



NEXT-GEN CAMPUS SAFETY

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Life on campus: navigating new challenges and expectations

Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once said that “A University should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.” Empowering students to become and achieve their best is the top priority for all higher education institutions. One that would be impossible if they didn’t feel safe and secure on campus.

Increasingly, league tables are ranking universities on more than just their teaching and job prospects. They reflect the latest realisation that great universities holistically grow and support their students. Furthermore, the number of higher education options are growing in the UK, so many need to differentiate themselves based on the campus experience offered. Especially those without a world-famous name or heritage to fall back on.

Crime is a particular focal point for students and parents when choosing a university. More parents, along with the [Complete University Guide](#), are calling for more transparency around crime on- and off-campus. Better

still, to alleviate concerns, universities would benefit from publishing details of how they are keeping students distanced. Especially in the post-Covid era when infection control has become part of security’s remit alongside preventing theft and anti-social behaviour.

Make no mistake, prior to the pandemic, campus security was already going through a transformation. This has been accelerated in the past two years, as many campuses shut and the needs of students and faculty shifted. Security was ready to respond, cementing its place as a vital asset for all universities.



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Day to day objectives

Campus security teams carry out a wide range of tasks in the course of their day.

They assist students, staff and visitors, deter crime and anti-social behaviour, secure and unlock buildings, respond to emergencies, and act as a key contact for any safety concerns. At a moment's notice, they attend reactive situations such as alarms, first aid calls, disturbances, traffic accidents, vandalism, lost and found property, and even injured wildlife on campus.

Beyond this, security teams are more and more involved in student welfare. As [Les Allan](#), chairman of The Association of University Chief Security Officers explains, "By necessity, many security teams

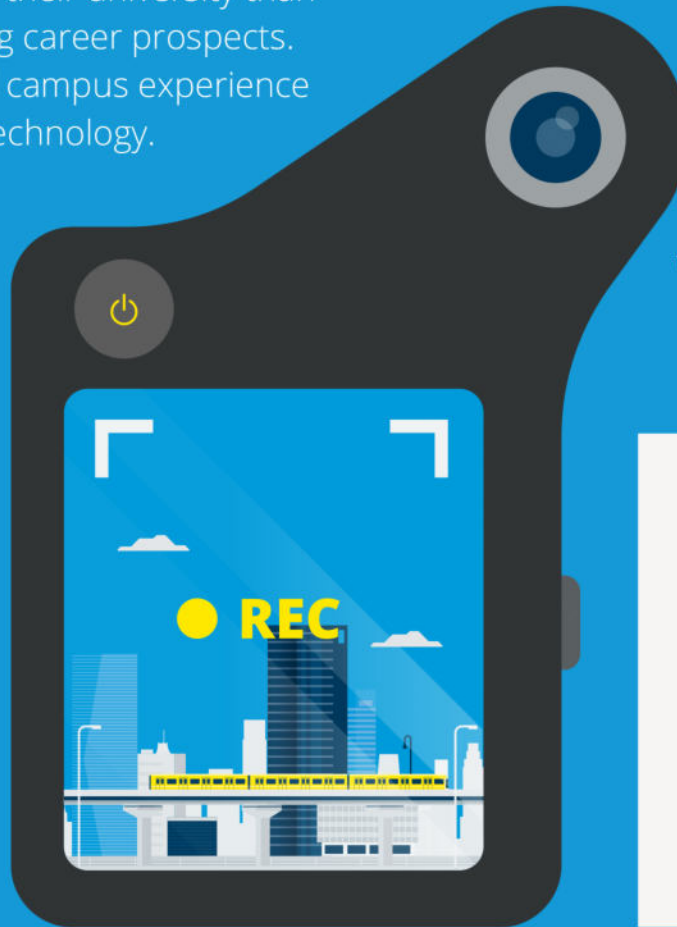
had to refresh their business models and evolve away from the traditional role of 'asset protection' and into a more holistic service embracing support, pastoral care, wellbeing and first responder duties. We've seen this particularly in the support given to the staff and students who have remained on campus during lockdowns."

