



The University of New Mexico

Report on the Project to Collect Uniform Crime Report Data in New Mexico, Phase 2

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This is a summary of Phase 2 of the New Mexico Crime Data Collection Project. In September 2009 we began Phase 1 to increase the number of New Mexico law enforcement agencies submitting their Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and improve the quality of the reports. Phase 1 was funded by a grant from the Department of Public Safety with funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Work on Phase 2 of the project began in March 2011 and ended June 30, 2011. Phase 2 funding was provided by a grant from DPS and the U.S. Department of Justice, Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program.

In this paper, we briefly review the federal UCR program and we describe our Phase 2 objectives and our efforts to meet each objective.

Overview of Uniform Crime Reporting Program

The Uniform Crime Reporting Program is official data on crime that is reported by law enforcement agencies throughout the United States to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The UCR Program collects information on crimes reported by law enforcement agencies regarding the violent crimes of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as well as the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. These are Part 1 crimes and are serious crimes by definition and/or by volume. The UCR limits the reporting of known offenses to the eight selected offenses because they are the crimes most likely to be reported and most likely to occur with enough frequency to provide an adequate basis for comparison. The program also collects arrest data for Part 1 offenses and for 21 other offenses that include all other crimes except traffic violations and are known at Part 2 offenses (FBI, 2009). Crime statistics are compiled from UCR data and published annually by the FBI.

UCR is a voluntary program administered by the FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Division. Each month participating agencies voluntarily report the number of Part 1 index crimes in their jurisdiction to the FBI. Agencies also report the number of crimes cleared and the number of arrests for Part 2 crimes. Agencies must report offenses and arrests in the authorized UCR format. This is accomplished using the UCR system for classifying and scoring offenses. Classifying and scoring crimes are the two most important functions that a participant in the UCR Program performs (FBI, 2004).

Classifying, is determining the proper crime category to report offenses to UCR. The classification is based on the facts of an agency's investigation of the crime not on the findings of a court or the decision of a prosecutor.

Law enforcement agencies decide the classification of the crime and then determine whether the crime is a Part I offense. The agency scores the crime accordingly, if it is a Part I offense. The UCR Hierarchy Rule requires that when more than one Part I offense is classified, the agency must identify the offense that is highest on the hierarchy list and score that offense involved and not the other offense(s) in the multiple-offense situation.

UCR treats Part II offenses differently. Part II offense data are only collected if the offense resulted in an arrest. The data elements collected for Part II offenses are the type of offense, the age, sex, and race of the offender. The UCR Program maintains uniformity of offense and arrest

data for Part I and Part II offenses using the definitions for each classification in the UCR Handbook (FBI, 2004).

UCR data is important for several reasons. The UCR Program provides a nationwide view of crime including fluctuations of the level of crime nationally and for local jurisdictions. UCR data are also used in determining federal grants, i.e., Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG) and DOJ DNA Initiative grants. UCR Program data are also used to report on crime at the state and local law enforcement agency level and are used in law enforcement administration, operation and management.

Grant Funding

Grant funding allocations to the state and law enforcement agencies in New Mexico have been effected by the State's low rate of participation in the national UCR program. An examination of the UCR data helps to clarify the problem in New Mexico. In 2005, 100 (70%) of the 143 law enforcement agencies in NM reported UCR data to DPS or directly to the FBI. Two years later, only 70 (49%) agencies reported crimes to DPS or directly to the FBI UCR Program, a 21% decrease in participation, and in 2008 only 66 (46%) reported to DPS or directly to the FBI. Nationally, in 2009, law enforcement agencies active in the UCR Program represented more than 295 million United States inhabitants—96.3 percent of the total population. A breakdown of the national coverage shows 97.1 percent of the population lives in Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 90.9 percent of the population lives in cities outside metropolitan areas, and 93.0 percent of the population is in nonmetropolitan counties. According to the 2007 annual UCR report published by the FBI in October 2008, crime reported in New Mexico covered approximately 85% of the state's population. To meet the national reporting standard set by the FBI, New Mexico should account for 96.3% of the state's population.

