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The Relationship between Information Literacy Competence and Library Users' Information-Seeking Behavior at the Library of the Padang Health Polytechnic, Ministry of Health

Puteri Salsabila & Desriyeni
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
desriyeni@fbs.unp.ac.id; puterisalsabila04@gmail.com

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of information technology has broadened access to digital information resources; however, users do not always possess adequate competence to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. This condition underscores the importance of information literacy as a key competency shaping information-seeking behavior in academic library contexts. This study aims to examine the relationship between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior among users of the Library of Padang Health Polytechnic, Ministry of Health. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 99 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics and Spearman Rank correlation. The findings show that users' information literacy competence was categorized as very high (mean = 3.32), while their information-seeking behavior was categorized as high (mean = 3.20). Correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior ($r = 0.595$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that higher information literacy competence

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is associated with more effective information-seeking behavior. The study contributes to the literature on academic library services by demonstrating the relevance of information literacy in supporting effective access to and use of information. Practically, the findings highlight the need to strengthen information literacy programs to improve library service quality and support students' academic success.

Keywords: Information Literacy; Information-Seeking Behavior; Academic Library; Library Users; Health Polytechnic Students.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information technology has significantly transformed the way individuals access, utilize, and disseminate information. The widespread availability of internet-based resources, digital databases, and social media platforms has enabled users to obtain information quickly and conveniently. Within higher education, this development has expanded opportunities for students to access scholarly resources that support learning, research, and academic achievement. However, the abundance of information available in digital environments has also created challenges related to information overload, making it increasingly difficult for users to identify, evaluate, and utilize reliable information effectively (Lehman & Miller, 2020). As a result, the ability to manage information critically has become an essential competency for students in contemporary academic settings. The availability of information does not automatically guarantee that individuals can acquire accurate knowledge. Many students tend to rely on information that is easily accessible without critically assessing its credibility and relevance. In the digital era, effective information use requires the ability to distinguish trustworthy sources from unreliable ones, evaluate information quality, and apply information appropriately to specific needs (Yu et al., 2024). Consequently, information literacy has become a crucial competency for navigating the increasingly complex information environment of higher education.

Information literacy refers to the ability to identify information needs, locate relevant information, evaluate sources critically, and use information effectively and ethically (Chourio-Acevedo et al., 2024). In academic contexts, these competencies are essential because students are continuously exposed to diverse information sources with varying levels of authority and reliability. Information literacy supports students in developing effective search strategies, selecting appropriate resources, and making informed academic decisions

(Pinto et al., 2024). Furthermore, information-literate individuals are better equipped to participate in lifelong learning and adapt to rapidly changing information environments (Taylor & DiGiacomo, 2023). The importance of information literacy is particularly evident in higher education institutions, where students are expected to engage with scholarly information and evidence-based resources. Through strong information literacy competencies, students can formulate search strategies, evaluate information critically, and overcome challenges encountered during the information-seeking process (Ozor & Toner, 2022). Moreover, information literacy contributes to critical thinking skills and enables individuals to make responsible use of information in academic and professional contexts (Madani et al., 2025). Closely related to information literacy is information-seeking behavior, which refers to the actions and strategies employed by individuals to satisfy their information needs. Information-seeking behavior includes identifying information needs, selecting search terms, choosing information sources, evaluating retrieved information, and determining whether the information obtained is relevant and useful (Vinyard et al., 2025). In academic environments, effective information-seeking behavior is essential because it influences students' ability to locate and utilize scholarly resources efficiently.

Previous studies have shown that many students prioritize speed and convenience when searching for information rather than critically evaluating source quality. As a result, information-seeking activities may not always be systematic or effective. Students frequently depend on easily accessible online sources despite potential concerns regarding credibility and academic reliability (Atman Uslu & Yildiz Durak, 2022). Such conditions indicate that effective information-seeking behavior is strongly influenced by users' information literacy competencies. Individuals with limited information literacy skills may encounter difficulties in selecting keywords, identifying reliable resources, and distinguishing scholarly information from non-academic content (Chlomoudis et al., 2022). The relationship between information literacy and information-seeking behavior is particularly important among students in health-related disciplines. Health science students regularly interact with scientific information that must be accurate, current, and evidence-based because such information serves as the foundation for learning, laboratory activities, and future professional practice (Amit-Aharon et al., 2020). Consequently, these students require strong competencies in identifying, evaluating, and utilizing reliable information sources, including scholarly journals, academic books, and specialized databases.

