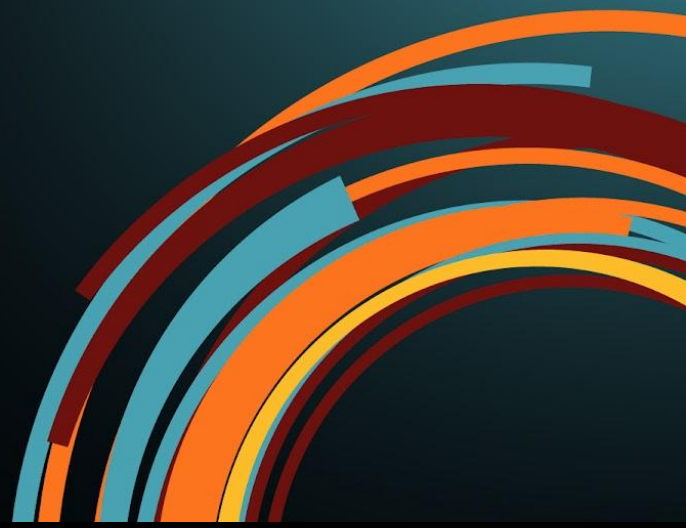
ASWF /* ACADEMY SOFTWARE FOUNDATION

ML Working Group Annual Review

April 29, 2026



What is the Machine Learning WG?

Goals

- Incubate **concrete open source projects** within ASWF.
- Establish a **community** to **share information and expertise** within the film industry.
- **Lead vision, terminology, norms, and technology** related to ML.

Non-goals

- Avoid **doomerism** and **boosterism**.
- Avoid getting involved with **issues or politics** outside of the film industry.
- Do not take **creative control** or **agency** away from **artists**.

Who are the Machine Learning WG?

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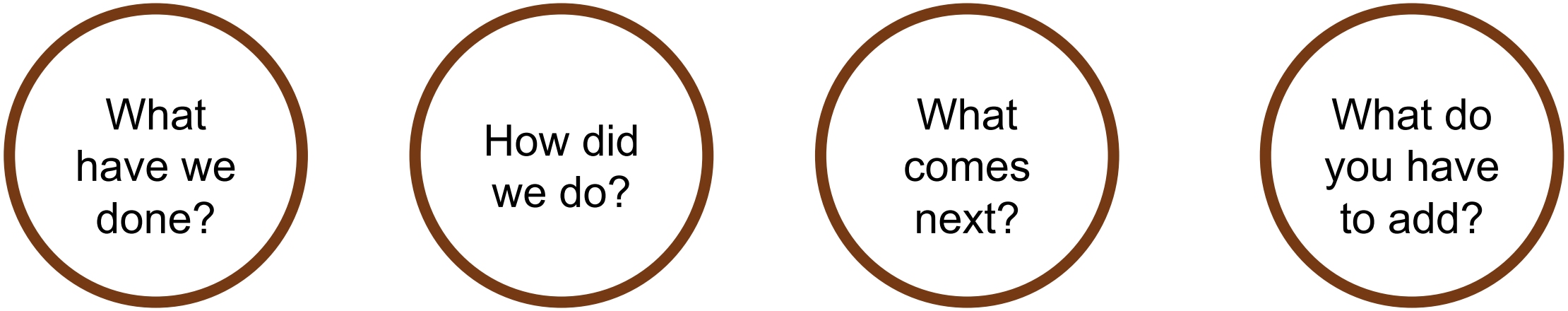
Acting Chair:

Tommy Burnette (ILM)

Key Participants:

James Spadafora (ILM)
Dmitry Grankin (Vexa.AI)
Cameron Target (Disney)
Tommy Snyder (Autodesk)
JT Nelson (PasOS/SCB)
Sam Richards (ex-WDI & SPI)
Olga Avramenko (SPI)
Cottalango Leon (SPI)
Larry Gritz (SPI)

Agenda


What have we done?
How did we do?
What comes next?
What do you have to add?

What have we done?

