



## Digital Marketing Tools and Quality Service Delivery in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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**Abstract :** This study focused on digital marketing tools on the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, two research questions were raised and translated into two null hypotheses to direct the study. Survey research design was adopted as the most suitable design for this study. The population of this study involved all key players in the hospitality, tourism and tourism related businesses in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State; including hoteliers, resort operators, Eateries, Cinema centres and registered transporters. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 3 each of hotels, resorts and transports companies and also draw 536 respondents for this study. Data obtained for this study was possible with the use of structured questionnaire entitled: Digital Marketing Tools and Quality Service Delivery Questionnaire (DMTQSDQ). These instruments were designed by the researchers and validated by two experts in Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach alpha reliability test with 50 questionnaires. The reliability result showed that the instrument is good enough to measure what it was originally designed to measure. Data obtained from respondents in the field was tested using independent t-test analysis. The result of hypotheses testing revealed that the use of social media and use of affiliate marketing tool significantly influence the quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Based on this result, it was recommended that Managers of Hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State should as a matter of necessity maintain their strong social media presence while exploring other social media platforms to engage their target audience. This can involve creating compelling content, interacting with followers, and leveraging social media advertising to reach a wider customer base. Similarly, affiliate marketing strategies should be explored to increase customer patronage of the hospitality and tourism businesses.

**Keyword :** Digital marketing, Marketing tools, Social media, Affiliate marketing tools, Quality service delivery, Hospitality, Tourism industry

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## INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry is a large sector of the service industry where product elements are interrelated and complex and just like many other businesses, the industry seeks to improve their marketing performance. This has propelled hotels to use digital marketing tools that will increase customer traffic and patronage of their products. Operationally, the hospitality industry is beyond the provision of accommodation. It provides amongst others food and beverage, accommodation, etc. It also impacts the economy through its direct contribution to taxes, employment, income and gross domestic product (GDP) of the country (Nsien & Ekong, 2023).

The hospitality and tourism industry consists of establishments that provide paid lodging and full guest services, typically with a continuous staff presence and other tourism and tourism related businesses. There are many different kinds of tourism attractions and hotels. Hotels are often divided into groups based on price, purpose, service and location. Typical divisions of service levels include; limited service, mid-range service and full services. Hotel ranges from 1- Star, to 7- Star. This variation affects price, purpose, service and location. The importance digital marketing has on the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry has attracted several interests. Unfortunately, there are inadequate

works done in this area in Akwa Ibom State thus the need for this research therefore to examine the impact of digital marketing tools on the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Digital marketing has become an important and indispensable part of every business today. This can be attributed to the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) that provide newer and more sophisticated means of reaching out to target audiences also according to Etuk (2021) argued that digital marketing alters the way businesses run, providing enhanced efficiency and profitability in the digital world of today. Digital marketing therefore has engulfed industries and transformed the way through which businesses reach out to customers. Before the 1990s, marketing activities were carried out using traditional channels such as printed media, billboards and broadcasting stations in the promotion of their products. Today, there are several digital marketing platforms where an industry can promote and boost its business. The industry is important because it contributes to the growth of an economy by providing a lot of employment opportunities for the people, representing a large percentage of a country's Gross Domestic Product. This help to raise the national income and earning foreign currencies through the goods and services provided to

foreign visitors, thus improving the balance of payments (Baker, 2020).

According to Akpabio (2017) with the recent economic recession, Nigeria strives towards economic growth especially through the hospitality industry. Akpabio explains that between 70% and 75% of international tourists' expenditure goes to hospitality services on an annual basis as stated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The author posits that there has been a rapid increase in the number of hotels in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, which in turn has a great influence on the economic, social, cultural and aesthetic evolution of the city. Despite the achievements of the hospitality industry, Akpabio (2017) further explained that one of the greatest challenges facing the hotel industry today in Nigeria is the ever-growing volume and pace of competition due to little or no difference between one hotel's products and another. Amadi (2018) identified epileptic power supply as another challenge; Nwosu (2018) noted poor services and Awoseyin (2017) spotted unethical behaviours by professionals. Therefore, the introduction of digital marketing tools has significantly improved quality in the services delivered; as well as making it easy for managers of accommodation to provide round the clock services for tourists visiting Nigeria and Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

