



Tempus



**Yerevan State University (YSU)**

## **Graduates' Profile Report**

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## Introduction

The YSU Graduates' Profile Report (hereinafter Report) is a pilot survey which was executed within the "Higher Education Network for Human Capital Assessment and Graduate Employability in Armenia (HEN-GEAR)" Tempus project. The project aims at uphold the higher education reforms and modernization process in the Eastern Neighboring Area, by addressing quality assessment and support of graduates' employability in Armenia.

The project supports Armenian Universities in identifying instruments and methodologies to improve the effectiveness of education system through the introduction of the graduates' database HEN-GEAR

system, applying the model proposed by AlmaLaurea Interuniversity Consortium (Italy, Bologna), and has two main goals:

The aims of the introduction of HEN-GEAR system are the following:

- to support the effectiveness of quality assessment practices with reliable statistical evidence on graduates features, as indicated by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education),
- to fulfill gaps in existing statistics,
- to facilitate the access of graduates to the job market at national as well as at international level,
- to consolidate relations between universities and companies at national as well as at international level,
- to increase in value the National University system as a whole.

The Periodical Development of the Graduates Profile Report is an important element of the effective functioning of the HEN-GEAR system. The objectives of the Report development are:

- to introduce and analyze data on graduates' performances and outline their main features
- to provide the information to those, who are involved in YSU policy development for the university education system further progress,
- to provide a tool kit for the university study programs development and selection,



- to improve the HEN-GEAR system in general and graduates' questionnaire in particular.

The study can be focused on a number of variables coming out from the six sets of the on-line platform's questionnaire used for the graduates' interviews.

Particularly, the following six sets are included in the questionnaire:

1. Personal information
2. Education and training
3. Information on the course that the graduate is completing now
4. Evaluation of the course that the graduate is completing now
5. Information about the family
6. Future intentions and perspectives

The Report is the first analyses of YSU Graduates data provided by HEN-GEAR database system. This Report can be considered as a pilot activity, which also has an aim to exercise the HEN-GEAR database system data analyses. The overall and more relevant information on graduates profile is possible to get having high response of graduates (high percentage of registered graduates with properly filled questionnaires).

The Sampling of studied graduates was made by the list of essential questions specifically selected for this Report. Particularly essential questions for this report are:

- parents' educational qualification,
- training and learning methods assessment,
- study abroad experience,
- work experience during university study,
- overall evaluation of the university experience,
- intention to pursue further studies.

The eligible questionnaires for the Report were selected via applying the exclusion criteria on completeness to the questionnaires. Particularly, the questionnaire completeness criterion is satisfied, if the graduate presented comprehensive information at least for 3 questions of the above-mentioned 6 essential questions.

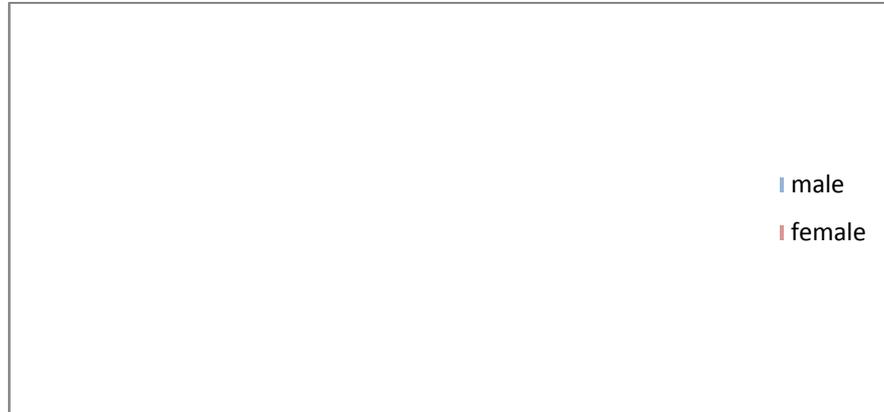
The Report contains an analysis of the features and performance of the 190 YSU graduates of the total 297 graduates registered in HEN-GEAR in 2014 (the 190 graduates profile was selected taking into consideration the above-mentioned criterion).

The report includes the following 6 chapters:

1. Graduates' socio-demographic data
2. Graduates' language skills
3. Graduates' IT skills
4. Information on the activities and awareness of the university and alumni
5. Graduates satisfaction with the educational process
6. Activeness of the graduates and their position towards education based on gender.

