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Windows Source Leak Traces Back to Mainsoft

By **Nate Mook** | Published 17 years ago   Follow

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EXCLUSIVE BetaNews has learned that Thursday's leak of the Windows 2000 source code originated not from Microsoft, but from long-time Redmond partner Mainsoft.

The leaked code includes 30,915 files and was apparently removed from a Linux computer used by Mainsoft for development purposes. Dated July 25, 2000, the source code represents Windows 2000 Service Pack 1.

Analysis indicates files within the leaked archive are only a subset of the Windows source code, which was licensed to Mainsoft for use in the company's MainWin product. MainWin utilizes the source to create native Unix versions of Windows applications.

Mainsoft says it has incorporated millions of lines of untouched Windows code into MainWin.

Clues to the source code's origin lie in a "core dump" file, which is left by the Linux operating system to record the memory a program is using when it crashes. Further investigation by BetaNews revealed the machine was likely used by Mainsoft's Director of Technology, Eyal Alaluf.

References to MainWin can also be found throughout the leaked source files, which do not compile into a usable form of Windows.

Prior to Microsoft's Shared Source Initiative launched in 2001, Mainsoft, which calls itself "the software porting company," was one of only two partners with access to the Windows source code under Microsoft's Windows Interface Source Environment (WISE) program.

The goal of WISE is to enable developers to write applications using Windows APIs and deploy them on Unix operating systems such as Linux.

Mainsoft extended its WISE agreement with Microsoft in March 2000 to include access to the Windows 2000 source. Microsoft subsequently employed Mainsoft to port Windows Media Player 6.3 and Internet Explorer to Unix.

Although the leak poses a serious threat to Microsoft's intellectual property, its limited scope is sure to help the company alleviate fears of potential disaster. Microsoft has opened an investigation with the FBI and says its internal security in Redmond was not affected.

Because Mainsoft used only select portions of the Windows source for MainWin, Microsoft may find itself more worried about the egg on its face than possible exposure of its flagship operating system; Windows 2000 served as the foundation for Windows XP and Windows Server 2003.

It is not clear at this point how the three and a half year-old source code escaped Mainsoft, but the company said it "will cooperate fully with Microsoft and all authorities in their investigation."

"Mainsoft has been a Microsoft partner since 1994, when we first entered
a source code licensing agreement with Microsoft," a Mainsoft spokesperson told BetaNews. "Mainsoft takes Microsoft's and all our customers' security matters seriously, and we recognize the gravity of the situation. We are unable to issue any further statement or answer questions until we have more information."

Eric Steil and David Worthington contributed to this report.

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brandon079 • 16 years ago

I was wondering did they stop this leak or is it about to be posted all over the internet? If it's about to be posted, then hackers will know how windows really works. There is going to be millions of lines of code stolen. Microsoft could get screwed like they screwed Macintosh in the early years. But like it happened before, it's for the good of all people. Because I'm sorry but I couldnt see myself ever using a macintosh exept for there few benifits, I.E. Graphics. But Dispite all of this, if the code is contolled, where did they find this code? Who or how many got a hold of this?

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boboki • 16 years ago

I am amazed that this is a argument thread.
The article is about windows source code leaked, and the thread is M$ vs. L|nux.
You guys are basically throwing snowballs. Hardcore linux guys are too bullheaded to ever admit that thier os is anything but superior to M$ in every way. Hardcore M$ people think the same.

M$ has the user and program base. They have a better desktop platform enviroment. Linux guys, stop all your bitching and moaning and crying. M$ is still better as a standard desktop. Its user friendly, quick, and have a pletora or software avaliable. Linux GUI IS VERY SLOW and pretty ugly. Its not user friendly. Desktop enviorment is GUI btw... so all of you whiny linux bitches stfu. I don't care if you prefer a shell over a gui... YOU are not the majority.

Server side, linux outperforms windows in a lot of areas. However, linux again, is much harder to setup, and much slower to learn. Granted, done correctly, its faster, more secure, and more stable... But the beauty of windows and why it takes more popularity is that any jackass can grab a windows server and just by reading help files for 5-10 minutes get a working domain controller with dns and dhcp running. heh, samba is just a TAD harder to just pick up and make work.

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wnowak1 ➜ boboki • 16 years ago

Hi,
Some of the debates weren't so general.
You will find below arguments about viruses. Windows is the flagship OS for virus creators and it isn't because its the most popular. As you have stated, Linux is getting to be exploited more and more, but not with worms or viruses. Two main reasons for this is 1, the architecture of the operating system, (user permissions, etc), and 2, NO REGISTRY :).

