# Remarks

- **4:** (Nie jestem rodowitym użytkownikiem angielszczyzny, zatem moje uwagi językowe proszę brać z rezerwą) has
- **4:** for citizens is
- 5: Trochę inaczej się cytuje poprawiłem w pliku thesis.bib. Wpisy bibliograficzne w BibT<sub>F</sub>Xu są zwykle dostępne w internecie.
- 7: Zdanie wprowadzające może być jedna linijka.
- 8: Zdanie wprowadzające może być jedna linijka.
- 9: Czy użytkownik, który się jeszcze nie zalogował «citizen» może głosować?
- **12:** It is
- **12:** it is
- 12: spacja przed cytowaniem
- 13: odstęp między słowej a cytowaniem
- 13: Cytowanie przed kropką.
- **13:** it is
- **17:** ?
- **17:** it is
- **18:** you
- **18:** your
- 18: W poprzedniej sekcji analogiczny opis korzystał z «you», ten z «we».
- **19:** do not
- 20: does not



# SILESIAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY FACULTY OF AUTOMATIC CONTROL, ELECTRONICS, AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

# **Engineer thesis**

Central online voting system

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Gliwice, January 2020

# Oświadczenie

Wyrażam zgodę / Nie wyrażam zgody mowej / rozprawy doktorskiej*.	* na udostępnienie mojej pracy dyplo-
Gliwice, dnia 31 stycznia 2020	
	(podpis)
	(poświadczenie wiarygodności podpisu przez Dziekanat)

\* podkreślić właściwe

# Oświadczenie promotora

Oświadczam, że praca "Central online v malne pracy dyplomowej inżynierskiej.	roting system" spełnia wymagania for-
Gliwice, dnia 31 stycznia 2020	
	(podpis promotora)

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# Chapter 1

# Introduction

# Chapter 2

# Online voting systems

# 2.1 Introduction

Ever since internet was introduced in our lives, online election voting was a contentious issue.

First of all, online voting would be convenient—right now voting is associated with going to a nearby ward, waiting in a queue, complicated procedure of receiving a ballot and filling a ballot. Moreover, waiting for results could be decreased—now we have to wait for all the votes to be counted, protocols sent to commissions, summed up, and determination of the winners. All this can take over few dozen hours. Online voting would decrease that time hugely, at the same time being much more precise than counting by a person.

On the other hand, there is significant trust issue. There will always be a person which have access to data, and with such access that person could change elections results in a matter of seconds. Following this lead, even if nobody has access to data, we will never be sure that vote we cast is not changed somewhere in the logic of the application. We can eliminate that by developing open source application, which can be verified that it does not change something in the logic. This approach would create many more problems, of which two are: firstly, open source application can be investigated by everyone, and with given source it is much easier to find a hole in the logic from which we can benefit. Secondly, even if we see view of that open source application, we can never be sure that logic

behind it is not swapped.

You can see a pattern here—for every argument there is a counter argument, which generates another problems. There is no right answer in this debate.

# 2.2 Ideal voting system

So what would be features of the perfect voting system? Let's investigate it along with flow of online voting.

Before election, system administrator has to enter committees and candidates data into a system, register them for polls predicted for certain date, which he have [(Nie jestem rodowitym użytkownikiem angielszczyzny, zatem moje uwagi językowe proszę brać z rezerwą) has] entered at the beginning. Although he could handle registering candidates to certain committees, he cannot handle scope of managing whole committee during election. It's best if administrator granted some chosen user privileges to manage certain committee inside the system—let's call him committee administrator. It's useful for example in case of allocation seats via D'Hondt method—it's committee itself that wants to decide on order in closed list, there should be no third party involved.

First, in order to cast a vote through internet, a citizen would have to register. What online voting system wants to achieve is for citizens [for citizens is] to be able to cast a vote without leaving home. It makes sense that citizens would register also through the internet—for example in case of some injury, if someone could go out of home, they could also vote in a ward. It creates a problem—how do we know that person on the other side of the screen is who he says he is. Solution is two step authentication process—citizen registers with citizen id (for example PESEL in Poland), he is sent a text message or an email, but also receives registered letter of registration, both with activation codes, that only together allows him to register properly. Registered letter allows to verify citizen willing to vote through internet without need of leaving the house. Because email can be generated without interference of any third party person, code sent this way secures citizen from someone taking advantage of code in letter. Those two ways combined secure citizens account from being taken advantage of.

