## The Effects of Video Recording on Office Workers' Conduct, and the Validity of Video Data for the Study of Naturally-Occurring Interactions

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# The Effects of Video Recording on Office Workers' Conduct, and the Validity of Video Data for the Study of Naturally-Occurring Interactions

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**Abstract**: This article starts from the observation that social scientists using video to study naturally-occurring interactions are often questioned about the reliability of their data, by wider audiences, but also by scholars who raised concerns early on about how the recording device would modify the participants' conduct. The study uses 47 video extracts in which workers filmed in their offices orient to the recording, analyzed from a conversation analysis perspective. I show that these sequences occur in two distinct sequential environments, corresponding to distinct sets of accomplishments. During the openings of encounters participants often discuss the meaning and features of the recording, and close the topic as they reach a form of agreement. I outline a pattern for such sequences. During the course of an encounter, they often use the recording not only as a resource to produce laughter in general, but also to achieve locally and sequentially relevant actions, such as closing a complaint or assessing an activity. By exposing the methods whereby participants "domesticate" the recording, I argue that while the recording is a specific circumstance that participants are aware of, and which requires some negotiations, which in turn may change their interactions, it nonetheless provides rich analytic material. The implications of the study are ethical, since they display participants' expectations regarding informed consent, and how they continuously achieve it in their interactions as an iterative process; they are also analytical, since I unpack a diversity of ways participants use the camera as a particular interactional resource to achieve commonplace interactional projects at work.

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## 1. Introduction

Filming "naturally occurring interactions" (SCHEGLOFF & SACKS, 1973, p.291) is now a widespread practice in social science[1]. Videos are used and generally admitted as a reliable form of empirical data to study phenomena specific to face-to-face interactions; and studies have shown their unique value to study, as an example in point for the present article, the moment by moment unfolding of work activities (FELE, 2008; GREIFFENHAGEN, 2008; MONDADA, 2008). Nevertheless, researchers invariably and unremittingly stumble on one criticism that challenges the scientific status of such studies: the cameras and participants' awareness that they are filmed must contaminate, or spoil, the data. This criticism originates in an idea initially raised by William LABOV as the "observer's paradox" (1972, p.209), according to which the observer's presence, all the more when it is enhanced by a recording device, encourages participants to act so as to show an ideal image of themselves. Thus described as an insurmountable obstacle, it implied that the observer was never offered the possibility to observe practices as they would unfold in her/his absence. But conversation analysis (henceforth CA) argues that whether they are recorded or not, participants still need to implement conversational actions in order to accomplish a meaningful interaction with one another, by resorting to the natural resources of language they are competent in using (DREW, 1989; MONDADA, 2006). This is not to say that the recording does not contribute to shaping actions—and I will below endeavor to show how—but that these recordings are nonetheless naturally-occurring interactions, relevant and rich for analysis. Further still, as MONAHAN and FISHER (2010) propose, the performances that participants stage for the ethnographer appear particularly worthy of study because they disclose in a nutshell central aspects of local practices, norms and values. [1]

There is continued debate about whether and how phenomena and data can be considered contaminated[2], and social scientists using video often observe situations where their participants demonstrably orient to the recording, formulate their perception of it, and sometimes explicitly state its influence on their conduct. As LAURIER and PHILO put it: "like the elephant in the kitchen [it] is unavoidably and very noticeably there" (2006, p.184). Because it is so widespread, researchers' capacity to explain why this problem does not invalidate the data is critical as they come to recruiting participants on the one hand, and in order to address a larger scientific audience on the other. One possible defense against this criticism is to empirically show that participants can orient to the recording in ways that serve their practical aims here and now, and contribute to the progression of interaction. Along with this goes the idea that the recording is only one feature of the situation and, as such, does not render it fake. Pursuing this line of investigation, I will show that 1. participants are able to agree together on the status of the recording to ensure informed consent and continue their usual activities; and 2. the recording, rather than being a constraint upon the encounter,

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1  I would like to thank Pentti HADDINGTON and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. I am solely responsible for this final version.

2  LOMAX and CASEY (1998) present an interesting (yet now dated) overview of two opposite positions (the recording does not make any difference vs. video data are not valid for research).

is an interactional resource like any other for them, allowing and even assisting them to conduct their usual activities. Surprisingly, this methodological aspect has been mostly overlooked until now, and seldom addressed in a systematic fashion. [2]

According to the conversation analytic principle of procedural consequentiality (SCHEGLOFF, 1992), a question can be addressed if, and only if, it is demonstrably relevant for participants themselves. The idea for the present article emerged when I noticed in my corpus how often participants demonstrably orient to the ongoing recording, and with closer analysis, how regular the occurrence and organization of these sequences are. I made the available data an opportunity to address a central methodological issue. The findings have two practical results for research: they provide substantial material for researchers who work with video to answer skeptical interlocutors, and they further knowledge of how participants themselves deal with the research process. The argument exposed by DREW (1989) in remarkably clear terms, according to which no special circumstance can distort the phenomena of interest for CA, is certainly accepted, even taken for granted, in the community of conversation analysts. But videos are used by a larger community of research, and the fact that participants at times demonstrably orient to the recording is well known (GORDON, 2012; HAZEL, 2016; HUTCHBY, O'REILLY & PARKER, 2012; LAURIER & PHILO, 2006; SPEER & HUTCHBY, 2003). Knowing more about how they do so would help researchers to answer the recurrent question about data contamination. Therefore the present study has two goals: 1. to address a methodological issue, and 2. to produce further knowledge about the sequential context and the achievements associated with participants' orientations to the recording. [3]

The questions that guided the investigation were the following: do participants rely on generic practices to raise the recording as a topic for conversation? What are these practices, and what are the possible trajectories that follow? Additionally, does mentioning the recording coincide with other particular interactional achievements? In Section 2, I first review the existing literature and what is known about the phenomenon at this point. In Section 3, I present the data and the method used for the present study. Section 4 consists of the detailed analyses of a series of extracts. It is divided in two sub-sections according to the distribution of the sequences as well as the two purposes of the article, methodological and analytical. In 4.1, I show that the openings of encounters in offices are a propitious sequential environment for participants to discuss their respective stances towards the recording, to agree on its conditions and status, and at times to pursue each other's informed consent to being recorded. In 4.2, I show that the cameras are repeatedly used as an interactional resource in the course of encounters, to accomplish a circumscribed set of actions. [4]

