

# WALK FOR WELLNESS: A PEDOMETER WALKING PROGRAM FOR UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background & Significance

- Forty-eight percent of Americans do not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines of 10,000 steps per day<sup>1</sup>
- Physical inactivity is associated with numerous chronic illnesses<sup>2</sup>
- Health benefits can be achieved with thirty minutes a day of moderate physical activity (e.g., walking)<sup>3</sup>
- The highest rate of physical inactivity occurs in the workplace, which is an ideal setting to influence health behaviors<sup>4</sup>
- Literature supports the efficacy of a pedometer-based walking intervention as a method to increase daily step counts of adults:
  - Individual & Team Goal-Setting<sup>4,5</sup>
  - Goal-Setting & Cognitive and Behavioral Support Materials<sup>6,7</sup>

### Purpose

Evaluate a 6-week pedometer walking program to increase daily steps of university employees

## OUTCOMES

- Number of participants who increased daily step counts by 20% over baseline
- Program completion rate
- Program elements with which participants were satisfied or dissatisfied
- Barriers to attendance
- Feasibility and cost of initiating a walking program

## METHODS

### Setting

- Rural, private Midwestern University
- 200 employees

### Inclusion Criteria

- Current University employees
- Read English
- Ambulatory without assistance

### Design

- Pretest-Posttest, Convenience Sample

## WALK FOR WELLNESS INTERVENTION

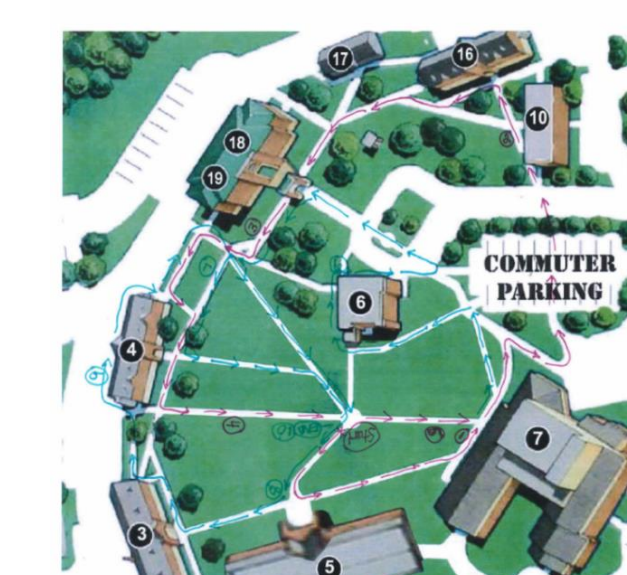
6-Week intervention Mid-September to the end of October 2016  
Based on a modified version of the Walk This Way! Toolkit<sup>8</sup>

### Week 1

- Self-monitoring using an accelerometer or pedometer
- Goal-setting
- Establishing baseline
- 1-mile walking path

### Weeks 2-6

- Weekly emails “Motivation Monday”, “Walking Wednesday”, “Fun Facts Friday”
  - Benefits and fun facts about walking
  - Best practices for safe and effective walking exercise
  - Ways to step up walking routines for those already active
  - Ways to incorporate walking into daily routine
  - Ways to stay engaged and motivated, including walking groups
- Social Media: Walk4Wellness
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - #StepItUp #Walk4Wellness
- Weekly challenges
  - Individual and group
  - Incentives, gift cards, recognition, traveling tennis shoe trophy



