. He is the author of more than 80 computer books that have sold over four million copies worldwide. His recent titles include the Sams Publishing books *Windows 7 Unleashed* and *Windows Home Server 2011 Unleashed* and the Que Publishing books *Windows 8 In Depth* (co-authored with Brian Knittel), *Formulas and Functions with Microsoft Excel 2013, Using iPhone,* and *Using the Microsoft Office Web Apps.* Paul is also the proprietor of Word Spy (www.wordspy.com), a website devoted to tracking new words and phrases as they enter the English language. Paul's web home is at www.mcfedries.com, and he can be followed on Twitter at twitter.com/paulmcf and twitter.com/wordspy.

Dedication

For my parents.

Acknowledgments

I've been writing computer books for more than 20 years now (ouch!), which is a long time to do *anything*, much less something that exercises the old noodle the way researching and writing a computer book does. Despite that, however, I still leap out of bed most mornings and can't wait to get my hands on the keyboard once again and start tapping away.

Maintaining enthusiasm for your job is never easy, but it sure helps when you get to work with some amazingly smart, talented, and nice people. I speak, of course, of the bright lights who populate the Que editorial department, who are as awesome a collection of Hoosiers as you're ever likely to meet (assuming you come across Hoosier collections regularly). In particular, I'd like to extend my heartfelt and profuse thanks to the editors I worked with directly on this book, including executive editor and development editor Rick Kughen; project editor Seth Kerney; copy editor Chuck Hutchinson; and technical editor Karen Weinstein. Thanks to all of you for the excellent work.

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We welcome your comments. You can email or write to let us know what you did or didn't like about this book—as well as what we can do to make our books better.

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Introduction

In most households these days, the joke is that it's the kids who run the show, at least as far as the technology goes. They provide the specs for new PCs, suggest peripherals and gadgets to buy, configure the router, perform routine Windows tasks, handle computer maintenance and repairs, and go inside the PC when the hard drive or the memory needs upgrading. And even if the kids are all grown up with families of their own, they probably still perform all these tasks whenever they drop by for a visit; that, or their kids—yes, the *grandkids*—take over these duties.

That's all well and good, but it leads to an important question: Why are parents and grandparents—why are *you*—letting the kids and grandkids have all the fun? The basics of the PC—including how to buy a PC, how to use Windows, how to get online, and how to maintain and repair a PC—are accessible to anyone of any age who is curious and motivated to learn. It might seem that tasks such as deciding on a computer, configuring a router, and replacing the hard drive are too advanced for older adults, but nothing could be further from the truth. That's because working with a PC doesn't require any advanced skills or knowledge, so it can be done by any beginner:

- All the needed parts are readily available online or from big-box retailers or electronics stores.
- All the tools you need are part of most people's toolkits or can be easily obtained.
- All the techniques you need are simple and straightforward.

Add to this the important fact that buying, using, maintaining, and repairing one's own PC gives the average grown-up an extra level of independence because he or she no longer has to rely on others or wait until a child or grandchild has time to perform these tasks.

PCs for Grown-Ups aims to be your guide on this independent, do-it-yourself path. With a friendly, knowledgeable tone, this book shows you everything you need to know to understand, use, and maintain a PC.

How This Book Is Organized

To help you learn about PCs in the easiest and most straightforward way, I've organized this book into four reasonably sensible parts that include related chapters. Here's a summary:

- **Part 1, "Understanding PC Basics,"** helps you understand PCs, including the various parts that make up a typical PC, purchasing a PC, setting up a PC, and taking the initial steps.
- **Part 2, "Understanding Windows,"** gives you a quick tour of some Windows basics, from getting around the screen to creating documents to installing applications. This part of the book also teaches you basic digital media literacy, including importing and organizing digital photos, setting up and maintaining a digital music library, and viewing digital video.
- **Part 3, "Working, Learning, and Playing Online,"** gets you online, with information on setting up a router and making wireless connections. From there, you learn about the Web, email, online shopping, researching, social networking, and the all-important topic of Internet security and privacy.
- **Part 4, "Maintaining and Repairing Your PC,"** is the biggest section of the book with eight chapters devoted to basic PC maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair. You learn not only the Windows tools that are most useful for maintaining and troubleshooting the system, but also step-by-step techniques for replacing the hard drive, replacing the DVD drive, adding memory, and more.

