**Figure 1.** Instructional Design picture obtained from Department for Education and Skills website at
http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/discover/index.cfm?menu=design&main=design/design&on=home

# Innovative Approaches: Developing Effective

# Stories to Complement Instruction

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Research in Information and Learning Technologies, Summer Semester 2005

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My name is Dianne Calhoun, and I am an instructional design senior analyst (IDSA) at Accenture Learning. I have worked for Accenture Learning for over 13 months. My main responsibility is to develop instruction for our clients. We have a very rapid development cycle and are constantly looking for tools, templates, or job aids that help us develop our instruction faster. Recently, we implemented the innovative approaches method to help increase the value of the instruction we develop. The Innovative Approaches method includes adding factoids (did you know or key quotes), game templates (crossword puzzles or Jeopardy), or stories (war stories or case scenarios).

These innovative approaches greatly enhance the instruction we develop by giving the learner a more interesting and realistic learning experience. There are templates available for us to use for the factoids and games, but not for the stories. In a recent course, I used short stories to illustrate some learning points in the instruction. Having a template or a job aid for how to develop effective stories would have given me direction and allowed me to develop the stories quicker. It is extremely important for us to develop our instruction quickly, and to ensure it has value for our clients. Therefore, having tools, templates, or job aids that allow us to develop stories that complement instruction quicker would be valuable for us. The question now becomes, what constitutes an effective story or scenario?

The guidelines we have so far for developing stories gives us a basic outline for how we to develop the stories.

The following is a summary of our guidelines:

- **Description**: put more facts into a story to make the writing interesting. Develop a story or scenario that runs throughout the learning to illustrate what the learning is trying to teach.
- **Conditions for use**:

- Simulate real-life situations
- Show common problems or mistakes
- Add supplemental information to reinforce objectives
- Add war stories for understanding of consequences
- **Examples of use**:
  - Use newspaper headlines to provide the learner with supplemental information that can be used to accomplish a goal or task
  - Provide the learner with clues through emails or memos sent from characters within the storyline
  - Provide the learner with expert stories or "war stories" to identify lessons learned and develop best practices when performing certain tasks

These guidelines are a good start for us to begin the process of developing effective stories.  However, I feel that we still need more guidance for:

- Types of effective stories
- Elements of effective stories
- Templates of effective stories

The purpose of this inquiry was to research how we can develop effective stories to complement instruction that:

- Increase learning value
- Use best practices for story telling
- Decrease development time

## *Background*

Continuous innovation and rapid transformation have been themes throughout Accenture's history. Established in 1989 primarily as a technology consultant and systems integrator, Accenture soon began offering a new breed of business integration solutions to clients—solutions that aligned organizations' technologies, processes and people with their strategies.  Accenture Learning has been part of Accenture's offered services for over 2 ½ years.

Accenture Learning is one of the largest and most forward-thinking learning services providers in the world, delivering more than 14 million hours of training to more than 1 million learners globally each year. Providing a full range of learning services–from content development to learning management–each solution is designed to meet specific client needs.

Accenture Learning encourages us to be creative and initiate positive changes to enhance our work environment.  In keeping with Accenture Learning's self-motivated environment, I take the initiative to develop tools, templates, or job aids to help in performing my job.  In an interview with Patricia Robinson (personal communication 2005), manager at Accenture, she felt that stories help add value to instruction by being:

- More memorable

- Very natural to tell stories—people tell stories all the time about their daily lives, their hobbies, vacations, etc.

- Gives context to "rules"

- Active learning – learners more engaged

Johnston (2002) explains that

"Using the story genre with adult learners is a common choice for instruction for two reasons. Stories are of great interest to almost all audiences. It is for this reason that so much of entertainment television is based on stories. Given an audience that is not inclined to furthering their education, a video series that uses the conventions of entertainment television is more likely to capture their attention. In addition, many adults, far removed from formal schooling and textbook learning, have developed a learning style that favors stories. In their years since school, they are accustomed to looking at life and deriving lessons from it."

Therefore, developing tools or job aids to help develop effective stories is just another way to increase my productivity, as well as the value of the instruction I develop for clients.

## *Research Questions*

The overall purpose of this inquiry was to research how we can develop effective stories to complement instruction that increases learning value, use best practices for story telling, and decreases development time.

1. What is a story?

    a. What constitutes a good story?

    b. Why should we use stories?

    c. What are some typical types of stories?

    d. What methods of story development are being used or explored in the industry?

    e. What are some best practices for developing stories?

    f. How will stories affect learner engagement?

    g. How will stories affect the effectiveness of the instruction?

2. What are the present challenges for us, instructional design analysts (IDAs), when we develop stories to complement instruction?

    a. What methods do we use now when developing stories?

    b. What are the preferred methods for developing stories?

    c. What can be learned from the story development methods already in use?

3. How can tools or job aids help support the development of effective stories that complement instruction?

    a. How will tools or job aids enhance our ability to develop effective stories?

    b.  What format should be used to develop tools?

    c.  Do any templates exist today?

    d.  Are there any existing templates to use?

    e.  Who should be involved in developing tools and job aids?

4.  If project time permits, what would the tool or job aid look like?

    a.  What do the IDAs think of the tool or job aid?

    b.  How well does the tool or job aid work for them?

    c.  Are there any suggestions for improvements?

## *Methods*

I used a mixed-method case study approach to gather the data I used for my research questions. I used the following strategies:

- Surveys
- Interview
- Literature review

### *Surveys*

I conducted four different online surveys and one email survey. The online surveys were created and hosted by using the rform survey website at [http://www.my3q.com/](http://www.my3q.com/). Two online surveys were for Accenture employees and two online surveys were for IDA user group forums where I am a member. For each group there was a short Likert scale survey and then a longer free form answer survey. The purpose of getting the online surveys answered by an outside group was to compare what we are doing at Accenture with what another group of IDAs was doing at their work. The online surveys for Accenture also helped me gather data about what we are doing, and what we are not doing—and then helped me give recommendations for action. I

sent the email survey to four Accenture employees and who gave me feedback on the story

checklist.

## *Interview*

I conducted one interview with one of my managers, Patricia Robinson, at Accenture

where I obtained data about Accenture's new requirements for innovative learning approaches.  I

also obtained her view on implementing the Innovative Approaches—and what benefits she

thinks developing stories have for Accenture clients.

