

The Effects of Modern Information Technology on Learning Outcome of African American Students



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Introduction

This study will focus on the effects that the digital divide has created among different ethnic and racial groups. Specifically, this study will emphasize how African American students learn. It will also examine the technological advancement of these students and how it affects their learning processes.

Literature Review

- According to Paul Attewell (2001), poor and minority families are less likely to have access to computers or the internet, thus creating a technology gap between the “information haves” and “information have-nots.” As a result, many African Americans and other minority groups lack the opportunity to participate in our modern economy.
- Poor and minority youth are disadvantaged in education because their schools often lack sufficient and updated computers and internet access. In the future, this may affect employment opportunities because they have not been exposed to core technologies, enabling them to attain necessary job skills.
- Even though computer access is problematic in their schools, rural/urban students rely more on this access than their suburban school counterparts. According to Attewell (2001) even limited access to computers allow students to develop their math, reading, science and critical thinking skills.
- In October 2009, according to the Census Survey, 63.5 % (75.8 million) households used high speed internet and this statistic had increased by 25 % in just two years. 45.9 % of Black households use broadband internet, ranking third in 2009 among other ethnic groups.
- Studies show that people with the highest levels of education use high-speed internet the most often (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010).
- Tests show that students of all races/ethnicities who study more tend to heavily rely on the internet. When a computer is in a home, experience with technology and access to information is made easier (Korgen, 2001).

Research Question

Is there now a Digital Divide 3.0? If so, what is it, and how does it affect African American student learning?

Hypotheses

There will still be a Digital Divide for generations to come. The extent of this divide will depend on one’s racial and socioeconomic status. Understanding the benefits of utilizing information technology will result in an improved national economy, as well as advance the education and lifestyles of African American students, providing them with a greater global awareness.