Academic libraries play a strategic role in supporting these competencies. As central learning resources within higher education institutions, academic libraries provide access to information resources and facilitate the development of information literacy through training programs, instructional services, and research support (Kim, 2025). In the digital era, academic libraries have evolved beyond traditional repositories and increasingly function as active learning environments that promote critical engagement with information (Amri, 2025). Nevertheless, the availability of information resources alone does not guarantee effective information use. Students' ability to benefit from library services largely depends on their competencies in searching, evaluating, and utilizing information effectively. Studies have demonstrated that students often experience difficulties in locating academic information due to insufficient information literacy skills, limited familiarity with scholarly databases, and inadequate search strategies (Zhu et al., 2026). Such challenges highlight the importance of understanding how information literacy competencies influence information-seeking behavior within academic settings. This issue is particularly relevant in specialized institutions such as health polytechnics, where students rely heavily on scientific information to support their academic activities.

The Library of Padang Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health serves as an appropriate context for investigating this issue. As a health-focused higher education institution, students are encouraged to utilize library resources extensively for coursework, assignments, and academic research. Therefore, understanding the relationship between information literacy competencies and information-seeking behavior is essential for improving library services and supporting students' academic success. Several previous studies have explored information literacy and information-seeking behavior in higher education settings. Suharto (2014) found that university library users generally demonstrated good information literacy competencies in accessing and utilizing information. Hutapea et al. (2021) reported that students had implemented several stages of information-seeking behavior but still experienced challenges related to keyword selection and information retrieval. Similarly, Syarifah et al. (2023) identified relatively strong information literacy competencies among university students while noting difficulties in locating relevant information sources. Saputri (2025) revealed that limitations in collections, internet access, and information literacy affected users' information-seeking activities. Although these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on either information literacy or information-seeking behavior as separate constructs.

The research gap addressed in this study lies in the limited empirical investigation of the relationship between information literacy competencies and information-seeking behavior, particularly within health science higher education environments. Previous studies have predominantly employed descriptive approaches and different theoretical frameworks, such as IFLA, Seven Pillars, and Ellis's model, without comprehensively examining how information literacy competencies influence information-seeking behavior. Furthermore, studies integrating the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy and Carol Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model remain scarce in the context of academic health libraries. To address this gap, the present study adopts the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education as the theoretical basis for measuring information literacy competencies. The framework emphasizes understanding information authority, information creation processes, information value, and strategic information searching (ACRL, 2016). In addition, the study employs Carol Kuhlthau's Information Search Process model, which conceptualizes information seeking as a process involving initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation stages (Kuhlthau, 1991). The novelty of this study lies in integrating the ACRL Framework and Kuhlthau's Information Search Process model to explain the relationship between information literacy competencies and information-seeking behavior among health science students. Unlike previous studies that examined these variables independently, this research investigates their empirical relationship within a specialized academic library context. Moreover, the study provides evidence that information literacy competencies and information-seeking behavior are both at high levels and are positively associated with one another. The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between information literacy competencies and information-seeking behavior ($r = 0.595$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that students with stronger information literacy competencies tend to demonstrate more effective information-seeking behavior.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the relationship between information literacy competencies and information-seeking behavior among users of the Library of Padang Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of information literacy programs, strengthen academic library services, and provide empirical evidence regarding the role of information literacy in supporting effective information-seeking behavior among health science students.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the relationship between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior among library users at the Library of Padang Health Polytechnic, Ministry of Health. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables the objective measurement of variables through numerical data and statistical analysis. The correlational method was adopted to determine the existence, direction, and strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables without manipulating any research variables. The research was conducted in 2025 at the Library of Padang Health Polytechnic, Ministry of Health. The study focused on two main variables: information literacy competence as the independent variable and information-seeking behavior as the dependent variable. Information literacy competence was operationalized based on the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. The indicators included the ability to evaluate the credibility of information sources, understand how information is created, apply ethical principles in information use, and employ effective information-searching strategies. Information-seeking behavior was measured using Carol C. Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model, which comprises six stages: initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation.

The population consisted of all active users of the Library of Padang Health Polytechnic in 2025, totaling 10,342 students from various academic programs. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in 99 respondents. A purposive sampling technique was employed, targeting students who frequently visited the library. These participants were selected because they were considered to possess sufficient experience in utilizing library services and information resources, enabling them to provide relevant and accurate responses aligned with the objectives of the study. The research utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through questionnaire administration, while secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, library reports, books, and scholarly publications relevant to the research topic. The primary instrument was a structured questionnaire developed based on the theoretical indicators of each variable. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items, including 12 statements measuring information literacy competence and 18 statements measuring information-seeking behavior. Responses were

assessed using a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with scores ranging from 1 to 4.

Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing. Content validity was assessed by language and subject-matter experts to ensure linguistic clarity and conceptual relevance. Construct validity was evaluated using Pearson Product Moment correlation at a significance level of 0.10. The results indicated that all questionnaire items exceeded the required critical value and were therefore considered valid. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha through SPSS software. The reliability coefficients were 0.897 for the information literacy competence variable and 0.940 for the information-seeking behavior variable, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability. Data collection was conducted through several stages. First, data verification was performed to ensure the completeness and accuracy of respondents' answers. Second, the responses were organized and tabulated according to research variables and indicators. Subsequently, a normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method to determine whether the data met the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis.

Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Descriptive analysis was conducted using mean scores to describe the levels of information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior among respondents. The mean values were then categorized into very low, low, high, and very high levels based on predetermined interval classifications. To examine the relationship between the two variables, Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was employed when the data met the normality assumption. If the normality requirement was not satisfied, Spearman Rank correlation was applied as a non-parametric alternative. The strength of the relationship was interpreted using correlation coefficient criteria, while statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.10 level. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the statistical findings to address the research objectives and determine whether the proposed hypothesis was accepted or rejected.

RESULTS

1. Prerequisite Analysis Test

A normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test to determine whether the data met the normality assumption. Data are considered normally distributed if the significance value (p) is greater than 0.05.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Variables	Shapiro–Wilk (Sig.)	Interpretation
Information Literacy Competence	< 0.001	Not Normally Distributed
Information-Seeking Behavior	< 0.001	Not Normally Distributed

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Based on Table 1. Normality Test Result, both variables obtained significance values of < 0.001, which are lower than 0.05. Therefore, the data for Information Literacy Competence and Information-Seeking Behavior are not normally distributed. As a result, further analysis was conducted using non-parametric statistical methods, which are more appropriate for the characteristics of the data.

2. Hypothesis Testing

a. Spearman Correlation Test

The relationship between Information Literacy Competence (X) and Information-Seeking Behavior (Y) was analyzed using the Spearman Rank correlation test because both variables were not normally distributed.

Table 2. Spearman Rank Correlation Test

Variables	Coefficient Correlation	Sig.	Information
Competence Literacy Information (X) – Behavior Search Information (Y)	0.595	< 0.001	Significant

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Based on Table 2, the Spearman correlation test produced a correlation coefficient of 0.595 with a significance value of < 0.001. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, there is a significant relationship between Information Literacy Competence and Information-Seeking Behavior. The positive correlation coefficient indicates that higher information literacy competence is associated with better information-seeking behavior. With a coefficient value of 0.595, the relationship can be categorized as moderately strong.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the information literacy competence of users at the Library of the Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health Padang is categorized as very high, as reflected by a mean score of 3.32. This result demonstrates that most respondents possess adequate abilities in identifying information needs, evaluating the

credibility of information sources, understanding the information creation process, applying ethical principles in information use, and implementing effective information-search strategies. These competencies are particularly important in higher education environments, where students are continuously exposed to a vast amount of information from various print and digital sources with differing levels of reliability and academic quality.

The high level of information literacy competence identified in this study suggests that students have developed the cognitive and practical skills necessary to navigate the increasingly complex information environment of the digital era. The contemporary information landscape is characterized not only by abundance but also by challenges associated with misinformation, information overload, and varying degrees of source credibility. Therefore, the ability to critically assess information has become a fundamental academic competency. In the context of health education, these competencies are even more crucial because students frequently rely on scientific evidence and authoritative information to support learning activities, clinical practice preparation, and professional development.

The findings support the conceptual framework proposed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2016), which views information literacy as a set of interconnected abilities involving the recognition of information needs, critical evaluation of information sources, ethical use of information, and strategic information exploration. The relatively high scores obtained by respondents suggest that they have internalized several essential dimensions of the ACRL Framework. In particular, the ability to assess source credibility reflects the principle of *Authority Is Constructed and Contextual*, which emphasizes that authority should be evaluated based on context and evidence rather than accepted uncritically. This finding is consistent with Rose-Wiles (2024), who argues that understanding authority and expertise is a critical component of information literacy in higher education settings.

