

1ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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January 29, 2000, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; Pg. C03

LENGTH: 852 words

HEADLINE: Unlettered in Ratings?; Industry Blasts Clinton's Ratings Proposal

BYLINE: Sharon Waxman; Jacqueline Trescott, Washington Post Staff Writers

BODY:

Why fix the ratings on movies, television, music and computer games? They're not broken, insisted entertainment industry leaders yesterday in response to President Clinton's call for a single, voluntary system to replace the current codes.

Hollywood's silver-haired spokesman, Jack Valenti, was first to fire at the White House for being ill-informed and advocating something "impossible" to carry out.

"I promise you--it can't work. It won't work," said Valenti, who heads the Motion Picture Association of America, which created the movie rating system. "The reason is quite simple: We rated 700 movies last year. There are 2,000 hours a day of television--the equivalent of 1,000 motion pictures every day. There's 1,000 video games every year, 7,000 albums and other materials. To have one panel that's going to apply subjective judgments to this is simply an impossible achievement."

In his State of the Union speech on Thursday night, Clinton said the current systems are "too numerous, diverse and confusing to be really useful to parents," and championed a suggestion by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to come up with a single system to replace it.

But other entertainment industry representatives agreed with Valenti. "A move to one rating system for mediums whose content is distinctly different will only create confusion, not clarity," said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

"The Clinton administration should spend its resources ensuring that every American, especially parents, know more about the entertainment ratings systems already in place," he continued. "Empowering parents with the knowledge to make choices that are in the best interest of their families is the most constructive way to address this issue."

Edward O. Fritts, president of the National Association of Broadcasters, said it was the wrong time to change the ratings system, now that televisions are finally entering the marketplace with the V-chip, a parental monitoring device.

"It would be unfortunate for parents and families to be asked to adapt to a new system of program guidelines. We worked for two years with the White House, Congress and children's advocacy groups to develop our pro-family rating system," he said. As of this year, every television set sold in the United States with a screen larger than 13 inches has a V-chip.

An official at the Washington office of the Recording Industry of America Association, the music industry lobby, said the group had no comment.

Valenti accused the White House of criticizing the current system without researching whether it works, and without having an alternative in mind. He said the first he'd heard of Clinton's proposal was in a courtesy phone call from the White House at 5 p.m. on the evening of the president's speech.

"No one has been in touch with us," he said. "Where does he get his information that it's confusing? We have a Web site, a fax, an address. A PSA (public service announcement) that says, 'Tell us what you want.' " He added, "If you're going to say something isn't working, you ought to present some evidence other than your own personal opinion as to why it isn't working."

But Valenti himself has come under fire for refusing to explore changes in the 30-year-old movie rating system that critics charge is vague, secretive and often amounts to censorship. And the young television ratings system, adopted in January 1997, is often skewered as irrelevant. The Washington Post, among many other newspapers, does not publish them in its daily television chart.

A spokeswoman for Hillary Clinton said neither the president nor the first lady is an expert in the ratings issue, and said they want to leave it in the hands of the respective industries.

"They are aware there are people who feel it would be difficult to do that," said Lissa Muscatine in Hillary Clinton's office. "Mrs. Clinton's point is that parents are having a hard time with the ratings system as it currently exists. We should find a way to make it easier. In her view the people in the industry should figure this out without interference from the federal government."

She said Valenti had met with Clinton's domestic policy adviser Bruce Reed in the past six months to explore this idea, though Valenti said otherwise.

The Interactive Digital Software Association, which represents Disney Interactive, Nintendo of America, Sega of America and Dreamcast Inc. and the other creators of video and computer games, has its own ratings board. The manufacturers stamp each of its computer games with a simple lettered guide that shows whether the content is suitable for a young user or adults only.

The television ratings--in which producers rate their own programs--has been used by 54 percent of parents who responded to a Kaiser Family Foundation study. "Every poll shows that the parental guidelines are being used. We're willing to discuss proposals that help empower parents and viewers, but why turn back the clock on a system that is working?" said the NAB's Fritts.