On windows you have very clever viruses/worms, etc that diguise them selves as system processes, starting up w/ windows, hiding in the registry, and not being able to be terminated by a user ending the process.

In linux or any unix operating system for that matter, regular users can't execute apps that affect the system. (i.e you can't dos attack w/ ping as a simple example) Only root has permission to do this. Even if you execute something like this as root and try to infect another PC, it gets real difficult because a root user can kill a process very easily. It is easier to identify processes that are virus/worm related. Also, VERY EASY to delete something like that.

If you want security, then the BSD family is your choice.

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ingmars ➜ boboki • 16 years ago

Hi Boboki,

I see that you try to be objective about the different OSs, however I'd like to add some points:

- Linux is more trustable
Since you have the source code, you can always look for backdors or anything like that by yourself. In contrast to that, Microsoft sotware can basically not be searched for hidden activities like that. You remember the thing about the NSA Key in Windows that enabled the possessor of this master key to decrypt anything crypted with the Windows crypting API? I think it was the CCC that discovered this.
This point is especially important for institutions like governments, police, etc. but also big companies do value this.

I'd also like to comment on your statement Linux be "much slower to learn" than Windows.
A time ago I have read a study about a comparision between a Desktop Linux distribution and Windows for absolute computer newbies, people who were not in

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w2tndsrc • 16 years ago
maybe u now where I can download this source ???

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> **wnowak1** ➦ w2tndsrc • 16 years ago
> lol
>
> and what are you going to do with it when you get it? Probably nothing since you have to ask where to get it. The people that are going to do something with it already have it.
>
> ⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

ravuri_ravi • 16 years ago
hey, i am new to betanews. i am enjouing and getting knowledge through your comments. Thanks.

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ioillusion • 16 years ago
If both of these operating systems were open source, I believe Windows would have some advantages over Linux. There are a few things I favor about the Windows operating system; 1) You can commercially redistribute software easily, 2) Software development can be accomplished faster with MS development products (this is essential in my line of work, companies need software written in the same day), 3) There are more commercial software packages available on the Windows platform. 4) The file system and hardware management is easier to administer.
I don't like however, the lack of open source products and projects available for Windows.

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> **ingmars** ➦ ioillusion • 16 years ago
> > 1) You can commercially redistribute software easily,
>
> Pardon? You can do it just as well under Linux!
>
> > 2) Software development can be accomplished faster
> > with MS development products (this is essential in
> > my line of work, companies need software written in the same day),
>
> You didn't ever do software development on Linux, did you?
>
> > 3) There are more commercial software packages available on the Windows
> > platform.
>
> True.

But you need to be a bit more idealistic about this: What if more and more people started to use Linux?
Yes, right, the software companies would start making Linux software.

Hey, the world has to wake up!

see more

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wnowak1 ➔ ioillusion • 16 years ago
My personal preference for developing (in my case mainly php and C) is under linux.

I like the bash shell alot. Windows' CMD is crap. I don't like using IDE's either.

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theye • 16 years ago
Congratulations Betanews and Nate Mook for being mentioned in an article on cnn.com. "Profanity, partner's name hidden in leaked Microsoft code".

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

Herby • 16 years ago
In reply to Mr normangerman. Linux is not so great for a Desktop system. Microsoft has brilliant product, but when it comes to licences it sucks. Do you think US military uses Microsoft systems to control their smart bombs...? NOT!

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rjdohnert • 17 years ago
Has Microsoft looked to see if maybe someone in Mainsoft did this intentionally?

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dzjepp • 17 years ago
People have confirmed that it is about 300mb unzipped. While the full source-code is like 40gb. So it is not the full source by any stretch of the imagination.

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

fewt ➔ dzjepp • 17 years ago
It is not possible that the actual full source code is that large. If it were, the base OS would require 30 DVD's to install since source code is TEXT. Maybe their entire repository of versions of source, with all necessities to build a complete OS is that large, but I would guess that a source snapshot based on 35 million lines of code not exceeding 80 characters per line would be roughly 2-2.5GB of text which should compress to about 240MB.

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wnowak1 ➔ fewt • 16 years ago
its more like 627 mb uncompressed 28782 files and compressed is 203 mb.

