



More Than Just Aesthetics

Tackling the User Experience in Checkmk



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A brief history of UX in Checkmk



Checkmk 1.6 (and before)

"All-in-one"
developers: Product
management, UX
design, coding,
consulting

Checkmk 2.0

Complete redesign
focusing on the
general navigation,
with a modern look
and feel

Checkmk 2.2 (and onwards)

Reduce the daily pain
with a data-informed
UX process

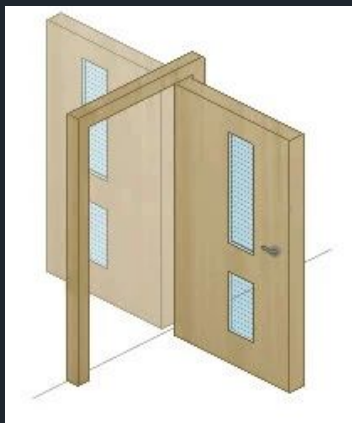


<https://www.creativemirror.com/products/etched-and-sandblasted/architectural-sw-ing-doors-and-walls.php>

What makes a door easy to use?



A “Push” / “Pull” sign

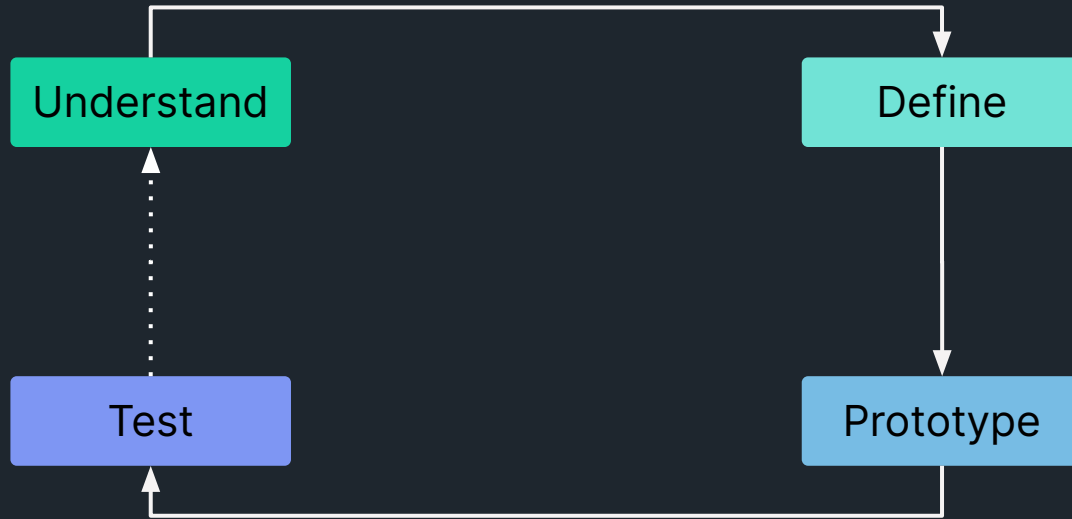


Opens both ways
 (“double action”)



Clear handle
 design

We have (basically) improved the user experience





**We want to improve any “door”
that’s confusing or difficult to
use in Checkmk.**

The 3 layers of UX improvements in Checkmk



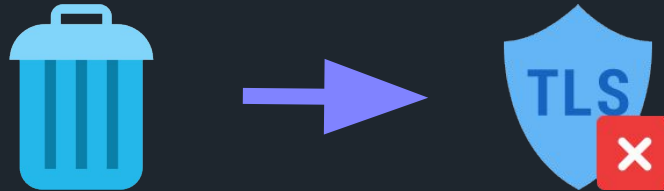
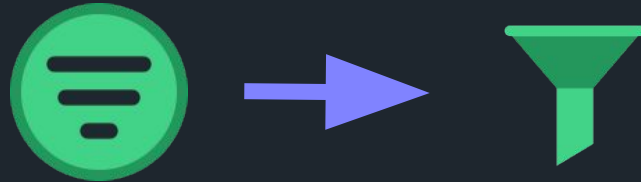
Complex workflows