In the realm of social media marketing, the significance of network

information is paramount in analyzing hotel service quality and the behavioural intentions of tourists in a given destination. Within this marketing landscape, the stimulation provided by hotel marketing platforms and various user engagement groups serves as the primary sources of network information. Tourists prioritize their information needs in the following order: room rates, lodging conditions, service quality, and options for transportation and entertainment. Furthermore, there is a noticeable increase in tourists' reliance on this information (Baer, 2023). As the Internet continues to evolve, there is a growing awareness among tourists regarding the cognitive risks associated with the reliability of information quality. When tourists think that the information quality is reliable, their satisfaction with the hotel will be improved, which shows that the hotel service quality is high, it will also significantly affect the psychological state of tourists, enhance their acceptance of hotel service information, and affect their behavioral intentions. As for the hotel service quality, the information quality belongs to the tourists' actual feelings after staying in the hotel, which is consistent with their satisfaction with the hotel service information transmitted by social media platforms, and the higher their satisfaction with the hotel service quality, that is, the higher the hotel service quality. In the realm of social media marketing, the interaction of

information serves as a fundamental element connecting media, society, and individuals, with individuals being the primary agents of information distribution.

Palazzo (2021) studied the effect of social media network marketing tools on the quality of the hotel's services by interviewing hotel managers and guests who were active in the sector. Qualitative research and the literature review developed the model of the investigated effect; the detailed model was further developed by structural equation modeling techniques. This conceptual framework was built on how the intention was to verify how hotel service quality is influenced by social media network marketing, adding to the literature evidence upon the scale. Empirical results verified methodologies applied, which were coherent with the previous theoretical frameworks, and this study provided more evidence by correlating different dimensions for a better explanation of how social media marketing affects hotel service quality. Similarly, Ho (2022) also conducted research examining how the image of social media platforms affects customers' intentions to visit hotels, utilizing hotel image, motivation, and anticipated service quality as mediating factors. Indeed, their online survey, conducted on a sample of 349 people on different social media platforms, indicated that the image of the social media sites themselves impacts motivation primarily due to

the hotel's image. Besides, motivation directly impacts the visit intention.

On a related aspect, the research by Armutcu (2023) investigated the influence of digital marketing tools and social media on the behavior of tourists in Turkey, a country where 80.7 % of the population engages extensively with online platforms. Their research revealed that tourists' perceptions of online content have a direct effect on their behavioral intentions, with satisfaction serving as a mediating factor. The study postulated that, besides improvement in the quality of products and services, encouraging tourists to share their experiences through digital platforms may help in improving the visitation to the destinations having positive electronic word-of-mouth. Baber and Baber (2023) studied the facilitating factors such as e-reputation, perceived destination image, and social media marketing activities which help and enhance tourists' intentions to visit. Through the analysis of data collected from 209 tourists at a UNESCO World Heritage site in India, the findings indicated that social media marketing efforts and electronic reputation significantly improved the destination image, which subsequently acted as a complete mediator in the relationship with tourists' intentions to visit. This study emphasized e-reputation and social media as supporters of destinations by highlighting some useful strategies that could be adopted by tourism organizations in an effort to

attract more visitors and develop more competitive advantages.

Van Huy and Thai Thinh (2024) analyzed the role of social media tools and service quality of hotel websites and introduced a ranking methodology aimed at pinpointing essential areas for enhancement. Following the base of data drawn from four-star hotels in Vietnam, the authors considered a holistic approach in determining the ranking index. The results depicted that the very important drivers causing an upward shift in website service quality, thereby increasing customer satisfaction, relate to design, functionality, interactivity of the website, and information quality. Xia et al. (2024) investigated the interconnections among motivation, service quality, tourist satisfaction, quality of life, and spa and wellness tourism through the application of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that motivation positively affected service quality and satisfaction, which in turn influenced quality of life. Satisfaction was reported to act as a mediator between the influence of service quality on the quality of life as far as spa and wellness tourism goes.

Aziz and Al Alam (2024) examined the role that social networks play in the formation of tourist behaviour in relation to destination image and satisfaction. In the framework of this research, on a sample of 1600 tourists, by applying the

factor analysis technique, the social network influenced the destination image positively and the latter contributed much to the improvement of tourist satisfaction. From these results, it can be seen that social media marketing (SMM) plays a core role in shaping tourist perception, improving hotel service quality, and driving tourist behavioral intentions. In addition, drawing on recent cutting-edge research on the interaction between SMM and the hotel industry can not only strengthen our understanding of existing literature gaps, but also expand the breadth and depth of research, providing more accurate and effective marketing strategy guidance for the hotel industry, thereby consolidating its competitive advantage in a fiercely competitive market.