## *Published Literature*

I reviewed the published literature, and I gathered data about many of my proposed

questions.  I examined what a good story is—then found out about the various kinds of stories

that add value to instructional design.  I also found further data about how other companies are

using and developing stories.  Other issues I found data on are the challenges IDAs face when

developing stories and whether they used tools to help with those challenges.

## *Findings*

## *What is a story?*

Denning states that a story in its broadest sense is anything told or recounted; more

narrowly, something told or recounted in the form of a causally-linked set of events; account;

tale,: the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings, whether true or fictitious

(October 2000).  To me a story has always brought the subject I am learning about to life.  It did

not matter if it was a true or fictitious story—I was engaged in finding out what happened.

Therefore, Denning's definition of a story rings true for me in my dealings with stories.

Now that I have defined what a story is—it is important for my work as an instructional

design analyst (IDA) to know what constitutes a good story.  For me a good story is engaging

and gets me thinking about what is going on in the story.  In instructional design it is important

that you grab the learner's attention right away—and give them something related to what they

are trying to learn.  Jonassen and Hernandez-Serrano (2002) emphasize that it is important to

ensure that all of the necessary information is included in a story, such as:

- Identify story goals and expectations

- Describe the context in which the story occurred

- Describe the solution that was chosen

- Describe the outcome of the solution.  Was it successful? Was it a failure?
  Why?

- Identify the points that each story makes (i.e., the lesson that it can teach).

While I think this is a very good list of elements for a story—I think there are still other elements

to consider when developing stories.  For instance, I think you should consider the following

additional elements:

- Identify characters for your story

- Identify what type of story you are developing (Knowledge builder, Case
  study, Scenario)

- Identify whether you will tell the whole story or let the learners solve the
  problem in the story on their own.

As an IDA, I try to consider all the previous elements to help me develop effective stories.  At

times though, I may not be able to do all these elements—but doing as many of them as I can in

the time provided to develop the story—helps ensure my stories engage the learner.

As an IDA, I have asked myself—why should I use stories when developing instruction?

I feel it is important because it gives the learner another way to connect to the instruction and

perhaps feel they can relate the story to their own experiences.  Herrington, Oliver, and Reeves

(2002) believe learners become immersed in problem solving within realistic situations

resembling the contexts where the knowledge they are learning can be realistically applied.  I

find this to be true of my own experience with stories—the more the story relates to the learning

the easier it is for me to remember the learning and then use the learning in my job or life.  There

are times though when using stories may not be appropriate.  The audience may not want a story

or you may not have all the information needed to write the story.  In these cases—it is best not

write the story.  In the longer survey, I asked the question—how do you feel about using stories

to help add value to the learning instruction?  Appendix A, Question 1 shows the results from

Accenture employees and Appendix B, Question 1 shows the results from the outside survey

group.  Most of the developers felt that stories add value when the stories depict "real world"

situations—many felt that stories are not always appropriate.  I feel that the responses really

speak to the points I just made above for using or not using stories to complement instruction.

I now have a better idea of what goes into an effective or good story—but what types of

stories are available for me to use.  In my experience as an IDA, I have used the following

stories:

1. **Knowledge stories** tell the learner another person's way of accomplishing a task.
   This gives the learner the benefit of the other person's experience without that
   person actually being present.

2. **Narrative stories** tell the story or account itself (narration is a sequence of events,
   often in chronological order, or alternatively, any story, whether in prose or verse,
   involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do). Some narrations

are reportorial and historical, such as biographies, autobiographies, news stories, and historical accounts.

3. **Dialog stories** are essentially narrative stories that tell the story by showing lines spoken by a character or characters in a story, especially a conversation between two characters.

4. **War stories** tell about the experiences of your subject matter experts (SMEs) real world applications or work.

5. **Scenarios** are short problem-based stories that help learners solve difficult issues from realistic settings.

6. **Case studies** tell a story that allows the learner to learn from a scenario problem.

An IDA uses various types of stories when developing stories for instruction.  For me, the ones I listed above are the typical stories that I use and have seen others use.  Massa (2004) explains that the main point is to engage the learner—pick the type of story that fits the instruction you are developing.  I heartily agree with Massa's explanation—if our stories do not fit the instruction, then it is not beneficial for the learner and they will not be engaged.

Knowing the types of stories you can use when developing stories helps—but having methods for developing the different types of stories can help an IDA be more efficient and quick.  For me developing stories is easier if I have methods that I want to use in mind.  I start with what is the learning about—then draw on my Subject Matter Experts' (SMEs) ideas for developing the plot and characters.  Chu and Lin (2005) emphasize that a "real world" approach to learning motivates the learner to "want to know".  Therefore, I feel it is important to draw upon the experience of SMEs that have the real world experience.  In my interview with Patricia Robinson (personal communication 2005), she explained that IDAs need to provide the learner

with why or how a task is important in the stories—thus making it more realistic to the learner. To find out what other companies are doing in the industry, I surveyed some outside groups. Appendix B, Question 4 shows the answers, which are similar to methods that I presently use. Appendix A, Question 4 shows the responses from my coworkers.  The answer that was given by most of the developers pointed out, as I said above, that it is important to use "real world" scenarios.

In a development environment that is fast-paced—I think it is especially important to have best practices in place.  Developing stories is not always easy, and you could leave important elements out of a story if you are not careful.  The result of leaving out important elements of a story leaves a learner wondering why they are not getting the point of the story. According to the Schreyer Institute for Innovation in Learning (2004), the following are guidelines for developing stories:

- A story should appear authentic and realistic. The story must develop the situation in real life terms.

- Use an efficient and basic story structure in writing. First, open up the story with the broadest questions, and then face the specific situation. Close with a full development of the specific issues.

- There must be a fit of the story with students' educational needs, and the needs in practice. The topics and content of the story should be appropriate and important to the particular students in which the story is used.

- A story should not propound theories, but rather pose complex, controversial issues. There are no simple or clearly bounded issues. The controversy of a story can entail debate or contest.

- There should be sufficient background information to allow students to tackle the issue(s). Include not only the events that happened, but also how the people involved perceive them.

- Write the story in a well-organized structure and in clear language. A story should be easy to read or access.