MEMORANDUM
OF CALL

DEADLINE: 3 pm

Previous editions usable

TO:

Lissa

☐

YOU WERE CALLED BY-

☐

YOU WERE VISITED BY-

Drew Clark

OF (Organization)

National Journal

☐

PLEASE PHONE ►

☐

FTS

☐

AUTOVON

703-519-6374

☐

WILL CALL AGAIN

☐

IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

☐

RETURNED YOUR CALL

☐

WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

POTUS mentioned last night that HRC was involved in getting a comprehensive ratings system established

RECEIVED BY

for parents

DATE

1/28

TIME

11am

50103-111 NSN 7540-00-634-4018

U.S. G.P.O.:1994-300-897/00003

OPTIONAL FORM 1063 (Rev. 1-94)

Prescribed by GSA

He would like to know more about what she has done.

Pam Eakes

Mothers Against Violence
in America

206-323-2254

Another Validator: ^{Pam}Parent
Advocate Groups

- The First Lady has long been committed to addressing the problem of youth violence and giving parents the tools they need to protect their children and families.
- She has a clear track record on encouraging the entertainment industry to develop rating systems. She has publicly spoken out against the gratuitous violence in all forms of media and, with the President, has continually challenged the entertainment industry to do more.
- On May 10, 1999, she hosted (with the President, Vice President and Mrs. Gore) a White House Strategy Session to develop a strategy to for a national campaign to address the problem of youth violence, in which the entertainment industry participated.
- On June 1, 1999, at a Rose Garden event on children, violence, and marketing, the First Lady called for actions that would help parents express authority over the media that their children are exposed to.
- In December, 1999, Mrs. Clinton challenged the entire media and entertainment industry to being working towards a voluntary uniform rating system. *NY where*
- Mrs. Clinton remains involved in working toward this goal. The First Lady has asked her to staff to synthesize the progress each of the industries have made on meeting the President's challenge of instituting and enforcing rating systems. She has also asked the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, a campaign that was designed and launched by the President and First Lady, to help her convene leaders in the media and entertainment industry to come together for a working session to brainstorm on working toward one voluntary uniform rating system.

Other conference:

*Children's Television Conference, July 29, 1996
(POTUS, FLOTUS, VPOTUS, MEG)*

*POTUS Meeting w/ Media Execs 2/29/96 (He ~~did~~ attend)
but had no formal role*

Talked to Jack Valentini -

last 6 months Met w/ Bruce Reed - has agreed would let FIC do it if industry doesn't

*BNI Entertainment (movie)
CEO / Strauss
Zelnic*

*Kath Eisenbrook
212-930-4961*

will continue to talk to ind. leaders -

We disagree with his position

*other media? (cartoon, video, I, ...)
is goal more specific or less specific*

*other suggestions
abstraction & abt. info for parents*

DRAFT

VOLUNTARY UNIFORM RATING SYSTEM FOR MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT
Q&As

Q: Since the First Lady announced her support for a voluntary uniform rating system, what has she done to work towards that goal?

A: The First Lady has asked her staff to synthesize the progress each of the industries have made on meeting the President's challenge of instituting and enforcing rating systems. She has also asked the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, a campaign that was designed and launched by the President and First Lady, to help her convene leaders in the media and entertainment industry to come together for a working session to brainstorm on working toward one voluntary uniform rating system.

The First Lady has a clear track record on pushing the entertainment industry to develop rating systems. She has publicly spoken out against the gratuitous violence in all forms of media and, with the President, has continually challenged the entertainment industry to do more. On June 1, 1999, at a Rose Garden event on children, violence, and marketing, the First Lady called for actions that would help parents express authority over the media that their children are exposed to. In December, Mrs. Clinton challenged the entire media and entertainment industry to being working towards a voluntary uniform rating system.

Q: What will the Administration do to work with the various industries to develop and implement a uniform rating system?

A: The President has asked the First Lady to work with the National Campaign to convene a meeting of entertainment and media industry representatives to begin discussing the possibility of voluntarily developing and implementing a uniform system.