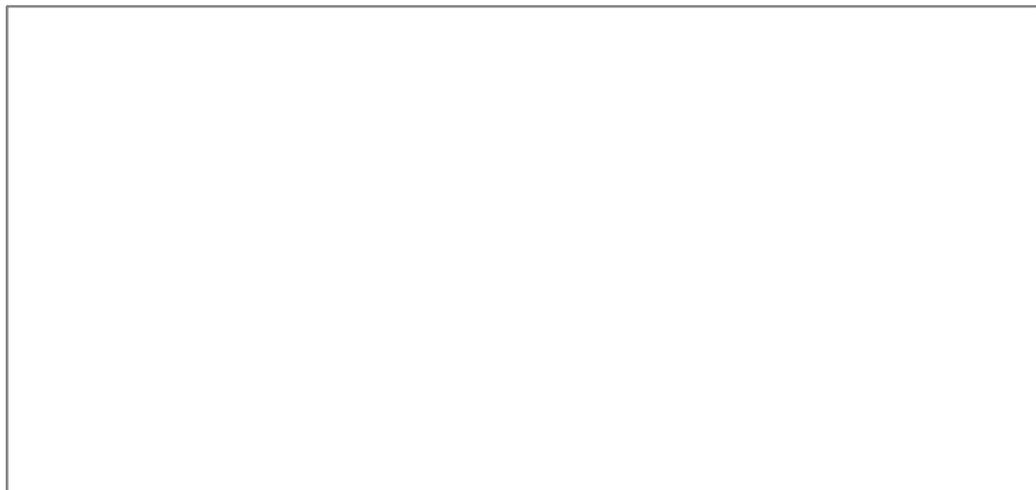
## 1. Graduates' socio-demographic data

The study was conducted using the data of 190 graduates who is eligible for this Report as it was mentioned in the introduction part. Among these 190 graduates 89.5% were female and 10.5% male (Figure 1).



*Figure 1. Graduates gender distribution.*

The students/graduates gender distribution varies from faculty to faculty, but the above mentioned picture does not reflect the real gender distribution among graduates. This can be explained both by the factor that the faculties which graduates were more actively registered in platform are mainly occupied by females and generally female graduates are more active in registering process. They are more active also in YSU Alumni and Career Center programs and other university activities; the type of job which they are looking for from the first sight is more relevant to the HEN-GEAR platform potential employment opportunities. At the same time we have to mention that many male graduates have to serve in army and they do not consider the registration in the HEN-GEAR platform as priority (though this can be applied to the 10-15% of graduates who had right to postpone the military service).



It is also interesting the figures on registered graduate's birthplace. Figure N 2 indicated that the significant part of the participants of the survey - 54.2% are residents of Yerevan, but students from different regions have also been involved in it: 10% of the respondents represent the province of Gegharkunik, 8.9% - Kotayk, 6.2% - Ararat, 1.6% - Tavush, 6.3% -Armavir, 3.7% - Aragatsotn, 5.3% - Shirak, 4.2% - Lori, 0.5% - Syunik and 1.1% -Vayots Dzor. The research has also involved foreign students (1.1% of the respondents).

The registered students from other cities are almost half of all students, but in reality they are less. This data indicates that graduates who are not originally from Yerevan are more interested in HEN-GEAR portal.

Graduates from 18 faculties of YSU have participated in this pilot research (the only missing faculty is the faculty of Informatics and Applied Mathematics).