Let's say a citizen registered successfully. On election day, he should be able to

vote on exactly the same polls as he would personally, in ward. Citizen should be able to cast a vote only once, and his vote should be detached from his account—in no way should anybody be able to tell which vote belongs to which citizen. Although registered for online voting, a citizen should still be able to vote personally in ward. However, once he voted in any of two ways, the second one should be automatically and immediately blocked. This requires for the system to work also in wards. Once user votes online or receives a ballot from commission in a ward, he should be immediately blocked for second type of voting.

Citizen easily and securely voted either through internet or personally. Now his journey ends, he can go back to living his life. What's left to do is to calculate results of election. However, system also has to take into account all votes casted in wards. Results can be calculated if and only if all wards have entered their protocols into the system. To do so, a member of a commission should be assigned with access to send the protocol to the system—let's call him a ward administrator. Once that member is a registered user, he should be able to be assigned as particular ward admin by the system administrator. Then, he should be able to file in the protocol, once the election is closed for voting.

After closing the election and collecting protocols from all wards, results of the election can be calculated. This information can be public and delivered to public on the same site that they voted on, as well as on official government electoral commission website.

# 2.3 Overview of similar solutions

# 2.3.1 Electronic voting in Estonia

In Estonia, voting is based on electronic citizen ID. It's mandatory and sufficient national identity document, which allows for secure remote authentication. To cast a vote, an Estonian needs a computer connected to the internet and equipped with card reader. They can authenticate using digital certificate included in their citizen card, and cast a vote on the internet [3]. [Trochę inaczej się cytuje – poprawiłem w pliku thesis.bib. Wpisy bibliograficzne w BibTEXu są zwykle dostępne w internecie.]

This solution is problematic for several reasons:

- It's impossible to be easily implemented in countries without electronic citizen ID. Providing such documents for most of society of the country is a long time process, measured in years rather than months.
- A card reader capable of reading such a card is not a common device—a citizen has to go somewhere with a card reader, if he wants to cast a vote.
- Electronic citizen ID is not an intellectual knowledge like password or token. It's a physical device that can be easily stolen—and of course blocked in some department—but it may be too late and someone may have already taken advantage from owning someone else's citizen ID.

# Chapter 3

# Requirements and tools

# 3.1 Functional requirements

[Zdanie wprowadzające – może być jedna linijka.]

- A citizen of a country that holds an online election in the application should be able to register.
- The application should allow registered citizens to vote on candidates of their preference.
- A vote of a citizen should be taken into account when calculating results of an election.
- A citizen should be able to cast only one vote per election.
- A vote of a citizen should not be trackable—no person should be able to tell which citizen voted on which candidate.
- A person designated as a ward administrator—and only that person—should be able to send a ward protocol to the system.
- Protocols sent from wards should be taken into account when calculating results of an election.

- A person designated as a commission administrator—and only that person—should be able to enter a commission's closed list candidates order to the system.
- An administrator of the application should be able to perform steps that lead to creation of an election identical to one provided to him.
- An administrator should be able to trigger calculation of the results of an election.
- Election results should not be calculated with some of ward protocols missing.
- An administrator should be able to grant privileges of ward and commission administrators to designated people separately.
- An administrator should not be able to perform actions in replacement of a ward or committee administrator.

# 3.2 Nonfunctional requirements

[Zdanie wprowadzające – może być jedna linijka.]

- User interface should be understandable to English speaking individuals.
- The application should be implemented in Java, with help of Spring Boot and related frameworks for an backend, and Thymeleaf template engine for an frontend.
- The application should store all necessary data in a MySQL database.
- The application should hash all sensitive data stored in a database.
- The application should offer all available functionalities on Google Chrome version 79.