Ekong, Etuk, and Attih (2024) carried out a study on digital marketing tools and hotel patronage in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study explored the effects of digital marketing tools on hotel visits in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, emphasizing social media and affiliate marketing as independent variables, and hotel patronage as the dependent outcome. The research targeted a population of 1122 employees with access to customer reservation details across forty-one hotels registered with the Akwa Ibom State Hotels Management and Tourism Board. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire given to hotel employees. Statistical analyses

were conducted using SPSS version 25 for demographic data, utilizing simple percentages and charts. Univariate analyses employed means and standard deviations to examine data central tendencies and variability. Lastly, to test the study hypotheses, the study employed Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), facilitated by the SmartPLS version 3.2.9 computer software. Findings of the study showed that social media ( $\beta = 0.803$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 13.113$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) had significant effect on hotel patronage in Akwa Ibom State and affiliate marketing ( $\beta = 0.701$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 10.002$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.021 < 0.05$ ), had a statistical significant effect on hotel patronage. The empirical results revealed that social media has a significant effect on hotel patronage. From this result, we concluded that social media platforms offer hotels a direct channel to engage with potential and existing customers, build brand loyalty, and influence travel decisions. Also, affiliate marketing has a statistical significant effect on the patronage of hotels in Akwa Ibom State. Affiliates, such as travel bloggers, online travel agencies, and other related service providers, promote the hotel to their audience, thereby driving traffic and increasing bookings. Based on the empirical findings, we recommended that management of hotels in Akwa Ibom State should maintain their strong social media presence while exploring other social media platforms in order to engage with their target audience. They

should also actively explore and implement affiliate marketing strategies to drive increased customer patronage. By leveraging the synergies between these different components, hotels can maximize the effect of their digital marketing efforts and drive increased customer patronage.

Affiliate marketing tools indirectly enhance quality service delivery in hospitality and tourism by boosting brand reach, improving customer acquisition, and driving sales through partner promotions. These tools provide data-driven insights that help businesses understand customer preferences, leading to tailored offerings that improve satisfaction. Furthermore, they support the development of trusting relationships between consumers and brands, which is vital for customer loyalty and repeat business. Digital marketing strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of tour operators' supply chains within the tourism industry leading to improved efficiency, increasing customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, indirectly affecting the economic growth of a community (Adam et al., 2020). Digital marketing involves the use of information and communication channels (ICT) for marketing activities including creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers (Strauss and Frost, 2014).

Affiliate marketing platforms such as TripAdvisor, booking.com,

Airbnb, and YouTube provide an opportunity for travelers and tourists who have reached their destination to share their testimonies or express feelings about the trip (Imani, 2021). Fotis, Buhalis, and Rossides (2018) noted that online travelers' reviews allow instant feedback from travelers by sharing their experience after using the products or services. Pabel and Prideaux, (2016) added that online reviews in virtual communities provide consumer and travel partners with a global platform with rich consumer content, price comparison tools, online reservations, and related services for destinations, and experience based on the scores of those who previously visited a particular destination. The performance of tour operators can be affected by destination marketing using various digital marketing tools to attract customers (Velentza & Metaxas, 2023; Zaidan, 2017). In addition, quality and user-friendly accessibility of online information influence tourists' level of satisfaction, and the digital marketing interaction channels positively affect their repeat visits (Armutcu, 2023). Thus, the success of digital marketing strategies employed by tourism marketers depends on tourists' use and adoption of tourism digital marketing tools and platforms (Mpotaringa & Tichaawa, 2023). Choosing the right digital marketing tools helps to enhance the firm marketing efforts and spends less on advertisement costs (Angeloni & Rossi, 2020; Eleanor, Cranmer, 2020). As the tourism

industry uses various online platforms, and the way tourists search and purchase tourism products and services tourism changes, tour operators need to understand how tourists find information (Almeida-santana & Moreno-gil, 2017) and to find out the effectiveness of affiliate marketing tools and strategies that contribute to the maximization of profit (Adam, 2020; Angeloni & Rossi, 2020). The identification and selection of appropriate digital marketing strategies are essential because not all strategies are universally suitable for every business. Some strategies may be costly in terms of time or financial resources while others may no longer provide significant benefit to the organization.

