Rillor

EXPLAINER

FPDS, SAM.gov and USAspending: where contract data comes from

Contracting officers report contract actions to FPDS, whose search has run only on SAM.gov since February 2026, and USAspending.gov republishes those records with its own delays and gaps.



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Summary

- FPDS and USAspending hold the same federal contract records at two points in one chain. Contracting officers report each contract action under FAR subpart 4.6 [3]. Since 24 February 2026 those reports are searched in SAM.gov and submitted through SAM's Contract Awards Management portal, the "Former FPDS database" [10, 11]. USAspending.gov republishes them beside agency financial data [24, 33].
- GSA's February 2026 bulletin was headed "FPDS.gov Decommissions", but its body retired the ezSearch function only [10]. On 24 October 2026 fpds.gov pages redirected to SAM.gov, and the legacy ATOM feed still returned records modified that week [34].
- The SAM.gov Contract Awards API replaces the feed. It caps search at the first 400,000 records and extracts at the first 1,000,000, allows 10 to 10,000 requests a day by account type, returns contracts deleted in the last six months and holds back DoD-funded DoD records for 90 days [14].
- The copies differ. On 24 October 2026, USAspending's DoD contract transactions fell from 18,343 on 23 July to none on 26 July, about 90 days back [35]. GAO found $77.5 billion of DoD other transaction agreements in SAM.gov for fiscal years 2021 to 2025 that were not reported to USAspending.gov [31].
- Rule text lags behind the systems. The FAR still names fpds.gov [3, 5], FAR 52.204-10 still points to the retired fsrs.gov [9, 16], and USAspending pages give older thresholds [22, 36].

Background

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) required the Office of Management and Budget to ensure, by 1 January 2008, a free, single searchable website listing each federal award's recipient and amount [1]. As enacted, a "Federal award" covered financial assistance as well as "contracts, subcontracts, purchase orders, task orders, and delivery orders", and excluded individual transactions below $25,000 [1]. The site could draw on the Federal Procurement Data System and two assistance systems, and had to be updated within 30 days after an award requiring a posting [1].

The site became USAspending.gov, launched in December 2007 with award obligations only [31]. The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act) expanded FFATA to disclose agency expenditures and link contract, loan and grant spending to programs, under government-wide data standards [2]. It added account data, the appropriations obligated and outlays made for each program activity, posted "monthly when practicable but not less than quarterly" [2]. The Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service maintains the site [33].

FAR 4.603(a) states that "all unclassified Federal award data must be publicly accessible" [3]. FPDS carries the contract part. GAO calls it "the government's principal repository for procurement information" and reports about $755 billion in procurement obligations recorded there for fiscal year 2024 [32]. Its reporting function was integrated into the System for Award Management (SAM) in October 2020. As of May 2025, GSA had retired 10 of its 13 legacy award systems and had no plan or timeline for the remaining three, FPDS among them [32].

That changed in 2026. GAO describes 24 February 2026 as the date on which "SAM.gov replaced the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) as the government's repository for federal procurement information" [31]. Many published descriptions of contract data predate the change. This report traces the chain as it stood on 24 October 2026 and sets out where the copies differ.

Method

What was examined. Each system from the contracting officer's report to its public copies: the Contract Awards Management portal, SAM.gov contract award search, the Contract Awards API, the legacy ATOM feed and USAspending.gov. For each, what it holds, when records arrive, who may read them and what it leaves out. Opportunity, entity and subaward data are covered as separate feeds.

Sources. Statutes as enacted [1, 2]. Regulations on Acquisition.gov: FAR text under FAC 2026-01 [3, 4, 7, 8, 9], the FAR Overhaul part 4 [5] and DFARS PGI 204.6 [6]. GSA's bulletin, transition pages and API documentation [10 to 17]. Treasury's USAspending documentation, API, code and release notes [18 to 30, 36, 37]. GAO and CRS [31 to 33]. Live retrievals on 24 October 2026 [34, 35].