Q: Does the Administration support the McCain/Lieberman bill, "Media Violence Rating Act of 1999" that they introduced in June 1999?

A: The President and the First Lady applaud Senators Lieberman and McCain for their leadership on this issue, but believe that a uniform rating system should be voluntarily developed and implemented by the industry not by the Federal government.

Q: How have the various media and entertainment industries responded to President Clinton's previous challenges?

A: In his SOTU, the President (will) applaud the industry for the hard work they have done to meet his challenges to develop, implement, and enforce rating systems that include warnings on content and age appropriateness. But, he will also recognize that these systems have become quite complicated for parents and are not easily enforceable. President Clinton has continually stated that the industry must do more. A call for a

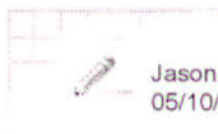
voluntary uniform rating system is in line with his challenges. (For more detailed information on responses to specific challenges, see attached sheet).

Q: Last year, the President announced that the FTC would be working with the Justice Department on a study to evaluate the marketing of sex and violence to children and that the study would include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the ratings systems. Wouldn't it be better for the President to first know if these new ratings systems are working before advocating an entirely new system?

A: The President is looking forward to reviewing this independent report which the FTC expects to complete by the end of the year. He does not, however, believe that we should wait for the report to be completed before beginning a discussion about simplifying the current system to make ratings more accessible and easily understandable for parents.

Q: The industry has criticized the President and the FTC for the intrusiveness and the expense of the FTC report. If the President is not going to use it to develop an alternative rating system, is it really worth all the expense?

A: This report will inform industry representatives, parents, and policy makers about the extent of the problem that exists both in terms of marketing to children, as well as the effectiveness and enforceability of the rating systems. It will be critical as we move forward in developing and implementing both a simplified system, as well as better understand how to take care in marketing products to children.



Jason H. Schechter
05/10/99 09:42:51 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Fact Sheet: Children, Violence and Responsibility

**PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON, VICE PRESIDENT AND MRS. GORE HOST
STRATEGY SESSION ON
CHILDREN, VIOLENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY
*Monday, May 10, 1999***

Today, President Clinton will lead a strategy meeting to discuss the problem of youth violence and develop a strategy for a national campaign to address this problem. The meeting will include a broad cross section of Americans, including parents and children, teachers and religious leaders, law enforcement and government officials, gun manufacturers and sportsmen, and representatives of the entertainment industry. The President will announce several initiatives to address the problem of youth violence, including a Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence, gun industry support for gun legislation in five important areas, and public and private commitments to ensure the effective implementation of the V-Chip.

SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON YOUTH VIOLENCE

Today, the President will announce that he is asking the nation's Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, to prepare a landmark report on youth violence -- the first such study on this subject in more than a decade. This report will bring together leading experts to review and evaluate existing research, and build on the findings of the 1972 Surgeon General Report on Television and Violence, as well as the 1985 Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence. Much is already known about how to reduce and prevent youth violence, but this report will add to the nation's understanding in this field. It also will address media that have emerged since previous reports, such as the Internet and video games.

GUN INDUSTRY SUPPORTS LEGISLATION IN FIVE KEY AREAS

Today, leaders in the firearms industry will announce their support for working out legislation in five areas. Specifically, the American Shooting Sports Council (ASSC), the gun industry's trade association in Washington, which represents 350 firearms manufacturers and distributors around the country, will release a statement supporting legislation in five areas:

- **Closing the gun show loophole on Brady background checks.** The Treasury Department estimates that 25-50 percent of the sellers at gun shows are unlicensed and

sell guns without the benefit of a background check purchasers. As a result, gun shows can provide a forum for illegal firearms sales and gun trafficking. The President has proposed background checks, based on the existing Brady law, for firearms transferred at gun shows.