I like the Schreyer Institute's guidelines—there are only six and all have a description that make them easy to understand.  Sometimes in our busy work schedule, we need short, succinct guidelines to keep us on track.  In Appendix A, Question 2 (Accenture) and Appendix B, Question 2 (Other groups) the answers to the survey question, Please describe how you use stories to enhance the instruction you develop shows what these developers do for best practices. As I reviewed the answers—I felt these developers used many of the best practice guidelines listed.  Additionally, in my interview with Patricia Robinson (personal communication 2005) she explained that IDAs should add value by asking for best and worst case scenarios—as this often brings out interesting points that may have been missed otherwise.

I believe that stories can positively affect the learner's engagement in the instruction only if the story is appropriate.  The learner's engagement in a story will be high if the story pertains to what they are learning—of course, the opposite is true if the story does not pertain to the learning. Norman and Spohrer (1996) explain that if your story engages the learner they are then motivated to take more time to learn—and thus engagement makes more of a difference between success and failure than any other factor.  I feel that is a powerful explanation of how the stories we develop affect learners.

How our stories affect the learner's engagement leads right into my next question of how our stories affect the effectiveness of instruction.  We now know how important it is to keep the

learners engaged—but what makes our stories effective for instruction.  I believe the overall most important factor is authentic stories.  If our stories do not appear authentic—whether fiction or non-fiction—learners can tell and are not engaged.  The more authentic the stories are—the better the learner will be engaged in the learning.  Herrington, Oliver, and Reeves (2002) state that there are ten characteristics of authentic activities:

- Authentic activities have real-world relevance.

- Authentic activities are ill-defined, requiring students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity.

- Authentic activities comprise complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period.

- Authentic activities provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources.

- Authentic activities provide the opportunity to collaborate.

- Authentic activities provide the opportunity to reflect.

- Authentic activities can be integrated and applied across different subject areas and lead beyond domain-specific outcomes.

- Authentic activities are seamlessly integrated with assessment.

- Authentic activities create polished products valuable in their own right rather than as preparation for something else.

- Authentic activities allow competing solutions and diversity of outcome.

While this is a very good list, it is not always easy to implement all of these authentic activities into developing every story we create in a rapid development environment.  I feel that using

these authentic activities at various times and keeping them in mind for over all best practices is the best solution.

*What are the present challenges for us, instructional design analysts (IDAs), when we develop stories to complement instruction?*

The present challenges for me in story development are that I did not think I knew enough about what developing stories entailed.  At times, I felt challenged to develop stories quickly—and did not know where to start.  In my surveys, both the detailed and short survey, I found out that I am not the only one who is having problems developing stories.  Appendix A, Question 3 shows the detailed answers of how my coworkers at Accenture felt about the process of developing stories.  Appendix B, Question 3 shows what outside groups felt.  Most of the developers felt challenged when developing stories.  In a shorter survey, 79.3% of my coworkers felt the process to develop stories to be challenging, 17.2% did not feel challenged, and 3.44% answered N/A.  For the outside groups, 72.4% felt challenged, 20.6% did not feel challenged, and 6.89% answered N/A.  Overall, most developers feel challenged when under pressure to develop stories in a hurry, or they did not know the content well enough to write the story.

Presently, the methods I use to develop stories for instruction is to use as realistic situations for the content as I can.  In Appendix A, Question 2, and Appendix B, Question 2 the developer's detailed survey answers convey this same attitude.  Realistic stories drive home the learning and keep the learner engaged.  In the short survey when asked if you have used stories to enhance instruction, the Accenture employees answered 89.6% Yes, and 10.3% No.  The other groups answered 82.7% Yes, 13.7% No, and 3.44% N/A.

I would have to say my preferred method of developing stories would be developing authentic or real world stories.  You of course need to know the content really well to write

authentic or real world stories.  In the detailed surveys, the developer's answers are very similar

to my preferred methods.  In Appendix A, Question 4, and Appendix B, Question 4 the

developers' detailed survey answers convey this same attitude.  In the short survey, when the

Accenture developers were asked if they had methods that help them develop stories quickly,

75.8% answered No, 20.6% answered Yes, and 3.44% answered N/A.  The other groups

answered 55.1% No, 41.3% Yes, and 3.44% N/A.

From the surveys, and literature readings I have learned a great deal about the methods of

story development already in use at Accenture.  Even though most of us feel challenged to

develop stories—it is good to know we already have some methods and best practices in place.  I

think the biggest thing I have learned from what is already in use is that methods and best

practices can always be improved and additions can be made to make the story development

process more robust.  In tallying everyone's ideas, I realized that creating a job aid to assist

developers in the process of developing stories would be helpful.

*How can tools or job aids help support the development of effective stories that*

*complement instruction?*

I feel that tools or job aids would be helpful in developing effective stories for

instruction.  The tools or jobs aids do not need to tell you exactly what to do—in others words,

constrict your creativity, but they could give you a basis on which to start.  Many developers felt

that having a template would constrict their development and make their development look just

like the next persons.  My intent of proposing a tool or job aid was not to constrict people but to

aid them in how they approach developing stories for instruction.  In the detailed survey

(Appendix A, Question 5; Appendix B, Question 5), developers either did not want a template or

they wanted more of a guidelines or checklist document.  In the shorter survey, when asked if a

template were available would they use it, Accenture employees answered 86.2% Yes, and 13.7% No. The other groups answered 75.8% Yes, 17.2% No, and 6.89% N/A.

Overall, I feel most developers would use a template or guidelines as a basis for developing stories as long as it did not constrict their style of writing or creativity. This type of tool or job aid would help the developer ensure they had all the elements needed for effective stories. This would then correlate to more engaged learners, as the stories they would read in their instruction would be of better quality.

When I develop tools or job aids, I research what others are doing as well as survey others to get tips and tricks that may be incorporated. After developing a job aid, I usually send it out for review, and then make changes based on the comments if I feel it is warranted. A collaborative effort is best in order to get a job aid that is useful for everyone—and one that is everyone is going to use.

We do not presently have any templates or job aids that give enough detail for developers to develop effective stories—and there are not any templates or job aids existing to use that I could find online. In the detailed survey, I asked the developers, at both Accenture, and the other groups, if they had any templates or job aids now. No one had any or had any that they could share (Appendix A, Question 6, Appendix B, Question 6). Additionally, I did not find any templates or job aids in my literature review.