How. Rule text was read first, then system documentation, then oversight findings. USAspending pages rendered by JavaScript were read from the publisher's public source repository and dated by their last change there [20 to 26, 36]. Live behavior was tested from one workstation between 16:38 and 17:00 UTC on 24 October 2026. USAspending queries used four endpoints [35]: download/count and search/spending_by_transaction, each filtered to contract award types A to D, one awarding toptier agency and an action-date window (the default date type [28]), bulk_download/list_monthly_files for all agencies' fiscal year 2026 contract files, and the unlinked_awards procurement report for fiscal year 2025, period 12. Quotations keep the published wording, including outdated system names. Arithmetic is labeled. The Contract Awards API itself was not queried, because it requires an account and key [14].

Findings

1. The reporting chain into SAM.gov

The chain starts with the contracting officer, who is responsible for "the completion and accuracy of the individual contract action report (CAR)". A CAR in draft or error status is not complete [3]. OMB guidance has agencies report the share of CARs entered through automated contract writing systems, the FPDS web portal or other means [32].

Since 24 February 2026 the entry point has a new name. "Agencies' Contract Writing Systems (CWS) will continue to provide data through the SAM Contract Awards Management web portal (Former FPDS database)" [11]. Federal users reach it from sam.gov/contracting and log in "with their legacy FPDS credentials" [11, 13]. On 24 October 2026 that link, an fpds.gov address, redirected to Login.gov with a client identifier for FPDS production [34]. GSA adds government purchase card data at least annually [3]. Each agency's chief acquisition officer certifies, within 120 days after the fiscal year ends, whether and how far its CAR data is complete and accurate [3].

Stage	System	Who uses it	Source
Entry	Contract Awards Management portal (Former FPDS database)	Contracting officers, agency contract writing systems	[11, 13]
Search	SAM.gov contract award search	Anyone with a SAM.gov account	[10, 11]
Reports	SAM.gov Data Bank	SAM.gov users who download or run reports. GSA points to it for NASA award data	[11, 13]
Machine access	SAM.gov Contract Awards API	Account holders with an API key	[14]
Legacy machine access	FPDS ATOM feed	Anyone, while it answers	[10, 34]
Republication	USAspending.gov	Anyone, no account	[10, 19]

SAM.gov's search list puts contract awards beside opportunities, subcontract reports, subcontracting plan reports and other transactions [13]. GSA calls its award data "the authoritative source for government procurement data, mostly used for policy and trend analysis" [10].

2. What FAR 4.6 covers and leaves out

Scope. A contract action is "any oral or written action that results in the purchase, rent, or lease of supplies or equipment, services, or construction using appropriated dollars over the micro-purchase threshold, or modifications to these actions regardless of dollar value" [3]. The threshold is $15,000, with lower figures for some construction and services [4]. Agencies must report definitive contracts, purchase orders over the threshold, indefinite delivery vehicles (IDVs) and all orders under them [3]. When an action mixes funding, only the appropriated portion is reported [3].

Exclusions. "Contract action does not include grants, cooperative agreements, other transactions, real property leases, requisitions from Federal stock, training authorizations, or other non-FAR based transactions" [3]. Actions are not reported when reporting would compromise national security or the data would be classified [3], and DoD adds contracts, agreements or orders that are themselves classified [6]. Subpart 4.6 allows other actions only if they can be kept apart from FAR-based actions and the FPDS Program Office approves in writing [3]. The overhaul text requires written approval from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy [5]. Generic entity identifiers are allowed where naming the contractor "could endanger the mission, contractor, or recipients of the acquired goods or services" [3].

Fields the records lack. "FPDS does not provide reports for certain acquisition information used in the award of a contract action (e.g., subcontracting data, funding data, or accounting data)" [3]. Subcontract reports come from prime contractors and account data from agency financial systems [9, 24].

Identifiers. Each PIID must stay unique governmentwide "for at least 20 years from the date of contract award" [3]. The awardee's unique entity identifier (UEI) must correspond to its name and address in the offer and contract and in its SAM registration [3].

Rule text lags behind the systems. FAR 4.602(c) still says "The FPDS Web site, https://www.fpds.gov, provides instructions for submitting data" [3]. The FAR Overhaul text moves the duty to section 4.301 and marks subpart 4.6 reserved, yet still says FPDS, at https://www.fpds.gov, "provides a comprehensive web-based tool for agencies to report contract actions" [5].