- **Extending the Brady Law to violent juveniles.** Although violent youth convicted in adult courts are barred from owning firearms as adults, the same is not true for youth convicted of serious violent crimes in juvenile court. The President has proposed permanently banning all violent juveniles from buying guns -- so that they cannot purchase a gun on their 21st birthday.
- **Raising the age of the youth handgun ban to 21 years of age.** Federal law generally bans the possession of handguns by juveniles under the age of 18, and prohibits federal gun dealers from selling firearms to anyone under 21 years of age. However, it is perfectly legal for 18-20 year-olds to possess handguns or to buy them from unlicensed sellers -- even though law enforcement traces more crime guns to 18- and 19-year-olds than all other age groups. The President has proposed raising the legal age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21 years, while maintaining current exemptions for employment, hunting, target shooting, ranching, and military service.
- **Holding adults responsible for child access to guns.** Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws promote gun safety and responsibility by holding adults responsible if they allow children easy access to firearms and ammunition. The President has proposed imposing felony penalties on adults who knowingly or recklessly allow a child to have access to a gun that is later used to cause death or injury.
- **Helping law enforcement to trace more firearms used in crimes.** Over the past two years, the President has expanded comprehensive crime gun tracing to 37 cities -- helping them to trace all crime guns to their source, to identify illegal gun markets, and to crack down on gun traffickers. Last year, ATF initiated over 300 investigations in these cities, which involved over 3,300 illegally trafficked firearms. The President has proposed expanding comprehensive tracing nationwide, starting by doubling the program to 75 cities.

MAKING THE V-CHIP WORK

The V-Chip is a device that allows parents to block television programming they consider inappropriate for their children. President Clinton and Vice President Gore led the successful fight for legislation that requires that the V-Chip be installed in all new television sets sold beginning January 1, 2000. At today's strategy session, the President will announce two new initiatives to make sure the V-Chip becomes a useful tool for parents.

- **V-Chip Task Force.** To ensure that the V-Chip law is implemented effectively, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will establish a V-Chip Task Force. The Task Force will: (1) ensure that the V-Chip requirement is enforced promptly and comprehensively;

(2) promote parental awareness about the V-Chip and work closely with organizations sharing this goal; (3) encourage adoption of a standard label identifying television sets that contain the V-Chip and; (4) study the use of the V-Chip and evaluate the effectiveness of the industry's ratings system. FCC Chairman William Kennard has appointed Commissioner Gloria Tristani to chair the Task Force.

- **The V-Chip Survey and Education Project.** According to a survey released today by the Kaiser Foundation, while many parents (77%) say they want to use the V-Chip, fewer than four out of ten parents (39%) have ever seen information on how the system works. The Kaiser Foundation and the Center for Media Education announced today a major national effort to educate parents about the V-Chip TV ratings system. The educational campaign will include free booklets for parents on how the V-chip TV ratings system works. The free parent information will be available through a toll-free telephone number and will be promoted through partnerships with TV manufacturers, retailers, parents' organizations, newspapers, and television stations.

A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

Recognizing that youth violence is a problem that government cannot solve alone, the President, the First Lady, the Vice President and Mrs. Gore will call for a national campaign to reduce youth violence. This campaign will work with all sectors of our society – the media, education groups, parents, religious leaders, and young people – to focus on this problem, find what is working, and spread it to new communities, while also helping to ensure that the media sends the right message to our children.

This campaign is modeled after two extremely successful efforts launched by the Clinton Administration. Four years ago, the President asked for a national campaign to reduce teen pregnancy. Today, under the leadership of Governor Tom Kean, former governor of New Jersey and now the President of Drew University, that campaign is playing an important role in reducing teen pregnancy rates nationwide. Two years ago, the President called for a national effort by businesses to hire people off welfare, to make sure the welfare reform effort would work. Today, under the leadership of Eli Segal, the Welfare to Work Partnership has grown to 10,000 companies that have helped move more than 40,000 people from the welfare rolls to the job rolls.

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Message Sent To: _____

courage -- and a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President -- (applause) -- the Senate faced down the gun lobby, stood up for the American people, and passed this legislation. But the House failed to follow suit.