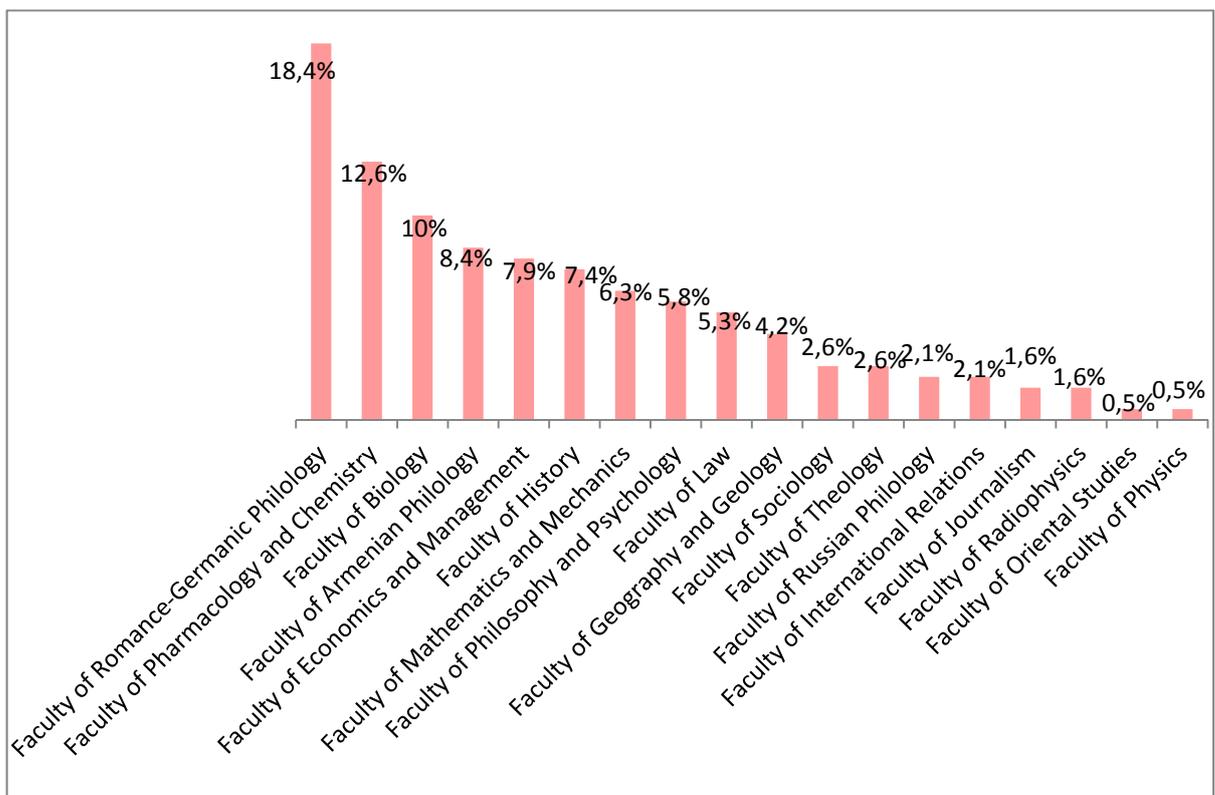


Figure 3. Graduates' distribution by faculties (percentage)

The distribution of studied graduates is presented in Figure 3. It is worth mentioning that there are some faculties which are one of YSU biggest faculties, but their graduates were not so active in HEN-GEAR platform (for example, the Faculty of International Relations, Faculty of Informatics and Applied mathematics, Faculty of Law) and we have to mention that according to expert evaluation the graduates from mentioned faculties relatively have less problems with employability.

## 2. Language skills of YSU graduates

The native language of the majority of graduates is Armenian (93.7%). 0.5% of the respondents noted Russian language as a native one, Albanian (0.5%) and Hindi (0.5%). These are foreign students, who study in the Republic of Armenia. There are many students (4.7%) who did not provided an answer (Figure 4).



The knowledge of the first, second and third foreign languages has also been considered during the survey. Table 1 shows the languages spoken by the participants of this study. Russian language was mentioned as the first foreign language by 56.8% of the respondents, English – 30.5%, Armenian is the second foreign language for 0.3% of the respondents, and French language for 0.5%. As for the second foreign language, as in case of the first foreign language, here also English and Russian languages dominate, but English was mentioned as a second foreign language by 55.8% of the respondents, while Russian by only 20.5% of students. For 5.8% of students, second foreign language is French, 5.3% - German language, 3.2% - Spanish language, etc. 10.5% gave no information regarding the knowledge of the first and second foreign languages.

This picture (no answer) is more dominated in case of the third foreign language – 56.3% of the total number of students. 11.1% of the surveyed students noted Russian as their third foreign language, 7.4% - English language, 7.9% - German language and 3.2% - French.

Knowledge of foreign languages is very important factor for Armenian labor market. Employers often require language skills and graduates with good knowledge of English have essential advantages.