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

fewt ➔ wnowak1 • 16 years ago
Was just a guess. :-)

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

wnowak1 ➔ fewt • 16 years ago
heh, you were close on the compression side :)

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

fewt ➔ fewt • 17 years ago
Also note I would guess that at least 10% of those 35+ million lines are likely 1-4 tabs and a } lol

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

wnowak1 → fewt • 16 years ago
/*
* dont forget
* the
* comments
* :)
*/

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

w2tndsrc → wnowak1 • 16 years ago
Hi, can you give me u e-mail, pls

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

wnowak1 → w2tndsrc • 16 years ago
Hi,
what do you want my email for?

Say whatever you have to say here :)

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

ingmars • 17 years ago
Not only because of this, but because of a whole lot of reasons I have finally come to the decisision to install Linux as the only operating systems on my PC, as well as on the PC of my father.
I think the time is due for an operating system change.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

ioillusion → ingmars • 16 years ago
I would like to know how many of the die hard linux people are posting to this form from a Windows system.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

jdube → ingmars • 16 years ago
Well, I looked at Linux; I even built a machine just for it so I oculd learn it. But I have been raised on Windows. I was learned NetAdmin stuff when DOS 6.22/Win 3.11 FWG and Novell Netware 3.12 comprised a school network. And I have grown with Windows since then, starting with NT 4.0 and all the way up to server 2003. I currently own a consulting firm/store where we specialize in Windows service. I and my 3 employess are all at least 2000 certified. I have not done my XP certification yet as business has been slow and costs an awefull lot. But anyways, we run a network (obviously) comprised of a 2003 Standard Edition server and 8 XP Professional clients. I have thus far been lucky and had no major security issues. But the crux of what I was talking abotu initially, I was thinking of converting the desktops to Linux, and maybe the server. But I do have ALOT of Windows based software that is proprietary. I had trouble getting Wine to work for me, and Office Crossover wouldn't setup menus correctly, and when it did, about 75% of the software I had to run didn't work correctly. The other issue I had was cross compatability with Windows. I was trying to get Lycrois Desktop/LX Update 3 to authenticate to the Windows Server and had no luck (even following a tutorial on how to do it). So here's my dilema: I have 4 machines setup for Linux use right now, I want 1 as a server and 3 clients, BUT I want to be able to authenticate to both the Windows and the Linux servers... if anyone can show me how or point me at a tutorial I would love it!
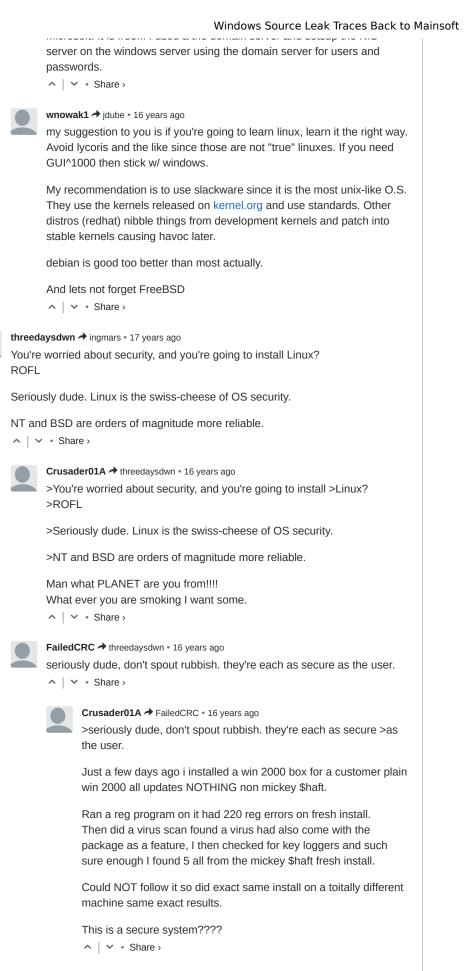
Thanks,
Justin

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

slentz → jdube • 16 years ago
I you need linux to login to windows domain use Services for Unix from Microsoft. It is free!!! I used a the domain server and setsup the NIS

Microsoft. It is freee. I used a the domain server and setaup the NIS server on the windows server using the domain server for users and passwords.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

wnowak1 → jdube • 16 years ago

my suggestion to you is if you're going to learn linux, learn it the right way. Avoid lycoris and the like since those are not "true" linuxes. If you need GUI^1000 then stick w/ windows.

My recommendation is to use slackware since it is the most unix-like O.S. They use the kernels released on kernel.org and use standards. Other distros (redhat) nibble things from development kernels and patch into stable kernels causing havoc later.

debian is good too better than most actually.

And lets not forget FreeBSD

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

threedaysdwn → ingmars • 17 years ago

You're worried about security, and you're going to install Linux?
ROFL

Seriously dude. Linux is the swiss-cheese of OS security.