In 2008, just 35 (24%) of New Mexico's law enforcement agencies made a complete 12-month report to DPS. Thirty-one agencies (22%) made partial reports, i.e., reporting fewer than 12 months worth of data. Non-reporting and partial reporting has implications aside from the obvious limitation on the reported level of crime in the state, which impacts federal funding. Because of its low participant level, New Mexico UCR data is not a reliable measure of serious or violent crime in the state.

Future Reporting Protocols

The FBI is undertaking a wholesale redesign and redevelopment of the system that has supported their UCR Program for more than 30 years. The FBI's UCR Redevelopment Project (UCRRP) is an effort to migrate all submissions to an electronic interface on or before 2013 when they deploy a new system. Paper submissions or the electronic submission of printed documents (such as Portable Document Format files) will no longer be accepted beginning in 2013. The UCRRP will contact each state UCR Program manager currently submitting crime data via paper to ensure that every state UCR Program is able to participate electronically when the new system goes live in 2013 (FBI, 2010). Unfortunately, unless New Mexico becomes a recognized State UCR Program, each NM law enforcement agency will have to develop a method for complying with the FBI's 2013 deadline.

Past Efforts to Increase Agency Participation

Efforts to increase the number of agencies reporting to DPS and improve the quality of reports have occurred in New Mexico before now. Beginning in 1996 through 1998 the Institute for Social Research staff undertook a similar endeavor. In the mid-1990s, before ISR worked on increasing UCR participation rates, 51 out of approximately 114 law enforcement agencies in New Mexico submitted UCR data. By 1997, ISR was able to increase reporting by 17.3% in one year. ISR did not attempt to collect UCR data from tribal agencies. ISR reported having difficulty determining exactly which agencies report for other agencies. One of ISR's goals for 1998 was to address this problem and determine which agencies report their own data. Funding for this project ended after two years (Guerin et al, 1998).

During the past 10 years, DPS has simplified the reporting process and helped local agencies report their data. To achieve this effort, DPS built a web-based UCR reporting system and offered free access to all local law enforcement agencies. Access to the system is gained from a secure website and the system software is downloaded from the DPS website.

The Federal UCR State Certification Program

The UCR State Certification Program is a system that allows for cooperation between the FBI and state agencies to ensure overall consistent and comparable UCR data. A Certified State UCR Program acts as a centralized hub collecting crime reports in various forms (e.g., hard-copy, email, and machine-readable data) and then submitting the reports to the FBI in a standard format. A State UCR Program is flexible and collects data from counties, towns, cities, colleges, and tribes. A set of national guidelines and conditions regulate the state programs in order to facilitate accurate nation-wide crime statistics.

Certified state programs function as liaisons between local agencies and the FBI. Many states have mandatory reporting requirements. State UCR Programs, in most cases, provide direct and frequent service to participating law enforcement agencies, make information readily available for statewide use, and help to streamline the national UCR program operation. Local agencies in those states that do not have a State Program (i.e., New Mexico, Indiana, and Mississippi) must submit crime statistics to their uncertified state program (i.e., New Mexico DPS) or directly to the FBI. The FBI has recommended the New Mexico achieve state certified UCR Program status.

Requirements to Qualify as a Certified State UCR Program

A qualifying state program must: comply with the FBI's six criteria. The criteria established for State Programs ensure consistency and comparability in the data submitted to the national Program, as well as regular and timely reporting. Table 1 lists the six requirements.

Table 1 Certified State UCR Program Requirements	
1	The state program must conform to the national UCR Program standards, definitions, and information required.
2	The state criminal justice agency must have a proven, effective, statewide program and have instituted acceptable quality control procedures.
3	The state crime reporting must cover a percentage of the population at least equal to that covered by the national UCR Program through direct reporting.
4	The state program must have adequate field staff assigned to conduct audits and to assist contributing agencies in record-keeping practices and crime-reporting procedures.
5	The state program must furnish the FBI with all of the detailed data regularly collected by the FBI from individual agencies that report to the state Program in the form of duplicate returns, computer printouts, and/or appropriate electronic media.
6	The state program must have the proven capability (tested over a period of time) to supply all the statistical data required in time to meet publication deadlines of the national UCR Program.