Walking Group Winners



Walk for Wellness Kick-Off Event

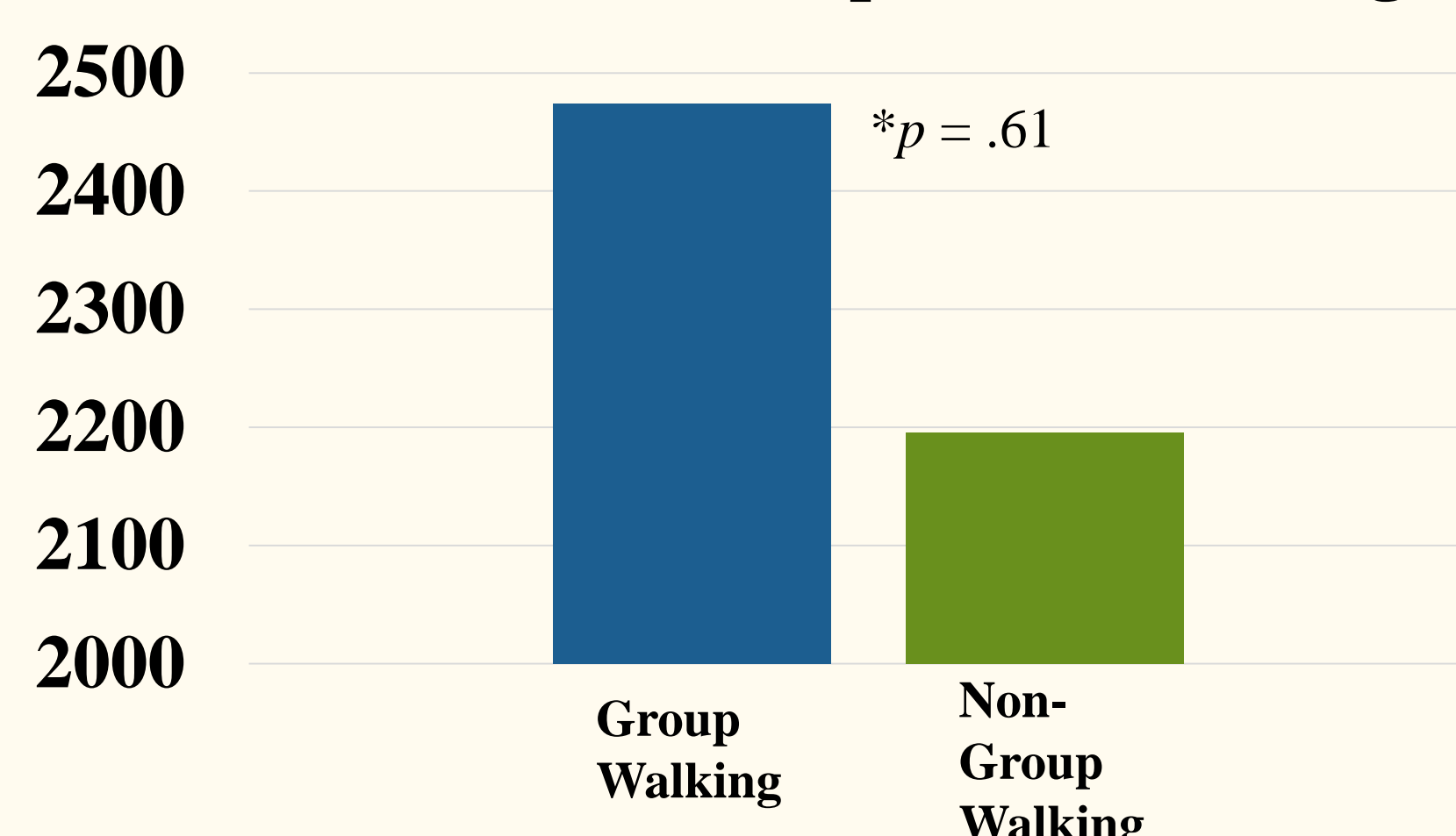


Walk for Wellness Grand Prize Winner

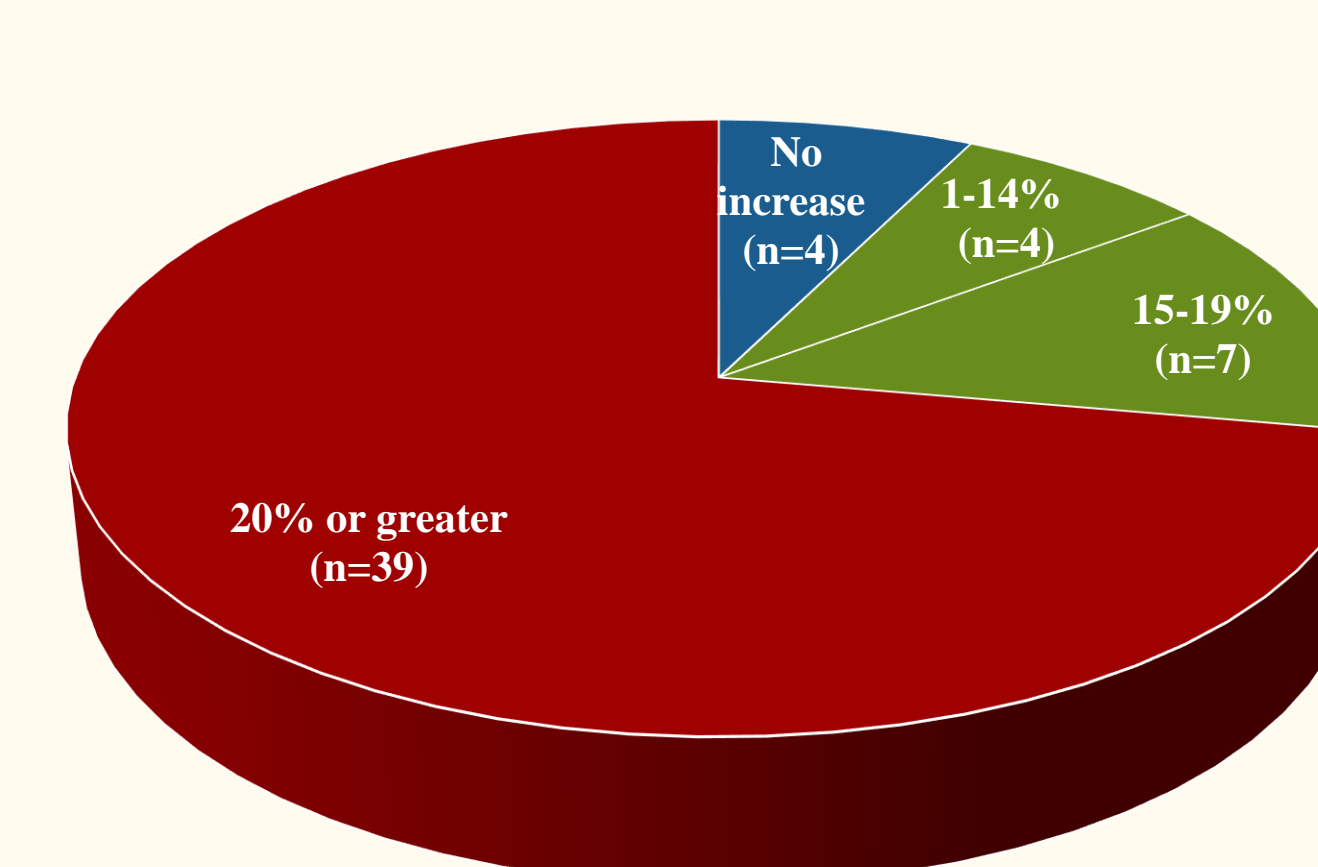
## RESULTS

- Mean increase in daily steps from baseline to 6 weeks: 39%
- Completion rate: 96.4% (54 of 56) completed the 6-week intervention
- Barriers to attendance: Broken pedometer and lack of time
- Cost: \$146 per participant
- Perception of University Community & Connectedness: (Scale range = 1-5) Pre-program 2.98, post-program 3.49 ( $p = .012$ )

