Slice it Up

Procedural and non-destructive way
to slice your footage in After Effects

v2.0

Installation

Follow these two simple steps to install the script:

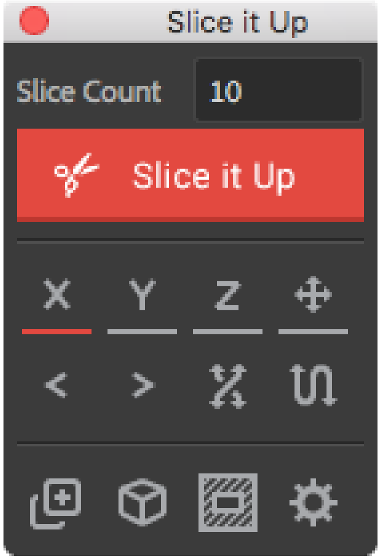
1. Unpack the archive you have downloaded and copy/paste files (both "Slice it Up.jsx" and "Slice it Up Help.pdf") to "ScriptUI Panels" folder:
    - Windows: Program Files\Adobe\Adobe After Effects <version>\Support Files\Scripts
    - Mac OS: Applications/Adobe After Effects <version>/Scripts

If folder ScriptUI Panels does not exist, create a folder and name it "ScriptUI Panels". Then paste the copied files into it.

2. Allow script to access network to avoid unnecessary problems while loading GUI. This option is under General tab of After Effects Preference pane:
    - Windows: Edit > Preferences > General
    - Mac: After Effects > Preferences > General

Once Installation is finished run the script in After Effects by clicking Window > Slice it Up

Interface



Slice Count 10

Number of Slices controls into how many parts should your layer be sliced. It accepts values greater then 1.

X Y Z ✥

Tab buttons shows/hides controls for XYZ Offset Speed and Axis Direction, and controls for slice Width/Height and Alignment.

Manipulating X, Y, Z values

> Next random seed for X/Y/Z speed controls the random seed for the speed of the slice on a given axis. Effect is seen once you change Random Offset slider values in compositions effects panel and has no effect when moving slices in linear way.

Random X/Y/X axis direction defines the random direction of the slice on a given axis. This option is useful when you need to break even or predictable heading of the slice.

Shift click sets bidirectional movement - positive direction for even slice index, and negative for odd slice index.

Cmd click sets directional movement - all slices will move in same direction. This will not make much sense in linear offset, but is useful when moving slices via Random Offset parameter.

Invert X/Y/Z axis direction will invert the direction of the slice. It's the same as if you punched-in negative slider values in effects panel.

Manipulating Width/Height values

If you are unhappy the way your slices look (horizontal or vertical proportions that is), hit Next random seed for Width/Height button a few times to get a different look. This will not add new slices but will regenerate random seed and will give different width or height for each slice.

By default slices have random width and are distributed horizontal. Set slice to equal Width/Height will make slice width or height equal, while Toggle Horizontal / Vertical alignments will change the alignment.

While > button generates a new seed for speed or width, button < will take one step back and regenerate previous seed value. This way you are free to skip through possible options and find a look that fits you best. Think of it as an “undo” option.

Above functions are available at any time even after restarting project.

Duplicate composition will create a copy of selected composition that holds all the slices and update all expressions linked to it.