In turn, the FBI is responsible for: editing submitted reports; coordinating directly with individual agency contributors; directing individual agencies to the state wide UCR Program; provide a quality assurance review (QAR) of submitted reports; work with the state UCR Program to conduct agency by agency training of law enforcement record-keeping and crime-reporting procedures, and if necessary distribute report forms to local UCR Programs.

The ISR Project

Accomplishments of Phase 1 of the ISR Project

In 2009, ISR began a pilot project to train law enforcement agency staff to use the UCR system, collect incident reports, and UCR monthly reports from agencies. Our goal was to increase the number of agencies reporting to DPS and improve the quality of reports.

We determined there are 132 Active law enforcement agencies in New Mexico. We targeted 48 agencies to contact during Phase 1 of the project. We completed Phase 1 on March 31, 2011, and partially, due to our efforts a total of 109 (82.6% of 132 agencies) agencies reported at least 3 monthly reports to the FBI during 2009 and 2010. We directly assisted 89 agencies to report their data.

We visited 52 agencies at least once during the project and visited 9 agencies twice, and visited one site three times, a total of 62 site visits. We focused our efforts on two main tasks. One, connecting agencies to the DPS system, i.e., authorizing agency staff to use the DPS system, and

installing the system on their computer training the agency staff to use the DPS system; two, assisting the agencies to complete as many as three years worth of UCR reports for DPS and the FBI.

We helped employees from 61 agencies apply and receive credentials from DPS to use the web-based system. We connected 43 sites to the DPS system, 83% of the 52 sites we visited. We received training from the DPS UCR Program staff on the use of the DPS web-based application. We were also trained by FBI staff on the purpose of the UCR Program, and the rules of uniform classification and scoring. During Phase 1 of the project, our staff trained 52 agency staff during the 62 site visits we made between March 2010 and March 2011. We also organized and conducted four training workshops for local agencies during the project and trained 36 agency staff at these workshops. In total, we trained 88 agency staff during Phase 1. A total of 51 agencies attended a workshop presented by the FBI or one of our workshops. Staff from 11 agencies attended both, the FBI and an ISR workshop.

Our effort to train employees at each agency may help to sustain a UCR record-keeping program at each site. Our objective to train local staff addresses the FBI's requirement that a state criminal justice agency must have a proven, effective, statewide program and have instituted acceptable quality control procedures. We began the project by connecting agencies to the DPS UCR system and training the agency staff how to use the DPS system. However, the more agencies we assisted the more we realized that connecting them to the system and training them, was not enough. Agencies lacked the workforce to be able to assume the task of routinely reporting UCR data. In addition to the need for additional staff, there is constant staff turnover, requiring constant training. To assist the agencies as much as possible we began entering their UCR data in the DPS system and if necessary, compiling their daily Incident Reports into UCR Monthly Reports. We compiled 214 agency Monthly Reports and entered 573 Monthly Reports into the DPS system during Phase 1 of the project.

One of our most significant “peripheral” accomplishments of Phase 1 was the re-creation of the FBI’s 80-year old Tally Book into an Excel format. This effort has been well received and is being used by approximately 10 rural agencies in New Mexico. The FBI and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) have also adopted the tool.

Phase 2 Accomplishments

Phase 2 of the project began in April 2011 and continued to June 30, 2011. Phase 2 included six Objectives. In this section of the report we highlight and discuss each Objective.

Objective 1

Complete a review of the six required conditions necessary to qualify New Mexico for a federally approved State UCR Program including step-by-step instructions for meeting each required condition (see Table 1 for a list of the six Requirements)

We estimate the DPS Law Enforcement Records Bureau (LERB) could meet Requirements 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The DPS system fulfills Requirement 1, that is, the system conforms to the national UCR standards and gathers the information required by the FBI’s national program.

We believe Requirement 2 is not met. The DPS UCR system lacks formal quality control procedures but standard procedures could be drafted to meet this requirement. The LERB and

our staff have a number of training aids and documents that could be expanded and formatted to conceivably meet Requirement 2.