Furthermore, the results indicate that respondents possess a strong understanding of information creation processes. This finding aligns with the ACRL frame *Information Creation as a Process*, which highlights the importance of recognizing how information is produced, reviewed, disseminated, and consumed. Students who understand the processes underlying information production are generally better equipped to differentiate between scholarly and non-scholarly sources and to evaluate information quality more effectively. Hendrigan et al. (2024) similarly found that awareness of information production mechanisms significantly

enhances individuals' capacity to evaluate the reliability and usefulness of information sources.

The high score obtained in the ethical use of information dimension further demonstrates that respondents understand the value of information and recognize the importance of responsible information use. Ethical information practices, including proper citation, avoidance of plagiarism, and respect for intellectual property rights, are fundamental academic skills that contribute to scholarly integrity. This finding supports the argument presented by Latham et al. (2019), who emphasize that ethical engagement with information constitutes a critical aspect of information literacy development. The ability to apply strategic search techniques also suggests that respondents possess practical skills necessary for effective information retrieval, including keyword selection, source identification, and search refinement.

In addition to information literacy competence, the study reveals that information-seeking behavior among respondents is also categorized as high, with a mean score of 3.20. This finding indicates that students demonstrate positive information-seeking patterns characterized by awareness of information needs, purposeful information exploration, source selection, information collection, and effective information utilization. Such behaviors are essential for academic success because they enable students to access relevant information efficiently and to support evidence-based learning and decision-making processes.

The results can be interpreted through the lens of Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model, which conceptualizes information seeking as a progressive and dynamic process involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. According to Kuhlthau (1991), information seeking begins with the recognition of an information need and progresses through stages of initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation. The high level of information-seeking behavior observed in this study suggests that respondents are generally capable of navigating these stages successfully.

The initiation stage requires individuals to recognize knowledge gaps and information needs. The positive findings indicate that respondents are aware of the importance of seeking information to support academic tasks and problem-solving activities. During the selection stage, students must define and focus their information needs. The results suggest that respondents are capable of identifying relevant topics and determining

appropriate directions for information exploration. This ability is particularly important because a clearly defined information need facilitates more effective search strategies and improves retrieval outcomes.

The exploration stage is often characterized by uncertainty and confusion due to exposure to diverse and sometimes contradictory information sources. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that respondents are generally capable of navigating this complexity. Their ability to evaluate source credibility and apply search strategies likely contributes to their effectiveness during this phase. The formulation stage, which involves refining and clarifying the focus of inquiry, also appears to be well developed among respondents. Such capability enables students to transform broad information needs into more manageable and researchable questions.

Similarly, the collection and presentation stages demonstrate respondents' ability to gather relevant information and communicate findings effectively. The strong performance in these dimensions suggests that students not only retrieve information but also utilize it meaningfully to support academic objectives. This finding is consistent with Jefferson et al. (2020), who argue that the Information Search Process remains highly relevant in contemporary digital environments because it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals seek, evaluate, and use information.

One of the most significant findings of this study is the existence of a positive and statistically significant relationship between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior. The Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.595 indicates a moderate-to-strong positive relationship, suggesting that students with higher levels of information literacy competence tend to exhibit more effective information-seeking behaviors. This finding supports the study's hypothesis and demonstrates that information literacy competence constitutes an important factor influencing how individuals search for and utilize information.

The observed relationship can be explained by the fact that information literacy provides the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for effective information-seeking activities. Individuals who understand how information is created, evaluated, and used are better prepared to navigate complex information environments. They are more likely to employ systematic search strategies, evaluate sources critically, and make informed decisions regarding information selection and use. Conversely, individuals with lower levels of

information literacy may struggle to identify appropriate sources, assess credibility, and retrieve relevant information efficiently.

These findings are consistent with previous studies examining the relationship between information literacy and information-seeking behavior. Ozor and Toner (2022) found that information literacy competence significantly contributes to students' ability to formulate effective search strategies and identify reliable information sources. Similarly, Atman Uslu and Yildiz Durak (2022) reported that students with stronger information literacy skills demonstrate more sophisticated information-seeking behaviors and are better equipped to navigate digital information environments. The current study extends these findings by providing empirical evidence from a health education context, thereby contributing to the growing body of literature emphasizing the interconnected nature of information literacy and information-seeking behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the complementary nature of the ACRL Framework and Kuhlthau's Information Search Process model. While the ACRL Framework focuses on the competencies required to engage effectively with information, the ISP model explains how these competencies are applied throughout the information-seeking process. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how individuals interact with information in academic contexts. The results suggest that information literacy competence serves as a critical enabler of successful information-seeking behavior, supporting both cognitive and behavioral dimensions of information use.