Now is an opportune time to build on security's new role as protector and supporter. As Allan elaborates, "In many cases, the experience of the last year has brought the security function and students closer together."



Evolving expectations

Students want more from their university than good teaching and exciting career prospects. They desire a streamlined campus experience that reflects their use of technology.



The latest student generation are true 'digital natives' and interact seamlessly with their smartphones, computers and other smart devices. The rise of mobile credentials, for example, pay testament to this by enabling students to access campus facilities through the devices that they carry every day. Some institutions have invested in smartphone apps that allow students to report broken equipment in a few clicks or to show their location to security staff if in distress.

Security no longer stops at the campus gates. With more students choosing off-site living and regular ventures into city centres and wider afield, a university's duty of care is widening. More security teams are exploring innovative ways to support students living and visiting off-campus through geo-fencing and smartphone apps.

Still, the vast majority of university campuses are falling short. Although many students report feeling satisfied with their study experience overall (4.21 out of 5), campus infrastructure is ranked in the bottom three, scoring 3.88.



Security teams are exploring innovative ways to support students living and visiting off-campus.

Parents' needs

The views and priorities of parents must also be considered. They are key decision-makers when picking a university. As Derek Scott, managing director of Consultive states, "Parents will often take the approach of, 'I won't tell you where to go but I'll definitely tell you where you're not going!' After all, they will be dropping their children off at their chosen institution for at least four years. They want an immediate feeling of safety, and that they can entrust their children to that university."

Different institutions take differing approaches to reassure parents. Some allow open day tours of their security facilities (such as control rooms) while others detail security processes and technology in prospectuses. Whatever the approach, it is imperative that all solutions and processes on show are of the highest standard and up-to-date with the latest threats. Not just from a reputational standpoint, but also to ensure campus occupants are truly protected from all risks.

Security as a differentiator

Due to these expectations, security has become a selling point for forward-thinking institutions. [Allan](#) adds, "It's vital to remember that safer campuses attract students, and that reputation management is as important as asset protection."

Although their mainstay will always be education, it's important to see the commercial operations behind universities today. They must continue to attract students year-in, year-out and cannot afford any negative impacts on their reputation. A critical social media post about a broken lock or graffiti on campus could dent a university's intake for several years.



Security has become a selling point for forward-thinking institutions.



Challenges facing universities

To meet changing expectations, universities must ensure they have robust, up-to-date security systems. Yet, many face challenges that hinder their progress.

Budget concerns are a common hurdle. Due to this, many institutions are seeking ways to shift more security costs to an operational, recurring cost (instead of a large capital expense). Cloud technology is assisting with this, enabling security leaders to pay monthly costs towards upgrading and maintaining their systems instead of one-off initial investments. Where upgrades are needed, some are taking a modular approach to add to a security system over several years — and also experiment with emerging solutions.

Older institutions face the additional challenge of upgrading their legacy infrastructure. Some security technologies require complete overhauls of an existing system which adds additional expense. Due to this, more universities are exploring open platforms that can integrate with legacy systems and add modern functionality to this infrastructure.

Likewise, depending on the institution there may be a mix of modern and historical buildings to support and protect. Alternatively, security teams may have to protect buildings in rural or suburban areas versus city centres. These require a range of approaches to secure and affix sensors and cameras to the building fabric and to meet the different challenges posed by busy or quiet areas. In turn, modern security systems must be able to integrate with many different device types to consolidate the many cameras, access control, HVAC, lighting and temperature sensors across different campuses.

For comprehensive integration of all technologies on-site, there must be close collaboration between security and other teams, such as IT. In many institutions, security departments can find themselves siloed and unable to communicate with different departments. Moreover, some systems, like access control, are often

controlled by non-security teams (such as facilities management).