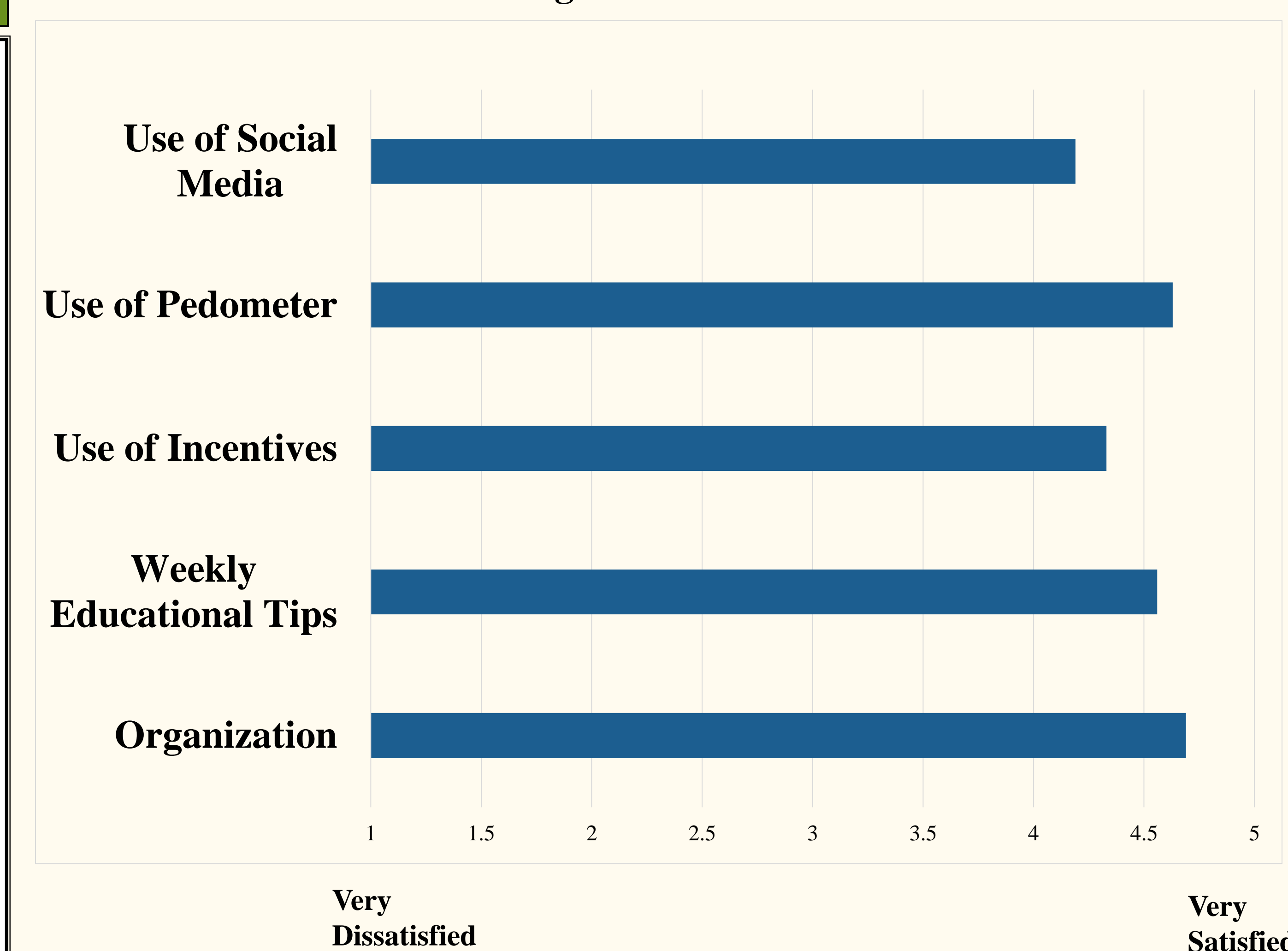
### Mean Step Change for Group (n=24) vs. Non-Group (n=30) Walking



### Increase Over Baseline



## Program Elements



## CONCLUSIONS

- Results support the feasibility and potential effectiveness of the *Walk for Wellness* pedometer-based intervention to increase daily steps
- An accelerometer or pedometer provided a tangible means of measuring physical activity and providing motivation to increase activity
- High level of employee interest, along with the high level of program completion demonstrates employees are interested in wellness
- Program fostered a sense of community and connectedness
- Results may not be generalized to other workplaces as participants were not a representative sample of the general population

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