## 2. Existing Studies

In a number of articles, participants' orientations to the camera have been touched upon as a secondary issue, in methodological remarks, or among other analyses. An example is provided in HEATH's published dissertation on medical consultations. He analyzes an instance where a young daughter brings the camera to her father's attention (1986, p.11), focusing on the sequential implicativeness of her embodied conduct. The extract is used as an occasion for analysis, and as a methodological issue not worthy of extended discussion. In the same vein, SCHEGLOFF (2005) analyzes an instance where one participant notices and asks about the camera to focus on how participants build a complainable matter. I will expand on this aspect of camera noticings in my analyses: a participant noticing the recording before her/his co-participants, who are aware of it, notify him/her, is recurrently treated as a possible cause for complaint. Other authors do make a specific methodological point of the issue, although more as a defense against data contamination rather than as an analytical claim. For example, DREW (1989) distinguishes the frequency of phenomena, which can be distorted by the recording—participants may joke more often for example—from the shaping of interaction, CA's focal object, the form of which cannot be modified. [5]

Other studies are fully dedicated to sequences where participants orient to the recording, in mundane or institutional settings. LOMAX and CASEY (1998), examining researchers' and participants' involvement in the production of the video data, analyze stretches of interactions before the recording starts, and how midwives, in the researcher's absence, take over by manipulating the camera according to the estimated sensitivity of the ongoing activity. Orientations to the camera have been extensively studied in sociology of childhood, partly because children are more likely than adults to play and interact with the camera (HUTCHBY et al., 2012; SPARRMAN, 2005), producing opportunities for practitioners to, for example, initiate therapeutic work (HUTCHBY, 2001). With an interest in identity-construction, GORDON (2012) proposes a double-entry classification of the ways family members refer or talk to the audio-recorder in their everyday life, standing for a person or for an object and in a literal or non-literal, playful way. STOKOE (2009) has studied when and how participants in police interviews with suspects use a standard formulation to refer to the audio-recorder: at the beginning of interviews, and otherwise to refer to embodied conduct or visual elements that the audio-tape does not make available to the listener. Lastly, HAZEL (2016) has recently analyzed how, by "doing-being-observed," participants in institutional settings can orient to the recording, to discuss its implications or to produce jocular sequences. The author interestingly emphasizes how participants compartmentalize and hierarchize the research activity and their primary activity, results that fit with my observations. However the present study rests on a systematically analyzed collection of instances, and aims to disclose recurrent methods. All in all, the existing studies have only begun to clarify some aspects of the topic. As far as I know, this article is the first systematic investigation that brings to the forefront a recurrent and recognizable

method through which participants negotiate the recording's status and the specific circumstance it creates for their encounter. [6]

## 3. Method and Data

This study is based on a video corpus of 120 hours collected in ten offices from three private organizations, including different types of work[3]. The data are in French. Two fixed cameras were placed in the office whose main occupant had agreed to participate in the research, and the recording was left running for approximately three days on a continuous basis. Main participants who worked in large organizations let their community know ahead of time that the office would be filmed during this period, implying that they were also likely to be filmed if they came into their office. [7]

I gathered and analyzed a collection of 47 instances with the methods of CA, including the multimodal dimension of interaction (DEPPERMANN, 2013), i.e. gesture, bodily postures and orientation, mobility in space, and orientation to the material environment (STREECK, GOODWIN & LeBARON, 2011). Talk was transcribed following the Jeffersonian conventions[4] (JEFFERSON, 2004); embodied actions were transcribed according to MONDADA's conventions (2014). My findings are specific to office organizations in that the systematic method I identify is embedded in the practices and ecological particulars of these settings, and may slightly vary in other settings. But these data are also an occasion to study how participants orient to the camera in general: the present findings are not restricted to the setting in question, and can be useful to further understanding of other types of settings. [8]

## 4. Analyses

The 47 sequences are distributed in two distinct sequential environments: 20 of them occur during the openings of the encounter, 27 occur in the course of the encounter. The fact that each type of sequence, corresponding to each sequential position, is characterized by specific actions and achievements, buttresses this distinction, as I will argue. The analytic section is accordingly divided in two subsections. First, this distribution suggests that the openings of an encounter, someone entering the filmed area, are a propitious sequential environment for participants to refer to the camera[5]. [9]

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3  Public relations, computer development, human resources, research and development in IT, managerial and executive positions, design and communication.

4  Except for translations: the original talk in French is indicated in normal font, the translation in English is indicated in bold font.

5  These encounters consist of a colleague visiting another colleague in his/her office, the occupant of the office being the person who has initially agreed to participate in the research. I recorded 60 such visits, among which 25 involve a reference to the camera. The remaining instances were collected in other moments of everyday work in offices.

### 4.1 Orienting to the recording during the openings of an encounter

In this sub-section, I focus on sequences that occur during the openings of an encounter[6]. They are initiated by the person who arrives in the filmed area (15 cases out of 20), or, in fewer cases (5 out of 20), by the occupant of the office. [10]

*4.1.1 The visitor raises the topic*

In a majority of cases, the visitor to the office mentions the recording first, often through an environmental noticing (SACKS, 1992, p.92), sometimes through a silent, embodied move[7]; most often in the form of a turn at talk accompanied with (a) deictic gesture(s). Extract 1 is a case in point, it also displays an achievement that is recurrent and typical in my collection: the iterative production of informed consent (HUTCHBY et al., 2012). As we join the two colleagues, Antoine[8] is sitting at his desk, working at his computer[9], and Bill is approaching the office door.