Now, we have all seen what happens when guns fall into the wrong hands. Daniel Mauser was only 15 years old when he was gunned down at Columbine. He was an amazing kid -- a straight-A student, a good skier. Like all parents who lose their children, his father Tom has borne unimaginable grief. Somehow he has found the strength to honor his son by transforming his grief into action. Earlier this month, he took a leave of absence from his job to fight for tougher gun safety laws. I pray that his courage and wisdom will at long last move this Congress to make common-sense gun legislation the very next order of business. (Applause.)

Tom Mauser, stand up. We thank you for being here tonight. (Applause.) Tom. Thank you, Tom. (Applause.)

We must strengthen our gun laws and enforce those already on the books better. (Applause.) Federal gun crime prosecutions are up 16 percent since I took office. But we must do more. I propose to hire more federal and local gun prosecutors and more ATF agents to crack down on illegal gun traffickers and bad-apple dealers. And we must give them the enforcement tools that they need, tools to trace every gun and every bullet used in every gun crime in the United States. I ask you to help us do that. (Applause.)

Every state in this country already requires hunters and automobile drivers to have a license. I think they ought to do the same thing for handgun purchases. (Applause.) Now, specifically, I propose a plan to ensure that all new handgun buyers must first have a photo license from their state showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course, before they get the gun. I hope you'll help me pass that in this Congress. (Applause.)

Listen to this -- listen to this. The accidental gun rate -- the accidental gun death rate of children under 15 in the United States is nine times higher than in the other 25 industrialized countries combined. Now, technologies now exist that could lead to guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them. I ask Congress to fund research into smart gun technology, to save these children's lives. (Applause.) I ask responsible leaders in the gun industry to work with us on smart guns, and other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands, to keep our children safe.

You know, every parent I know worries about the impact of violence in the media on their children. I want to begin by thanking the entertainment industry for accepting my challenge to put voluntary ratings on TV programs and video and Internet

games. But, frankly, the ratings are too numerous, diverse and confusing to be really useful to parents. So tonight, I ask the industry to accept the First Lady's challenge to develop a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier for parents to understand and enforce. (Applause.) The steps I outline will take us well on our way to making America the safest big country in the world.

Now, to keep our historic economic expansion going -- the subject of a lot of discussion in this community and others -- I believe we need a 21st century revolution to open new markets, start new businesses, hire new workers right here in America -- in our inner cities, poor rural areas, and Native American reservations. (Applause.)

Our nation's prosperity hasn't yet reached these places. Over the last six months, I've traveled to a lot of them, joined by many of you, and many far-sighted business people, to shine a spotlight on the enormous potential in communities from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, from Watts to the Pine Ridge Reservation. Everywhere I go, I meet talented people eager for opportunity, and able to work. Tonight I ask you, let's put them to work. (Applause.) For business, it's the smart thing to do. For America, it's the right thing to do. And let me ask you something -- if we don't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it? (Applause.)

So I ask Congress to give businesses the same incentives to invest in America's new markets they now have to invest in markets overseas. (Applause.) Tonight, I propose a large New Markets tax credit and other incentives to spur \$22 billion in private-sector capital to create new businesses and new investments in our inner cities and rural areas. (Applause.)

Because empowerment zones have been creating these opportunities for five years now, I also ask you to increase incentives to invest in them and to create more of them. (Applause.)

And let me say to all of you again what I have tried to say at every turn -- this is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. Giving people a chance to live their dreams is an American issue. (Applause.)

Mr. Speaker, it was a powerful moment last November when you joined Reverend Jesse Jackson and me in your home state of Illinois, and committed to working toward our common goal, by combining the best ideas from both sides of the aisle. I want to thank you again, and to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with you. This is a worthy, joint endeavor. Thank you. (Applause.)