3.3. Use cases 9

# 3.3 Use cases

### 3.3.1 Citizen use case UML

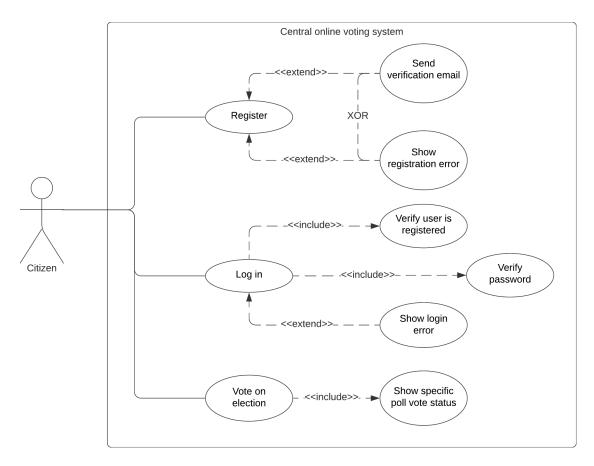


Figure 3.1: Citizen use case UML for Central online voting system

Figure 3.1 shows available use cases for a citizen. He can register and in that case he will receive an email, or he can see some error regarding registration. A citizen can try to login, which will trigger checks if he is registered and that password matches. In case of any errors, he will see a message. A citizen can vote, and after that he will see status of his vote regarding every poll in the election, no matter if vote is valid or not. [Czy użytkownik, który się jeszcze nie zalogował «citizen» może głosować?]

### 3.3.2 Ward administrator use case UML

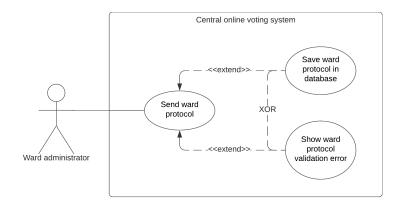


Figure 3.2: Ward administrator use case UML for Central online voting system

Figure 3.2 shows available use cases for a ward administrator. A ward administrator can try to send a ward protocol. If anything is not correct in a protocol he tried to send, he will see a validation error, and the protocol will not be sent.

### 3.3.3 Committee administrator use case UML

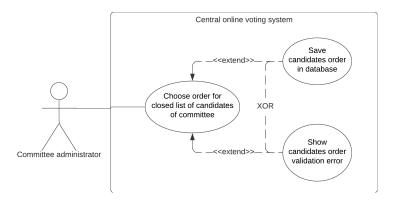


Figure 3.3: Committee administrator use case UML for Central online voting system

Figure 3.3 shows available use cases for a committee administrator. A committee administrator can send closed list candidates' order. If anything is not correct in an order of candidates, he will see a validation error, and the candidates order will not be saved.

3.3. Use cases

### 3.3.4 Administrator use case UML

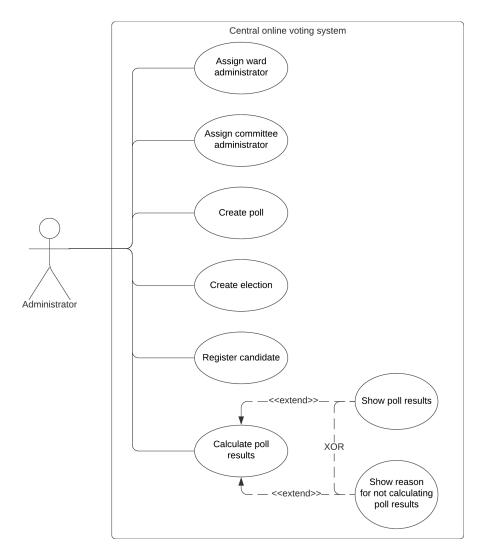


Figure 3.4: Administrator use case UML for Central online voting system

Figure 3.4 shows available use cases for an administrator. We assume that an administrator knows what he is doing, so there is no need to validate his choices. However, he has no power over how many protocols are sent from wards when he wants to calculate poll results. Thus he will get appropriate message when he tries to calculate results of poll that is not ready to be calculated.

# 3.4 Description of tools

The application is developed in Java programming language with Spring Framework and Thymeleaf as template engine. Data is stored in a MySQL database, and whole application is built with Apache Maven build automation tool.

### 3.4.1 Java

It's [It is] an object—oriented programming language that requires Java Virtual Machine to run a program. This allows Java applications to run on almost every device, regardless of it's operational system[4]. Java offers huge open—source ecosystem.

### Alternative

C# is also an object-oriented programming language, but it's [it is] used to develop software for Microsoft platforms[spacja przed cytowaniem][11].