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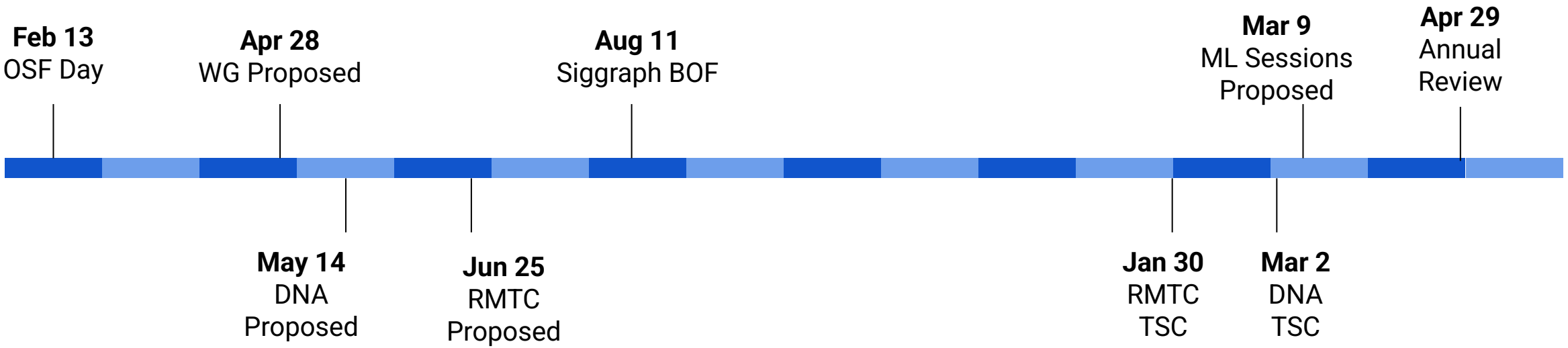
Feb 2025 - April 2026



How did we do?

Goals

✔ Incubate **concrete open source projects** within ASWF.

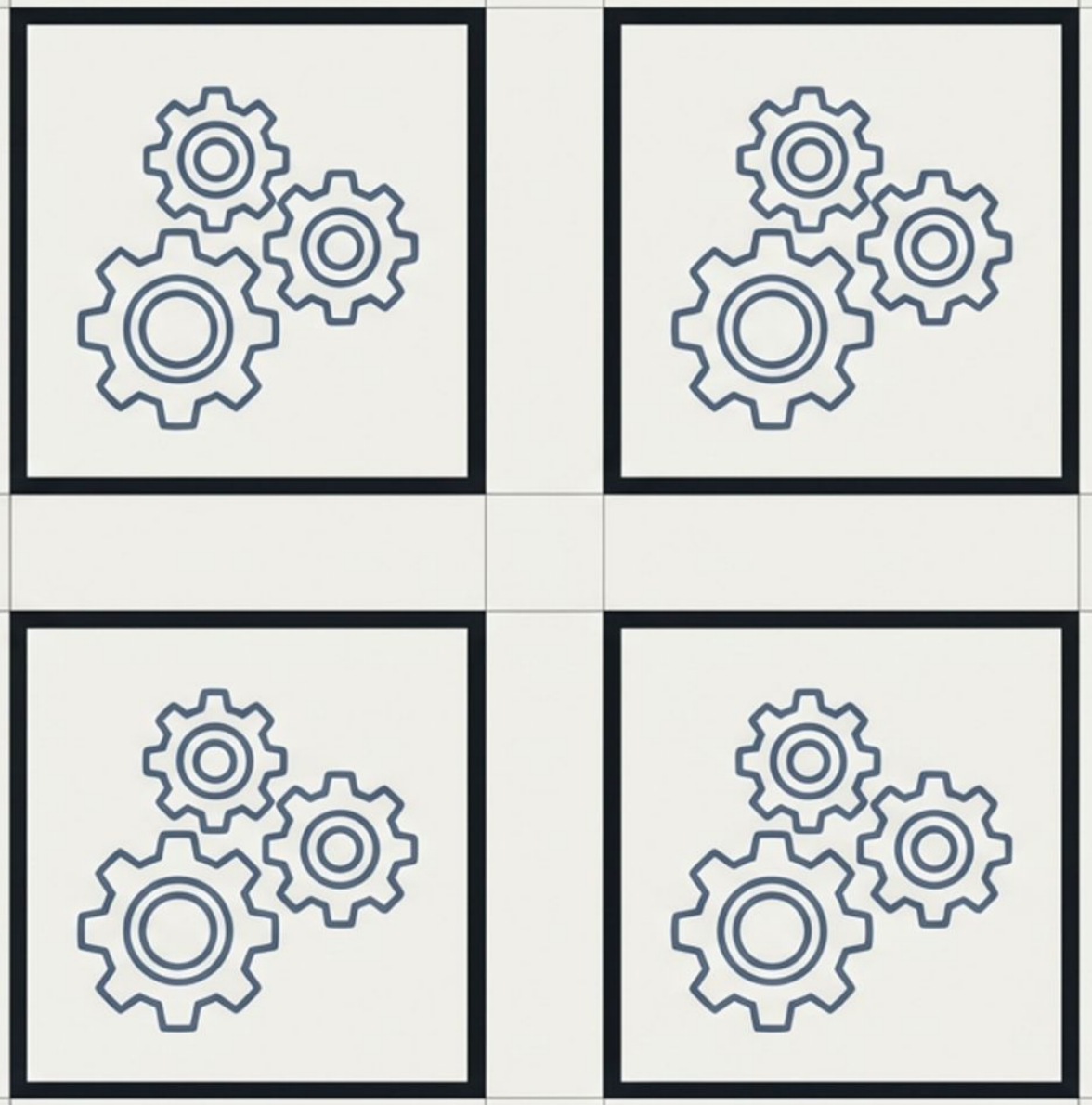
- Establish a **community** to **share information and expertise** within the film industry.