Item	Current rule or system	Older text still published	Sources
Reporting system	SAM.gov Contract Awards Management (Former FPDS database)	"FPDS", https://www.fpds.gov	[3, 5, 11]
Subaward reporting site	SAM.gov, since FSRS.gov retired on 8 March 2025	http://www.fsrs.gov, in FAR 52.204-10	[9, 16]
Micro-purchase threshold	$15,000	USAspending: $10,000 "as of 2022"	[4, 36]

Item	Current rule or system	Older text still published	Sources
Subcontract reporting threshold	$40,000	USAspending: $30,000	[8, 9, 22]

3. The 2026 move and the Contract Awards API

What GSA retired. GSA's bulletin of 9 February 2026 carried the headline "FPDS.gov Decommissions on February 24, 2026" [10]. Its body says: "GSA will decommission the ezSearch function within FPDS.gov on February 24, 2026" [10]. GSA had migrated FPDS.gov functions to SAM.gov since 2020 and moved ezSearch in July 2025 [10]. It said "All of the data that was previously available in FPDS.gov is now available in SAM.gov", that searching needs a SAM.gov account, and that the data remains public on USAspending.gov [10]. The account needs "no specific role", and "Users attempting to access FPDS.gov will be redirected to SAM.gov" [11].

What the domain did on 24 October 2026. The fpds.gov home page, content pages, wiki and data dictionary PDFs returned HTTP 301 to sam.gov/contracting, and the old ezSearch page returned 301 to sam.gov/search [34]. The legacy data dictionary is published on SAM.gov [11].

The ATOM feed. In February GSA wrote that the feed "has been replaced with the SAM.gov Contract Awards API ... and will be retired this coming summer" [10]. A SAM.gov announcement last updated on 18 August 2026 says it "will be retired later in FY 2026" [12]. That fiscal year ended on 30 September 2026, by the convention that starts FY2008 on 1 October 2007 [28]. On 24 October 2026 the feed still answered in the FPDS 1.5 schema. A query for records last modified from 20 to 23 October listed about 100,600 entries, and the deleted-records feed about 300 for 1 to 23 October [34]. The pages reviewed give no new retirement date.

The replacement API. Its change log shows a base version on 5 December 2025 and an update on 25 August 2026 that added `publicDeltaDate` [14]. Its record types run from purchase orders and definitive contracts to IDVs and orders, and include "Other Transaction IDVs", "Other Transaction Orders" and "Other Transaction Agreements" [14].

Feature	Documented behavior
Revealed data	Civilian-funded or civilian-awarded contracts, plus DoD contracts with a Date Signed at least 90 days before today
Unrevealed data	Revealed data plus DoD contracts signed in the last 90 days, and the awardee's immediate and domestic parent UEI and name

Feature	Documented behavior
Who may read unrevealed data	"Available only to users assigned to DoD"
Page size	10 records by default, up to 100
Synchronous search	"It can return only the first 400,000 records"
Extract	A file link, JSON or CSV, "only the first 1,000,000 records"
Deleted contracts	With `deletedStatus`, only contracts deleted in the last 6 months, under the same reveal rule
Date filters	`lastModifiedDate` by last modified date, `publicDeltaDate` by last modified date or reveal date

Source: [14].

The date filters matter for incremental loads. By these definitions, a DoD record signed and last modified 90 days ago becomes public today, so a pull keyed on last-modified date alone can pass over it. `publicDeltaDate` also selects by reveal date [14].

Access tiers. Users need a SAM.gov account and API key [14].

Account	Key	Requests per day
Non-federal user with no role in SAM.gov	Personal	10
Non-federal user with a role in SAM.gov	Personal	1,000
Federal user	Personal	1,000
Non-federal system user	System account	1,000
Federal system user	System account	10,000

Source: [14].

By arithmetic, a non-federal user with no role, at 10 requests of 100 records, reaches 1,000 records a day through search. Both caps apply per query: the API rejects paging once offset times limit passes 400,000, and rejects an extract whose query matches more than 1,000,000 records, asking for a narrower search [14].

Licensed fields. Records containing D&B data "include all base award notices with an award date earlier than 4/4/2022", and the D&B disclaimer on the page states that "Systematic access (electronic harvesting) or extraction of content from the website, including the use of "bots" or "spiders", is prohibited" [14]. Teams that build on older award records have those terms to read.