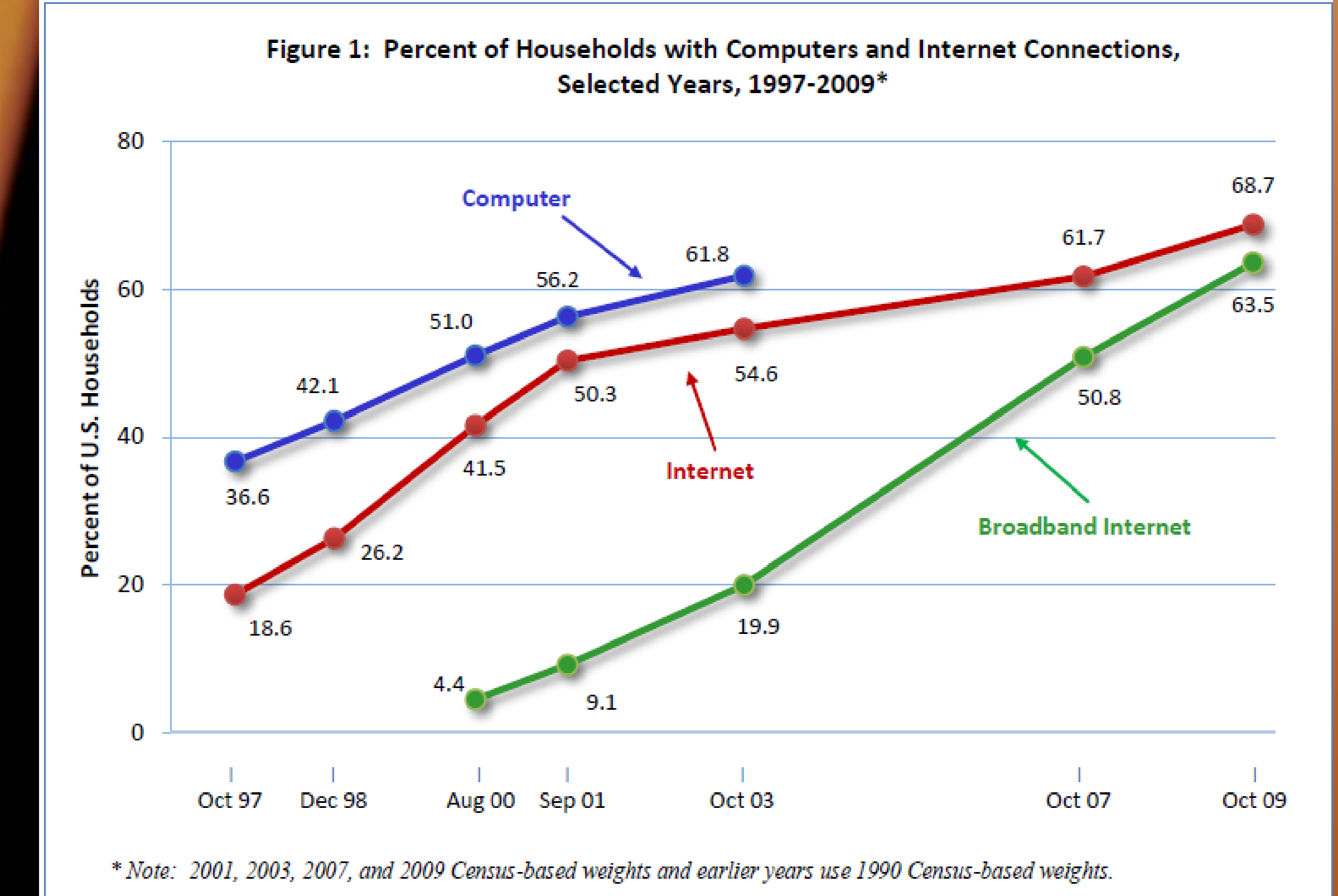
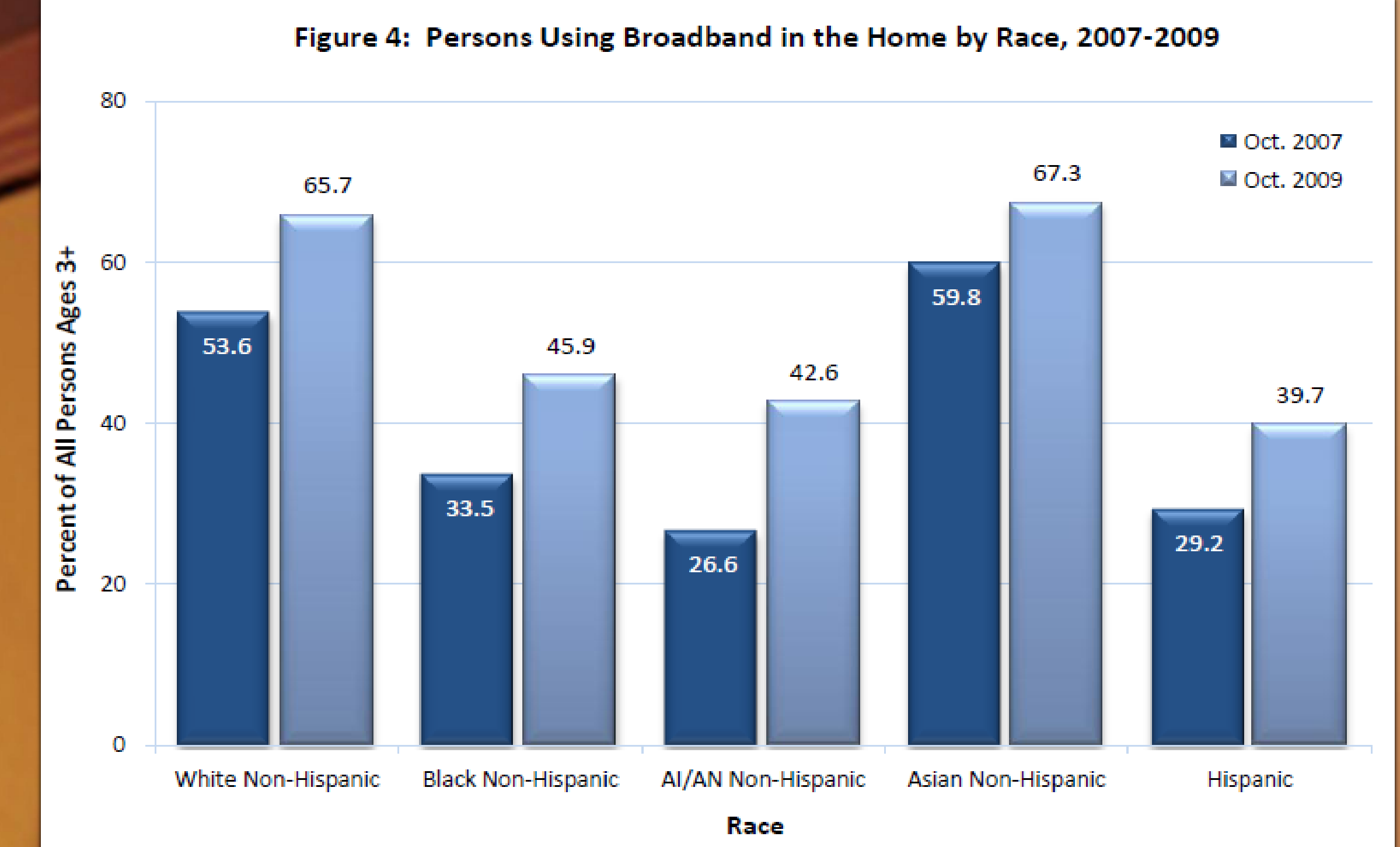
Methodology

- Data will be gathered from a survey of University of Wisconsin-Whitewater students.
- This study will involve 50 student participants, 25 White and 25 African American.
- Availability sampling will be utilized
- This survey will emphasize these students’ technological knowledge and how it affects their learning experience.
- Data will be collected in the Fall 2010 semester and analyzed in Spring 2011.

Projected Sample Survey Questions

- Did you grow up in a household with a desktop computer?
- Did your parents use computers on their jobs?
- What kind of internet provider did you have at home?
- Did you remember using computer labs in grades K-12?
- Where there enough computers for all students to use in school?
- At what age did you start using computers?

Preliminary Results



Conclusion

This research will: expand the literature on this subject; help to find ways to decrease the digital divide gap; educate African American students on the importance of technology.

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