Please click here for Extract 1: I'm going to be filmed again[10] [11]

The visitor mentions the recording from the doorway, marking the boundary between the recorded office and the rest of the organizational space. The sequence is initiated through a turn at talk ("I'm going to be filmed again," line 6, Image 1) that is understandable as an environmental noticing through embodied conduct. A little later, Bill points to the camera with arm and index extended (line 9, Image 2), a fairly universal deictic gesture used to refer to an object in the environment (HINDMARSH & HEATH, 2000). Through this turn at talk, Bill formulates his personal stance towards the recording. Previously aware of it, he has been filmed before and does not oppose it. [12]

Nonetheless, Antoine responds to Bill's noticing as a possible emerging complaint (SCHEGLOFF, 2005), or at least as a way of making explicit that being recorded requires one's informed consent. SACKS notes: "given that sort of a noticing, a sequence can be done in which an explanation of the noticed phenomenon is offered" (1992, p.94), and indeed the noticing seems to make some form of account relevant concerning the noticed object. Antoine stops near the central table, makes a hand gesture towards the camera while asking: "it doesn't u:h it doesn't bother you?" (line 9), and later continues with an alternative proposal: "Otherwise we can stop if you want" (line 12). Although the negative interrogative question is tilted towards agreement (RAYMOND, 2003), Antoine embodies the

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6  Considering the difficulty of establishing, even with rigorous ethnographic information, whether participants had talked together about the recording before the encounter, I chose not to make inferences from the fact that the recording is mentioned during the openings of "only" 20 of the 60 visits available in my collection.

7  In at least four of the extracts, among which Extract 3, the visitor makes a recoil movement that marks the moment (s)he notices the camera. I chose not to dedicate a section to the detailed analysis of this particular phenomenon in order to avoid digression.

8  Participants' names have all been changed to pseudonyms.

9  Antoine is not visible on the first image (although he is recorded with another camera). He is sitting at the bottom right outside the frame.

10  The participants represented in the extracts have agreed to appear in scientific publications.

possibility to oppose the recording and keeps Bill away from it with his hand gesture (Image 2): palm open and opposing the camera's angle rather than pointing to it, the gesture is shaped not so much as a pointing than as forming a physical obstacle between Bill and the camera. Before Antoine has completed his alternative proposal, Bill shakes his head sideways and drops his arm while making explicit that he does not oppose to being recorded ("no::", line 11; see the [Appendix](#) for transcript conventions). Antoine's alternative proposal is rejected in favor of continuing the recording and the encounter. Antoine also drops his arm, and closes the sequence by launching the meeting ("go ahead get settled (.) so," line 13). I will compile the fundamental components found here with those observed in later extracts, and summarize them later. [13]

Echoing SACKS' comment about environmental noticings ("[...] the local resources are what people make conversations out of, what they can make conversations out of, and endlessly," 1992, p.92), in at least three instances I found that the cameras' visible presence is a resource for someone passing by the open door of the office to initiate an encounter. Before Extract 2, Patty has walked past and come back towards Sophie and Betty's office. We join them after Patty has stopped on the doorway, bending towards the camera, making clear, through her embodied position, that she has seen the camera and is coming to take a closer look at it.

Please click [here](#) for Extract 2: You're recorded [14]

As in Extract 1, the visitor mentions the recording even before she has entered the office. Her first turn at talk is understandable as an environmental noticing through her embodied conduct, by leaning towards the camera: "you're u:h hello? huh huh you're recorded" (line 3). Following the announcement, Sophie greets Patty again (line 4), somehow highlighting that Patty neglected to do so and inserted a greeting token inside her already in-progress announcement. By initiating the announcement before greeting, Patty gives the recording a particular status and builds its noticeability. However, Sophie, by recalling normal obligations, undermines this noticeability. The encounter begins on a slightly disaligned trajectory with the two main protagonists displaying contradictory stances regarding the recording: remarkable for one, unnoteworthy for the other. [15]

Sophie confirms Patty's noticing with "ye:s?" (line 4), but through the upward intonation and the prolongation, she also invites her to take the floor again, thus treating her turn as a preliminary (SCHEGLOFF, 1980). Patty's question seems to project, and prepare the ground for, a delicate action. Indeed, her following question "it doesn't bother you?" (line 5) raises the unsettling possibility that some people may feel uneasy about being recorded, an issue that is at least potentially expandable and debatable. The negative framing of the question nonetheless orients towards a negative answer (RAYMOND, 2003). Sophie answer by displaying her more consensual, unproblematic stance ("no:?," line 6), and continues with the account "I have nothing to hide" (line 6). Whereas Patty alludes to the most famous dystopia of totalitarian surveillance to buttress her stance, George ORWELL's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949) ("this is like big

brother," line 10), Sophie, on overlap, produces a wisecrack: "or I hide it elsewhere" (line 11), portraying a more complex perception of the recording. On the one hand, she avoids contradicting Patty, agreeing to her perception by showing that she too does not wish to disclose everything to the cameras. On the other hand she explains why, to her, being recorded at her desk does not mean disclosing everything. This wisecrack is followed by extended laughter, marking the closing of the topic (HOLT, 2010). Patty turns to Betty and initiates small talk (line 14-15). Retrospectively, the topic will appear all the more unproblematic given that Patty will stay in the office for 4 more minutes (not reproduced), and the awareness that she is being recorded will not stop her from overtly complaining about the organization's management methods. [16]

This encounter is initiated by a passer-by noticing the camera inside the office, making it the main topic of the openings, and only the first of a long encounter. In Extract 1, the topic was distinctively framed as in passing, but nonetheless in anchor position, suggesting how foundational it is for an encounter about to begin here and now. I wish to note three important elements in these encounters. First, the noticing is an opportunity for participants to publicize and discuss their personal stances vis-à-vis the recording and the research process. The visibility of the cameras in their environment is a resource for them to address the topic before the interaction really begins, and therefore define together the features of the upcoming interaction. Second, whether their personal stances are aligned from the onset or not, participants reach a form of agreement and rapidly close the sequence to move on to another topic. Patty's rather negative stance towards the recording[11] appears as a personal unease, rather than an ethical concern regarding the publicity of (inter)actions, whereas Bill confirms that his noticing was not raising any particular concern. Third, although the research process has been authorized by the organization, participants are able to question anew each other's personal consent to being recorded every time an encounter begins. Informed consent is not necessarily obtained once and for all between the researcher(s) and one or several gatekeepers. It is also an iterative process taking place between participants themselves, implying individuals, their rights and personal decision. Whether co-participants' informed consent can become a condition for the recording to take place, and for the encounter to continue, or not, is very much dependent on what happens in the very first moves of the encounter. [17]

*4.1.2 The office occupant raises the topic*

With the next extract, taking place in the same office as Extract 2, we move on to sequences initiated by the occupant of the office. After Vera and Sophie have agreed via electronic messaging to take a moment to work together, Vera walks in the office while Sophie prepares a seat next to her, but suddenly interrupts this project as Vera is about 3 feet from the door, causing her to stop suddenly, with two audible footsteps.