NT and BSD are orders of magnitude more reliable.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

Crusader01A → threedaysdwn • 16 years ago

>You're worried about security, and you're going to install >Linux?
>ROFL

>Seriously dude. Linux is the swiss-cheese of OS security.

>NT and BSD are orders of magnitude more reliable.

Man what PLANET are you from!!!!
What ever you are smoking I want some.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

FailedCRC → threedaysdwn • 16 years ago

seriously dude, don't spout rubbish. they're each as secure as the user.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

Crusader01A → FailedCRC • 16 years ago

>seriously dude, don't spout rubbish. they're each as secure >as the user.

Just a few days ago i installed a win 2000 box for a customer plain win 2000 all updates NOTHING non mickey $haft.

Ran a reg program on it had 220 reg errors on fresh install. Then did a virus scan found a virus had also come with the package as a feature, I then checked for key loggers and such sure enough I found 5 all from the mickey $haft fresh install.

Could NOT follow it so did exact same install on a toitally different machine same exact results.

This is a secure system????

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

Niro → Crusader01A • 16 years ago

LOL...yea ok...maybe it's time to stop downloading your OS from newsgroups and actually go buy it...or a more reliable w@r3z

release.
LOL...you out of the millions who installed it found a virus and a 5 key capture programs in "official" MS software....yea ok, nice try.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

unoengborg → threedaysdwn • 17 years ago

It was a long time since I used BSD so I'm not up to speed on what security features it offers nowdays. But if you think windows NT/2k and to some extent windows XP is a clearly worse choise than Linux.

In the latest Linux kernel you can have can have things like mandatory access control, as well as security level based controls. You know the stuff you always see in science fiction movies where the computer tells the godlike hero hacker "You are now at level 1".

This kind of security means that if one service is compromized, only files needed by that service is at risk
e.g. if your apache web server was hit by a worm, only files that apache was allowed to write to could be changed. And of course a good admin would probably not allow apache to write to that many files.

There is no way to escalate security, as the concept of a root user having full access to everything no longer applies.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

al451 → threedaysdwn • 17 years ago

BSD, yes, OK. NT? NT?? NT?????
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

swiftnet → threedaysdwn • 17 years ago

Ignorance is bliss...

The Windows code was leaked out by someone with access to the machine and root privileges. It was a log file, ya' know those silly little things we administrators use on every OS. Logs contain sensitive info, so you must be root to access them.

Comparing security of a windows box to a linux box is difficult. A Windows box comes with next to nothing, a Linux Distro comes with 100's (or thousands) of applications. The Linux security alerts are for the various packages and rarely the kernel. Windows has dozens of security alerts on Windows alone. Loadup your Windows box with 100's of apps and you'll have a garage door size opening of security flaws.
If you strip a linux distro down to the same amount of apps as a standard Windows install, you'll have very few security alerts.
By design, Windows is a security nightmare, scan your system for viruses and spyware - you'll probably find something. I gave up on MS in late 2000. MS has 87000+ viruses because it is so easy to infect. To illustrate

see more

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wnowak1 → swiftnet • 16 years ago

"Comparing security of a windows box to a linux box is difficult."

You can start by saying that Linux doesn't active x problems, no spyware, adware, keyloggers, worms, and millions of viruses.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

Acidfx → swiftnet • 16 years ago

You say windows has x amount of viruses because it is so easy to infect... hahahahahahaahahahaha... do you really think that's why most viruses are for windows.... come on buddy... think for 1

most viruses are for windows... come on buddy... think for 1
second.... if you were a virus programmer and wanted to infect the
most ammount of computers possible... would you go with linux or
windows??? WINDOWS of course!!! 95% of the world runs under
Microsoft..... so therefore that is why a smart virus programmer
would target windows!....

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

bdesth ➜ Acidfx • 16 years ago
Pardon ? "95% of the world runs under Microsoft." ? Chapter and
verse, please !

95% of *home* and small office computers runs MS Windows.
That's not 95% of the computer in the world.

Please stop saying stupidities. Virus writers mainly target Windows
because
1/ it's the worst swiss-cheese OS in the world AND
2/ there are a lot of Windows user AND
3/ a whole lot of them are clueless enough to run potentially
dangerous things on their computers (don't blame or flame them
for it, they usually have to *work* with this pitiful OS without
knowing anything about computers...).