Dialogs

Simple elements, e.g. icon

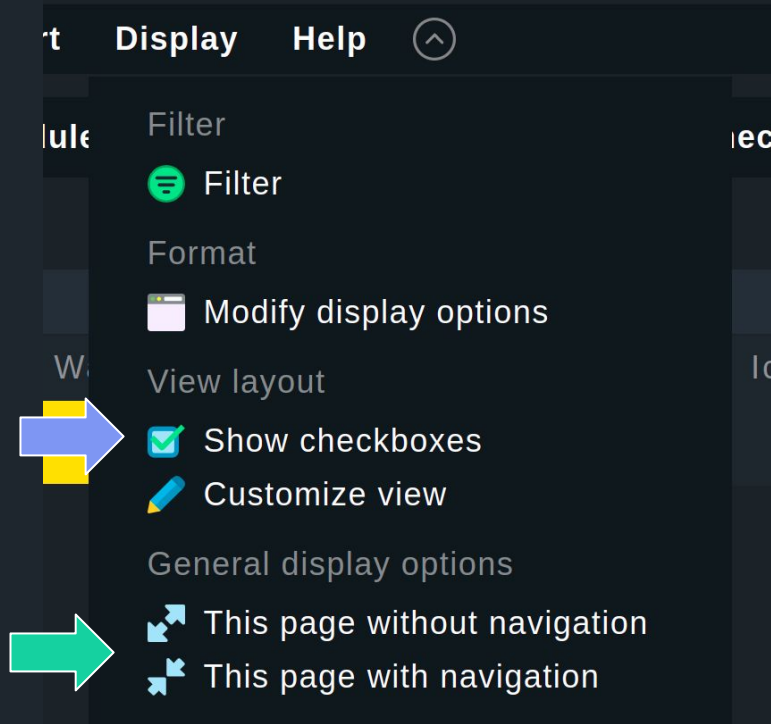
More intuitive interaction

Do/Click the right things

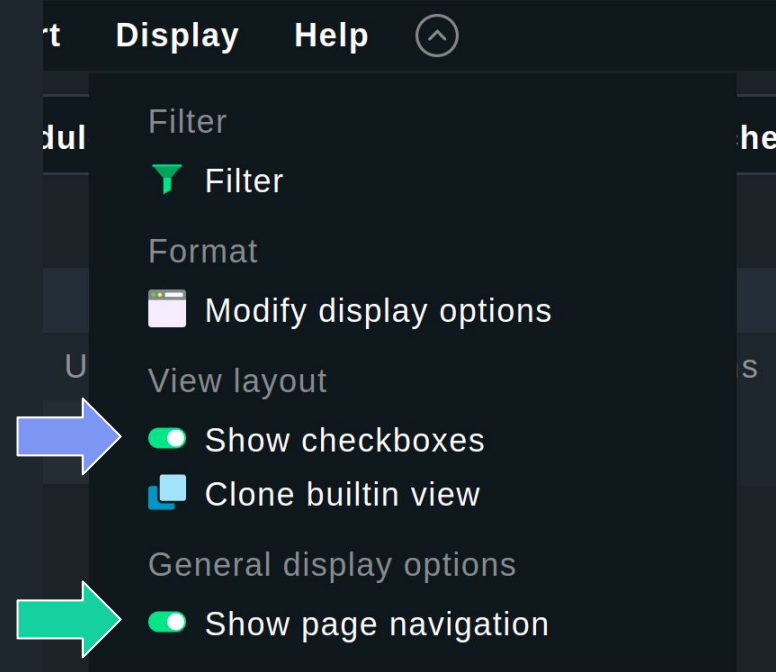


More intuitive interaction

Do/Click the right things



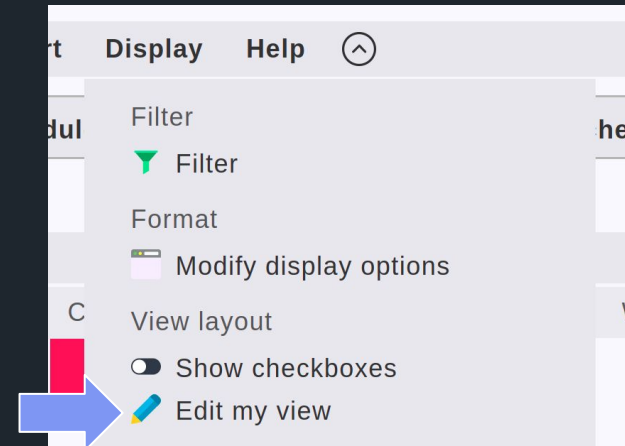
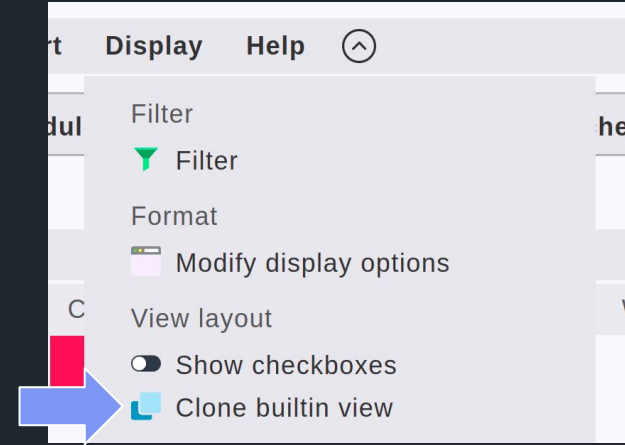
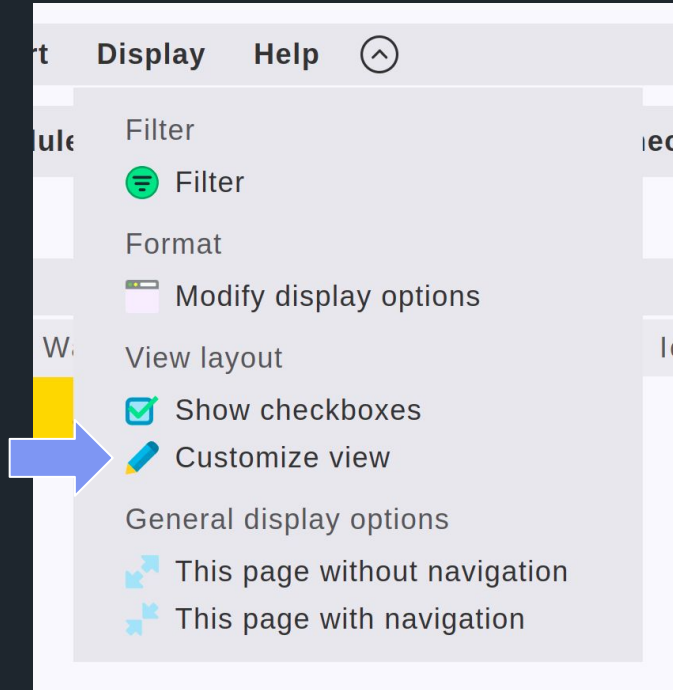
Filter
 Filter
 Format
 Modify display options
 View layout
 Show checkboxes
 Customize view
 General display options
 This page without navigation
 This page with navigation



Filter
 Filter
 Format
 Modify display options
 View layout
 Show checkboxes
 Clone builtin view
 General display options
 Show page navigation

More intuitive interaction

Do/Click the right things





checkmk

Windows, Linux, Solaris, AIX

Setup > Agents > Windows, Linux, Solaris, AIX

Agents

Related

Display

Help

Filter



Bake and sign agents



Bake agents



Sign agents



Agent rules

▼ Sign agents

Key to sign with

test



Key passphrase

Bake and sign

Agent bakery: “Bake and sign agents”
confirmation button now in green

Default
configuration



MSI



DBM



DEB



TGZ



PKG



TGZ

Linux

Linux

Linux

Solaris

Solaris



More intuitive interaction

Do/Click the right things

Parent scan
Setup > Hosts > Main > Parent scan

Display Help ^

⬆ Main

You have selected **1** hosts for parent scan.

The parent scan will try to detect the last traceroute. If a gateway is found by that host, that host will be used as the hosts parent. If no gateway is found, a parent host will be created if you have not disabled this feature.