☒ **Lead vision, terminology, norms, and technology** related to ML.

What comes next?

Accelerating ML adoption is creating siloed exploration

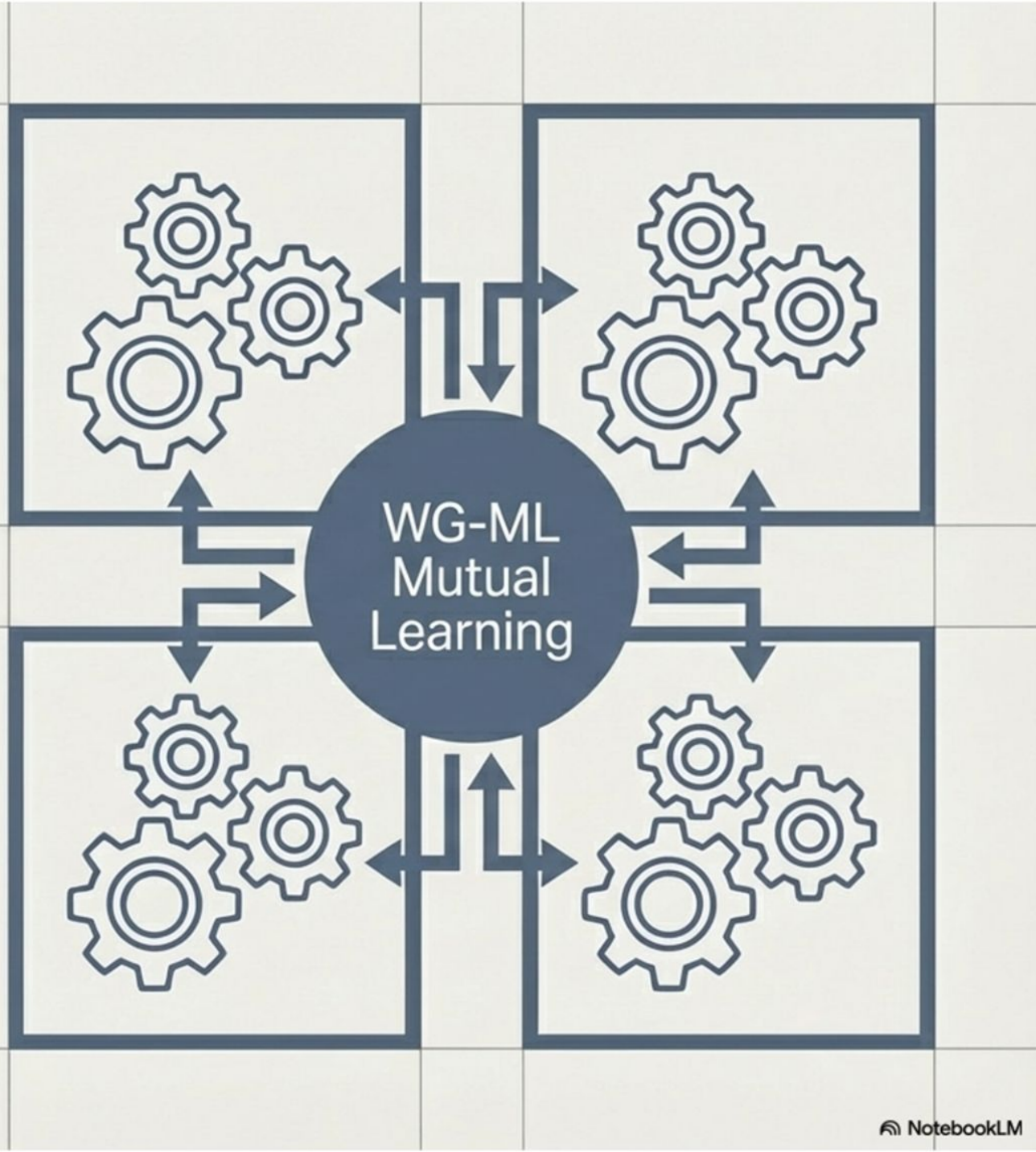
As machine learning and AI adoption accelerates across the industry, teams at different studios are independently exploring the exact same VFX and Animation challenges. This isolated approach limits visibility and leads to duplicated effort across the ecosystem.