I feel that a collaborative effort is best when creating a template or job aid. Everyone can add ideas to the overall template or job aid. This gets buy in from everyone to use the template or job aid.

### *If project time permits, what would the tool or job aid look like?*

Considering that our work environment is so fast-paced—it would be best to develop a job aid that is short and easy to follow. The job aid should give the developers a basis to start their story development process. Another area that the job aid should cover is to give some questions for the developer to ask when developing stories. Last, the job aid should detail some of the basic story types the developers might want to use—and what situation would be best to use them.

The developers that reviewed the story checklist liked it—but wanted more content for the story elements description. I struggled with how much to put in the job aid—as normally a job aid should not be more than one to two pages. My story checklist is already two pages long—so I opted for short and concise descriptions.

One developer explained that the job aid would not be of much use, as they do not have a hard time developing stories. However, as a refresher, and reference they felt the job aid was great. I felt that even though the job aid was not going to be an everyday reference for this developer—that over time it would be an occasional reference. Another developer felt that it would be of great value to developing stories for instruction. Therefore, for me this was still a successful outcome of the job aid. I meant for the job aid to be a reference and a starting point for developers as they develop stories for instruction.

There were several suggestions for improvement—all of which I implemented except for adding more detail to the story element descriptions and the adding of actual story templates. My project timeline was not long enough to develop story templates, but I hope to accomplish this task sometime in the future. Some of the suggestions from the email survey for the checklist that I implemented were to:

- Clarify opening paragraph to include what audience would use all the elements of developing a story.

- Add emphasis about when writing a story for instruction, it needs to tie clearly to the learning objectives.

- Explain that not only must it address the learner's problem, but also that it must be internally a strong story.

## *Conclusion*

Overall, I felt that my research proved my overall research inquiry, which was to show how we develop effective stories to complement instruction that increases learning value, uses best practices for story telling, and decreases development time.  As the questions that I proposed were answered, it became evident to me that many developers, including myself, have problems developing stories when under pressure and when the content is unfamiliar.  Additionally, many of the developers agreed that using stories was a good idea but would like help in developing the stories.  In the short survey, when asked the question do you feel stories help enforce the effectiveness of learning, Accenture employees answered 93.1% Yes, 3.44% No, and 3.44 N/A. The other groups answered 93.1% Yes, and 6.89% N/A.  So, we can see that developers feel that using stories is important—as well as we can see they would like a little help in developing the stories.

In my interview with Patricia Robinson (personal communication 2005), I asked her what she thought were the three benefits that would come from IDAs using stories to complement instruction at Accenture—and she gave me the following three answers:

1. It improves the value of the training
2. It provides insight without real experience

3. It is natural to tell stories—people tell stories all the time about their daily lives, their hobbies, vacations, etc.

For developers to provide the above benefits in their story development process—I think they need to have a process in mind.  Whether that is a template, job aid, or something else of their choosing—a process is needed to help ensure the story development is effective for the instruction.

## *Action Plan and Recommendations*

The next step in this process has already being acted on with the creation of a job aid.  I developed a simple two-page story checklist that gives developers a basis to start from when developing stories.  Some recommendations for future actions are:

- Offer IDAs training on story development.  Many developers felt challenged when developing stories.
- Offer brown bag lunches where speakers or our own developers with experience in story development could give advice to less experienced developers.
- Offer seminars or sessions where developers share stories or tip and tricks of story development gone bad or good.

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank those people from Accenture and the outside groups that participated in my surveys and reviewed my story checklist.  I would also like to thank Patricia Robinson for her time and knowledge she gave in the interview.  Last, I would like to thank my classmates and Brent Wilson, my teacher for being invaluable resources throughout my research project.

## *Appendix A*

### *Detailed Developing Stories Survey - Accenture*

Hello everyone,

This survey request is only going to a select few IDAs as the survey is a little longer (time wise) than the previous survey. These free form questions ask your opinions. If you choose to accept the invitation, I would greatly appreciate your participation.

I am conducting a survey on how we, IDAs, develop stories to complement instruction for my research class paper. I felt this topic was appropriate since we have just implemented the new Innovative Approaches techniques. My intent is to study what we are doing—then recommend changes and or create templates for how to approach developing effective stories that complement instruction.

Please answer the following questions with as much detail as you would like to provide. If you have supporting documentation or templates that you would like to share with me along with filling out the survey, please email me at dianne.calhoun@accenture.com. The answers will be emailed to me through the my3q.com, so you only need to submit your answers. Please complete the survey by Friday, June 24, 2005.

http://www.my3q.com/home2/70/dpeach2959/92646.phtml

The overall results of all the survey answers will be incorporated in my research paper. No names will be used.

Thank you for your participation! Dianne Calhoun

**Questions:**

1. How do you feel about using stories to help add value to the instruction?
   a. I like using stories because I know how much I, as a learner, enjoy stories and retain more info when there is a story. (e.g. the John Seeley Brown Xerox story from Jim's paper)
   b. I feel that stories should be used if appropriate to the material. If the stories are appropriate then I feel they add value.
   c. Stories allow the visual learners (and others) really to grasp the concepts within a module/course. I think they can add a lot of value. Stories really complete the picture.

    d.  I believe that real world stories give context to the learner. It makes concepts more applicable to the learner.

    e.  I think it is valuable to give context to what the students are learning.

2. Please describe how you use stories to enhance the instruction you develop?

    a.  I like to use "real world" stories about the ways others have interacted/used the content in the real world. If there are experts, I like to talk about their "war stories".

    b.  I use stories to propose possible situations that might occur in the real world, so that the learners can relate to the content better.

    c.  Stories are used to provide a complete picture when describing a product and how it works.  Drives it home, in that it could be a 'real' or typical situation that the learner would face.

    d.  In two ways. Sometimes I present a story, which identifies a problem. Then, I introduce the concept that solves the problem. Or in reverse, I introduce a concept, then use a story to demonstrate how the concept is used.

    e.  Determine what type of scenarios are relevant to the student's work, and use them either as a teaching point for a topic, or as part of an exercise.