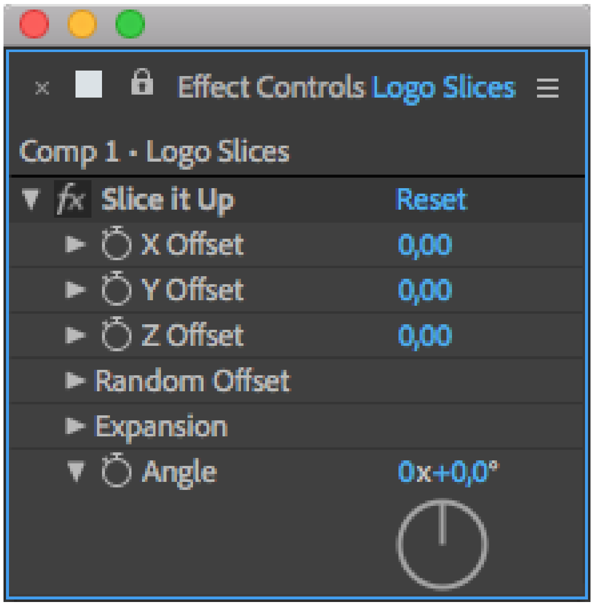
Toggle 2D/ 3D space will enable/disable 3D checkbox for the slices. If it’s OFF, slices will be distributed in flat space (X and Y) and controls for Z offset and Z Random will have no effect.

Container is something I am not able to put in words logically, but it controls the size of composition that contains all of the slices. There are 3 possible options: Diagonal, Largest Side and Bounding Box. Your choice must be made depending on which way and how you will be slicing/animating. Each of these options have its pros and cons, so please refer to the examples at the end of the document.

How to Slice it Up

Workflow is straight forward: select a layer you wish to slice, enter desired value for slices and hit Slice it Up. The script will get to work.

You won't get much visual feedback right away - you need to adjust some values in effects panel to see script in all its glory. So select the pre-sliced composition (script did the job of precomposing your layer in case you need to adjust something to the source later) and navigate to effects panel.



Effect Controls Logo Slices

Comp 1 • Logo Slices

Slice it Up Reset

X Offset 0,00

Y Offset 0,00

Z Offset 0,00

Random Offset

Expansion

Angle 0x+0,0°

Slice movement on X, Y, and Z is presented in two states - linear and random. Slices will move in linear fashion using first option, and will be offset randomly when using the second.

If slices get too far from each using randomised way and there isn't much of randomness seen, try lowering down the first (linear) value to compensate the movement. Tweak both of these values to get desired look. If randomness does not get the desired effect, go back to GUI and regenerate X, Y or Z respectively. Same follows for the random width of the slices - if you are unhappy the way they look you can always regenerate them in the GUI.

Expansion control shrinks or grows the bounds of each slice. Pushing slider to the max will result in extraordinary transition of the object.

Angle control sets the rotation of the slices.

Container Mode: Diagonal

Pros - Slices will cover entire shape; works perfect on any angle; no clipping. Use this mode if you are unsure.

Cons - Some slices will be empty at certain angles, though rendering unnecessary layers (compositions);

Container for the slices is calculated by the hypotenuse of your layer (the square the length of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the lengths of the width and hight of your object. *Wikipedia*)

Container Mode: Largest side

Pros - Perfect choice if your layer is perfect circle.
Cons - Some clipping will appear if your image is not a perfect circle.
Container size is calculated by the largest side of your layer.