Although there is no much difference in beginner level development between Java and C#, I find C# less convenient than Java, because I use machine with macOS operating system as my everyday work tool, and Java has huge support on Unix based system, compared to almost none support for C#.

### **3.4.2** Maven

Apache Maven is a tool that is capable of building and managing any Javabased project. It helps developers with dependency management, as it's able to download all necessary dependencies with almost no participation of developer. It's easy for beginners, as it's build lifecycles and syntax is easy to understand—all You need is artifact info of dependency that You want to include in Your project, and it will download and include dependency in project during install build lifecycle[2].

#### Alternatives

**Gradle** It's also application build tool for Java-based projects. It's better than Maven for larger projects, thanks to better automation methods and better per-

formance. Gradle is built with more experienced and demanding developer in mind[5]. [odstęp między słowej a cytowaniem]

Ant is a powerful tool that allows developer to automate very complicated task, but this functionality is not cheap. It's complicated to configure and it's being ousted by Gradle[1].

I chose Maven because I wanted to learn modern build technology that is common in the industry, but is suitable for beginners.

### 3.4.3 Spring

It's an open—source framework for Java platform. It focuses on delivering out—of—the—box core features for any kind of application, so developers can focus on business logic of the application. Aside from Spring Core, which provides easy dependency injection, Spring provides extensions in form of more or less independent modules, each available as it's own maven artifact.[7] [Cytowanie przed kropką.] Spring Boot is an extension of Spring framework, which provides out—of—the—box configuration, and requires user to provide only application specific configuration.

### Alternative

Because Spring is open—source framework, considered a standard in the industry for over 10 years, there is no other framework that is as feature—packed as Spring. One could make a case for .Net framework for C# language, but it's [it is] developed and directed by Microsoft[11], whereas Spring is powered by community, and contains features required by that same community.

#### **Spring Security**

Authentication and Authorization framework for Spring based applications. Provides quick protection of API exposed by application and integration with users in database. Allows for assigning users' roles, and managing accesses based on these roles[8].

### Spring Web MVC

It's designed around front controller pattern, and helps developers follow the Model–View–Controller design pattern. It coordinates flow of request processing performed by configurable delegate components[9].

### Spring Data JPA

Spring implementation of JPA contract, powered by Hibernate. Reduces hugely boilerplate code that's associated with querying database, especially with Repository interface custom finder methods[6].

# 3.4.4 Thymeleaf

Modern server-side Java template engine resolver. It converts HTML files with Thymeleaf–specific dynamic attributes based on model attributes provided by developer through Spring MVC framework[10].

#### Alternative

There are not many pure alternatives when it comes to template resolvers. Java Enterprise Edition comes with JSP, which is not pleasant to use, and is considered obsolete. It definitely does not provide level of integration with Spring MVC framework as much as Thymeleaf does.

# 3.5 Methodology of design and implementation

Base of every application is a well designed database schema. Once schema is considered with required functionalities of application in mind, and with space for extensibility predicted, it makes development not only go faster and more efficient, but also more pleasant for a developer.

With proper database schema, we have to consider what is the best way for user to use our application—through web browser or application? Because application is meant to be nation—wide, and there is a web browser on perhaps every computer with internet connection—which is necessary for application to work—web application is the way to go.

When designing web application, we have to decide how we want to achieve end result—presenting view to application user. There are two most common approaches when it comes to Spring application:

- Exposing REST API from Spring application, that contains all of business logic and create another application, that consumes that API and interacts with the user in any way desired.
- Keep view rendering on server side, and expose pure html to the user.

I chose the second option, because it is not the most important thing for Central online voting system to be pretty and responsive, I wanted to focus on backend side of the application.

Once view presenting is established, we want to consider how we want to design architecture of the application. I can see two approaches in choosing the architecture: basing on application requirements or basing on technology used in application. Because Spring provides whole framework dedicated to MVC design pattern, and also it's widely used in the industry, I chose to develop application in that manner, rather than choosing architecture basing on application requirements. My application is not large enough to be hugely impacted by bad architecture. I could only harm my project by using some fancy architecture.