### **Statement of the problem**

In recent years, the tourism industry has experienced unprecedented exponential growth driven by improved transportation convenience, accelerated globalization, and people's growing desire for unique tourism experiences. This growth has significantly impacted the accommodation industry, especially the hotel industry, facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities in meeting the diverse needs of contemporary tourists. With the continuous upgrading of tourism demand, hotels not only need to cope with the increase in reception volume, but also strive to improve the overall

standard of service to meet the increasingly demanding expectations of modern travelers, including high requirements for comfort, convenience, and personalization.

Although the application of social media marketing in the tourism industry has been widely discussed, there is in-depth research on how it affects hotel service quality and tourism behaviour intention through specific information dissemination mechanisms, interaction modes, and customer trust building processes is still scarce. Especially, how to effectively integrate elements such as social media and affiliate marketing tools, and how these elements work together to improve the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry is a significant gap in current research. The existence of this research gap is regrettable; as the hospitality and tourism industry operates in a highly competitive environment where service quality is a key factor distinguishing each other, and social media as well as digital marketing tools significantly influence quality service and overall satisfaction. How hospitality can effectively showcase their excellent service through social media, respond to online reviews in a timely manner, and have a positive impact on guests' arrival in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

It is against this backdrop that this study was conducted to examine to what extent does the impact of digital

marketing tools influence the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of digital marketing tools on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Establish the effect of social media on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
2. Determine the impact of the use of affiliate marketing tool on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research questions**

1. What effect do social media have on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent does the use of affiliate marketing tool influence quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant influence of social media on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

2. Use of affiliate marketing tool does not have any significant influence on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

## METHODOLOGY

The study area is Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The design adopted for the study is survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 798 registered tourism and hospitality outfits in Uyo with 7,056 workers (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Akwa Ibom State, 2025). A proportional simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 5% of the tourism and tourism related industries while 30% respondents each was selected from the tourism and tourism related industries used for this study. Based on the selection, a sample of 536 respondents was selected for the study. Questionnaire tagged: Digital Marketing Tools and Quality Service Delivery Questionnaire (DMTQSDQ). The questionnaire was designed with 20 items to measure the variables used in the study. The questionnaire was face validated by three Test, Measurement and Evaluation experts while the Cronbach Alpha reliability technique using 30 workers that are not part of the study sample was used. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 to 0.84 was obtained. This implies that the instrument is reliable enough to obtain what it was designed for. Independent t-test analysis was used to test and

analyze the two hypotheses adopted for this study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant influence of social media on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The independent variable is social media while the dependent variable is quality service delivery. Independent t-test analysis statistical tool was adopted to establish the influence of social media on quality service delivery. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1

**Table 1. Independent T-Test Analysis of The Influence of Social Media on Quality Service Delivery on the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State (n = 536)**

| Variables                                                          | n   | x     | SD   | t-cal. | P-value |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|------|--------|---------|
| Positive influence of Social media on the quality Service delivery | 456 | 57.15 | 6.21 | 26.54* | .032    |
| Negative influence of Social media on the quality Service delivery | 80  | 33.38 | 2.10 |        |         |

\*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Result obtained from data analysis and testing of hypothesis one revealed that, there is a significant influence of social media on the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (P-value = .032, t-cal = 26.54). This implies that social media has a significant influence on quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria at the

.05 level of significance. Based on the outcome of this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted and retained.

H<sub>0</sub> 2: Affiliate marketing tools do not have any significant influence on quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The independent variable is affiliate marketing tools while the dependent variable is quality service delivery. To test the data obtained, independent t-test analysis statistics was adopted to establish the influence of affiliate marketing tools on quality service delivery. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Independent T-Test Analysis of The Influence of the Use of Affiliate Marketing Tool on the Quality Service Delivery in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State (n = 536)**

| Variables                                                                             | n   | x     | SD   | t-cal. | P- value |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|------|--------|----------|
| Positive influence of the Use affiliate marketing tool On quality service delivery    | 336 | 23.95 | 4.21 | 18.32* | .000     |
| Negative influence of The use of affiliate marketing tool on quality service delivery | 200 | 28.34 | 3.10 |        |          |

Result obtained from data analysis and testing of hypothesis one revealed that the use of affiliate marketing tool significantly influence the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (P-value = .000, t-cal = 18.32). This implies that the use of affiliate marketing tool has significant influence on the quality

of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria at the .05 level of significance. Based on this result the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted and retained.