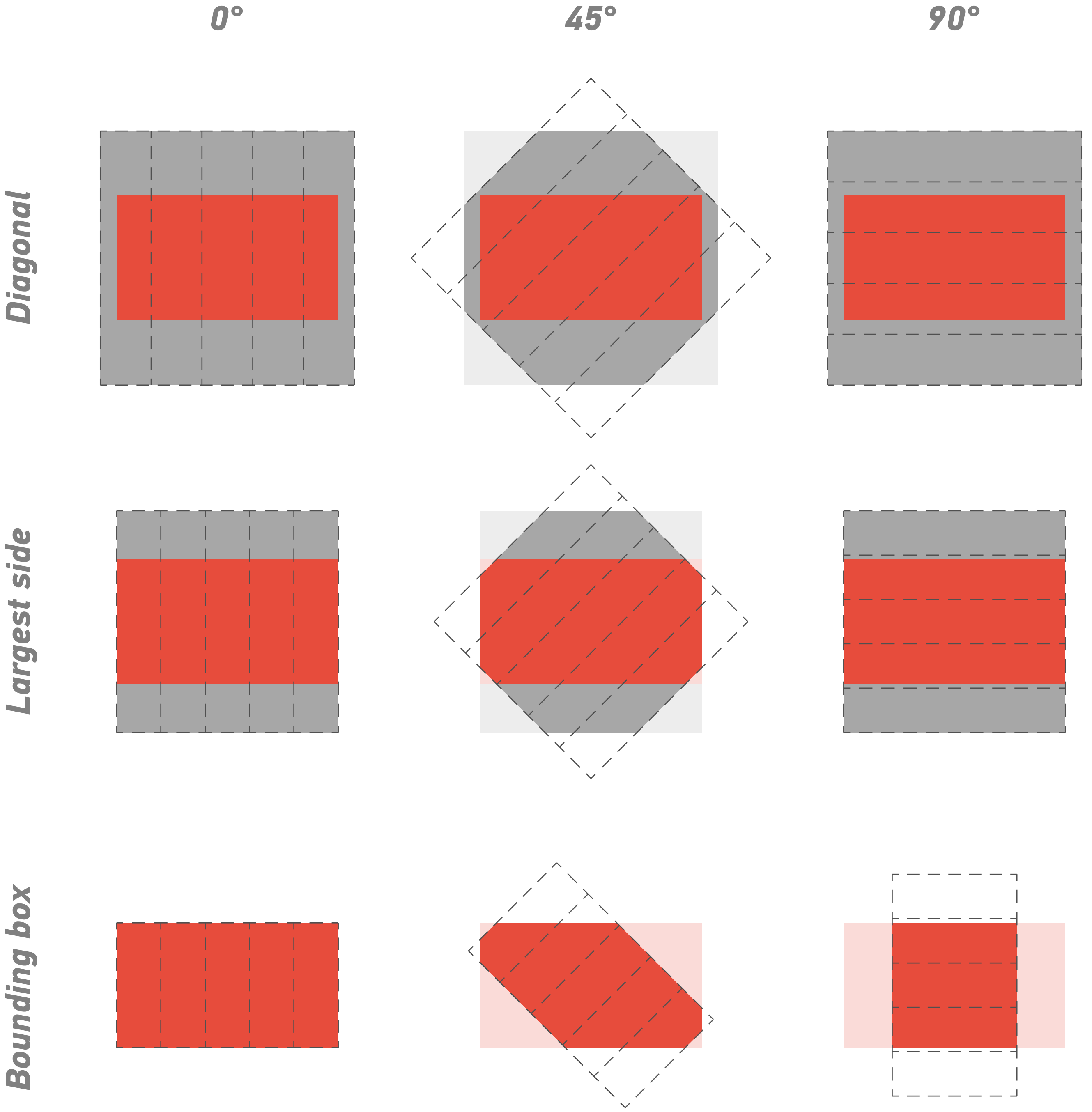
Container Mode: Bounding box

Pros - Ideal way to slice layer in *(and only)* vertical way; no empty slices.
Cons - huge clipping will appear if angle is not at 0 degrees.
Container size is equal to the dimensions of bounding box of your layer.

Following examples demonstrate the use of *Diagonal/Largest side/Bounding box* mode. In each case three different shapes (16x9 frame, perfect circle, and custom shape) are sliced with different mode. Please observe what effect each mode has for every object. In some case you get empty slices, while others produce clipping of your layer.