The FBI's *Crime in the United States, 2009*, describes the process used by the FBI to determine the percent of a state population reporting UCR data and equal to the national standard.¹ We believe Requirement 3 is met because of the work we have accomplished in Phase 1 and 2 of this project. Table 2 shows the percentage of the state population covered by UCR reporting agencies compared to the most recent national rates used in 2009. This comparison incorporates the number of New Mexico agencies reporting at least 3 months of UCR data to DPS and the FBI and the corresponding population. We estimate New Mexico exceeds the Total 2009 National category. The table shows all New Mexico city, county, and tribal agencies that report to either the DPS, directly to the FBI, or to the BIA during Phase 2. To fully meet Requirement 3, all reports should be sent to DPS. In New Mexico this would require 16 agencies to report directly to DPS instead of to the FBI.

Population Ranges		Population in Ranges	Number of Reporting Agencies After Phase 2 of Project, 2011	Population Covered by After Phase 1 of Project	Percent of Population Covered	2009 National Percentage
Cities	>250k	521,999	1	521,999	Cities outside Metro areas = 94.8	90.9
	100k to 249,999	0	0	0		
	50k to 99,999	240,442	3	240,442		
	25k to 49,999	261,473	7	261,473		
	10k to 24,999	86,919	7	86,919		
	>10k	207,377	55	178,478		
Counties	Non-Metro Counties	451,824	22	390,237	86.4	93.0
	Metro Counties	1,070,030	6	1,029,103	96.2	97.1
Total		1,318,210★	101	1,289,311	97.8	96.3

★ Total population includes all cities

We believe Requirement 4 is currently being met -- while ISR serves as an “agent” for the LERB. However, Requirement 4 may not be met unless the LERB continues to use ISR or hires additional staff. Currently LERB assigns one staff person to work part-time on the UCR program. There is probably more work than a part-time person is able to meet listed in Requirement 4 (i.e., conduct audits, assist contributing agencies in record-keeping practices and crime-reporting procedures).

¹ The FBI computes estimates for participating agencies not providing 12 months of complete data. For agencies supplying 3 to 11 months of data, the national UCR Program estimates for the missing data by following a standard estimation procedure using the data provided by the agency. If an agency has supplied less than 3 months of data, the FBI computes estimates by using the known crime figures of similar areas within a state and assigning the same proportion of crime volumes to non-reporting agencies. The estimation process considers the following: population size covered by the agency; type of jurisdiction, e.g., police department versus sheriff's office; and geographic location (http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/about/table_methodology.html).

We believe the DPS LERB UCR Program meets Requirement 5. The state program furnishes the FBI with detailed data collected from individual agencies that report to the DPS.

Requirement 6 is met by DPS annually. The LERB staff sends data to the FBI in time for publication deadlines.

Objective 2

Provide a draft report to the New Mexico DPS Law Enforcement Records Bureau by June 30, 2011, describing the steps needed to meet the FBI's six conditions to become a national UCR Program.

We reviewed the process several states (i.e., Louisiana, Colorado, and Iowa) used to gain UCR State program certification. The element these states had in common was to spend time preparing for the FBI's review to become certified. We prescribe the DPS LERB should review the six Certification Requirements and form a committee of DPS staff and experienced local agency staff to work with local agencies to prepare for an audit by the FBI UCR Certification Team. Additionally, a pre-audit by the DPS LERB staff could be helpful to identify weaknesses in the New Mexico UCR process and to correct those weaknesses before a formal audit. Once DPS LERB is satisfied their program is prepared, they should make a formal request to the FBI for certification.

Objective 3

Continue the task of training and connecting to the NMCJIS UCR system non-reporting New Mexico law enforcement agencies. In collaboration with DPS determine the next set of law enforcement agencies to train and connect.

During Phase 2, ISR staff trained 37 law enforcement agency staff, visited 23 agencies, and connected 26 additional agencies to the DPS Web-based UCR system.

Objective 4

Continue the task of collecting crime data from next set of non-reporting law enforcement agencies chosen.

During Phase 2, ISR staff entered 365 Monthly UCR reports to the DPS web-based UCR system. This effort brought three agencies into compliance for a BJA grant funding allocation or at the very least these agencies can now apply when grant funds are available.

Objective 5

Continue working with agencies from the prior contracting period who request or require assistance in connecting and reporting crime data.