3. Describe how you feel about the process of developing stories?

    a.  I like developing stories - it's not daunting if your SME can help you ground it in the truth, and provide you some factual info to surround the story.

    b.  I feel it is hard to come up with the stories.  I always struggle with developing stories especially if I have a deadline and I don't know the content very well.

    c.  Challenged...

    d.  If I am comfortable on the material, I feel very good about the process. Most times, I have my own real-world examples to use as a basis for the story. However, when I am not very solid on the material, I feel shaky about creating a story that may or may not be accurate.

    e.  Like it. It makes developing training more interesting.

4. Please describe what methods you use that help you develop stories quickly?

   a. SME input is the fastest method for developing stories - then the stories grow from there.

   b. I don't have any methods--wish I did.

   c. Start with steps of a process or key points that you want learner to key in on. Then draw (literally) out the steps for the visual. And then finally, write the words (i.e. laymen's terms) to go along with the story.
   All of this can begin with SME collaboration.

   d. I do not have any specific methods to develop stories other than using "Who, What , When, Where, Why and How"

   e. I don't really have any methods. The hard part is getting relevant scenarios, which usually have to come from the SMEs.

5. What do you think would help you to develop stories?

   a. I would prefer not to have a template, but instead need face-to-face time with my SME to draw out stories, or else I need a receptive SME who's prepared to talk about their work.

   b. I would like to know what constitutes a good story.  What types of stories are good for various learning then I might be better able to use the appropriate story style tailored to the learning I'm developing.

   c. More examples of stories to draw upon ideas. In addition, educate the SME's on this approach, so they know what's expected of them during the production phase.  Templates (an easy one) or a guideline document would be helpful.

   d. Prompting questions such as What is the problem being solved? Why is this important to the learner, etc.

   e. I would help if SMEs could provide information on how the subject matter of the course will be used in the student's work up front.

6. Will you be including any supporting documentation or templates that you would like to share with me? If yes, please specify what you will be sending to me at dianne.calhoun@accenture.com.

   a. I don't use any templates.

b.  I don't have any templates or supporting documentation.

c.  Sorry - don't have any templates.

d.  Unfortunately, the only things I have done are for confidential clients, so I cannot contribute.

e.  I would, but I don't think I have anything very good. I'll keep my eyes peeled for something useful.

## *Appendix B*

### *Detailed Developing Stories Survey - Others*

Hello everyone,

I am conducting a survey on how we, IDAs, develop stories to complement instruction for my research class paper. I felt this topic was appropriate since my company has just implemented new Innovative Approaches techniques. My intent is to study what we are doing—then recommend changes and/or create templates for how to approach developing effective stories that complement instruction. One of my research questions asks about comparing what others outside my company, are doing in this area. The following six questions should take you no longer than 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation.

Please answer the following questions with as much detail as you would like to provide. If you have supporting documentation or templates that you would like to share with me along with filling out the survey, please email me at dcalhoun@designbydi.com. The answers will be compiled through the my3q.com website, so you only need to submit your answers.  Please complete the survey by Monday, June 27, 2005.

http://www.my3q.com/home2/70/dpeach2959/2502.phtml

The overall results of all the survey answers will be incorporated in my research paper. No names will be used.

Thank you for your participation! Dianne Calhoun

**Questions:**

1.  How do you feel about using stories to help add value to the instruction?
    a.  I would use them only if appropriate. Not just to add value or to make it entertaining.
    b.  Very valuable.
    c.  I think stories when used in appropriate situations add great value to learning. It was the simplest method used since the early days to teach children and adults. Stories act as analogies and help make difficult or complicated concepts easy to understand.
2.  Please describe how you use stories to enhance the instruction you develop?
    a.  I don't use them.

b. We tie test questions to the stories and ask the questions about the characters in the stories.  That way, people can't just skip over the content to go straight to the tests and take them.

c. There was a time when we were asked to create a WBT to teach a group of people the basics of MS Outlook. Knowing that explaining the basic steps on how to interact with Outlook to send and receive mail, create meeting requests etc. would get monotonous after a while, we simulated an office scene and created a few characters each with particular designations. Using this scenario and the characters, we taught the learners how to use MS Outlook to do a variety of tasks. This WBT was well received.

3. Describe how you feel about the process of developing stories?

    a. –

    b. It's hard

    c. The process of developing stories is a demanding activity. It requires in depth knowledge of the subject matter and a creative inclination to be able to develop an appropriate story that effectively teaches.

4. Please describe what methods you use that help you develop stories quickly?

    a. –

    b. We typically start with the test basic content of the course.  Then we write test questions.  Then we come back and build stories so that the test questions can be anchored to a specific page.

    c. The process of developing stories is a demanding and exciting activity. It requires in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and a creative inclination to be able to develop an appropriate story that teaches effectively.

5. What do you think would help you to develop stories?

    a. -

    b. A Hollywood scriptwriter... but we can't afford that.

    c. Reading a lot helps the mind expand and encompass many ways of telling things. Personally for me it was exposing myself to National Geographic, History Channel, Discovery, David Attenborough, and Beautiful People to

name a few that made me aware of how powerful storytelling is to learning.

6. Will you be including any supporting documentation or templates that you would like to share with me? If yes, please specify what you will be sending to me at [dianne.calhoun@accenture.com](mailto:dianne.calhoun@accenture.com).

   a. -
   b. We use ReadyGo to author the courses.  It makes the job of turning the content into web material easier.  Coming up with the content is still hard.
   c. I don't have anything with me right now.  But when I do I will surely share it with u. Sorry :)

## *Appendix C*

### *General Developing Stories Survey - Accenture*

Hello everyone,

I am conducting a survey on how we, IDAs, develop stories to complement instruction for my research class paper.  I felt this topic was appropriate since we have just implemented the new Innovative Approaches techniques.  My intent is to study what we are doing—then recommend changes and/or create templates for how to approach developing effective stories that complement instruction.