## Discussion of Results

Result from data analysis and testing of hypothesis one revealed that, social media has a significant positive influence on the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This result is in tandem with the findings of Palazzo (2021) who studied the effect of social media network marketing tools on the quality of the hotel's services by interviewing hotel managers and guests who were active in the sector. Qualitative research and the literature review developed the model of the investigated effect; the detailed model was further developed by structural equation modeling techniques. This conceptual framework was built on how the intention was to verify how hotel service quality is influenced by social media network marketing, adding to the literature evidence upon the scale. Empirical results verified methodologies applied, which were coherent with the previous theoretical frameworks, and this study provided more evidence by correlating different dimensions for a better explanation of how social media marketing affects hotel service quality. Similarly, Ho (2022) also conducted research

examining how the image of social media platforms affects customers' intentions to visit hotels, utilizing hotel image, motivation, and anticipated service quality as mediating factors. Indeed, their online survey, conducted on a sample of 349 people on different social media platforms, indicated that the image of the social media sites themselves impacts motivation primarily due to the hotel's image. Besides, motivation directly impacts the visit intention.

Result obtained from data analysis and testing of hypothesis two revealed that the use of affiliate marketing tool has significant positive influence on the quality of service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The result of the finding is line with the findings of Fotis, Buhalis, and Rossides (2018) who noted that online travelers' reviews allow instant feedback from travelers by sharing their experience after using the products or services. Pabel and Prideaux, (2016) added that online reviews in virtual communities provide consumer and travel partners with a global platform with rich consumer content, price comparison tools, online reservations, and related services for destinations, and experience based on the scores of those who previously visited a particular destination. The performance of tour operators can be affected by destination marketing using various digital marketing tools to attract customers (Velentza & Metaxas,

2023; Zaidan, 2017). In addition, quality and user-friendly accessibility of online information influence tourists' level of satisfaction, and the digital marketing interaction channels positively affect their repeat visits (Armutcu, 2023). Thus, the success of digital marketing strategies employed by tourism marketers depends on tourists' use and adoption of tourism digital marketing tools and platforms (Mpotaringa & Tichaawa, 2023). Choosing the right digital marketing tools helps to enhance the firm marketing efforts and spends less on advertisement costs (Angeloni & Rossi, 2020; Eleanor, Cranmer, 2020). As the tourism industry uses various online platforms, and the way tourists search and purchase tourism products and services tourism changes, tour operators need to understand how tourists find information (Almeida-santana & Moreno-gil, 2017) and to find out the effectiveness of affiliate marketing tools and strategies that contribute to the maximization of profit (Adam, 2020; Angeloni & Rossi, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that digital marketing tools of social media and affiliate marketing are important for quality service delivery in the tourism and hospitality industry. Social media platforms offer tourism and hospitality industry a direct channel to engage with potential and existing customers, build brand loyalty, and influence travel decisions. Effective use of social

media can enhance a hotel's visibility, attract a broader audience, and raise a community of loyal customers through interactive content, promotions, and customer reviews (Ekong, Etuk and Attih, 2024). By partnering with affiliates, tourism and hospitality industry can expand their reach and tap into new customer segments. Affiliate marketing tool such as travel bloggers, online travel agencies, and other related service providers, promote the hotel to their audience, thereby driving traffic and increasing bookings.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for quality service delivery in the hospitality and tourism industry;

1. Managers of Hospitality and tourism industry in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State should as a matter of necessity maintain their strong social media presence while exploring other social media platforms to engage their target audience. This can involve creating compelling content, interacting with followers, and leveraging social media advertising to reach a wider customer base.
2. Affiliate marketing strategies should be explored to increase customer patronage of the hospitality and tourism businesses in Uyo.
3. The owners and managers of tourism and hospitality outfits in Uyo should actively explore and implement affiliate marketing

strategies to drive increased customer patronage. They can do this through partnerships with influential bloggers, social media personalities, or other businesses to promote hospitality and tourism industry, and its offerings to a wider audience.

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**Conceptualization :** All Authors;

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