Embedding VR into NI

Implementation of Virtual Reality (VR) into Northern Ireland focusing on age, location and profession

VR has taken an increased presence within society in the past 20 years and is expected to grow further as the technology develops. The purpose of this research poster is to examine the limitations and the variables within age, location and professions that may affect this expected growth;

It has been suggested that communication through VR will contribute to 60% of the global market after further development (Miller, Walker and Rupnow 1992).

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a 1000% rise in demand for the technology (Wiederhold 2020).

This indicating how society will adapt to the use of VR.

60% of the market

This negative correlation with age indicates the older the consumer the more likely they are to perceive VR hardware difficult to use (Manis and Choi 2019).

VR is at the forefront of innovation and advancement across industries such as oil and gas, aerospace and construction (Higgins 2017).

Of those that were able to complete the virtual survey none argued against it. Showing there is a space for it in society.

Methodology
To explore how Northern Ireland will embrace VR into everyday life and the comparison of this across age groups, professions and location. Conducting a virtual survey, this was then followed up with short interviews on their thoughts on VR. These forms of participant methodology allow the collection for both quantitative and qualitative data. The data was gathered from individuals aged 18 to 70, across the country from multiple professions and age groups. The survey provided interesting data on the aspect of VR being embraced into different areas of users lives.

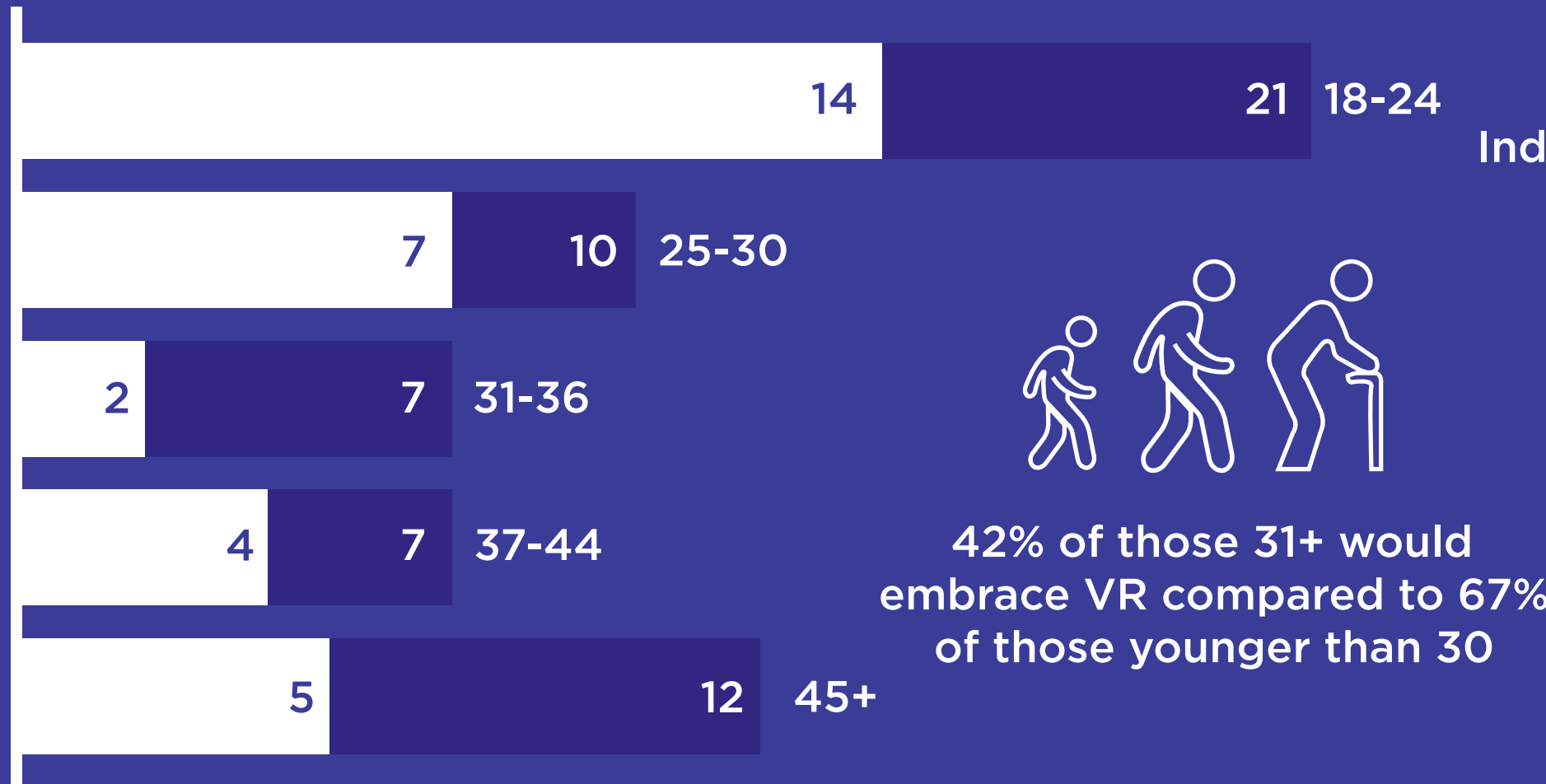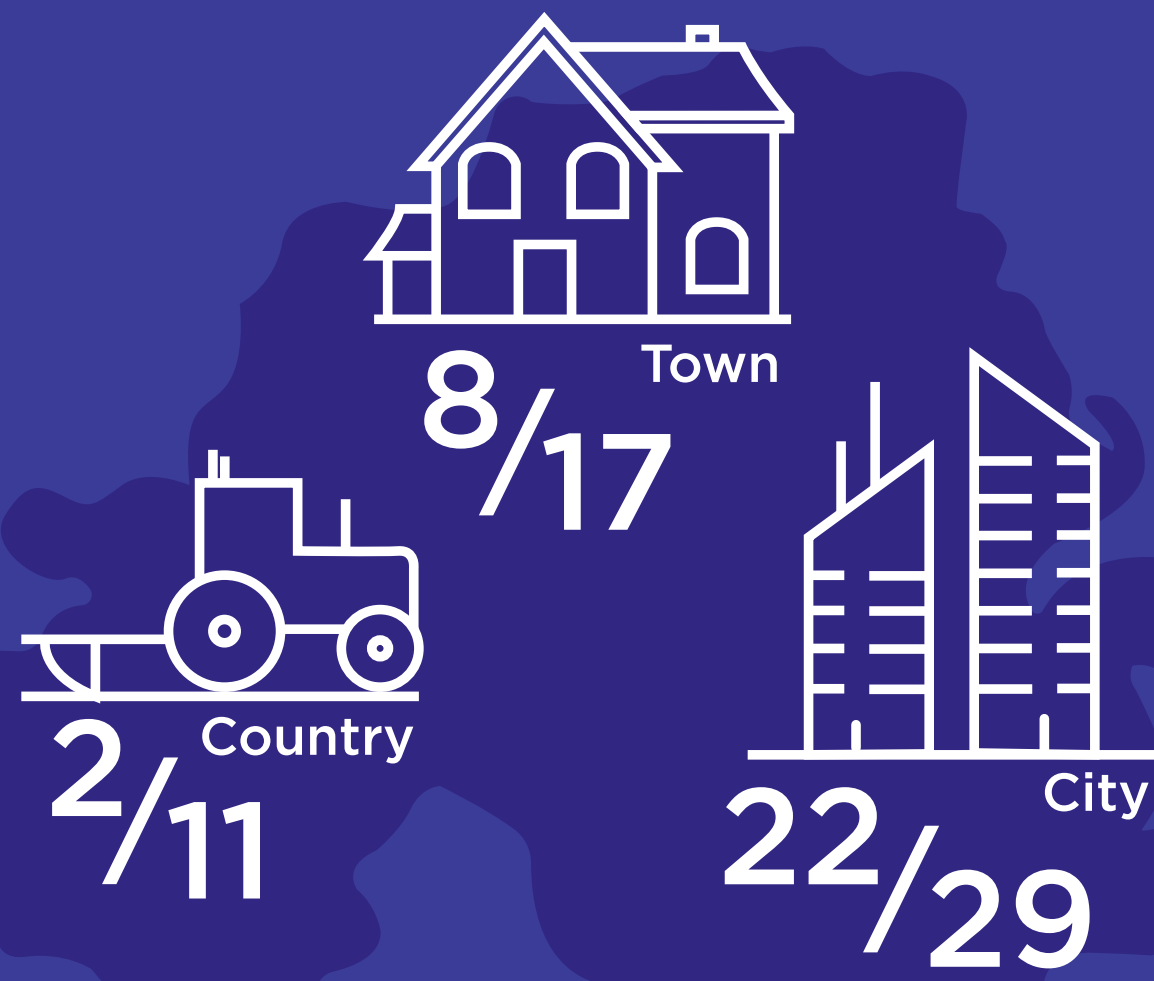**The aim of this research is to investigate the following questions;**
• Does age affect embracing of VR into every day life?
• Do individuals professions affect the embracing of VR into every day life?
• Does the location of individuals in Northern Ireland affect the embracing of VR?
• Are individuals within Northern Ireland interested as to what VR will provide in the future?