Table 1. Knowledge of foreign languages (first, second and third foreign language)

	First foreign language	Second foreign language	Third foreign language
Russian	56,80%	20,50%	11,10%
English	30,50%	55,80%	7,40%
Germany	0,70%	5,30%	7,90%
French	0,50%	5,80%	3,20%
Armenian	0,30%		
Spanish	0,20%	3,20%	5,30%
Hindi	0,20%	0,90%	0,70%
Italian		1,60%	-
Turkish		0,50%	1,10%
Polish		0,50%	4,20%
Georgian	-	0,50%	1,10%
Arabic	-	0,50%	1,10%
Greek	-		2,60%
Farsi	-		2,10%
Japanese	-	-	0,50%
Bulgarian	-	-	0,50%
No answer	4,70%	5,80%	56,30%

It is also very important the level of knowledge of foreign languages. Graduates often have studied foreign languages, but in practice (oral and written communication) they have certain difficulties. The study focuses on the existence of the certificate on the knowledge of foreign language. Only 15% of respondents have a document certifying the knowledge of the first foreign language, 10.5% - second foreign language and 3.6% - third foreign language.

### 3. Graduates' Information Technology Skills

The YSU graduates Information technology skills are presented in details in Figure N 5, 6 and 7.

As shown in Figure 8, 88.4% of YSU graduates are skilled in web surfing (7.9% fairly good, 30% good, 50.5% excellent). As it was expected the graduates are more skilled in text processing (Figure 6); 83.2% (10 % fairly good, 35.3% good, 37.9 excellent) are skilled in text processing and 85.2% (18.4% fairly good, 40% good, 26.8% excellent) are skilled in spreadsheets (Figure 7).

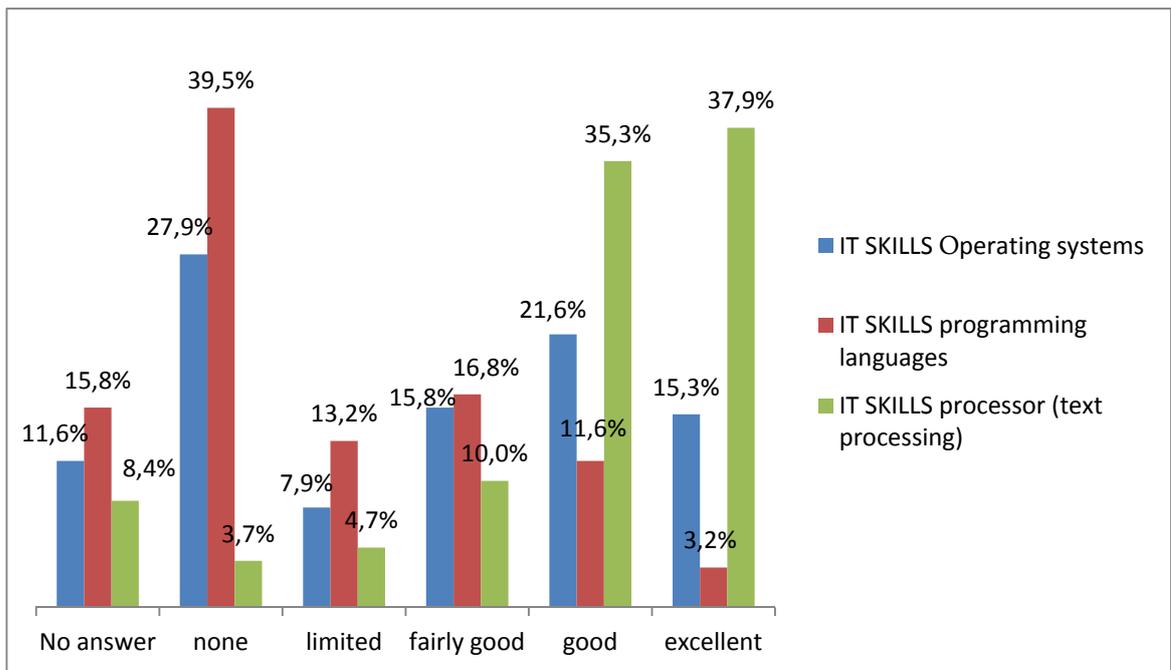


Figure 5. Graduates IT skills (Operating systems, programming languages, text processing).