The study also contributes to the broader discourse on information literacy in higher education. As digital technologies continue to transform information access and dissemination, universities and academic libraries face increasing challenges in preparing students to engage critically and responsibly with information. The findings highlight the importance of integrating information literacy instruction into academic curricula and library services. Information literacy should not be viewed merely as a technical skill but as a comprehensive set of competencies that support lifelong learning, critical thinking, and evidence-based decision-making.

Practically, the findings have important implications for library management and educational policy. Academic libraries should continue to develop and expand information literacy programs, workshops, and instructional services designed to enhance students' information competencies. Such initiatives may include training in database searching, source

evaluation, citation management, and ethical information use. Since information literacy competence is positively associated with information-seeking behavior, investments in literacy development are likely to produce broader benefits in terms of academic performance and information utilization. For librarians, the findings provide evidence supporting their role as educators and facilitators of information literacy development. Modern academic libraries are increasingly expected to function not only as repositories of information resources but also as centers for learning support and knowledge creation. By designing targeted literacy programs and collaborating with faculty members, librarians can contribute significantly to students' academic success and information competence. For students, the results emphasize the importance of continuously developing information literacy skills in response to evolving information environments. As health sciences increasingly rely on evidence-based practices, students must be capable of identifying authoritative information sources, evaluating research quality, and applying information ethically and effectively. These competencies will remain essential throughout their academic and professional careers.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within a single institutional context, namely the Library of the Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health Padang. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to students in other universities or academic disciplines with different educational and information environments. Future studies should include multiple institutions to enhance external validity and provide broader insights into the relationship between information literacy and information-seeking behavior. Second, the study employed a quantitative correlational design, which allows for the identification of relationships but does not establish causal relationships between variables. Although information literacy competence was found to be positively associated with information-seeking behavior, it cannot be concluded that one variable directly causes changes in the other. Future research could employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to explore causal mechanisms and gain deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions. Third, data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to social desirability bias and subjective interpretation. Respondents may have overestimated their competencies or behaviors, potentially affecting the accuracy of the findings. Future studies could complement survey data with observational methods, performance-based assessments,

or qualitative interviews to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of information literacy and information-seeking practices.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior among students of the Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health Padang are both at high levels and are positively associated with one another. The findings confirm that information literacy competence plays a significant role in shaping effective information-seeking behavior and support the relevance of both the ACRL Framework and Kuhlthau's Information Search Process model in explaining students' interactions with information. By highlighting the importance of information literacy in academic contexts, this study contributes to theoretical understanding, informs library practice, and underscores the need for continued investment in information literacy education within higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the relationship between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior among users of the Library of the Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health Padang. The findings reveal that respondents demonstrate a high level of information literacy competence, reflected in their ability to evaluate the credibility of information sources, understand information creation processes, apply ethical principles in information use, and employ effective information-search strategies. Likewise, information-seeking behavior was found to be at a high level, indicating that respondents are capable of recognizing information needs, identifying search objectives, exploring multiple information sources, collecting relevant information, and utilizing information effectively to support academic activities. The study further confirms a positive and statistically significant relationship between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior, indicating that individuals with stronger information literacy skills tend to exhibit more effective and systematic information-seeking practices.

These findings provide a clear answer to the research objective by demonstrating that information literacy competence plays a substantial role in shaping users' information-seeking behavior. The results highlight the importance of information literacy as a foundational competency that enables students to navigate complex information environments, particularly in the context of higher education where access to digital

information continues to expand rapidly. The study contributes theoretically by reinforcing the applicability of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy and Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model in explaining the interaction between information literacy competence and information-seeking behavior. It also contributes practically by offering empirical evidence that can support the development of library services, information literacy instruction, and user education programs within academic institutions.

The implications of this study suggest that strengthening information literacy competence should become a strategic priority for academic libraries and higher education institutions. Enhancing users' ability to evaluate, access, and utilize information effectively may contribute to improved academic performance, critical thinking, and evidence-based learning. Therefore, libraries are encouraged to implement continuous information literacy training programs, digital resource workshops, and instructional activities focused on information evaluation and search strategies. Future research should involve broader populations, different institutional contexts, and additional variables such as digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and technology utilization to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing information-seeking behavior in contemporary academic environments.

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