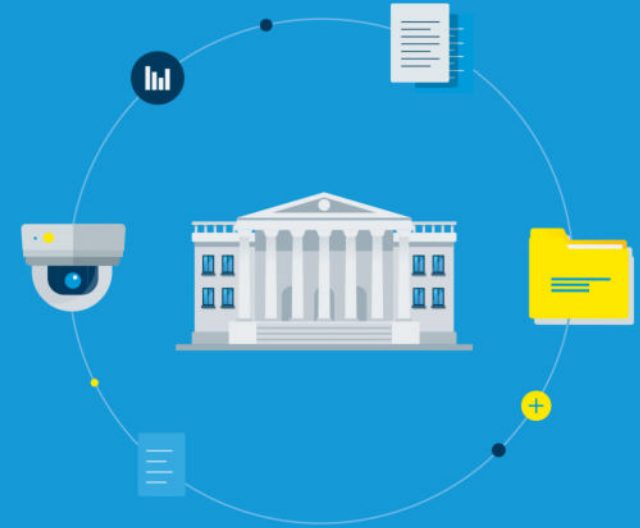
Flexibility has also come to the fore as a priority for security teams. Uncertainty means universities must adapt to changes quickly. At Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), the global lockdown surfaced unexpected challenges for the campus security team. Richard Smith, Infrastructure Analyst, explains, “SHU has a large estate that was completely locked down during the pandemic. The team was so used to having a busy campus and we relied on the presence of people as part of our security. All of a sudden, the estate was empty and we still had to protect it.

“Our system had to dynamically change and, because of Milestone, we were able to quickly change settings to reflect the new needs of the campus. For example, we could alter rules so events would be triggered by someone moving in a building — because they weren’t

supposed to be on-site. Then, as the lockdown eased and people came back to campus, we were able to quickly change our settings again to keep the site secure throughout all of the changes.”

Finally, to become more of a value driver in the institution, teams must find new ways to share the insights from security systems like camera feeds, with the wider organization. This will improve planning, staffing and overall efficiency on-site. Real-time intelligence, powered by advanced video analytics and automation, will help security teams quickly respond to dangerous behaviour, unusual events, or crowds forming. Meanwhile, occupancy and usage trends can influence staffing, maintenance, and cleaning schedules.

For more information scan the QR code or visit [our website](#).



Tactics to protect students today

Investing in tools to facilitate coordination is the first port of call for all forward-looking security teams. Coordination and collaboration across departments, campuses and buildings is needed to create a truly secure and insights-driven environment.



Using data

The data generated by a security system that consolidates CCTV, access control, sensor data and more, will provide useful insights for security, operations, facilitates management, senior leadership and other teams. Surfacing the data through smart walls and dashboards makes it easily accessible and understandable to all who require it.



Optimizing resources

With budgets stretched, more universities are seeking ways to improve efficiency and optimize their existing resources. Automation can help security personnel to rapidly identify and assess threats and risks, and respond to campus emergencies. It can also take over some of the more time-consuming and highly manual work, such as cleaning and processing data ready for analysis. University leaders must strike the right balance between people, processes, and technology within a team that will deliver the best outcomes for students.



Boosting flexibility


A focus on increasing the flexibility of security systems will enable universities to scale with ease to future needs or innovate with new technologies. Cameras in new buildings and campuses can be easily added to an open VMS (video management system) for example.



Freedom of choice

Indeed, open platforms provide great autonomy and flexibility over a security system. University leaders are free to choose whatever devices and functionality that best suits their campuses' needs, instead of being locked into a limited number of chosen vendors. Integration with legacy systems, and new solutions, is easier. This helps with cost efficiencies as well as futureproofing.

As Paul Greenlees, [deputy head of security] at Manchester University has experienced. He states, "Manchester University invested in Milestone XProtect, an open system that supports multiple integrations.



Automation can help security personnel to rapidly identify and assess threats and risks.