This Book's Special Features

PCs for Grown-Ups is designed to give you the information you need without making you wade through ponderous explanations and interminable technical background. To make your life easier, this book includes various features and conventions that help you get the most out of the book and your PC:

- **Steps**—Throughout the book, each task is summarized in step-by-step procedures.
- **Things you type**—Whenever I suggest that you type something, what you type appears in a **bold** font.
- **Commands**—I use the following style for menu commands: File, Open. This means that you pull down the File menu and select the Open command. I also have placed names of menus, commands, and anything you click on screen in a **bold** font.

This book also uses the following boxes to draw your attention to important (or merely interesting) information.

Note

The Note box presents asides that give you more information about the topic under discussion. These tidbits provide extra insights that give you a better understanding of the task at hand.

Caution

The all-important Caution box tells you about potential accidents waiting to happen. There are always ways to mess things up when you're working with computers. These boxes help you avoid at least some of the pitfalls.

Tip

The Tip box tells you about methods that are easier, faster, or more efficient than the standard methods.

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Chapter 7

Dealing with Digital Photos

A *digital photo* is a photographic image that, instead of residing on film (which those of us of a certain age still remember) or as a print, resides on your PC's hard drive or on a memory card. The "digital" part just means that the photo consists of the same electronic bits and pieces as anything else that's stored on your PC—files, documents, apps, and so on. Having your photos in digital form makes it easy to organize and view your photos, run a slideshow, and manipulate your photos (for example, by removing bits of the photo you don't want).

Windows 8 isn't a digital photo powerhouse by any stretch of the imagination, but it does come with some tools that help you perform these and a few other photo-related tasks. This chapter provides you with the details.

Getting Photos onto Your PC

You can't do much of anything with Windows 8's photo tools until you get some honest-to-goodness photos on your PC. Fortunately, Windows 8 can help here by offering a wealth of ways to get digital photos from out there to in here. In all, there are four methods you can use, and the next four sections take you through the necessary steps.

Transferring Photos from a Digital Camera

The most common scenario these days is to take a bunch of photos using a digital camera, which might be either a dedicated camera or a smartphone that comes with a camera feature. Either way, your next chore is to transfer some or all of those photos from the camera to your PC.

Begin by connecting your digital camera to your PC. How you proceed from here depends on whether this is the first time you're connecting your camera. Here are the various possibilities:

- **Connecting your digital camera for the first time**—In this case, after a few seconds you see a notification similar to the one shown in Figure 7.1. Select the notification to see a list of actions you can perform with the camera and then select **Import Photos and Videos**. Windows displays a list of the photos on the digital camera.

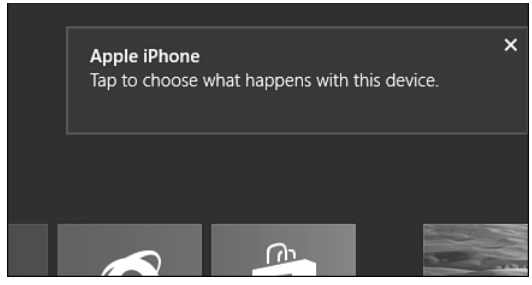

Figure 7.1 *You see a notification similar to the one shown here the first time you connect your digital camera.*

- **Connecting your digital camera after the first time**—Since you've already told Windows what action you want to take when you connect your digital camera, Windows just goes ahead and performs that action automatically. In this case, Windows displays a list of the photos on the digital camera.
- **Connecting your digital camera does nothing or you miss the notification**—If nothing happens when you connect your digital camera, or if the notification disappears before you have a chance to select it, you're not out of luck. On the Windows 8 Start screen, select the **Photos**

tile to launch the Photos app. Right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge of a touchscreen) and then select **Import**. In the **Choose a Device to Import From** dialog box (see Figure 7.2), select your digital camera. Windows displays a list of the photos on the digital camera.