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

Acidfx ➜ bdesth • 16 years ago
hahahahahahaha... yes ...95% of home computers... which is
where viruses can be major problems and distributors...

that 95% really pissed you off didn't it? ... hahaha.. you just
disregarded the rest of my whole message.... windows machines
where stupid people can pass on viruses are far more
predominant!! I couldn't care less what you think... it's fact... it is
much rarer that a person is going to be using a Linux box and not
realize that a virus is in their email box and send it to all their
friends... or whatever...

the fact is virus writers WRITE VIRUES because WINDOWS is
EVERYWHERE...

oh just for your knowledge..
OS with the most exploits= Linux (sure the whole argument of
more services running plays a factor..)
OS that gets the biggest hype if Exploit found= Windows
(Microsoft).. because there machines are far more predominant in
the world!!!

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

wnowak1 ➜ Acidfx • 16 years ago
hey einstein, to have a virus cause havoc on a linux machine, it
has to be exectued by a user with root permissions. Unless you're
an idiot, you do not work under root. SO HENCE, writing a virus for
linux is inpractical and difficult.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

wnowak1 ➜ wnowak1 • 16 years ago
also. In linux you have daemons,services and a clear list of
everything running. I haven't seen and probably won't see a virus
that attaches itself to the system at startup and disguise itself from
the root in a way viruses do in windows.

∧ | ∨ • Share ›

Baggio ➜ bdesth • 16 years ago
I don't know that we're going to agree to any of this, but let

examine your claims. I can't go head-to-head with you on item 1, because you have your beliefs and I have mine. You can make Windows every bit as secure as alternative OS's, and the SID based rights makes more sense than the group based rights on a *nix platform.

On item 2, there are a lot of Windows users... no arguement.

On item 3, a whole lot of them are clueless enough to run potentially dangerous things on their computers... again, no arguement.

However, items 2 and 3 by themselves do not support the claim that Windows is any less secure. If the table was turned, and conditions 2 and 3 were met for the Linux platform, virus writters would be targeting that platform. Security has little to do with it at all. The most prevalent viruses now days are social viruses. Stupid people doing stupid things. They show up on the Windows platform only because of the shear numbers.

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rizla99 ➜ swiftnet • 17 years ago

All i can say without falling over laughing at your lame ass comments is - root administrator same diff. However if you want to start the delete directories game: Try it under a non ninety shite version of windows, what you say won't work as fully as you think. However on your loverly Linux box logged in as equivalent to Administrator (root) cd / rm -rf * - LOL like to see you recover from that
;-)

Its horses for courses. I have four windows box and four linux boxes - i like em both and hate them them both for different reasons.

Do yourselves a favour if you have to log onto a computer be it windows or Linux or BSD or Whatever don't logon as the superuser. Its kinda key to it all.

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

flamoid ➜ rizla99 • 17 years ago

you calling yourself an admin? ... I got bunch of Linux machines under my control and I can assure you that "rm -rf *" on "/" will do nothing on each of them. Hell, root can't even change passwd/shadow/group directly ... has only read access to system binaries and the list would follow ... get yourself some books and start learning finaly ... you ain't anywhere close to being an admin son ... it's YOUR lame ass comments that actually make someone laugh dude ... your type of "admin" is the threat to Linux based servers ... just to give you a quick hint, start looking for ACL/RC/MAC stuff on Linux ... you'll be blown away what this can do ... and if you find yourself lost in understanding the mentioned, then I suggest you stick with your "Blue Death" boxes ...

it really is a waste of time talking here ...

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Baggio ➜ swiftnet • 17 years ago

...and yet ignorant you remain...

⌃ | ⌄ • Share ›

flamoid ➜ threedaysdwn • 17 years ago

LOL ... dude .. Linux is what you make it ... ever heard of OpenWall, PaX, LIDS, RSBAC, MEDUSA, ACL, MAC, RC, CAP and tons of other security

tools ? guess not ... NT and security ? come on ;)

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fewt ➔ threedaysdwn • 17 years ago

"Seriously dude. Linux is the swiss-cheese of OS security."

LOL! That was good, I needed a laugh this morn.

Thanks!

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Nytol ➔ ingmars • 17 years ago

ingmars you Fool. This leak occured because someone obviously broke into a Linux Operating System using some unknown Vulnerability in Linux. Did you read the article!

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threedaysdwn ➔ Nytol • 17 years ago

That was the first thing I thought when reading this article :P

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fewt ➔ threedaysdwn • 17 years ago

Somebody obviously worked on a team that had access to that system, or the system was managed by someone that didn't know how to do their job. Why don't we wait before the facts before we start playing the blame game.

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