Please click on the link below to answer five short questions by selecting a Yes, No, or N/A answer.  The answers will be tallied through the my3q.com website and emailed to me, so you only need to submit your answers.  Please complete the survey by Wednesday, June 22, 2005.

http://www.my3q.com/go.php?url=dpeach2959/19626

The overall results of all the survey answers will be incorporated in my research paper. No names will be used.
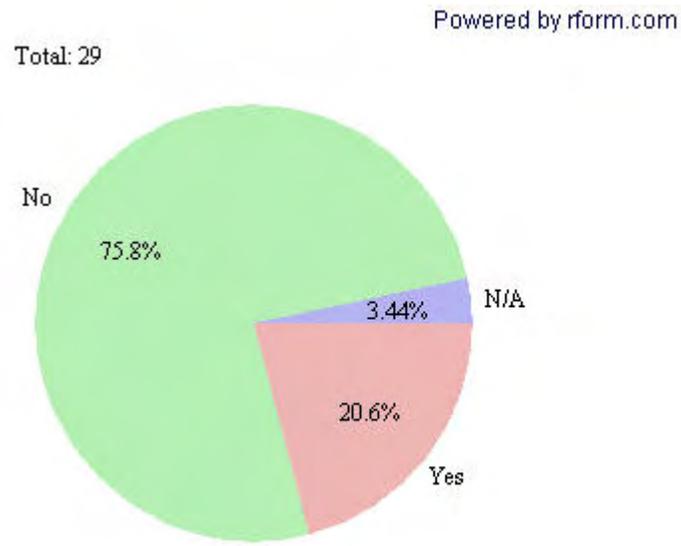
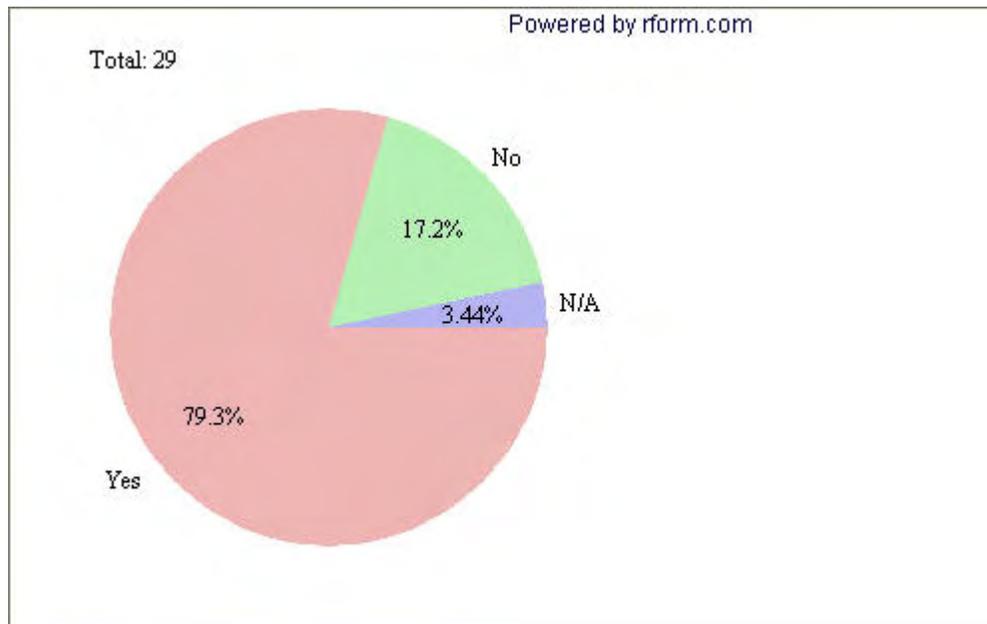Thank you for your participation! Dianne Calhoun

**Questions:**

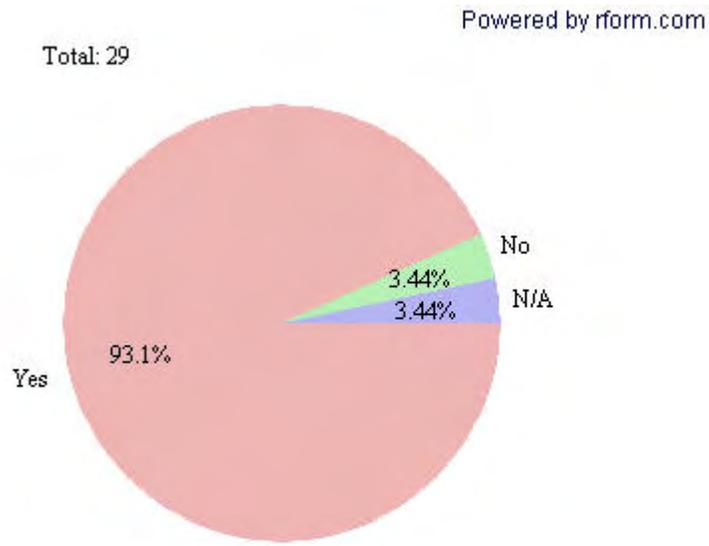1.  Have you used stories to enhance the instruction you develop?

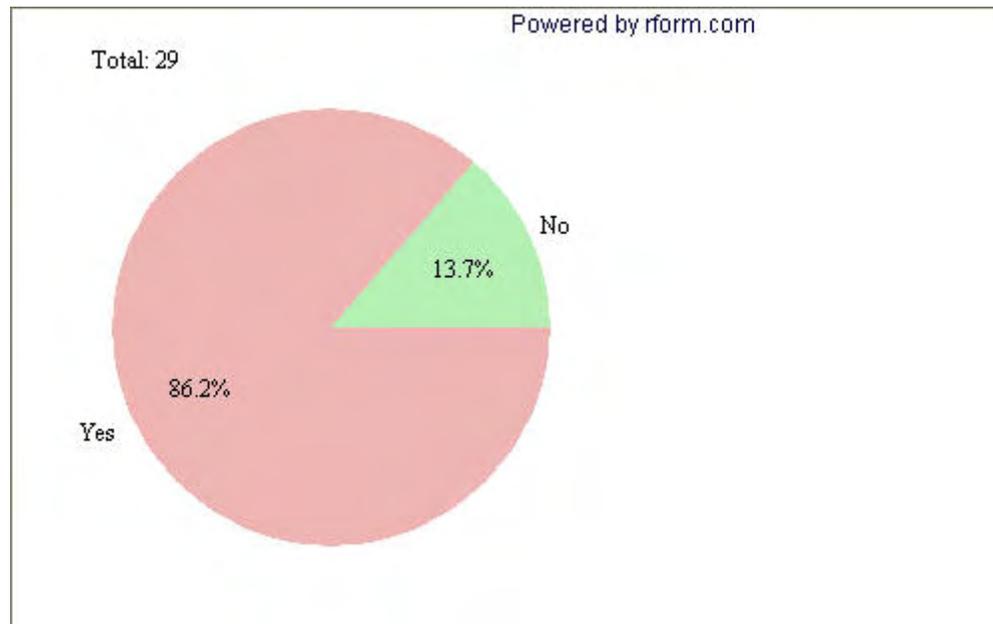2.  Do you have methods that help you develop stories quickly?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No
75.8%