Figure 7.2 *Open the Photos app, display the app bar, select Import, and then select your camera.*

Whichever scenario you're in, you end up seeing a list of the photos on the digital camera. Follow these steps to proceed from here:

1. Select **Clear Selection**.
2. Select each photo you want to import. The Photos app adds a check mark to the upper-right corner of each selected photo, as shown in Figure 7.3.
3. Use the text box at the bottom of the screen to type a name for the folder that Windows 8 will use to store the photos.
4. Select **Import**. Windows 8 imports the photos to your PC.

When the import is complete, you can either select **Open Folder** to display the photo files or press **Windows Logo** to return to the Start screen.

Figure 7.3 *Photos selected for import have a check mark in the upper-right corner.*

Transferring Photos from a Memory Card

If your photos are located on a memory card, the import process is similar:

1. Insert the memory card.
2. As with a digital camera, the next step you take depends on whether you've inserted a memory card previously:
   - If this is the first time you've inserted the memory card, you see a notification like the one shown in Figure 7.4. Select the notification that appears and then select **Import Photos and Videos**.
   - If you've inserted the memory card before, Windows 8 should take you straight to the list of photos on the card, so you don't need to do anything at this stage.

- If Windows 8 does nothing when you insert the memory card, open the **Photos** app, right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge), select **Import**, and then select your memory card.

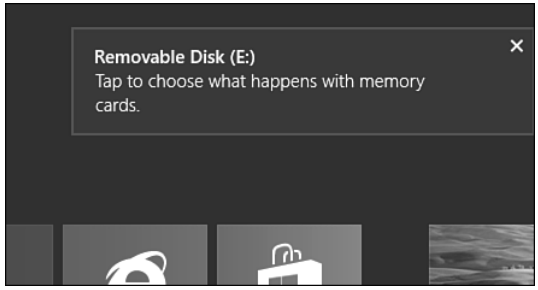

Figure 7.4 *You see a notification similar to the one shown here the first time you insert a memory card.*

3. When Windows displays a list of the photos on the memory card, select **Clear Selection**.
4. Select each photo you want to import.
5. Use the text box at the bottom of the screen to type a name for the folder that Windows 8 will use to store the photos.
6. Select **Import**. Windows 8 imports the photos to your PC.

Scanning a Photo

If you have a document scanner or a multifunction printer that includes a scanning feature, you can use it to turn a hard-copy photo into a digital photo on your PC. Windows 8 comes with a Scanner and Camera Wizard to give you a step-by-step method for scanning photos. First, place the photo on the scanner glass. Then launch the **Scanner and Camera Wizard** using either of the following methods:

- If your printer has some kind of scan button, press that button.
- On the Start screen, press **Windows Logo+W**, type **devices**, select **Devices and Printers**, select your printer, and then select **Start Scan**.

Whichever method you choose, you see the New Scan dialog box. You can select the **Preview** button to see what your image will look like before fiddling with any of the options or committing yourself to the scan. A preview of your scan appears as shown in Figure 7.5.