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11  Note that this is the only sequence in the collection where such a marked negative stance appears.

Please click here for Extract 3: It doesn't bother you to be filmed? [18]

As she pulls a second seat from under her desk[12], Sophie stops suddenly and causes Vera to suddenly and audibly stop walking (Image 5). Sophie asks, while pointing to the camera behind her: "it doesn't bother you to be filmed?" (line 1): she displays an obligation to obtain Vera's consent before they involve further in the interaction, and the sequential positioning of the question affords it a specific status. Her subsequent account, minimizing the duration of the recording, argues in favor of Vera's agreement: "the time to: huh" (line 4). She does not complete it, and laughs, apparently as a reaction to Vera's embodied conduct. By freezing her movement and moving her eyeballs to look around in search for the camera, she produces a sort of humorous performance imitated from cartoons. Such embodied displays, jocular, staged and adjusted to the visual character of the recording device, are not uncommon in the collection. After she has visually located the cameras, Vera resumes walking (Image 6) and confirms that this feature of the situation indeed deserves to be clarified. Although Sophie's negatively framed question on line 1 is tilted towards agreement to being filmed, Vera, by withholding her answer, re-asserts her right to be asked. Locating the camera is one important aspect of this clarification. Sophie looks at her continuously, and after a long silence, reformulates her question and continues with an alternative proposal: "it's all right? (0.6) otherwise we settle elsewhere you know" (lines 7 to 9). Vera shows that she is ready to engage in the meeting by throwing her notebook on the table, after which she eventually answers, defusing Sophie's worries: "no no it's all right you know (.) mhuh huh huh huh" (line 10). On overlap, a last request for confirmation from Sophie (line 11) emphasizes her obligation to obtain agreement, they laugh together for a few seconds, and initiate their meeting ("go ahead (.) so (.) it's going to be quick?," line 13). [19]

Here, Sophie and Vera collaboratively locate the cameras in space, and agree to continue the encounter while being recorded. The way Sophie makes herself accountable for the recording vis-à-vis her colleague suggests that obtaining informed consent, even though it is in the first place the researcher's problem and obligation, can become the main participant's problem, towards persons around her who may enter the recorded area, because (s)he was the first who agreed to being recorded. Sophie offers the possibility to stop the recording but the visitor unconditionally agrees. However she takes the question as an opportunity first to initiate a jocular performance by modifying her body posture and gait. She also displays a particular stance towards the recording, postponing her answer and framing it in a way that confirms the relevance of being informed of this specific circumstance. In other words, even though colleagues tend to agree to the recording, sequences where informed consent is obtained have consequences on the incipient encounter. In Extract 1, the visitor's noticing is treated by the occupant of the office as a possible complaint by pursuing his consent through a very similar alternative, negatively framed question containing the verb "bother." We see here that the main participant to the research can also initiate the topic and ask for informed consent in the absence of a noticing on the visitor's part. [20]

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12 The onset of this action does not appear in the transcript because it begins before.

### 4.1.3 The missing warning

Before we turn to the next sub-section, let us consider one extract that does not *sensu stricto* belong to the first category of instances that take place during the openings of encounters. Extract 4 is relevant here because it is one of two instances in the collection where a visiting colleague notices the camera after (s)he has been in the office, and thus filmed, for a moment[13]. Because he is a distant collaborator, Donald is in no way aware of the recording. We join the meeting in Richard and Lisbeth's office about eight minutes after Donald has arrived and launched his agenda for the meeting[14].

Please click here for Extract 4: We should have warned you [21]

As Donald turns his head towards one of the cameras, his talk becomes hesitant, he stops in the middle of a turn ("::h he:r her his her training-," line 3) and announces a noticing: "°oh° (.) you're recording yourselves? hhh" (line 4, Image 7). The pointing gesture, like in the previous extracts, contributes to framing the turn as an environmental noticing, whereas the change-of-state token (HERITAGE, 1984) in initial position emphasizes the unexpectedness of the noticed object and the fact that it makes a difference. On overlap with his laughter, Lisbeth stops smiling, confirms Donald's noticing with "yes" (line 7), and continues with "we didn't tell you we should have warned you" (line 8). Thus, after Donald has turned to his two hosts in a way that makes relevant some form of account, Lisbeth makes herself explicitly accountable for the recording that is going on, and guilty of not having informed their visitor. Like Sophie's initiative in the previous extract, Lisbeth's response shows that the obligation to inform a future participant falls upon those who are informed and have already accepted to be filmed, and should be done before the encounter really begins. This normative expectation seems to imply that the recording is a special circumstance to which any participant should be afforded the possibility to adjust to. On the other hand, the verb "warn," present in most of these questions, suggests that the visitor does not have a real choice, and is only entitled to be informed: this word is part of the recurrent devices that facilitate the visitor's acceptance. [22]

In response to Emily drawing his attention to the second camera behind him, Donald produces another change-of-state token, expresses astonishment, greets the camera and waves at it, as if ratifying a new participant ("oh dear hu hu hi," line 10, Image 8). Lisbeth partially repeats her previous turn ("we should have warned you yes," line 12), and then only provides an account by introducing the researcher and her aims: "there's Sylvaine uh who does u:h studies in sociology and u:h °about organizations so uh that's it°" (lines 13 and 16). This account translates the perception that the recording has a necessary purpose, for something or for someone. Moreover, formulating this person as a sociologist produces a distinctive understanding, separating a research or study purpose

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13 Incidentally in both instances, the visitor's sight is attracted by the researcher changing the camera's tape.