4. USAspending's layers: transactions, award summaries, accounts and subawards

Award and account data. Agencies upload account spending, including a breakdown by award, and transaction-level award spending [18]. "These files can be linked together to associate award spending with account spending. If a shared ID cannot be found between these files, award spending may be unlinked to any account" [18]. All agencies must submit award outlays monthly since fiscal year 2022, and earlier outlay data may be incomplete [18].

Transactions and summaries. A prime award transaction is the base award or any modification. A prime award summary rolls up the transactions that share a unique award key, and `parent_award_id_piid` holds the PIID of the IDV under which an award was issued [18]. Contracts_Full and Contracts_Delta files carry transactions, and Contracts_PrimeAwardSummaries carries summaries [18].

Files C and D1. "Prime award data on USAspending.gov come from two types of sources: agency financial systems (whose data are submitted in File C) and governmentwide award systems (whose data are extracted in Files D1 and D2)" [24]. File D1 holds procurement transactions with obligation, action date, awarding agency, recipient, place of performance, NAICS and PSC codes and set-aside type, among other fields [23]. File C arrives monthly or quarterly from audited financial systems, and D1 is published up to daily [26].

Unlinked awards. An award only in agency financial systems lacks recipient, location, industry and competition fields. One only in governmentwide award systems lacks treasury account symbol, program activity, object class and outlays [24]. One documented cause is an award under the micro-purchase threshold reported in one file and not the other [24]. USAspending's reporting endpoint counts D1 awards with activity in a period that are not linked to any File C award, and File C awards not linked to any D1 or D2 award [26]. For September 2025 (fiscal year 2025, period 12) it returned these counts on 24 October 2026.

Agency	D1 awards with no File C match	Linked awards	File C awards with no D1 match
Department of Defense	436,140	25,732	27
General Services Administration	19,400	149,457	240

Agency	D1 awards with no File C match	Linked awards	File C awards with no D1 match
Department of Veterans Affairs	10,551	1,168	25
Department of Homeland Security	1,372	8,189	89
Department of Health and Human Services	247	7,548	32
Department of Energy	61	1,171	1

Source: [26, 35].

Subawards. Prime recipients report subawards to SAM.gov by the end of the month after the subaward. In USAspending's example, a subaward reported on 31 October is published on 2 November [22].

Access. The USAspending API's endpoints "do not currently require any authorization" [19]. Search covers FY2008 onward, and downloads go back to FY2001 [28, 33]. The Award Data Archive gets new files "by the 15th of each month", and delta files flag records as modified (C), deleted (D) or added (blank) in `correction_delete_ind` [25]. The usaspending-api repository, under CC0, describes how to restore a full production snapshot of the database into PostgreSQL [27].

Which upstream system feeds it. The documents name two. USAspending says D1 data "derived from the Federal Procurement Data System" arrive two days after submission [23], and GAO wrote in September 2025 that "USAspending.gov extracts procurement data from FPDS daily" [32]. CRS, in May 2026, says SAM.gov "is the source for contract award data in USAspending.gov", and that this data "previously originated from the Federal Procurement Data System" [33]. Treasury's Data Broker code held both routes in October 2026. `pull_fpds_data.py` reads the public and deleted ATOM feeds. `load_sam_contract.py`, first committed on 4 June 2026 as an "Initial commit of loader with limitations", requests CSV files from the Contract Awards API by last-modified date, with deleted records requested separately and a 1,000,000-record file limit [30]. The Broker's release of 22 September 2026 refers to "the upcoming SAM Contract loader" [29]. Its release notes of 3 November 2026 say it "Migrated from using the FPDS Atom Feed loader to the new SAM Contract API loader as the new source of contract data" [37].

5. Timing from award to public copy

Step	Documented timing	Source
CAR completed after award	Three business days	[3, 5]

Step	Documented timing	Source
CAR for urgency (FAR 6.302-2) and emergency (subpart 18.2) awards	30 days	[3, 5]
DoD CAR data public or for non-DoD use	90 days after Date Signed	[6]
Contract data on USAspending after award	Generally within five days	[20]
USAspending extraction	Daily	[32]
File C account data	Monthly or quarterly	[26]
Award transactions to USAspending, per CRS	Within 30 days, DoD generally 90	[33]
Subawards	End of the month after the subaward	[9, 22]

USAspending's worked example runs from a Thursday award to a Tuesday report and publication on the following Thursday [20]. DoD and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data are delayed 90 days in Files C and D1 [20, 21]. The current rule is DFARS PGI 204.604(2), in the version effective 7 May 2026: "CARs or their data are not available for public view or for non-DoD use until 90 days after the "Date Signed" data element in order to minimize risk to military operations" [6].