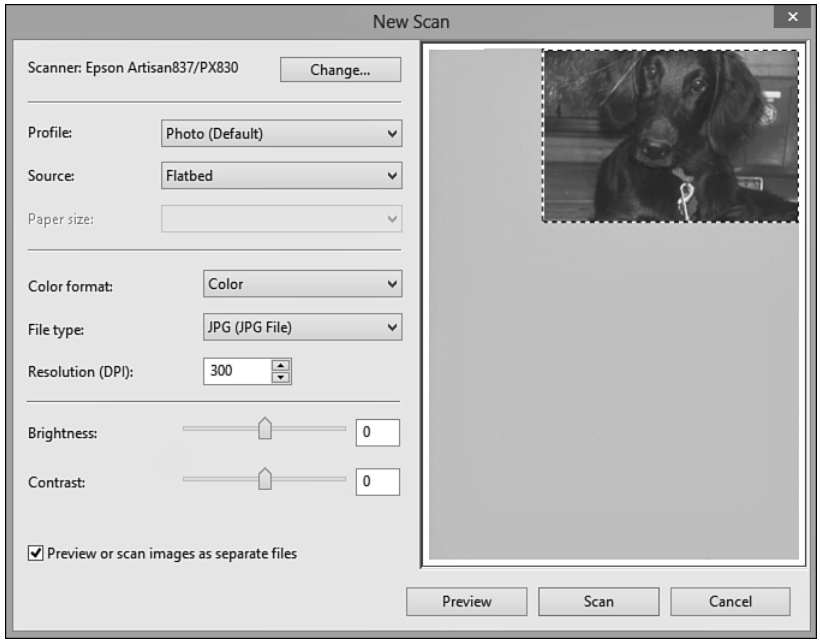

Figure 7.5 *You use the New Scan dialog box to scan a photo from a multifunction printer.*

If the dotted rectangle in the preview area isn't the same size as the image, click and drag the bottom-right corner of the rectangle to make it the same size (as I've done in Figure 7.5).

When you're ready to scan, select **Scan**. After Windows 8 scans the image, the Importing Pictures and Videos dialog box appears. Select the **Import All New Items Now** option, type a name for the image in the text box, and then select **Import.**

Adjusting the Resolution

Before scanning, you might want to adjust the Resolution value. The *resolution* determines the overall quality of the scanned photo: The higher the resolution, the higher the quality but the bigger the resulting file. Resolution is measured in dots per inch (DPI).

Taking a Photo with the PC's Camera

If your PC has either a built-in camera or an external camera connected to a USB port, you can use the Windows Camera app to take a picture. This feature is great for self-portraits, but you can also take shots of your surroundings, particularly if you're using a tablet PC that has a rear camera.

Follow these steps to take a picture using the Camera app:

1. On the Start screen, select the **Camera** tile to open the Camera app. The first time you do this, Windows 8 asks if the Camera app can use your camera (which Windows 8 called a *webcam*) and microphone.
2. Select **Allow**. The Camera app loads and you see a live shot of yourself (or something near you, depending on where your PC's camera is pointing).
3. Aim your camera as needed.
4. If you'd like the Camera app to delay slightly before taking the shot, select **Timer**. (Note: This button is "on" when it has a white background.)
5. If you want to take a video instead of a photo, select the **Video Mode** button. (Again, this button is "on" when it has a white background.)
6. Click or tap the screen. If you turned on Timer mode, there's a three-second delay before you hear a shutter noise and the Camera app snaps a photo. If you're recording a video, the app beeps and then begins the recording.
7. If you're recording a video, click or tap the screen when you're done.

The Camera app saves your photo or video into a new album called Webcam that it adds to your Pictures library (see the next section to learn more about this library).

Viewing Photos

Now that you've loaded up your PC with a few photos, you're ready to start viewing them, either by scrolling through them manually or by playing a slideshow. Windows keeps your photos in a special storage location called

the Pictures library, which usually consists of several folders that Windows created when you imported photos from a digital camera or memory card. There's also a folder called Webcam that contains photos you've taken with the Camera app.

Looking Through Your Photos

To get started, select the Start screen's **Photos** tile to open the Photos app and then select the **Pictures Library**. This opens the Pictures Library, which includes a tile for each folder within your Pictures library as well as for any individual photos that aren't part of any album (see Figure 7.6).