During Phase 2, ISR staff contacted 40 agencies that we assisted during Phase 1. This undertaking was essentially to assist these agencies with problems that could be easily resolved. Agencies with significant problems will be contacted in Phase 3, when more time is available for the ISR staff to help.

Objective 6

Provide a draft report to the New Mexico DPS Law Enforcement Records Bureau by June 30, 2011, describing the status of crime reporting in New Mexico and progress made during the contracting period.

This report outlining our work during Phase 2, fulfills Objective 6. A more complete report describing the status of crime reporting in the state will be possible after the BJA grant allocations are published later in 2011. The results of connecting agencies to the DPS system and increasing the number of agencies reporting data should have a positive effect on the BJA grant allocations to New Mexico law enforcement agencies and regional Taskforces.

The result of Phase 1 and 2 of our project has increased the percentage of the population of the state covered by agencies reporting UCR data. We improved the reporting population percentage by connecting agencies to the DPS system and entering monthly UCR reports into the system.

BJA Grant Funding Allocations

In 2009, 31 New Mexico law enforcement agencies were eligible for a federal JAG funding allocation. In 2010, the number of eligible agencies dropped to 29. We contacted the FBI in 2010 and received a list of agencies that needed to submit UCR reports to the FBI in order to become or remain eligible for JAG funding. During Phase 1 we assisted 11 of these agencies by reporting their missing monthly reports to the FBI and entering at least 36 new monthly reports to qualify these agencies for a future JAG funding allocation. Agencies still have to meet JAG eligibility requirements (i.e., a high enough level of crime to be eligible for JAG funding). However, without reporting UCR data these agencies have no chance to be eligible for funding. Table 3 shows the JAG funding allocation to New Mexico agencies for 2009 through 2011.

Future grant funding level

It is too early to determine the full impact of our efforts. The JAG allocation list is not published until late summer and the data we have entered may not be used in the JAG allocation until 2012. Among the agencies we assisted to be eligible during Phase 1 were six County Sheriff's Departments and seven Municipal Police Departments. Reporting Counties are important because they cover a broad area of the state's population.

Table 3 JAG Funding Allocation to New Mexico Law Enforcement Agencies 2009, 2010 & 2011			
Agencies Receiving Funding	JAG 2009 Funding	JAG 2010 Funding	JAG 2011 Funding
Alamogordo Police Department	\$16,004	\$15,097	\$12,963
Albuquerque Police Department	\$675,086	\$637,096	\$508,256
Belen Police Department	\$11,472	\$0	\$0
Bernalillo County Sheriff	\$122,129	\$118,245	\$97,220
Bernalillo Police Department	\$16,381	\$18,649	\$10,802
Bloomfield Police Department	\$15,532	\$11,856	\$0
Carlsbad Police Department	\$16,193	\$19,671	\$17,979
Clovis Police Department	\$33,896	\$33,302	\$29,514
De Baca County Sheriff	\$15,532	\$14,609	\$12,047
Dona Ana County Sheriff	\$39,514	\$43,293	\$35,556
Eddy County Sheriff	\$0	\$0	\$11,754
Espanola Police Department	\$0	\$18,827	\$21,568
Farmington Police Department	\$69,161	\$54,882	\$53,902
Gallup Police Department	\$34,038	\$40,806	\$34,604
Hobbs Police Department	\$55,140	\$49,643	\$30,905
Laguna Tribal Police Department	\$17,939	\$12,699	\$11,205
Las Cruces Police Department	\$66,895	\$64,074	\$50,972
Las Vegas Police Department	\$22,047	\$17,495	\$14,098
Los Lunas Police Department	\$15,012	\$11,634	\$0
McKinley County Sheriff	\$14,351	\$12,033	\$0
Mescalero Apache Tribal Police Department	\$19,875	\$25,754	\$24,534
Otero County Sheriff	\$18,836	\$22,068	\$18,126
Rio Rancho Police Department	\$34,085	\$33,347	\$26,328
Roswell Police Department	\$55,140	\$49,332	\$40,866
San Juan County Sheriff	\$36,492	\$34,457	\$28,928
Santa Fe County Sheriff	\$27,428	\$25,576	\$21,531
Santa Fe Police Department	\$48,153	\$51,064	\$38,083
Silver City Police Department	\$20,772	\$11,500	\$0
Socorro Police Department	\$11,047	\$0	\$0
Taos County Sheriff	\$11,425	\$10,746	\$0
Tucumcari Police Department	\$12,652	\$0	\$0
Valencia County Sheriff	\$23,652	\$20,070	\$14,867

Conclusion

Important points can be made regarding the work of ISR during Phase 2 of our New Mexico Crime Data Collection Project.