# Chapter 4

# External specification

# 4.1 Types of users and cockpits

#### 4.1.1 Overview

In order to secure application from unauthorized access I divided application into four main cockpits:

- Voter cockpit
- Administrator cockpit
- Ward administrator cockpit
- Committee administrator cockpit

Each cockpit has certain role that is necessary to even display available actions [?]. In order to have access to anything we have to be authenticated (active, successfully registered) user, with assigned role that gives us permission for certain cockpits. A guest—not registered user—is only available to register or login.

# 4.1.2 Voter cockpit

A user with a role of a voter is able to vote for election and see election results after it's [it is] closed. In case of voting a user is be able to vote on a poll only once without any exception.

# 4.1.3 Administrator cockpit

A user with a role of an administrator is able to create essential data—wards, polls, committees etc. as well as granting certain roles to certain users. An administrator is not be able to interfere in a ward or committee administration other than choosing its administrator. Moreover administrator is the one that triggers polls results calculation.

### 4.1.4 Ward administrator cockpit

A user with a role of a ward administrator is able to manage only his assigned ward. Under no circumstances he is able to manage other wards. In a ward administrator cockpit he is able to enter a protocol from a ward for each poll during an election.

# 4.1.5 Committee administrator cockpit

A user with a role of a committee administrator is able to manage only his assigned committee. Under no circumstances he is able to manage other committees. In a committee administrator cockpit he is able to choose an order of committee candidates in a closed list.

# 4.2 Software requirements

In order to run the application, You [you] have to have Java 12, Maven 3.6.X installed on Your [your] computer, make sure that java and mvn executables are in PATH environment variable.

# 4.3 Installation procedure

In order to build project, we [W poprzedniej sekcji analogiczny opis korzystał z «you», ten z «we».] have to execute Maven install lifecycle mvn install in APP\_ROOT directory. This lifecycle will generate ballotbox -0.0.1-SNAPSHOT.jar jar file in APP\_ROOT/target directory. To run application we just have to

execute java -jar APP\_ROOT/target/ballotbox-0.0.1-SNAPSHOT.jar. Application server will listen on PORT 8080 by default.

# 4.4 Activation procedure

Users' roles definitions are loaded into a database on first server startup if they don't [do not] exist in the database already. Same behaviour with default admin user with password 'nimda'—it's in the database on first startup. To secure the application we have to register a proper user which is meant to be an administrator, and execute following query in the database:

**INSERT INTO** users\_roles(user\_id, role\_id)values (ADM\_ID, ROLE\_ID); Where ADM\_ID is id of desired administrator in table 'user', and ROLE\_ID is id of row with column name equal to "ROLE\_ADMIN" in table 'role'—1 by default. That's the procedure we should follow when we want to add administrator to the system. After that we should delete predefined admin user from table user, with following query:

**DELETE FROM** user **WHERE** username='admin';

### 4.5 User manual

#### 4.5.1 Voter manual

Voter can access voting page at root endpoint of the application—HOST: PORT. After clicking show all elections, user can choose election on which he wishes to vote in. After clicking on vote button, he can cast a vote in all polls available in this election. There are two types of voting methods. One is a single choice vote—voter can mark a checkbox next to candidate he wishes to vote on.

```
////single choice vote screenshot////
```

Second one is a preference voting, in which voter can mark candidates by his choice of preference: 1 for a candidate of his first choice, 2 for his second favourite candidate and so on.

```
////preference vote screenshot/////
```

Description provides user with specific instructions on how to vote on a specific poll. If user doesn't [does not] follow the instructions, vote is invalidated, and voter cannot vote again. After casting a vote, user gets information on status of his votes - if vote is validated or not, and if not, why.

```
////polls statuses screenshot/////
```

After election is finished and results are calculated, voter can see results of poll after clicking on results button. He will get information about how many valid votes were casted in a poll, and who are the winners of that poll.

```
////poll results screenshot/////
```

### 4.5.2 Committee administrator manual

Committee administrator can access committee management page after going to HOST:PORT/committeepanel endpoint of the application. After that, he can choose which committee that he is an administrator of he wishes to manage. Then, he can set closed list order of that committee, required for D'Hondt method.

```
////closed list order screenshot////
```

If he makes any error, he will be displayed appropriate message, and order will not be saved—it will be held at previous stage.

```
////closed list order result screenshot////
```

#### 4.5.3 Ward administrator manual

Ward administrator can access ward management page after going to HOST: PORT/wardpanel endpoint of the application. After that, he can choose which ward thet he is an administrator of he wishes to manage. Then, he can send specific poll protocol from that ward.

```
////ward management page screenshot//// ////poll protocol sending page screenshot////
```

If administrator makes any error in protocol, he will be displayed appropriate message, and protocol will not be sent.