14 Donald is sitting on the left, Lisbeth on his right; Richard's face appears on the right of the frame, and Emily, Lisbeth's trainee, is outside of the frame on Donald's left.

from industrial, entertainment or organizational purposes for example. Donald keeps looking in the direction of camera 1, displaying a continuing concern, and on overlap with Lisbeth's talk, agrees in a fairly mitigated fashion: "ah okay (.) well (.) well it's it's" (lines 14-15). In a few turns, he progresses from a rather reluctant to a fully cooperative stance, first showing with a quick shrug that no harm has been done, then upgrading his previous turn: "well °okay° (.) perfect?" (line 17), and as Lisbeth formulates the question—once again strongly tilted towards acceptance ("so u:h it's alright? it doesn't bother you?," line 18), he turns to her and displays full agreement: "oh not at a:ll ohhpf" (line 19). With a final arm gesture throwing his hand backwards, he upgrades the full agreement embodied through the shrug. After this protracted sequence, Donald immediately resumes the meeting ("a:nd so u:h uh- ((name)) u:h so she has been in charge," line 20). The fact that his coparticipants are the subjects of the recording just like him, probably plays an important part in reaching an agreement, contributes to securing it, and facilitates in turn the resumption of the previous activity. [23]

However, the late realization that Donald has been recorded for some minutes already and not informed beforehand by his colleagues, is treated as problematic in many ways. Many particulars of this extract (first Lisbeth's apologetic, remedial work, then Donald's mitigated reaction, then Lisbeth's protracted accounts and explanations about the research process before she asks for his consent) suggest that the absence of an initial warning can become accountable. This explains the propensity to initiate the topic during the openings of encounters. Here, the explicit question for agreement happens quite late, and thus seems to be postponed until the visitor has begun to display a cooperative stance. Offering limited possibility to refuse the recording is a recurrent feature and facilitates the *in situ* production of informed consent. Thus, the visitor's noticing of the camera initially raises an obvious moral problem, but as the recording is step-by-step mentioned, located and explained, it gradually becomes an unproblematic, benign contingency of the encounter. [24]

I will now summarize the most important findings from sequences occurring in the openings of encounters. First, participants orient to a rule according to which informing a new participant should be done before the encounter begins. Second, as a consequence of the study set up, most visitors are aware of the recording before they come to their colleague's office, but they also appear all the more likely to refer to the cameras during the opening of an encounter that they are visible in the environment, and oriented to as noticeable. Would a visitor not mention them, it appears to be the initial participants' responsibility to inform their visitor. Third, a direct consequence of this obligation is that such informings can be done in the course of the encounter, but in this case demands costly remedial work. The occupant(s) of the office is/are held accountable for warning the visitor, informing him/her, and obtaining her/his agreement in the first place. [25]

Furthermore, these sequences appear to be organized according to a pattern, with a set of recognizable, recurrent accomplishments.

1. The cameras are noticed, mentioned and located in space. This is achieved through announcements, in the form either of warnings or environmental noticings, through pointing gestures, verbal greetings (to the camera or to the researcher), waving at the camera, or discontinuities in mobility that mark the boundary of the camera's field.

2. The status of the recording is discussed to produce a shared understanding of the situation for the upcoming encounter. Participants can express and discuss their individual stances; exchange information about the research process, including its purposes, origin, and timing; make explicit requests for informed consent; and propose that the recording be stopped or that the encounter take place elsewhere.

3. Either after they have reached an explicit form of agreement—usually the visitor's consent to being recorded—or in a way that retrospectively frames the previous moves as a satisfactory form of implicit agreement, participants very rapidly close the sequence and move to a next one, fully engaging in their encounter. [26]

I will discuss the implications of these findings in section 5. Now that I have shown that entering a filmed area involves specific interactional work so that any new participant is given the possibility to adjust her/his conduct to the circumstances, I turn to the second argument based on sequences occurring in the course of an encounter, showing that the cameras often become resources for a diversity of practical purposes and interactional projects. I use the term interactional projects to distinguish local actions the way they are demonstrably ascribed on a turn-by-turn level, mainly on the basis of turn design and turn location (LEVINSON, 2013), from larger units of action, or activities such as progressing or completing a task at work, or visiting a colleague in her/his office. [27]

**4.2 An interactional resource in the course of encounters: The recording as a multifaceted witness**

This sub-section rests on the analysis of 27 instances that form the second half of the collection. The fact that the recording can be brought back to the surface at any moment of an encounter shows that participants may not forget about it. However, they also do not constantly orient to it as a relevant feature of the situation. They do so at particular moments, when the recording can serve an interactional project, and the aim of this section is to find out what kind of interactional projects or moves the recording is usually used for. [28]

One general observation is that laughter is pervasive in these sequences. In all except one, the participant initiating the sequence laughs and fosters collective laughter by doing so. A second observation is that orientations to the cameras often coincide with the emergence of a sensitive issue. The pervasiveness of both laughter and the emergence of sensitive issues is far from surprising since one massive function of laughter is to sanction and soften blunt words or action (GLENN, 2010). This relationship will be discussed later. That humor is a common component of participants' orientations to the recording is apparent in

the body of existing literature. To quote only a few studies, the actions in question have been labeled at times as orientations to the camera "in a playful way" (GORDON, 2012, p.299), to "play with" it, to make "jokes about surveillance" (HUTCHBY et al., 2012, p.678), or to "tease each other" (SPEER & HUTCHBY, 2003, p.329). In the following analyses, I build on these findings, and highlight the recurrent actions achieved by referring to the recording in the course of encounters. [29]

Within the 27 sequences, many actions are recurrent and yet intermingled with one another. I therefore do not intend to propose a typology of these sequences according to the main action achieved in each sequence. Instead, I selected three extracts where participants obviously come to grips with another type of interactional problem than simply teasing or joking, and where collaboration is at stake. [30]

### 4.2.1 Teasing and attempting to hedge an accusation

Although Extract 5, from a strictly sequential point of view, happens during the openings of an encounter, it is relevant to this section because it is not so much focused on the preamble character of the reference. Rather, the participant who initiates the topic does so in response to the visitor's prior move, and as a resource to achieve something within an encounter the openings of which have rapidly progressed. Before it begins, Michel enters the office while Vincent is on the phone[15], and Gillian, sitting next to Vincent, attends to the telephone call. The transcript starts just as Vincent hangs up.