▶ Settings for Parent Scan

Start

Parent scan
Setup > Hosts > Main > Parent scan

Action Display Help ^

⌚ Start ⬆ Main

i You have selected **1** hosts for parent scan.

▶ Settings for Parent Scan



More intuitive interaction

Simpler configuration

New connection
Setup > Hosts > Dynamic host management > New connection

▼ **Connection Properties**

Connector type Piggyback data ▼

Sync interval
0 days 0 hou

Add connection
Setup > Hosts > Dynamic host management > Add connection

▼ **Connection properties**

Connector type Piggyback data ▼

Restrict source hosts

Sync interval
0 days 0 be





More intuitive interaction

Simpler configuration

Properties of host localhost
Setup > Hosts > Main > Properties of host localhost

▼ Network address show more

IPv4 address empty (Default value)

▶ Monitoring agents

Properties of host localhost
Setup > Hosts > Main > Properties of host localhost

▼ Network address show more

→ IP address family IPv4 only (Default value)

IPv4 address empty (Default value)



More intuitive interaction

Better error messages

Metrics

Monitor > Workplace > Metrics

Dashboard Add Dashboards Display Help 

Combined graph

Problem while rendering dashboard element 0 of type combined_graph: Failed to calculate a graph recipe.. Have a look at `var/log/web.log` for further information.

Metrics

Monitor > Other > Metrics

Dashboard Add Dashboards Display Help 

Combined graph

Sorry, you cannot create combined graphs for more than 200 objects. Please add more filters to match on less hosts/services.



More intuitive interaction

Better error messages

```
AgentUpdate: ...  
Unexpected answer from Checkmk server: Missing  
json data. Maybe we are talking to an agent bakery  
from before Checkmk 2.0 ?
```

```
AgentUpdate: ...  
The deployment server provides an agent but that  
is not signed.
```




More intuitive interaction

Do/Click the right things

Hosts to be monitored

Setup > Hosts > Host monitoring rules > Hosts to be monitored

Related Rules Display Help   

Delete rule #0 (ID: 10843c55-11ea-4eb2-bfbc-bce65c...
of folder 'Main'?

Yes

No

Matching: The first matching rule defines the parameter.

Hosts to be monitored

Setup > Hosts > Host monitoring rules > Hosts to be monitored No p

Rules Related Display Help   

Delete rule #0 - Do not monitor hosts with the tag "offline"?

Folder: Main

?

Delete

Cancel



Increasing productivity

Make things readable

i Use this condition to select hosts based on the configured host labels.

Add label condition

i Rule only applies to hosts matching the label conditions.