# 4.6 System administration

In order to access administrator cockpit, we should go under HOST:PORT/panel URL in the browser, when logged in as user with administrator rights.

```
////localhost:8080/panel screenshot////
```

We can see all available actions for administrator.

### 4.6.1 Add country

Crete a country with typed in name.

#### 4.6.2 Add district

Create a district with typed in name, and select country that owns created district.

### 4.6.3 Add ward

Create instance of real ward in district - place where people come to vote. Select district that owns created ward.

# 4.6.4 Grant ward administrator privileges

Choose ward and existing user. Chosen user will be ward administrator of chosen ward. One user could be administrator of many wards.

#### 4.6.5 Add committee

Create a committee with typed in name.

# 4.6.6 Grant committee administrator privileges

Choose committee and existing user. Chosen user will be committee administrator of chosen committee. One user could be administrator of many wards.

### 4.6.7 Add poll

```
////add poll screenshot/////
```

Create poll. Type in unique name and short description. Choose date in which poll will be available to vote. Choose poll scope—citizens from which wards can place a vote in this poll. For example, if You choose country scope, citizens from all wards that belong to all districts that belong to country chosen will be able to vote in this poll. Same applies to district scope—citizens from all wards that belong to chosen district will be able to vote in this poll. Next, select voting method. It's method in which results will be calculated, but also it will determine how voters can cast their vote. There are four available methods, each with constraints:

- Winner takes all—Number of seats to fill must be 1, voter can mark only 1 candidate. Candidate with higher number of votes overall wins.
- Two round—Number of seats to fill must be 1, voter can mark only 1 candidate. Poll is resolved only if one candidate has over half of all votes.
- Instant runoff voting—Number of seats to fill must be less than number of candidates participating (type in desired number), voter can mark maximum of available candidates (type in desired number). Voter will vote on candidates based on his number of preference for each candidate—1 for highest preference, 2 for slightly lower and so on.
- D'Hondt method—Number of seats to fill must be less than number of candidates participating (type in desired number), voter can mark only 1 candidate. Results of poll will be calculated using D'Hondt method, using closed lists from committees, provided by committee administrators.

# 4.6.8 Register candidate

Select an existing user and register him as a candidate in a poll, as candidate from chosen committee.

#### 4.6.9 Create election

Create an election from existing polls. Voter will have only one chance to vote on polls contained in an election.

### 4.6.10 Polls

```
////polls screenshot/////
```

Opens available polls menu. For each poll we have two options: Summary and Results.

#### Summary

Shows if poll is active (can be voted on), and how many votes were casted over the internet.

#### Results

Calculates and shows results of chosen election. Results will not be calculated if poll is still active, or if any ward did not send the protocol. Once results are calculated they are stored in database and will not be calculated again—there is no need to.

# 4.7 Security issues

Application is protected against unauthorized access with help of Spring Security. It handles authentication and authorization following only guidelines of the developer. Moreover, I handle business logic security directly in API calls which may affect data written to database. Whenever there is a call that should be protected by some business logic, before it performs anything, it checks whether user that makes that call can perform desired action. If not, it returns with message why action was not performed. For example, see trying to vote in election that You, as a voter, have already voted in.

# Chapter 5

Internal specification

•

### Chapter 6

Verification and validation

•

# Chapter 7

### Conclusions

•

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# Appendices

#### List of abbreviations and symbols

API Application Programming Interface

APP\_ROOT Root directory of ballotbox project (with pom.xml file)

HOST IP of host machine of application server

HTML HyperText Markup Language

JPA Java Persistence API

JSP JavaServer Pages

MVC Model-View-Controller

PORT Port on which application server listens

REST Representational State Transfer

UML Unified Modeling Language

## Listings

#### Contents of attached CD

The thesis is accompanied by a CD containing:

- thesis (LATEX source files and final pdf file),
- source code of the application,
- test data.

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