Please click here for Extract 5: You're filmed, so now you calm down [31]

Right after Vincent has hung up the phone, Michel initiates a long turn where he complains and accuses Vincent of keeping his phone line busy (DREW, 1998): "the moment I hang up well the moment I arrive you hang up it's been an hour since I've been trying to call you" (lines 1-2). In the meantime, Vincent starts smiling, turns his face to Michel, points to him with his index finger, and produces an instruction at the first opportunity: "listen to me Michel listen to me" (line 3). Having thus marked a distance with the action performed in the previous turn (CLAYMAN, 2013), he makes the recording relevant, and produces another instruction framing Michel's attitude as agitated, emotional, and out of control: "you're filmed? (.) so now you calm down" (line 5). He confronts Michel with his current behavior, by also turning and pointing to the camera and back to Michel, while the latter has turned to look at the camera (Images 9 and 10). On the one hand, Vincent teases his recipient and thus elicits a form of collusion between all three co-present participants—as Gillian's laughter on line 7 also shows. On the other he also attempts to thwart Michel's complaint, to hedge the accusation, and to escape the pursued account for keeping his phone line busy. He uses the recording as a resource at once to tease his colleague, defuse tension through humor, thwart the complaint and re-orient the trajectory the interaction is taking. [32]

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15 In the images, Vincent is sitting on the left and Michel standing on the right. Gillian, sitting on Michel's left, is not visible from this camera, but from another camera located behind Michel.

But Michel rejects this attempt and reasserts his accusation by scoring the damage done with "I don't care it's been AN HOUR since I've been calling you sir" (line 8). The sudden awareness of the recording has one visible effect on Michel's talk: he changes "tu" into "vous," the formal version of the second person pronoun in French, and ends with the formal address term "Sir," albeit in a sarcastic tone. The encounter thus gains a more formal or public status, but instead of bringing Michel to modify his conduct as Vincent attempted to have him do, this new status enables him to reassert the legitimacy of his complaint. Eventually, with "me I'm leaving in half an hour" (line 11), he provides a justification for his complaint, and Vincent closes the sequence by initiating the work-related topic (line 11). By treating the recording as a public witness and a normative reference, they have 1. negotiated the acceptability of each other's conduct; 2. engaged and persisted in sensitive actions; and 3. defused this conflicting trajectory on a light tone, and closed the sequence on laughter. [33]

In 6 of the 27 extracts in this sub-collection, the participant who first mentions the recording is similarly attempting to stop him/herself or her/his co-participant in the course of an activity and to close a sequence such as a complaint, gossiping or small talk, in order to initiate or resume work proper. The recording is somehow a resource to display a judgment regarding the non-compliance of the ongoing activity to its institutional nature, and exert some sort of (self-) censorship, yet in a teasing or self-mocking tone that softens an otherwise authoritative move. [34]

*4.2.2 Reminding the speaker that her former turn at talk is on the record*

The next extract happens in the same office but on a different day. Although the office occupant's warning may seem similar to the one in Extract 5, participants actually achieve something very different. As the transcript begins, Gillian, a computer scientist, has joined Vincent for a task they are achieving together.

Please click here for Extract 6: You're filmed now [35]

Gillian proposes that they ask for the piece of information they need to a colleague, an absent party: "if that's what we want we have to ask Denis yeah" (line 1), and shortly after, she self-repairs: "well not to Denis to Monique" (line 4). Vincent agrees to both turns, but after the modified proposal, his rising intonation and the way he starts smiling and laughing project more to come ("yeah? heh hhh," line 6). Gillian accounts for her self-repair: "because Denis u:h °we won't get it°" (line 8): she considers Denis will not be able to help them in their task, thus deprecating him as a collaborator and as a professional. She also bends her head down and lowers the volume, framing her talk as not to be eavesdropped, and making apparent the delicate character of this move. On overlap, having anticipated the negative appraisal adumbrated in her self-repair, Vincent attracts her attention by pointing to her, and reminds her of the recording: "you're filmed now" (line 9, Image 11). Although it resembles a turn in Extract 5, Vincent does not leave a slot for collective laughter this time, he keeps the floor and produces an instruction: "so you say u:h to so to Denis u::h °to Denis°" (line 11). [36]

This instruction to self-repair frames "you're filmed now" (line 9) as partly serious, and therefore Gillian's deprecating move as worthy of remedying. Gillian turns to the camera during the instruction, responds with a change of state token and an apology: "oh sorry hhhhh" (line 12), and collapses with an exhaling laughter (Image 12). She treats the reminder as apposite, even helpful because it offers her an opportunity to remedy a previous move. She repeats the apology and aligns to Vincent's instruction by repeating her initial proposal, yet with interpolated particles of aspiration (POTTER & HEPBURN, 2010) that mark a troubled situation: "sorry hhto to Denis (.) huh huh" (line 15). The way she marks her sudden realization and apologizes, the way she is invited to take back her self-repair, and indeed attempts to take it back, form a set of evidence that both participants retrospectively treat Gillian's negative appraisal of a colleague as apologizable in the precise circumstance that she is being recorded. Gillian's initial reaction to the reminder suggests that she has been acting as though she had forgotten about the recording. The recording as a witness is thus a resource for participants to produce a shared moral assessment of Gillian's "departing," and Vincent's partly serious, partly teasing reminder becomes an opportunity to discuss the terms and conditions of collaboration and reach agreement, a thoroughly practical issue for colleagues at work. [37]

Laughter enables participants to maintain a helpful ambiguity throughout the sequence. It softens the potentially offending character of both Gillian's move and Vincent's reminder, offending for all three parties involved. The reminder can be seen as merely initiating a playful, collusive sequence at the expense of this colleague, and Vincent as taking an opportunity to tease Gillian. [38]

Having somehow agreed on this, they discuss the actual confidentiality of the recordings. With a turn framed as getting back to serious talk (SCHEGLOFF, 2001), Vincent tries to reassure Gillian: "but no no don't worry it no: no no it stays uh of course it's" (lines 17-19). This turn shows that the possibility to make a moral assessment of Gillian's move is independent from the actual confidentiality of the recording—i.e. the fact that the colleague in question will not see the recordings—and their trust in the research process. Gillian tries to make sure of one aspect of the confidentiality measures in particular: that Denis will not see the video ("uh- he won't see the video Denis?," line 18). As in other extracts of the collection, the author of the problematic talk does not question the overall use of the data or its storage, only one aspect of it that is very specific to local circumstances. Researchers' independence from participants' hierarchy and peer group recurrently appears critical. [39]

### 4.2.3 Footing one's own talk

With the next and final extract, I touch on the point that, by referring to the fact that the conversation is recorded, a speaker can shed a particular light on her/his previous spate of talk, and cast it in a particular footing. The recording is a convenient resource to laminate interactions, create several footings (GOFFMAN, 1979), and achieve keying operations (GOFFMAN, 1961). In offices, the most common set of footings is whether a stretch of talk, or a form of speech, is official

with regards to the hierarchy and the organization as a whole, or private, locally meaningful and addressed to the co-present participants only. Shortly following Extract 3 where Donald noticed the recording in the course of the meeting, he has resumed his agenda. As the transcript begins, he is explaining to Lisbeth and Richard how the new intranet system is implemented in the organization.