3.44%   N/A

20.6%

Yes

3.  Do you find the process of developing stories to be challenging?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No
17.2%

3.44%   N/A

79.3%

Yes

4. Do you feel stories help enforce the effectiveness of learning?

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Total: 29

No
3.44%
3.44%    N/A
93.1%
Yes

5. Would you use templates to help you develop stories if they were available?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No
13.7%
86.2%
Yes

## *Appendix D*

### *General Developing Stories Survey - Others*

Hello everyone,

I am conducting a survey on how we, IDAs, develop stories to complement instruction for my research class paper. I felt this topic was appropriate since my company has just implemented new Innovative Approaches techniques. My intent is to study what we are doing— then recommend changes and/or create templates for how to approach developing effective stories that complement instruction. One of my research questions asks about comparing what others outside my company, are doing in this area. The following five questions should take you no longer than 6 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation.

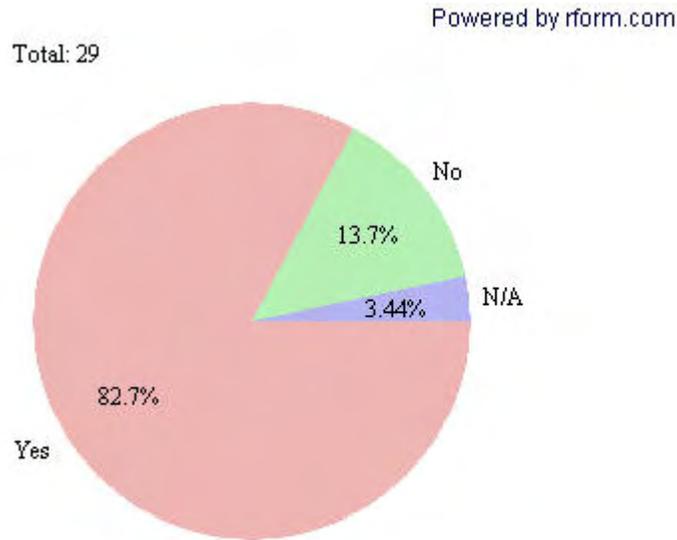http://www.my3q.com/home2/70/dpeach2959/96210.phtml

The overall results of all the survey answers will be incorporated in my research paper. No names will be used.
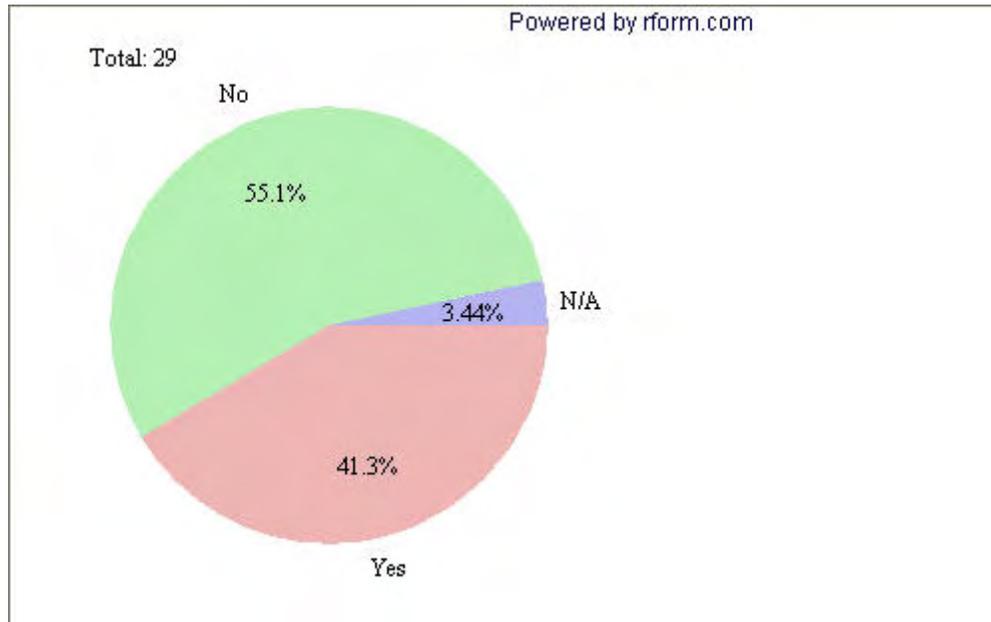
Thank you for your participation! Dianne Calhoun
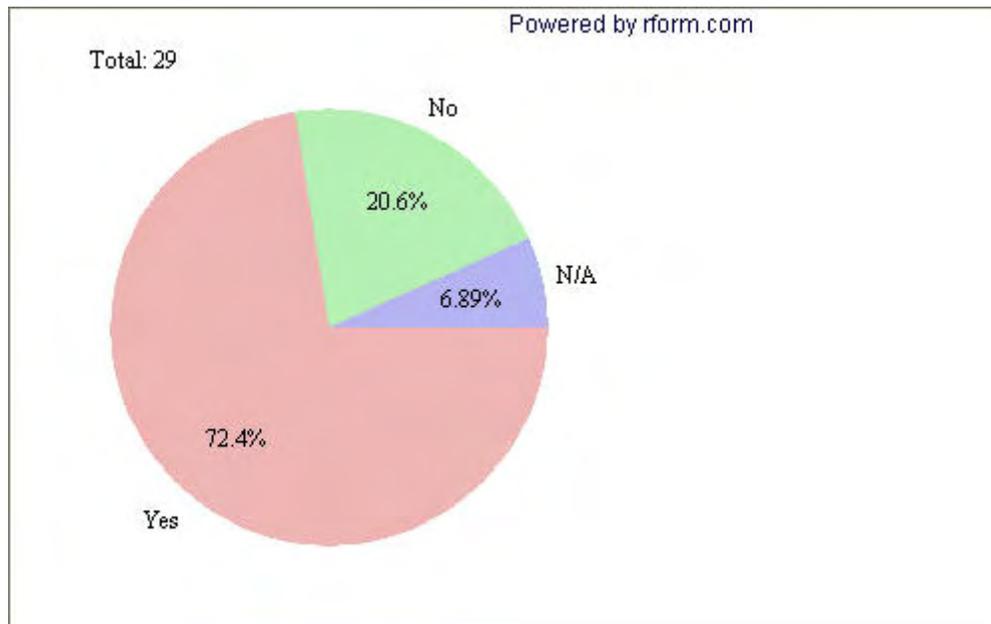
**Questions:**