The delay shows in USAspending's counts of contract transactions by action date, retrieved on 24 October 2026.

Action dates, 2026	Department of Defense	Department of Veterans Affairs
1 to 31 May	353,047	9,474
1 to 30 June	325,355	10,806
1 to 31 July	256,876	8,639
1 to 31 August	71	7,969
1 to 30 September	649	9,818
1 to 23 October	10	8,533

Source: [35].

DoD's daily count was 18,343 for 23 July, 96 for 24 July, 3 for 25 July and 0 for 26 July [35]. By arithmetic, 90 days before 24 October 2026 is 26 July, and the drop begins two to three days earlier. A few DoD rows fall inside the window, the latest dated 21 October 2026 [35]. The API reveals at once contracts funded or awarded by a civilian subtier [14]. Civilian data was current: the latest GSA transactions were dated 22 October 2026 [35].

6. Deleted contracts and other transactions

Deleted contracts. The Contract Awards API returns deleted contracts only on request, and only those deleted in the last six months [14]. USAspending's delta files flag deletions with D [25]. How USAspending treats deleted transactions across every download is not documented in the sources reviewed. A pipeline that pulls deletions from SAM.gov less often than every six months can miss some.

Other transaction agreements. GAO describes OTAs as "legally binding agreements other than standard contracts and grants that authorized government agencies may use and are not subject to certain federal acquisition laws and requirements" [31]. FAR 4.6 excludes them from "contract action" [3], yet SAM.gov lists other transactions as a search domain and the API returns them [13, 14]. For its March 2026 testimony, GAO "identified $77.5 billion in OTAs that were reported by the Department of Defense in SAM.gov from fiscal year 2021 through 2025 but were not reported to USAspending.gov" [31]. GAO notes that FFATA neither explicitly includes nor excludes OTAs. Treasury told GAO that agencies should not report them because they fall outside FFATA's express definition of "federal award" [31]. As of GAO's 17 March 2026 testimony, the Stop Secret Spending Act of 2025 (H.R. 2069, S. 872) would add them if enacted, and its Senate bill had been placed on the Senate calendar on 7 November 2025 [31]. How OTAs are kept out of USAspending is not stated in the sources reviewed.

Parent companies. Immediate and domestic parent UEI and name appear only in unrevealed API responses, which only DoD-assigned users may read [14]. Public responses still carry the awardee's ultimate parent UEI and name, and the API can filter on them [14].

Subaward completeness. GAO estimated that about 70% of SBIR and STTR Phase II awards have at least one subcontractor or consultant, while "only 10 percent of the awards that we reviewed had subaward information reported on USAspending.gov" [31]. It also found a subaward record of $1 quintillion [31].

Agencies that do not report. The oversight sources count differently. GAO's testimony says 49 of 152 federal agencies in the government's consolidated financial statements for fiscal year 2022 did not report to USAspending.gov [31]. CRS cites a November 2023 GAO finding of 25 executive branch agencies [33]. The figures cover different sets of agencies.

Data quality. Of the 70 agencies that reported to FPDS for fiscal year 2023, 36, or 51%, confirmed completion of procurement data quality reports, and 19 of the 24 CFO Act agencies missed OMB's deadline for the report [32]. The DATA Act requirement for inspectors general to review agency submissions expired in

2021 [32]. CRS warns that USAspending results "may be incomplete or contain inaccuracies" [33].

7. Opportunities and entity data as separate feeds

Opportunities. Notices come from the Get Opportunities Public API, which has its own key and role-based limits [15]. "This API only provides the latest active version of the opportunity". Active notices update daily and archived notices weekly [15]. Award notices are one of nine notice types, and queries by posted date span at most one year [15]. FAR 5.301 requires award synopses for awards over $25,000 that fall under trade agreements or are likely to result in subcontracts, with exceptions [7]. Award notices are therefore a subset of the awards reported under FAR 4.6, which reach down to the micro-purchase threshold and every modification [3].