1.) New Mexico lags behind the nation in reporting its UCR data and consequently New Mexico receives limited grant funds from the federal government. The only way New Mexico can improve crime reporting is to increase the number of reporting agencies.

2.) Reporting UCR data is important for several reasons. The data provides a view of crime in New Mexico and data are used to determine federal grant eligibility. These data are also used to administer and manage law enforcement operations.

3.) The level of response by agencies to report their UCR data will always be limited without a permanent and consistent program to train and assist agencies to report their UCR data. Temporary projects to improve UCR reporting in New Mexico have had limited success. In the 1990s, a two-year project by ISR increased state UCR reporting levels but within 10 years the reporting level had dropped again.

4.) We estimate Phase 1 and 2 of the current UCR Crime Reporting Project has helped to increase the amount of crime reported in New Mexico. There are 132 active law enforcement agencies potentially able to report UCR crime in New Mexico. Partially, due to our efforts during Phase 1 of the project, 109 (82.6% of 132 agencies) agencies reported at least 3 monthly reports to the FBI during 2009 and 2010. During Phase 1 we assisted 89 agencies to report their data. During the four-month Phase 2 we visited 23 agencies, trained 37 law enforcement staff, and connected 26 agencies to the DPS Web-based UCR system. In total we helped 112 agencies during Phase 1 and 2. At the end of Phase 2, 101 agencies are continuing to report crime to DPS or the FBI.

5.) We discovered few agencies have an adequate computer staff able to connect their agency to the DPS system nor can most agencies afford a stand-alone computer created and maintained only for accessing the DPS NMCJIS UCR system.

6.) The FBI urges every state to have a certified state UCR program. Certified state programs are responsible for collecting and reporting all local agency data to the FBI. Currently, the FBI accepts several UCR reporting methods from agencies, (e.g., printed hardcopy from automated systems, and manually tallied hardcopies on FBI approved forms). The FBI will soon deploy a new data collection system that accepts only MS Excel "flat-files." This change by the FBI makes it imperative for New Mexico to have a certified state UCR program to collect and report data to the FBI.

7.) Six criteria must be met before a state can become a certified state UCR program. We believe New Mexico can meet 5 of the 6 criteria. The current DPS UCR system conforms to the national standards. An adequate portion of the state population is covered by agencies reporting to the FBI. During Phase 1 and 2 of this project, we have shown that NM can assist enough agencies to meet the population requirement and train agencies to correctly gather and report UCR data. DPS has shown it can furnish the FBI with data regularly in the appropriate media and can furnish data in a timely basis.

8.) Training agency staff to use the UCR system is a continuous need that must be addressed for the New Mexico to maintain the number of reporting agencies.

Recommendations

After Phase 1 of the project we offered two recommendations:

- 1. The DPS IT Department should continue to make improvements in the NMCJIS UCR system.** The DPS IT Department is underfunded and short staffed, but we recommend the IT Department focus on improving customer service and address issues dealing with local law enforcement agencies.
- 2. DPS should contract with ISR to continue training and assisting agencies.** Our efforts have increased the number of agencies reporting UCR data to approximately the percentage of the national population covered by the FBI's National program and would meet one of the six requirements for NM to qualify as a state certified UCR program.

Phase 2 recommendation:

We recommend holding discussions with the DPS LERB to review the possibility of New Mexico fulfilling the FBI's Certification Requirements. Topics for the discussion would center on forming a committee of DPS staff and experienced local agency staff to work with local agencies to prepare for an audit by the FBI UCR Certification Team. The committee could perform a pre-audit to identify strengths and weaknesses in the New Mexico UCR process and to correct those weaknesses. Once DPS LERB is satisfied the state is prepared, they could make a formal request to the FBI for certification.

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