Comparison of individuals age to their embracing of VR in everyday life

14	21	18-24
7	10	25-30
2	7	31-36
4	7	37-44
5	12	45+

42% of those 31+ would embrace VR compared to 67% of those younger than 30

Comparison of individuals location to their embracing of VR in everyday life

Town **8/17**

Country **2/11**

City **22/29**

Individuals 45+ in "traditional" professions that embrace VR

Individuals 45+ that embrace VR

Individuals 45+ in professions that utilise "new media" that embrace VR

14%

80%

12 Aged 45+ Surveyed

41%

36% of people are aware of VR being utilised in healthcare and therapies.
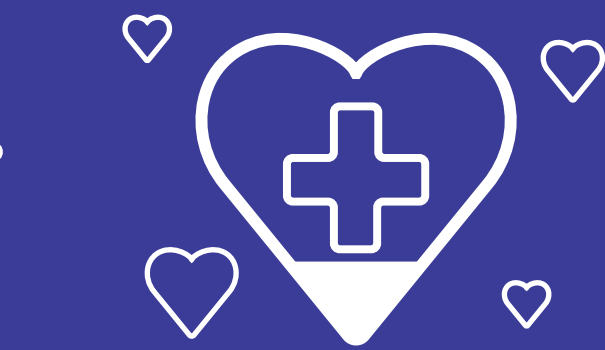
Conclusion
The research shows mixed results from the subject of VR; looking at the aspect of age, current research would expect that older and more traditional generations would struggle to explore VR being implemented into society, Although those within professions that use "New Media" there were more open to the idea of VR. There was not much of a difference between younger and older generations. Although, majority of the younger generations surveyed were students, further research could aim for individuals 18-24 not in education. Majority of individuals outside of healthcare or therapy based roles were unaware of VR being used as a form of treatment, although those who have experienced the technology as a form of treatment have had positive experiences. It remains difficult to draw conclusions under the restrictions of COVID-19 and how it may have amplified the use of VR (this could be further explored in further research. Furthermore majority of the population of Northern Ireland is based in Belfast, therefore limiting the research, leaving opportunity to focus on specific areas of Northern Ireland.
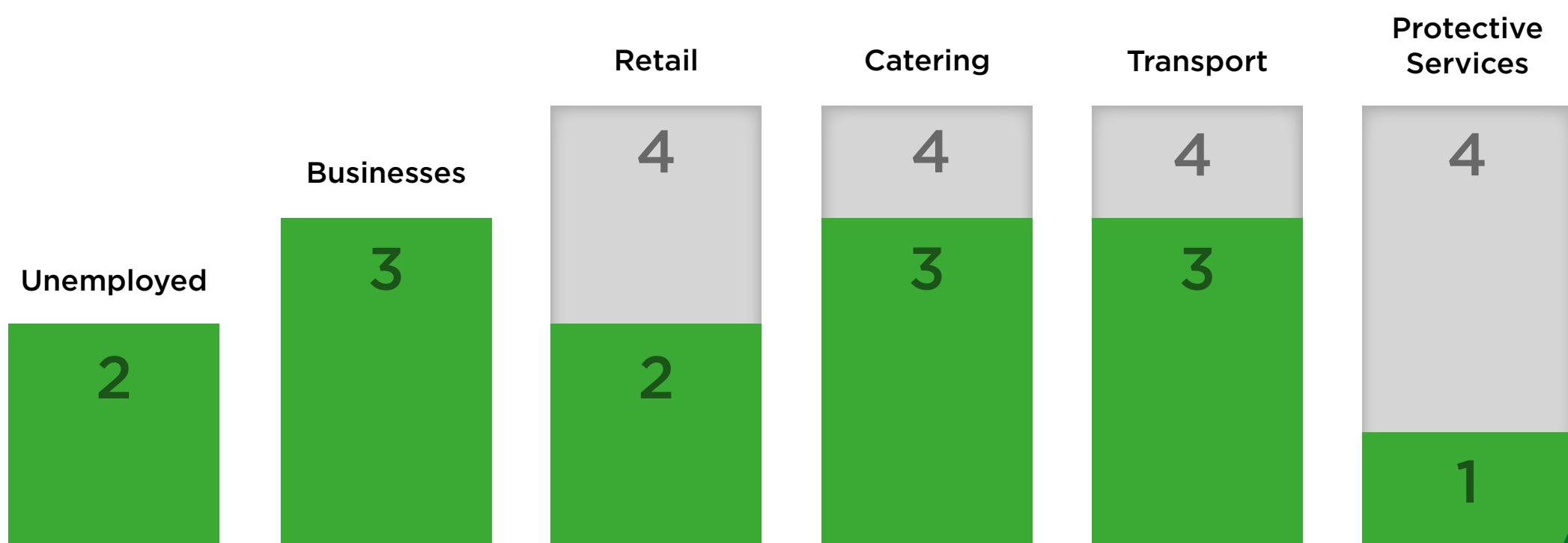
78% of those located in Belfast felt VR could benefit society
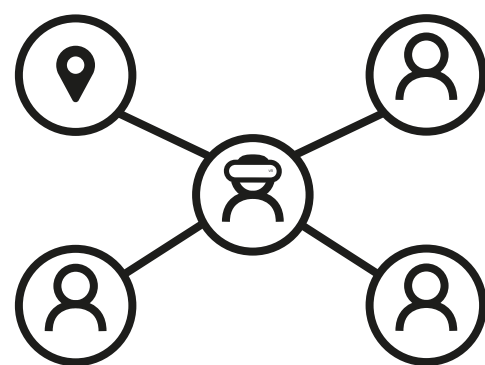
66% of people are interested how VR could impact their profession