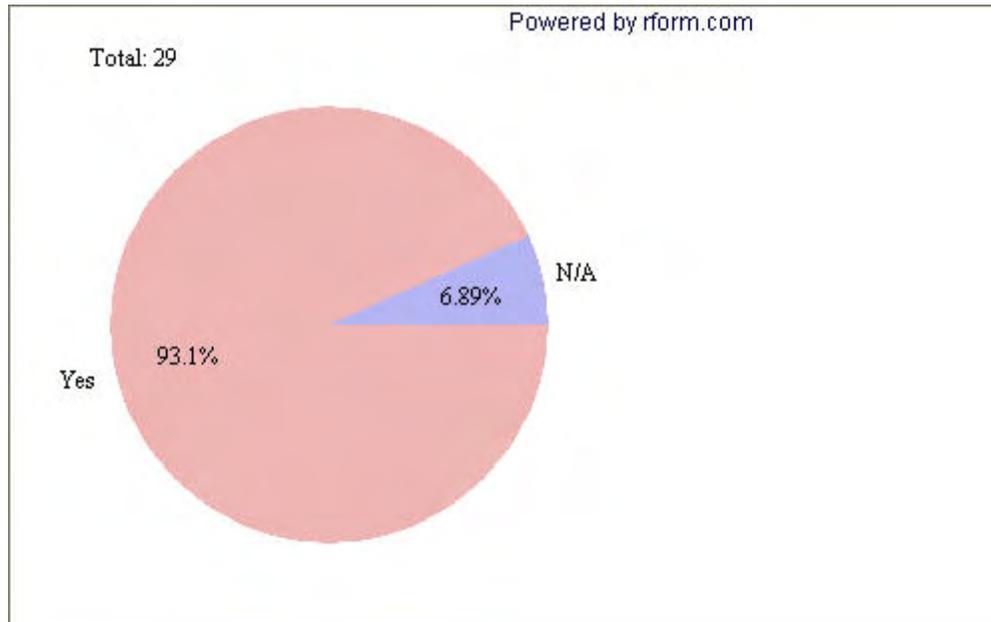1.  Have you used stories to enhance the instruction you develop?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No

13.7%

3.44%   N/A

82.7%

Yes

2.  Do you have methods that help you develop stories quickly?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No

55.1%

3.44%   N/A

41.3%

Yes

3.  Do you find the process of developing stories to be challenging?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No

20.6%

6.89%   N/A

72.4%

Yes

4. Do you feel stories help enforce the effectiveness of learning?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

N/A
6.89%

93.1%
Yes

5. Would you use templates to help you develop stories if they were available?

Powered by rform.com

Total: 29

No
17.2%

N/A
6.89%

75.8%
Yes

*Appendix E*

*Interview Questions for Patricia Robinson*

1. As a manager of Accenture, why do you feel that it is important for IDAs to use stories to help add value to instruction?

    a. More memorable

    b. Natural – teachers / parents do it all the time

    c. Gives context to "rules" – the why or the framework

    d. Active learning – learners more engaged – makes them think

2. Please describe how you think IDAs should best use stories to enhance the instruction they develop.

    a. When first hand experience not feasible – can't do something live, good to hear about it (e.g. something dangerous)

    b. When context is required – some learners need to understand why or how a task is required or why it's important.  Stories can provide this and the WIIFM

3. Do you have any ideas or best practices that you could share for IDAs who find the story development process challenging?

    a. Think of is as an opportunity to provide the WIIFM in training, to add value and why something happens the way it does

    b. Be naturally curious when gathering information – ask for clarifications, examples and why something happens the way it does

    c. Ask for best and worst case scenarios – this often brings out interesting points you may not have gathered during a typical interview

4.  Overall, what three benefits do you perceive will come from IDAs using stories to complement instruction for Accenture?

    a.  It's interesting and motivating – thus improves the value of the training experience

    b.  It can provide insight without real experience – "Oh, that happened to him when he did X, so I should probably not do X."

    c.  It's natural – people tell stories all the time about their daily lives, their hobbies, vacations, etc.  Many people find it very normal/easy to listen to stories

5.  Is there anything you want to add that you are surprised that I did not ask?

    a.  Good question!

    b.  Just one…What are some good references for including stories in instruction?  Roger Shank

# *Appendix F*

## *Survey Questions for Story Checklist*

1. What do you think of the checklist?  (visual appearance and content)

    a. Visually good and clear. The only thing I was looking for was a little more explanation. While I realize there is a fine balance between making it comprehensive and making it easy to read, I would like maybe a little bit more detail on some elements - especially if I am a beginning storywriter.

    b. It looks really good. I like the layout and appearance.

2. Would the checklist be helpful to you when developing stories for instruction?

    a. Personally, I do not think I would use it much, but I do not have much trouble writing stories. Perhaps if I got stuck for an idea or got feedback that a story was unclear or unhelpful, then I would look back at this for some inspiration.

    b. It would definitely be helpful to me and I am sure many others.

3. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

    a. Clarify opening paragraph to include what audience would use all the elements of developing a story.  Add emphasis about when writing a story for instruction, it needs to tie clearly to the learning objectives.

    b. Future improvement: business examples of stories and learning to help the creativity and help new people get a good idea of how to apply in the business sense as opposed to going off into a small novel or losing the learning objective.

4. Do you have any suggestions for things that I could add?

    a. Explain that not only must it address the learner's problem, but also that it must be internally a strong story.

b.  Some items to maybe add would be something in relation to how long stories

should be per type. Maybe just an average amount of time as I know that can

vary.

## *Author Note*

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