Please click here for Extract 7: I'm not going to say it aloud [40]

Donald gives a piece of advice to Lisbeth and Richard: "this is also why you absolutely have to migrate[16] now"[17] (line 1), and frames it as an announcement with a marked conclusive token ("there we are," line 3). Then he initiates a long turn framed as a parenthetical sequence (MAZELAND, 2007) with accelerated pace and lowered volume: "(.) this way we will be (.) °relaxed° (.) °because it's a bit of a mess but° >°I'm not going to say it aloud now that I know I'm recorded°<" (lines 3 to 7). Like Gillian in the previous extract, the private aside is first adumbrated by lowering volume, and right before the colloquial expression "a bit of a mess," Donald brings his hand to his mouth. He pretends to be excluding potential overhearers, albeit in an exaggerated manner that enhances its artificiality: the gesture is made directly in the camera's direction, and Donald is obviously aware that his talk can be heard, and is actually recorded. The reference to the camera intensifies, binds together and makes explicit a set of visible and audible cues. By pretending to hide from the recording, he explicitly casts this negative judgment about an organizational process ("it's a bit of a mess," line 5) in a private rather than official manner—some words he does not want to be held accountable for. The sequence is followed by collective laughter. In the continuation of laughter, Donald closes the sequence and resumes the meeting on his former loud volume ("there (.) any questions about this?," line 11), and Lisbeth follows ("no well OK (.) yeah," line 12). [41]

Donald also stages a humorous performance and displays his adaptive skills by resorting to an unusual feature of the situation as an interactional resource to achieve something here and now. Like Patty who later in Extract 1 complains about managerial methods, and like Michel in Extract 5 who maintains his accusation to Vincent, the recording does not stop participants from performing sensitive or even negative actions towards their colleagues or the organization. They systematically distinguish their professional community from the research process and the research community who will share the recordings. The camera, and by proxy the person responsible for the recording, are tolerated as witnesses whose interests and relationships are unrelated to those of the local parties. [42]

By analyzing in this section instances that occur in the course of an encounter, I have endeavored to unpack how an orientation to a camera mid-way through a delicate action-in-progress provides an opportunity to modulate or otherwise

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16 "Migrating" is a technical term in IT referring to transferring a website's content from one system to another, often a heavy operation.

17 The French "il faut" is impersonal, as opposed "you have to," but this is what I contend that any French speaker would hear Donald to be meaning. This translation is approximate for the lack of a better alternative.

change it. I have shown that participants can make the cameras relevant again at precise moments, in ways that retrospectively shed a new light on the previous move(s) and on what is currently going on, consisting of moral assessments, and most often efficiently so that the trajectory indeed changes. [43]

## 5. Discussion

Aiming at a double objective, methodological and analytical, I have first endeavored to show that in office organizations, participants to the study would inform their colleague(s) entering the recorded area—were they not aware beforehand—about this extraordinary circumstance. The propensity to mention it at the very beginning of encounters reflects the concern that a usually confidential interaction is made public and reproducible, hence an orientation to offering the opportunity to adjust one's conduct accordingly. I have identified a pattern whereby participants, in this sequential environment, refer to the recording through typical actions, discuss and reach some form of agreement on its meaning and implications, close the topic and initiate their activity with no more visible orientation to it. The very first moves begin to draw a trajectory: some announcements and their responses elicit accounts and/or justifications; others frame it as a detail and facilitate rapid transition to another topic. When initiated by the visitor—a majority of instances—the sequence usually includes questions about the technical features of the device, its location, the duration of the recording, or the office occupant's feeling about it. When initiated by the office occupant, the sequence can consist of only informing the newcomer and/or of actually asking for her/his consent or proposing to stop the recording. This is one important locus for the iterative production of informant consent. Either way, participants end up making the recording "at home," part of the local contingencies (LOMAX & CASEY, 1998), and establish a shared perception of the situation. [44]

In a second sub-section, I have focused on sequences where participants make an interactional resource of the recording in the course of their encounters. Notably, it facilitates joint laughter, which in turn very often appears as a tone and a vehicle to achieve commonplace interactional projects. The participant initially orienting to the recording can often be seen as both teasing her/his recipient and staging her/his humorous performance. These moves achieve several things at the same time by contributing both to a very local interactional project, and to the progression of the encounter. One typical example of this was Vincent in Extract 5 mentioning the recording to retrospectively frame his colleague's past action as inappropriate. He is not only teasing Michel, but also offering him an opportunity to remedy a previous action, trying to escape an accusation, and closing the complaint to move on to the next topic. When referred to as embodying a public witness, the camera is a resource for participants to confront each other with the image they are displaying of themselves, and with ideals and representations of the roles they are implicitly taking each other to be performing here and now. Thereby, they are also able to make one another more accountable than usual regarding these roles. [45]

In addition, because the recording is a convenient resource to provoke laughter through (self-) mockery, it is also a resource for members of organizations to mark and manage moments when sensitive matters reach the interactional surface, when the privacy or publicity of an utterance-to-come or a past utterance can be discussed, when a discrepancy arises between what is deemed sincere and/or intimate, and the public version one wishes to display of oneself. I have shown how, by orienting to the recording, the speaker can take a distance from her/his role through keying operations within her/his own speech, by framing it as "off the record." In her study based on audio-recordings in everyday life, GORDON observes similar shifts of frames and footing and explores the "identity-work opportunities that the cameras provide" (2012, p.314). Here, I have also tried to show how the recording is used as a resource to laminate an interactional situation and shift footings, but more specifically by distinguishing public and private personae and activities (GOFFMAN, 1979) in ways characteristic of work activities. Participants discuss the moral boundaries of a particular situation within larger contractual rights and obligations, to act as a public witness, and to facilitate a form of social control in and through interaction. For the analyst, these sequences display the online formulation, production and negotiation of norms and values. [46]