At the same time the skills in data bases, operating systems, programming languages are very limited. It is worth mentioning that the self-evaluation of IT skills among graduates is also often overestimated. For example many graduates have very limited skills of work with spreadsheets (MS-Excel and other programs), but they think that they have relevant knowledge.

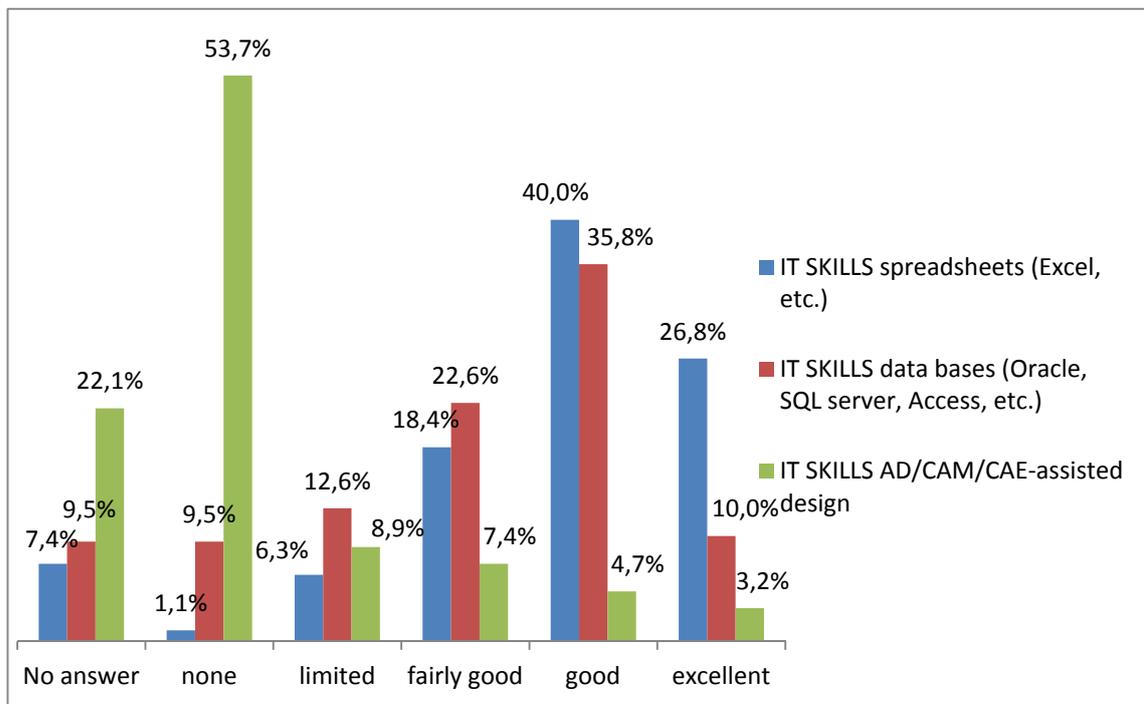


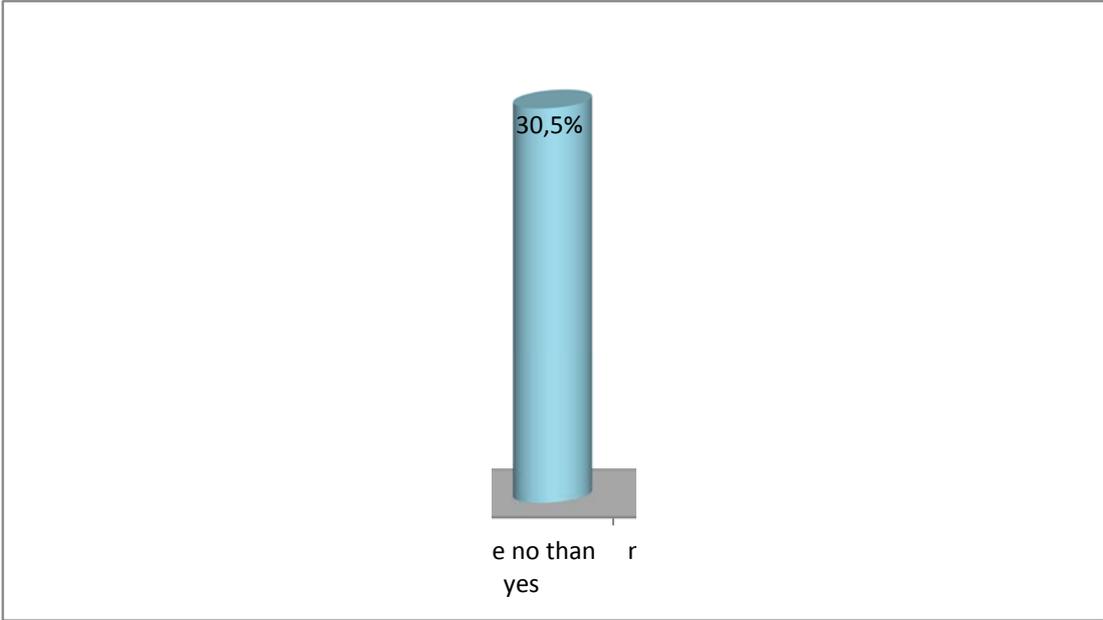
Figure 6. Graduates IT skills (spreadsheets, databases, AD/CAM/CAE design).