Comparison of individuals profession area to their embracing of VR in everyday life

Unemployed	Businesses	Retail	Catering	Transport	Protective Services	Agricultural	Trades & Labour	Sports & Fitness	Healthcare & Therapies	Technology, Creative & Media	Student
2	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	7	10
	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	3	2	6	4

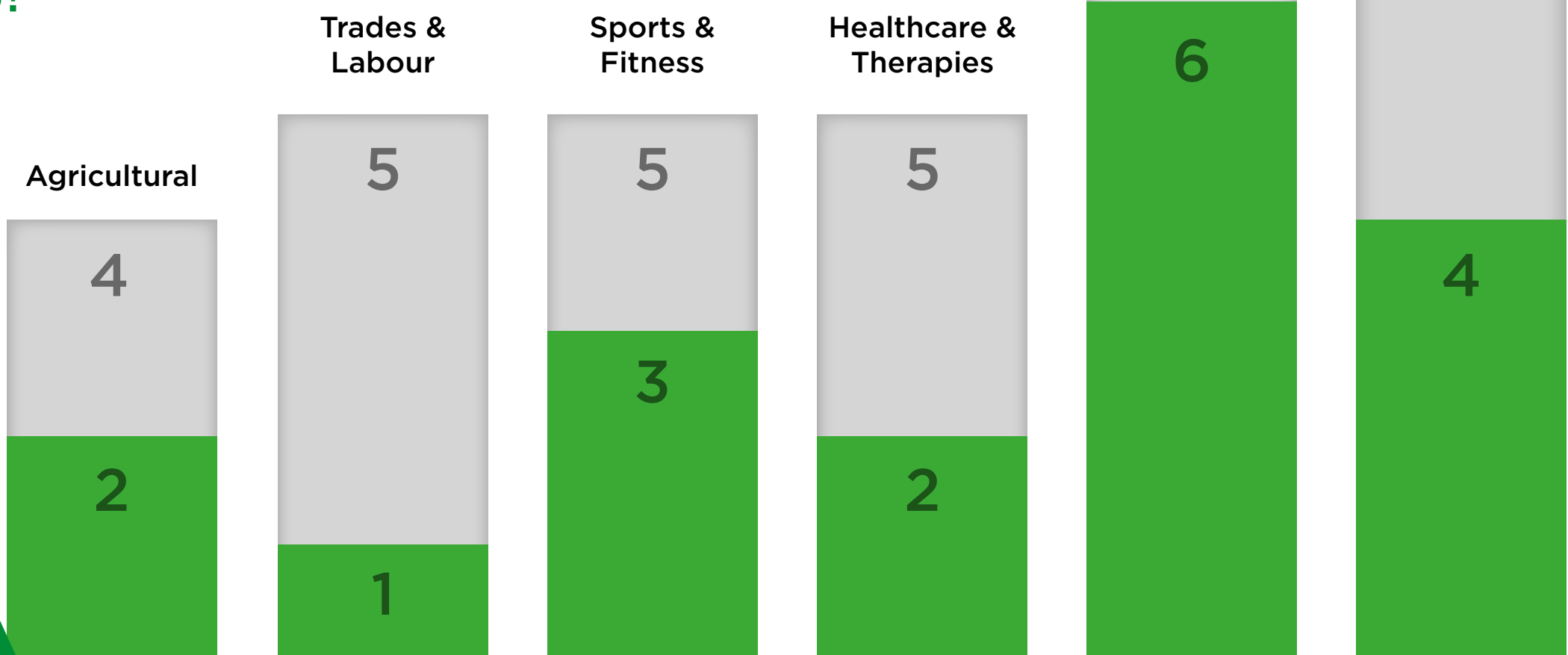"Virtual Reality feels like it limits our engagement with patients."

"Booking cabs under a virtual system makes my role easier."

"The ability to order food and drinks without human interaction is scary although helpful."

"How long will it be till technology can do my job?"

VR

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