Entities. Registration data comes from the Entity Management API. Public data includes name, UEI, registration details, addresses, business types, PSC and NAICS codes and contact names [17]. Controlled data adds "the entities that have opted out of public display", and requires a federal system account with the "Read FOUO" permission [17]. Synchronous requests return only the first 10,000 records [17]. A public entity pull therefore omits opted-out entities that contract records can still name.

Subawards and subcontract reports. "As of March 8th 2025, FSRS.gov was retired, and all subaward reporting data and functionality are now on SAM.gov" [16]. SAM.gov offers public subaward and subcontract APIs [16], and GSA also moved subcontracting reports from eSRS.gov into SAM.gov [13]. Under FAR 52.204-10, the subcontract reporting database is prepopulated "with some information from SAM and the FPDS database" [9].

8. Choosing a source by question

Question	Source that answers it	Watch for	Sources
Every reported contract action and modification	SAM.gov award search, or the API extract	Account, daily limits, record caps	[10, 14]
Spending tied to accounts, programs and outlays	USAspending.gov awards linked across File C and File D1	Unlinked awards lack fields	[18, 24, 26]
DoD-funded DoD awards signed in the last 90 days	No public copy until 90 days after Date Signed	Recent DoD totals read low	[6, 14, 35]
Records deleted after reporting	The API with `deletedStatus`, or USAspending delta files	Six-month window in the API	[14, 25]

Question	Source that answers it	Watch for	Sources
Other transaction agreements	SAM.gov	$77.5 billion of DoD agreements missing from USAspending	[13, 14, 31]
Immediate and domestic parents of awardees	Unrevealed API data, DoD users only	Ultimate parent is public, immediate and domestic parents are not	[14]
Notices before award	The Opportunities API	Latest active version only	[15]
Subcontract and subaward reports	SAM.gov subaward and subcontract APIs	Completeness gaps	[16, 31]

Implications

For data engineers. A pipeline still reading the ATOM feed runs on a service that GSA, since February 2026, has scheduled for retirement [10, 12], even though it answered on 24 October 2026 [34]. The API's limits shape a replacement: an extract for volume, `publicDeltaDate` so DoD records arrive on their reveal date, and a deleted-records pull more often than every six months [14]. Treasury's Broker code uses date-ranged CSV extracts and a separate deleted-records request [30]. Storing each record's pull date and source system keeps later differences traceable.

For analysts and researchers. A total depends on the copy and the date. A DoD figure for the last 90 days is incomplete by rule [6, 35]. A USAspending total leaves out the $77.5 billion of DoD other transaction agreements that GAO identified for fiscal years 2021 to 2025 [31]. An award only in File D1 has no account data, and one only in File C has no recipient [24]. Each figure needs its system, pull date and agency scope stated with it.

For readers of oversight work. GAO's 2025 and 2026 work describes gaps in the completeness and quality of reported data [31, 32], and every downstream copy inherits them.

Rillor's public procurement records link notices, awards, suppliers, line items and attached documents across U.S. federal sources, with per-page text extraction including OCR.

Limits of this analysis

- This explainer describes data sources. It is not legal advice and does not interpret any agency's reporting duties.
- The live retrievals ran from one workstation on one day [34, 35]. Feeds, redirects and counts change.
- The Contract Awards API was described from its documentation and not queried [14].
- No published reconciliation of SAM.gov and USAspending counts was found beyond GAO's OTA figure [31].
- The Broker's move to the SAM.gov loader is dated by its release notes alone [37], and its effect on USAspending's counts was not examined. GSA's pages give no actual ATOM retirement date [10, 12].
- GAO's $77.5 billion figure comes from GAO's own analysis of public OTA data for its March 2026 testimony [31], and the records behind it were not reproduced here.
- The effective dates of the $15,000 and $40,000 thresholds, and which agencies apply the FAR Overhaul text, were not checked [4, 5, 8].
- The causes of the unlinked award counts and of the DoD rows inside the 90-day window were not examined [35].
- USAspending documentation was read from its source repository and dated by its last change there [20 to 26, 36].

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