This allows us to futureproof to emerging needs as well as add devices and functionality as we go along. For example, we're adding a second control room on one of our campuses to act as a reserve if anything goes wrong with our main control room. That is relatively simple with an open platform. We're also exploring integrations with fire systems, so our security teams can be automatically alerted to any potential fires, and we wish to add online and text chat functions, which will then be displayed on the control room screen for our security staff to review and respond."

Tactics to protect students today



Continuous training

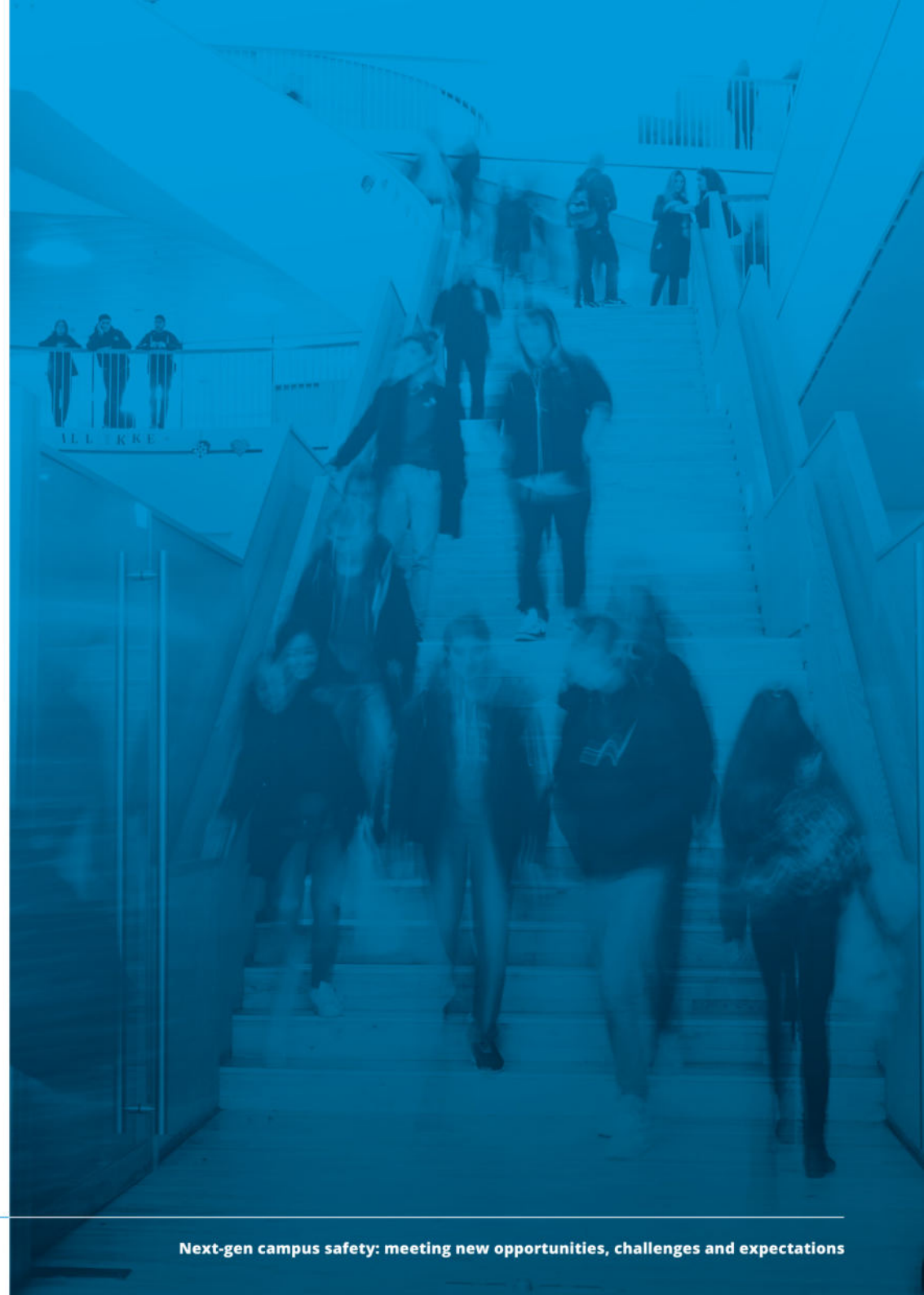
To provide a robust service, security teams need to be trained in best practices. Personnel skills need constant review to meet the latest processes and risks. Reflecting the holistic nature of the role, today's frontline security staff need training in data and digital skills, communication, student wellbeing (mental, as well as physical), to name but a few areas.