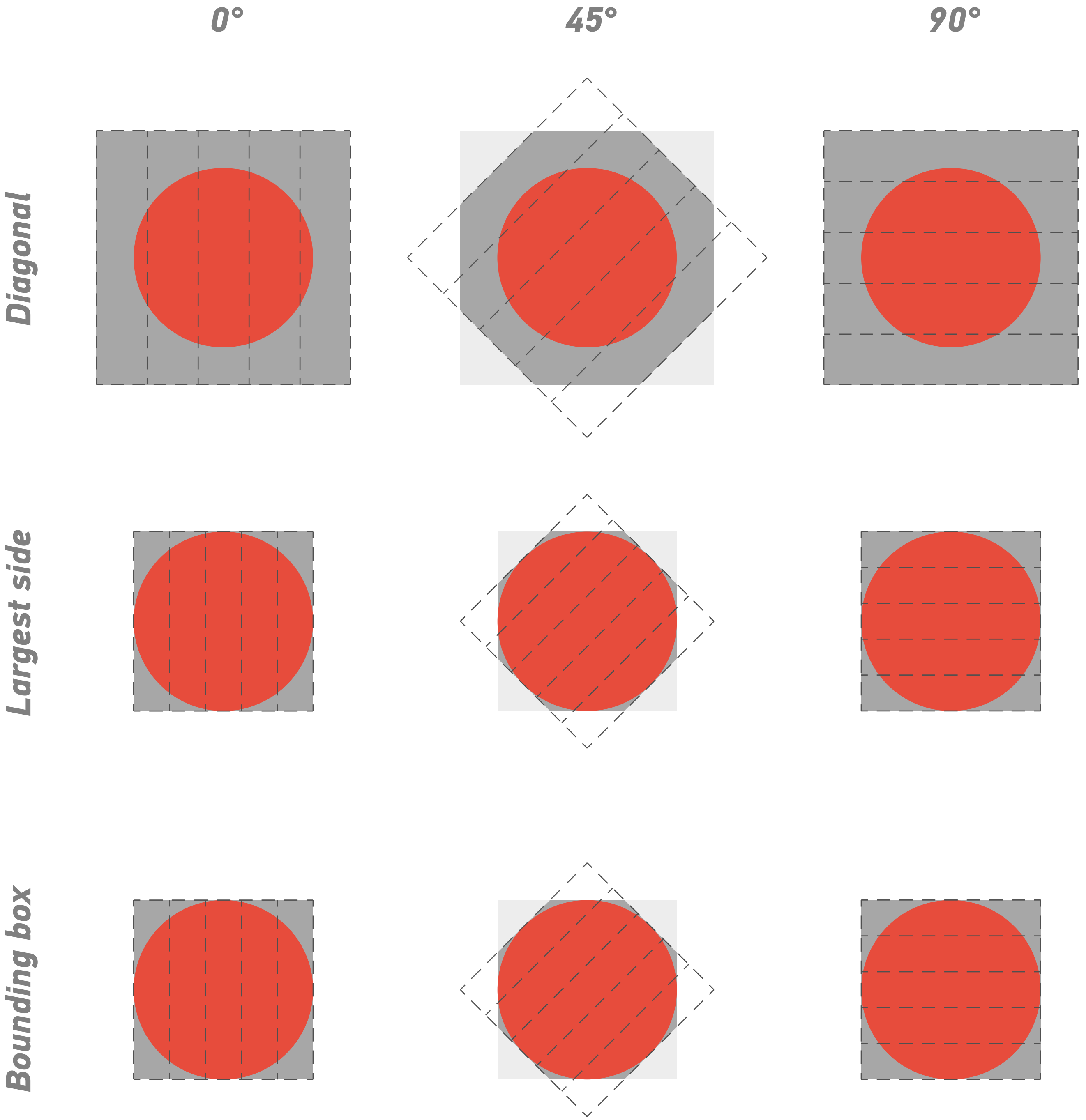
Shape - 16x9 frame.

No clipping in *Diagonal* mode, but empty slices at 90° angle. *Largest side* mode - some clipping appear on the edges if angle is not 0°, 90°, 180°, 270°. *Bounding box* mode - huge clipping on any angle except 0°.