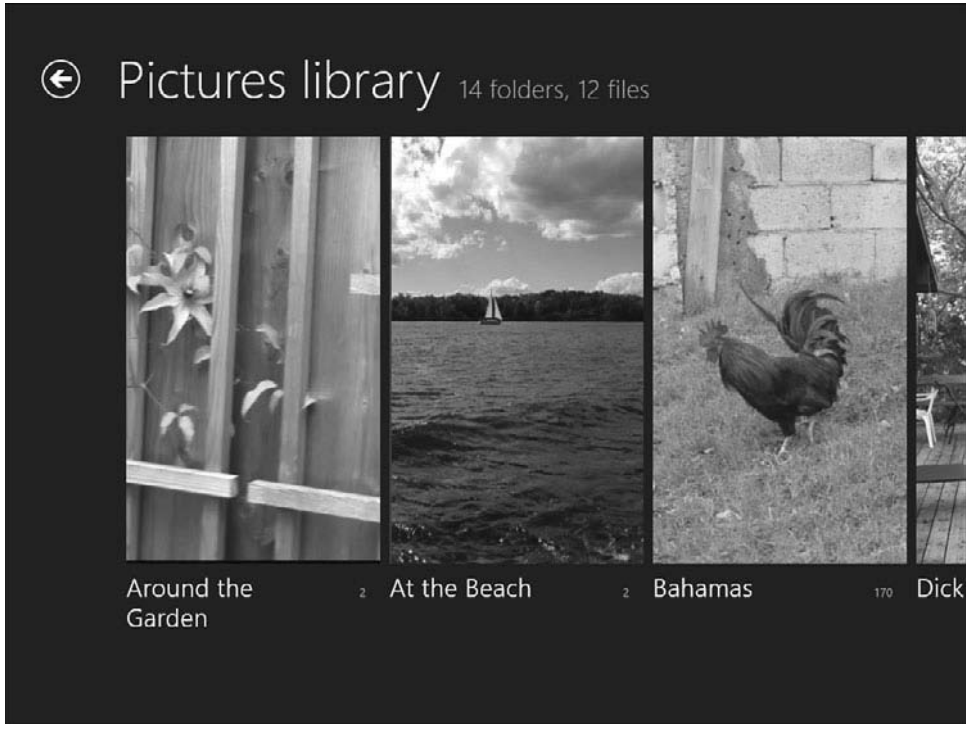

Figure 7.6 *The Photos app displays a tile for each folder in the Pictures library.*

Note

Facebook, SkyDrive, and Flickr Photos

When you first load the Photos app, you might notice the three other tiles there: Facebook, SkyDrive photos, and Flickr photos. They are Internet-based photo services, and to use them, you need a Microsoft account (see Chapter 10, "Getting Online").

Select the folder you want to view and then double-click a photo to open it up full screen. From here, you navigate the photos like so:

- **View the next photo**—Move the mouse pointer over the current photo and then click the right arrow or press the **right-arrow** key on the keyboard; on a tablet, slide the current photo off to the left.
- **View the previous photo**—Move the mouse pointer over the current photo and then click the left arrow or press the **left-arrow** key on the keyboard; on a tablet, slide the current photo off to the right.
- **Jump to any photo**—Press **Esc** to return to the album, use the scrollbar to locate the photo (or swipe your touchscreen), and then double-click the photo.

Using a Photo as the Lock Screen Background

You can use one of your own photos as the background image for the Windows 8 Lock screen. To set this up, use the Photos app to open the folder that contains the photo you want to use and then open the photo itself. Right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge), select **Set As**, and then select **Lock Screen**.

Watching a Photo Slideshow

Viewing photos one at a time by hand gives you control over what you view and how long you view it, but it's a bit of work. If you feel like making your PC do some of the work for a change, follow these steps to see a slideshow of the photos in a Pictures library folder:

1. Run the Photos app and open the **Pictures** library.
2. Open the folder you want to view.
3. (Optional) To start the slideshow with a particular photo, double-click that photo to open it.

Deleting a Photo

To delete a photo you no longer want to keep, use the Photos app to open the folder that contains the photo you want to delete and then open the photo itself. Right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge) and then select **Delete**. When Photos asks you to confirm, select **Delete**.

4. Right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge of your touchscreen) and then select **Slide Show**. Photos begins running through the photos, with each photo displayed onscreen for about three seconds.
5. When you're done, press **Esc** to stop the slide show. Press **Esc** again to exit the current image.

Fixing Your Photos

No matter how good your photography skills, mistakes happen. Your photo might be rotated the wrong way, or the image includes some extra, unwanted material (such as a thumb). The Photos app can help here, but only just: The app comes with just two tools for fixing your photos—one for rotating photos and another for cropping out unwanted elements. The next two sections provide you with the details.

Not All Tools Are Available For All Photos

The Photos app's scant editing tools are even more limited in that they're not available for all types of photos. If you follow the techniques that I outline in the next two sections and find that you don't see the tools that I describe, it means that they're not available for that particular type of image.