There are also concerns related to the picture of web-site creation skills. Only 23.1% of graduates have good and excellent web-site creation skills, while the labor market requires potential employees with such profile. The situation is similar with data transmission and multimedia skills (Figure 7).

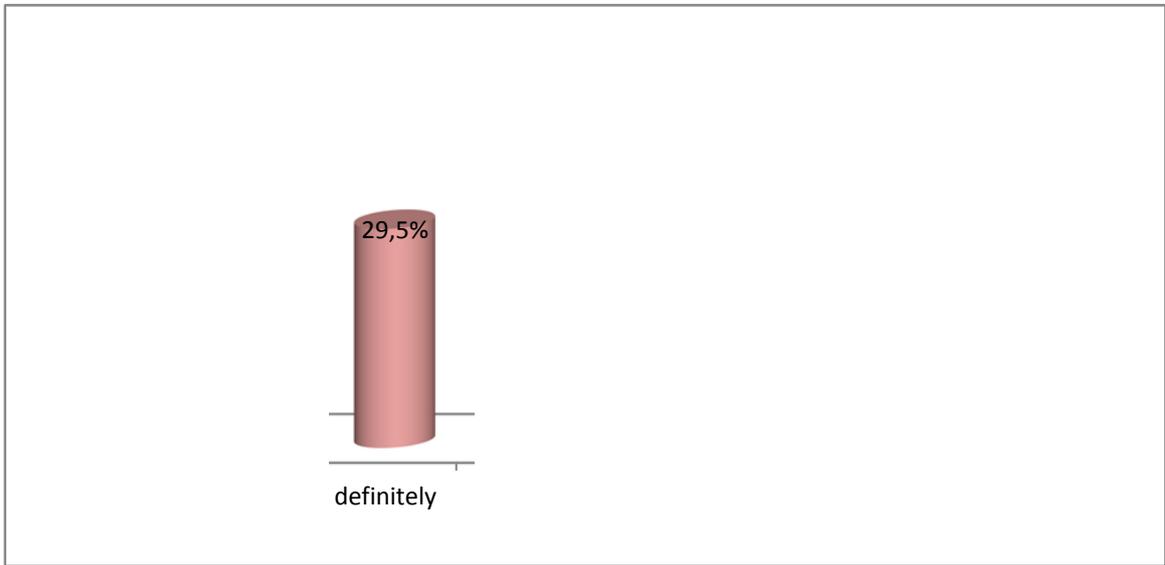


#### **4. Information on the course that graduates are completing now**

About the half of the interviewed graduates (54.2%) indicated that they have known before enrolling at the university what knowledge and skills they were going to acquire by the end of the chosen course of study. Particularly, 22.6% of the respondents answered “yes, definitely” and 31.6% answered “more yes than no” to the question “Before enrolling at the university, did you know what knowledge and skills you were going to acquire by the end of the chosen course of study?” (Figure 8). At the same time it is worth mentioning that 30.5% of graduates answered “more no than yes”, which means that professional orientation process has certain problems and university should be more active in this regards.



The majority of the studied graduates (79.54% methods used at the university during their study that hey more agree (Figure 9).



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knowledge at*