Add label condition

Increasing productivity

Make things readable



Host groups

Monitor > Overview > Host groups

Name	Alias	Up	Dw	Un	Pd	O	W	C	U	P
check_mk	check_mk	1	1	0	0	38	1	3	0	0

Host groups

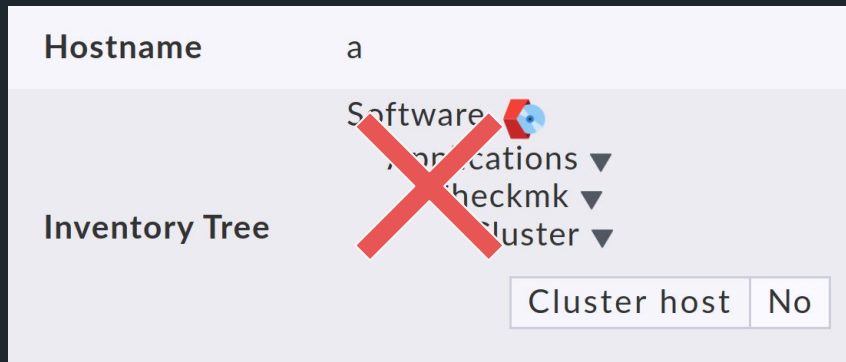
Monitor > Overview > Host groups

Name	Alias	Up	Dw	Un	Pd	O	W	C	U	P
check_mk	check_mk	3	1	0	0	273	8	14	0	0

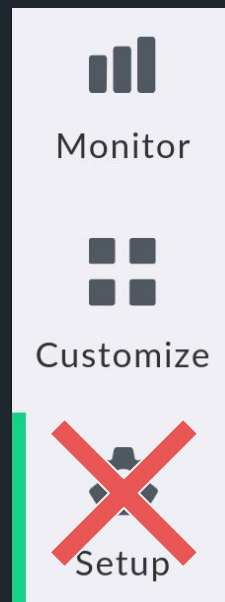
Fewer errors and less frustration

Only show relevant information

Only show HW/SW inventory, if data available



Hide setup menu on remote sites when Setup is disabled



Filter labels with the AND/OR/NOT operator



The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of a 'Filter' interface, illustrating the process of adding a new label to an existing filter. The interface is divided into two main sections: 'Host labels' and 'Not'.

Left Screenshot: The 'Host labels' section contains two labels: 'location:MUC' and 'location:BER', connected by an 'Or' operator. Below them is an 'Add' button. The 'Not' section contains two labels: 'environment:test' and 'cmk/os_family:linux', connected by an 'And' operator. Below them is an 'Add' button. At the bottom left, there is an 'Add group' button. A blue arrow points to the 'Add' button in the 'Host labels' section, and another blue arrow points to the 'Add group' button.

Right Screenshot: The 'Host labels' section is identical to the left screenshot. The 'Not' section is identical to the left screenshot. A new 'And' section has been added at the bottom, containing an 'Add label ...' button. A blue arrow points to this 'Add label ...' button.

checkboxes

cons OK Wa Un Cr Pd S

Filter



+ Add filter

Apply filters

Reset

Host labels



Label

is

cmk/os_family:linux

or

cmk/check_mk_server:yes

and

(Select label)

and

is not

cmk/site:beta

not

(Select label)



Add to query

Result: Best of both worlds

'Acknowledge problem'-dialog



M

mgutt

1  Jan 17

Anytime a new user acknowledges a problem, they need to google / check the documentation for the meaning of the “sticky” checkbox:

Acknowledge problems

Comment (required)

sticky send notification persistent comment

Expire acknowledgement after days hours mins

Analysing current dialog



Acknowledge problems ✕

Comment (required)

sticky send notification persistent comment

Expire acknowledgement after days hours mins

Acknowledge **Remove acknowledgement**

Understand - Define - Prototype - Test - Repeat



61

Participants in
Micro survey

13

Prototype tester
6 internal,
7 external

4

Iterations

First concept

Sketched wireframe

Comment (required)