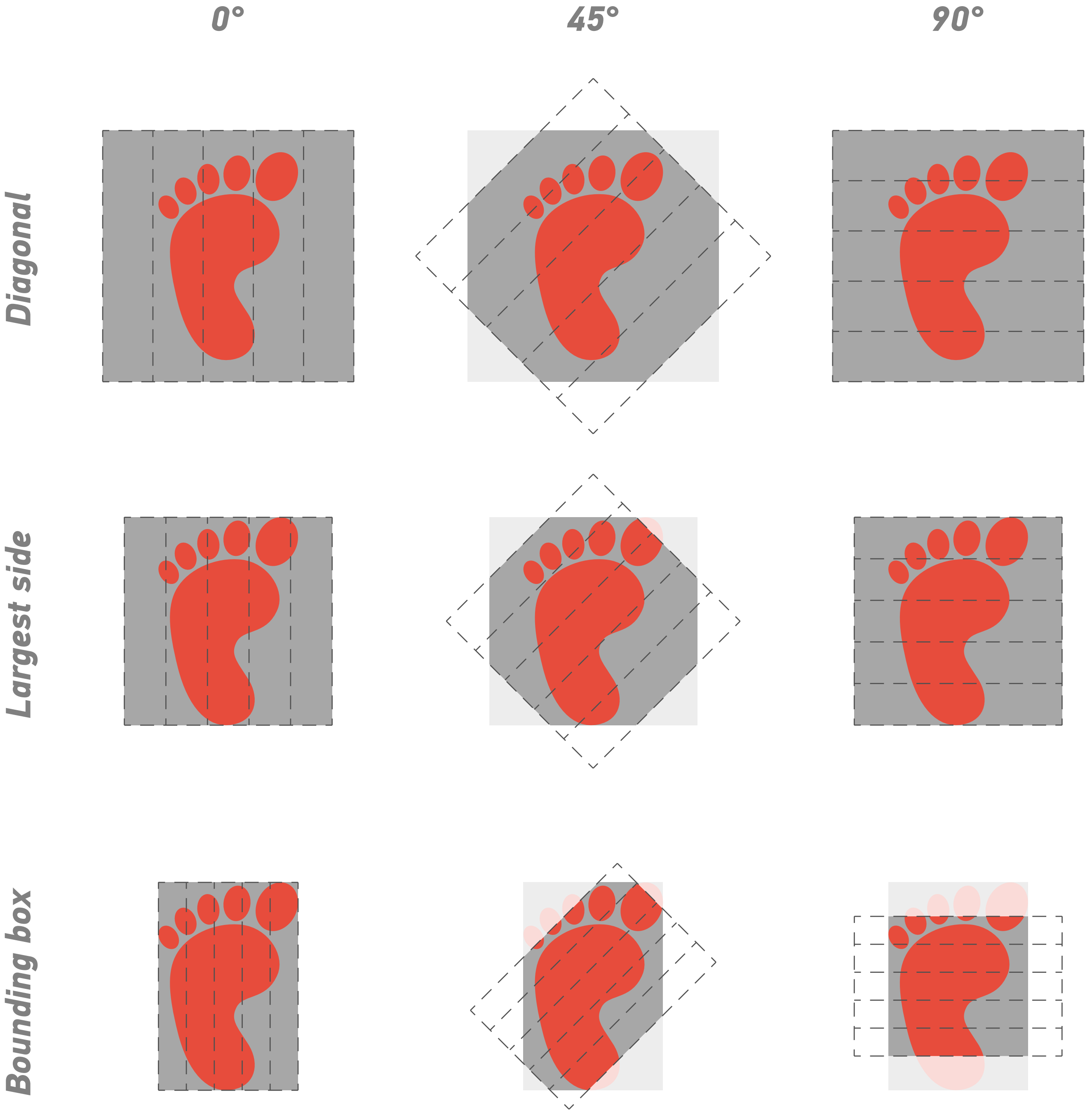
Shape - perfect circle.

No clipping and no empty slices appear at any angle. Perfect Container mode for this shape is *Largest side*. Slices are evenly distributed along the object. *Bounding box* mode produces same effect as *Largest side* mode.



Shape - custom.

Probably best choice - *Diagonal* mode. Empty slices appear, but no clipping at any angle. In this scenario small clipping appears at 45° in *Largest side* mode and huge clipping at any angle in *Bounding box* mode.



Slice it Up

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