## 6. Conclusion

Three main findings may help researchers reply to questions about video and data contamination. First, the purpose of ethnomethodological, conversational analytic research is to study how people routinely do what they usually do. The practices through which cooperation and intersubjectivity are produced and maintained, and their organization, do not substantially vary because of cameras. In the meantime, participants are able to overtly state and discuss their stances towards the recording while it is taking place, again through the emergent organization of interaction. Second, the findings complement DREW's (1989) argument regarding the way the recording may modify the frequency of phenomena. Participants' virtual awareness of the recording is such that some achievements will ever remain hidden to an inquiry relying on video data, and the researchers will not get through the recordings a full picture of what can happen in a specific setting. But, once again, this is not the point of ethnomethodological, conversation analytic research. Cameras are used as tools to produce a type of data, video, which is necessary to study specific phenomena through a specific analytic method. Third, participants agree to being filmed in the first place because they are fully informed, aware that the recording can be stopped, and the recordings erased. Thus the fact that they are able to remind each other of it, or re-examine the permission and the recording's characteristics, reinforces the trust relationship with the researcher, and between workers themselves. Once (s)he has brought the camera in the office, the researcher leaves it to participants to handle it according to their judgment in the variety of situations that may arise. [47]

The set of findings concerning how participants in office organizations agree about the recording's implications for their encounter support the recommendations made in standard ethical guidelines for social research.

Participants' discussions go back over what researchers are responsible for presenting a full picture of: the purposes of the research, data storage and use, the possibility to withdraw anytime or to have some recordings erased, and the researcher remaining available and accessible throughout the process and after. These elements prove to be essential for participants to trust the confidentiality of the recordings, adhere to the process and feel unhampered in their usual interactions and environments. [48]

In addition, this type of close empirical study of research ethics-in-action provides an avenue for criterial reflection upon the matter of participant inducement. I have shown that although the main participant to the research can inform her/his visitor about the recording, it is often the visitor who initiates the topic. This suggests that gaining formal consent remains mainly the researcher's problem, but this avoidance is part of the many practices through which initial participants try to avoid rejection of the recording from their colleagues. SPEER and STOKOE have shown on the basis of data from various institutional settings that the practices through which informed consent is gained are biased in two ways, first because the recording being already under way, refusal has to be made explicit; and second through turn design: "consent-gaining turns were tilted in favor of continued participation, making opting out a dispreferred response" (2014, p.54). In my data, initial participants also tend to induce their colleagues towards acceptance, mostly through lexical choice (the verb "warn" rather than "ask") and turn design (negatively framed questions such as, most frequently, "It doesn't bother you?," tilted towards acquiescence). Informing of the recording and of the right to withdraw from the study is formulated only when the initial participant can hardly escape. In only three instances in the collection did the initial participant state to her/his visitor that (s)he would not be filmed against her/his will. There is yet certainly more to discover about participant inducement, especially in a systematic approach compiling larger sets of data. [49]

I do not claim that participants completely forget about the recording, or that their conduct is in no way modified. In line with earlier work about conversation analytic and ethnographic methods (DREW, 1989; MONAHAN & FISHER, 2010), I have argued that the recording inevitably changes some aspects of interactions through a kind of "low key presence" (LAURIER & PHILO, 2006, p.188). It either remains in the background as a virtually relevant feature of the situation, or, at times, is brought to the foreground and thus becomes an actual feature of the situation. Close attention to when the latter happens suggests that there is an accommodation effect. The longer participants have been recorded, the more the recording is pushed into the background, and the greater the effect of a sudden relevancing. [50]

I have described a set of achievements associated with references to the recording, such as questioning about informed consent and confidentiality, staging performances, switching from on- to off-record, or more serious moral assessments and admonitions to watch over one's conduct. Other achievements are more characteristic of workplace interactions, or at least shaped in a characteristic way: how one colleague obtains informed consent from another,

how workers may wish to hide gossip from the disparaged colleague(s), how they can refer to potential control from the hierarchy, and to the official version vs. the insiders' point of view. In other words my findings both concur with and also complement existing research. HUTCHBY et al.'s (2012) study, based on family therapy sessions as one setting and one type of encounter and interactional unit, also outlines regularities and patterns. The issue of informed consent is mostly brought about by the therapist; it does not become an issue among participants as in my data. Besides noting that "the camera and the subsequent recording are treated as at least unproblematically present, and at best clinically valuable" (689), the authors show that it can be used in the course of the sessions to produce, resist or negotiate family hierarchy. They show how the achievements associated with references to the cameras participate in the emergent achievement of one institution, and can be fairly typical of it. Another interesting direction is the angle of materiality, space and mobility (HADDINGTON, MONDADA & NEVILE, 2013; STREECK et al., 2011). In the method I have outlined, the doorway operates as a crucial boundary and landmark for the office and for the recorded area. Identifying such particularities of office organizations was one objective of the present study, and many uninvestigated settings are available for future research. This article sheds new light on how the recording may indeed influence participants' interactions and on how participants deal with it by developing interactional methods. Lastly, it offers evidence that orientations to the camera, rather than contaminating the material, can prove very instructive regarding the setting under study. [51]

## Appendix

Transcript conventions (JEFFERSON, 2004; MONDADA, 2014)

| normal font | talk in original language (French) |
|---|---|
| bold font | English translation |
| grey | embodied actions |
| * * | each participant's actions are delimited by the use of the same symbol |
| *—> | action described continues across subsequent lines |
| —>* | action described continues until the same symbol is reached |
| .... | action's preparation |
| ,,,,, | action's retraction |
| × | position of image reproduced below |
| °low volume° | talk uttered on a lower volume than surrounding talk |
| BLOCK LETTERS | talk uttered on a louder volume than surrounding talk |
| uh:: | elongated vowel, the more double points the longer |
| [overlap] | on tow closely following lines, talk uttered simultaneously, on overlap |
| intonation? | question mark indicates a rising intonation |
| (0.9) | figures in brackets are duration of silences in seconds |
| (.) | silence lasting no more than 0.2 seconds |

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