Increasing trust

There have previously been concerns about the 'heavy-handedness' of some campus security. Similarly, the way security forces are presented on campus can influence how they are perceived by the student body. Scott explains, "Some security teams are highly visible, driving around with bright stripes on their cars and security emblazoned on their vehicles and uniforms. But this is becoming an old-fashioned approach that doesn't reflect security's role in student wellbeing. Discreet suits and ties are becoming popular, and provide a more subtle indicator of student protection on-site."

Likewise, teams should work to communicate their use of security technology across campus. To increase awareness of the protections available to students as well as build trust that the technology being employed is for the good of everyone on campus.



Technologies to secure your campus



CCTV:

Video surveillance that provides 'eyes on the ground' for security teams.



ANPR:

License plate recognition that can control entry and exit to a site. With automation, it can also automatically allow pre-authorized vehicles in, streamlining the work done by security. Dangerous driving or trespassing could also be flagged with the license plate to follow up.



Perimeter protection:

This prevents unauthorised individuals from gaining access to a campus or building without security's awareness. It is particularly important in city centre locations when members of the public mix freely with students and staff around campus.



Body-worn cameras:

Wearable cameras that can be worn by on-site staff to provide detailed monitoring of their patrols and any blind spots. Recording and playback can aid investigations and post-event reporting.



Lighting and HVAC control:

Lighting, heating and ventilation control can be integrated with a VMS to automatically turn lighting and other equipment on in a room if someone enters it. This makes the campus experience more comfortable for students and staff as buildings will be warm or cool when needed. It can also cut the carbon footprint of a campus.



People and occupancy counters:

These monitor the occupancy of specific rooms and areas and can quickly flag any bottlenecks as people move through campus or when crowds form. In the pandemic, they proved useful in supporting social distancing measures but beyond this, they can help to improve the campus experience by reducing queues or crowds. They can also inform campus planning, such as widening paths that are heavily used or making sure classrooms are cleaned as needed.



VMS:

The video management system consolidates all on-site and body-worn cameras and sensor feeds for quick review by security teams.



Access control:

Controlling the entry and exit of people on-site and around the campus. This can include restricting access to some areas, such as server rooms or potentially dangerous buildings. It can also be combined with visitor and contractor logs so teams can understand who is on-site and where they are.

Technologies to secure your campus



Mobile credentials:

These, along with key fobs and other forms of touchless access control technology, are helping students to access facilities through their everyday devices (like smartphones).



Digital signage:

These screens integrate with a VMS to automatically send messages to the campus from a security team. For example, a crowd forming could be asked to disperse or a vehicle accident could automatically send divert notifications to roadside screens on campus.



Smart wall:

This works with a VMS to show consolidated information on a large screen for all control room staff to view. This can include camera and audio feeds, bodycam footage from patrols, social media feeds, live chat and phone transcripts, and sensor or access control data. If an alert is issued, it can be brought up quickly on the screen and cameras can zoom in on affected areas for a team to rapidly review.



Smart maps:

Students and staff can choose to be monitored via smartphone apps and other devices as they move around campus or outside. They can then flag if they need assistance or find themselves in danger. These can be displayed on the smart wall for a quick response.