Send notification

Remove when status changes to

Remove after

Keep comment when Acknowledgment is removed

All about removal is next to each other

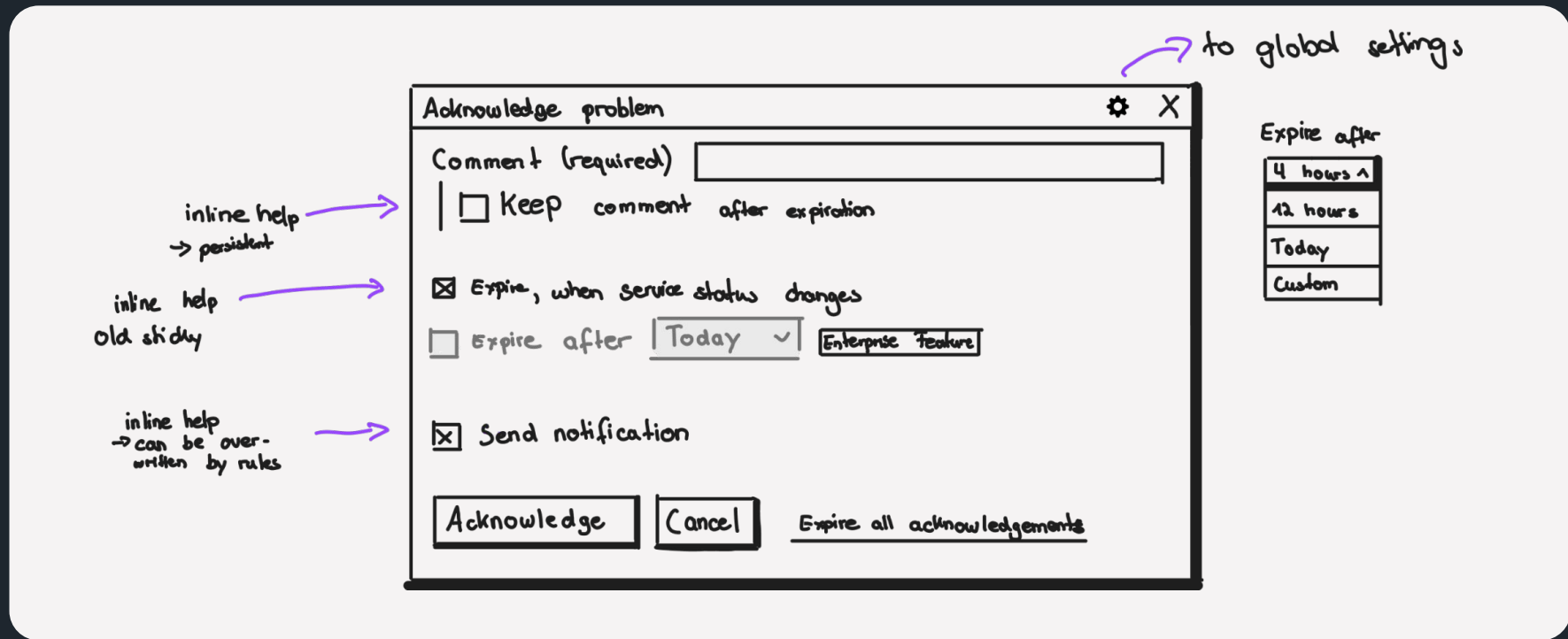
Consistent language ("remove")

Makes clear what can/will happen
→ no need to look up Documentation

Way out of the dialog

Iteration I

Sketched wireframe



Acknowledge problem [gear] [X]

Comment (required)

Keep comment after expiration

Expire, when service status changes

Expire after Today Enterprise feature

Send notification

[Expire all acknowledgements](#)

Expire after

- 4 hours ^
- 12 hours
- Today
- Custom

inline help → persistent

inline help → old sticky

inline help → can be over-written by rules

to global settings

Clickable prototype

Iteration II - after internal feedback




Acknowledge problem



Comment **(required)**

Options

- Sticky: Expire only on recovery
- Expire after 
- Persistent: Keep comment after acknowledgement expires
- Notify other users (as specified with [notification rules](#)).

Acknowledge problem

Cancel

[Expire all acknowledgements](#)




Clickable prototype

Iteration III - after internal usability testing

Acknowledge problem ✕

Comment **(required)**

Options  [Edit defaults](#)

Expire on

Sticky: Expire only on recovery

Persistent: Keep comment after acknowledgement expires

Send notification: Notify affected users as specified in [notification rules](#).

[Expire all acknowledgements](#)

High fidelity mockup

Iteration IV - after external usability testing



Acknowledge problems ✕

Comment **(required)**

Options ([Edit defaults](#))

- Expire on
DD/MM/YYYY HH:MM
- Don't expire on status change, but OK/UP (sticky)
- Keep comment after acknowledgment expires (persistent comment)
- Notify affected users according to the [notification rules](#) (send notifications)

How to get involved



Micro survey

Once a month



< 5 min



Online survey

Normal survey

When needed

> 5 min

Online survey

Interviews

When needed

30 - 60 min

Video call

Usability tests

When needed

30 - 60 min

Video call

How to participate



Visit the Checkmk forum

Look for announcements about research in the “Announcements” section



Talk to us!

During the conference or contact us via email

Join the Checkmk UX Research mailing list

Up to date announcements about research directly in your inbox



To subscribe: **Scan the QR-Code** or visit **lists.checkmk.com** and look for “Checkmk user experience research”.



<https://lists.checkmk.com/mailman3/postorius/lists/ux-research.lists.checkmk.com/>



**Participate and help us to shape
the future of Checkmk!**

Thank you!

Vielen Dank!



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