I also ask you to make special efforts to address the areas of our nation with the highest rates of poverty -- our

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December 22, 1999, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section B; Page 5; Column 2; Metropolitan Desk

LENGTH: 789 words

HEADLINE: Hillary Clinton Seeks Uniform Sex and Violence Rating for a Range of Media

BYLINE: By ADAM NAGOURNEY

DATELINE: OYSTER BAY, N.Y., Dec. 21

BODY:

Hillary Rodham Clinton called today for scrapping the existing array of entertainment rating systems and replacing it with a uniform system intended to warn parents about sex and violence in video games, movies, television and music.

Mrs. Clinton, a candidate for Senator from New York, condemned the "culture of violence" that she said infused some video games and other forms of entertainment aimed at children, and said it was a cause of the recent rash of shootings involving teenagers. The first lady said that parents trying to guard their children against such violence or sex in entertainment were being frustrated by the disjointed voluntary rating systems now in use.

"We have an epidemic of violence in our country, and the violence is everywhere," Mrs. Clinton told parents and children at a forum here. "A parent who is a conscientious parent, looking for information about what to do, is totally confused."

To demonstrate her point, Mrs. Clinton raised a sheet of paper and began reading the different ratings used for movies, cable television, video games and music. The audience began to laugh as Mrs. Clinton rambled through the various combinations of letters and numbers.

"The ratings should be the same," Mrs. Clinton said. "Parents need clear guidance, not alphabet soup."

In raising the issue, Mrs. Clinton took a page from one of the most successful tactics of President Clinton's 1996 campaign for re-election, in which he embraced issues that captured the interest of middle-class voters, but offered few specific proposals beyond identifying the problem, thus minimizing political risk.

In this case, Mrs. Clinton said that she was not endorsing mandatory rating

systems that some congressmen have proposed, though her spokesman, Howard Wolfson, later said the first lady was not ruling out supporting such legislation. Instead, Mrs. Clinton said the industry should adopt regulations on its own.

Mrs. Clinton's idea came under quick attack. Carolyn Rausch, the senior vice president for the Interactive Digital Software Association, representing manufacturers and publishers of video games, said her group would vigorously oppose such a program as unnecessary.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it," Ms. Rausch said. "Consumers are well aware of the existing rating system."

A spokesman for Mrs. Clinton's likely Republican opponent, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, declined to comment on the first lady's remarks.

At the same event here, Mrs. Clinton also appeared to signal her displeasure with an appellate court's decision to move the trial of four New York City police officers charged with murdering Amadou Diallo from the Bronx to Albany, citing a potentially prejudicial atmosphere. Mr. Giuliani has applauded the decision.

"I think it's unfortunate that the trial, apparently for legal reasons, had to be moved," Mrs. Clinton said during a brief news conference here. "And I hope that there will be a fair and effective trial in the new venue in Albany." She ended her news conference without taking further questions on the topic, and her aides declined to say whether she actually disagreed with the court decision.

In her comments on violence, Mrs. Clinton urged more parental involvement to protect their children, saying: "We could save a lot of children's lives if all of us were not embarrassed to call any parent whose child plays with our child and say, 'Do you have guns in your home? And if you do have guns, where do you keep them? Are they under lock and key?'"

She also asked how many people had visited a video arcade. "It's a very revealing and sobering experience," Mrs. Clinton said. "I couldn't help but be upset when I read about the two boys from Columbine being obsessed with the game Doom."

But the first lady found her arguments challenged from an unexpected source -- Ben Levine, a poised, 14-year-old student who appeared with Mrs. Clinton on a panel. He first said that a good student who "really thinks about things before he does them" was not about to be turned astray by a James Bond game. The boy then asked what the Clintons had done to keep tabs on what Chelsea Clinton played, a question that stopped Mrs. Clinton, but only for a moment. "I have to say one of the best things about Bill being president is that she was surrounded by Secret Service agents," Mrs. Clinton said.

A moment later, though, Ben returned with a question that seemed to stump even the first lady: "Would you rather have a kid being at a movie that is 'R' rated, or would you rather have him at a party doing drugs, getting drunk and getting arrested?" he asked. Mrs. Clinton acknowledged the question with a smile and a nod. She then called on someone else to speak.

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*Campaign
has not
transcribed
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