IoT:

Internet of Things sensors (such as temperature control, lighting control, on equipment, in pathways and roads, and environmental sensors) can be integrated with a VMS to automatically flag any events or issues. This can extend further than traditional security to include information like air quality to assist with overall student wellbeing. Sensors on valuable equipment can also be combined with geofencing to warn security if it is suddenly taken off-site.



Automation and video analytics:

Advanced video analytics is providing additional context for security teams, to assist them with understanding everything that happens on-site. Combined with automation, pre-defined events can trigger responses without a team's input, such as raising a barrier when a known vehicle is approaching or directing cameras to focus on a potential emergency.



Adding value

Once the fundamentals are supported by security technology, it's time to consider future uses for the technology on-site.

For example, people and occupancy counters were repurposed during the pandemic to aid with social distancing measures. Insights from sensors and counters across campus can influence many processes including building management and maintenance, building planning, and staff rotas. Students can be kept updated about busy and quiet areas so they can choose where, and when, to study. Likewise, if temperature sensors detect a sudden fall in outside temperature, teams could be alerted to the need to salt roads and pathways overnight.

[Shaun Johnson](#), business development manager at Integral UK (JLL) elaborates, "Being able to monitor when a university is busier can have all sorts of efficiency benefits for facilities managers – such as moving to skeleton staffing on a Friday when it's clear a university building may only be at 40 per cent capacity."





Beyond security

Investing in advanced video analytics can pay off in ways beyond security, especially as solutions continue to advance.

Analytics and automation can streamline campus operations and decision-making. Video investigations, for instance, can be drastically sped up with [forensic analytics](#) that pinpoints objects and people of interest in minutes (instead of days of manual searching). During events, cameras can

automatically pan to areas of interest. Pre-authorised visitors entering a site can automatically gain entry to a car park when the video system recognises their number plates. These different areas can add up to offer a seamless, intelligent campus experience.



Open is essential

Investing in an open VMS platform provides flexibility, scalability and futureproofing.

Innovating with emerging technology like the IoT is made easier with an open platform as a device can be quickly added to the system as a pilot and removed if it doesn't deliver. Likewise, new buildings or campuses can be seamlessly added to an open VMS.

At SHU, for example, with the open XProtect platform, the team is now looking at

integrating their campuses' access control and intruder alerts with the system to create a central point of control. Additionally, the team is experimenting with smart building sensors like lighting and occupancy sensors, to alert security if someone suddenly enters a closed building.



Key takeaways

Modern-day campus security has a large remit that encompasses student safety, wellbeing and the university's reputation.

By investing in the right tools, security teams can better meet the expectations of today's student cohort while improving efficiency and response times.

Forward-thinking institutions are employing a range of tools to meet new needs, including advanced video analytics, automation, IoT devices, people counters and more.

After day-to-day security is taken care of, there is more value to be gleaned from an advanced security system and VMS. Data insights can help inform building maintenance, layout, and staffing. Collaboration

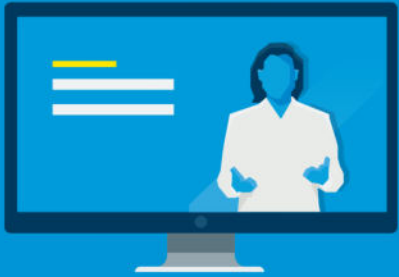
between security, IT, and other departments is needed for this to be effective.

Investing in an open platform is key to building a flexible and scalable security system that can adapt to changing expectations, growing campuses, and take advantage of new technologies.

The choices that security leaders make today will reverberate for years to come. Both in the safety of a campus and a university's reputation, as well as students' performance and career prospects.



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Milestone is a leading VMS provider for many higher education institutions in the UK, who are benefitting from the flexibility and scalability of the open XProtect platform. To understand more about how Milestone XProtect can future-proof and enhance your campus security, [contact our expert team.](#)



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