Rotating a Photo

All digital cameras enable you to rotate the camera to pictures that are either wider than they are tall (this is called *landscape* orientation because the typical shot would be a wide landscape) or taller than they are wide (this is called *portrait* orientation because the typical shot would be a picture of a person). If you find that you have a photo that isn't being displayed with the correct orientation, you can use the Photos app to rotate the photo into the correct position. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Run the Photos app and open the **Pictures** library.
2. Open the folder that contains the photo you want to rotate.
3. Double-click the photo to open it.
4. Right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge of your touchscreen) and then select **Rotate**. The Photos app rotates the photo 90 degrees clockwise.
5. Repeat step 4 until the photo is in the correct orientation.

Cropping Out Unwanted Elements

Despite your best efforts, you might end up with a photo that includes some unwanted element near the edge of the photo. It might be a tree branch that you didn't notice, a person who walked into the frame at the last second, or a bit of a finger that accidentally covered part of the lens.

Fortunately, you can get rid of these eyesores by cutting them out of the photo using a process known as *cropping*. With this technique, you specify a rectangular area of the photo that you want to keep. Anything outside that rectangle is removed from the photo. Here's how it works:

1. Run the Photos app and open the **Pictures** library.
2. Open the folder that contains the photo you want to crop.
3. Double-click the photo.
4. Right-click the screen (or swipe up from the bottom edge of your touchscreen) and then select **Crop**. The Photos app displays the cropping rectangle on your photo, as shown in Figure 7.7.

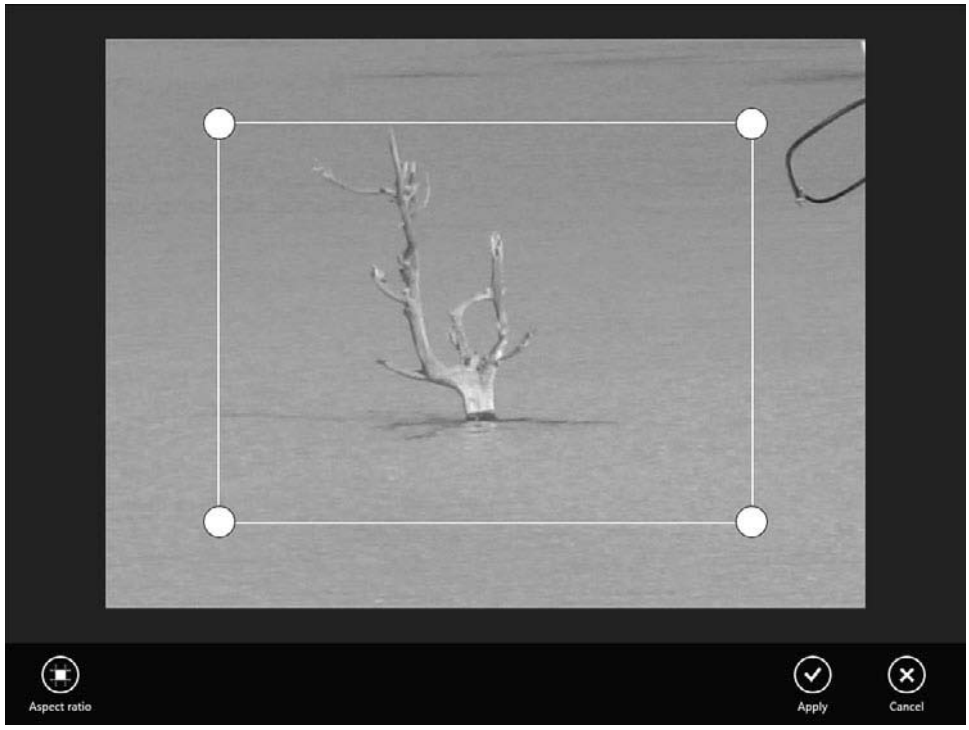

Figure 7.7 *Use the cropping rectangle to specify the area of the photo that you want to retain.*

5. Drag the corners of the rectangle to set the area of the photo that you want to preserve.
6. Select **Apply**. The Photos app crops the photo.

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