Connecting practitioners to build collaborative pathways

We are establishing recurring WG-ML Mutual Learning Sessions. Designed for engineers, researchers, and technical artists, these sessions will:

- Increase visibility across studio efforts
- Reduce duplicated exploration
- Connect practitioners solving related problems



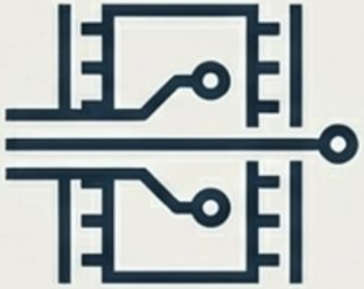
Four guiding principles for our sessions

1. Mutual Learning

Share practical experience and discover common challenges and solutions.

2. Open Discussion

Ensure all content is suitable for public discussion within the WG-ML forum.



3. Relevance

Focus strictly on ML/AI use cases specific to VFX and Animation.

4. Practical Over Theoretical

Prioritize hands-on implementation over purely theoretical or trend-focused surveys.

Strict boundaries on intellectual property and sales

No Confidential Information

Do not share company secrets, proprietary data, or technologies considered core competitive competencies.

No Commercial Product Pitches

These sessions are not for marketing.

Exception: Users showcasing the technical implementation and practical benefits of a commercial product in their workflow are welcome.

Bring your practical experience and lessons learned

Presentations should center on actual implementations:

"We tried X model for Y task and these were the results."

Focus areas include:

- Specific experiments and approaches attempted
- What worked and what failed
- Unexpected outcomes and integration challenges
- Insights into production scalability

Applying ML to content creation workflows

Examples: These are for illustration purpose only

Automated Prep:
Using ML for automated rotoscoping or prep work

Animation Constraints:
Applying reinforcement learning to character animation constraints.

Rapid Iteration:
Using ML-based style transfer to rapidly iterate on concept art or look-development frames.

Leveraging LLMs for pipeline and productivity

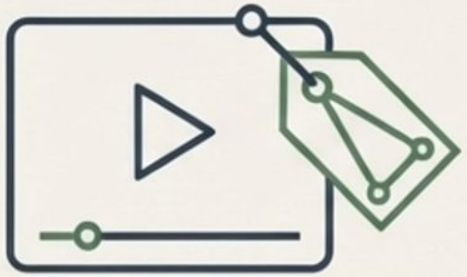
Examples: These are for illustration purpose only

Coding Assistants

Experiments in pipeline or tools development, detailing productivity gains, risks, and failure modes.

Custom RAG Systems

Building Retrieval-Augmented Generation to query proprietary technical documentation and pipeline FAQs.



Production Workflows

Using LLMs for metadata enrichment, tagging, or knowledge retrieval.

Infrastructure trade-offs and the scrapheap

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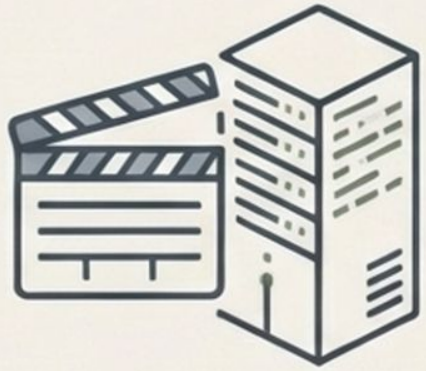
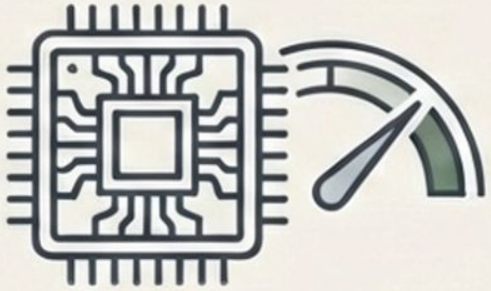


Production Deployment

Lessons learned from deploying ML models into active pipelines.

Infrastructure Trade-offs

Evaluating on-prem versus cloud for ML workloads.



Optimization

GPU scheduling, cost modeling, and inference optimization experiments.

The Scrapheap

Experiments that were attempted and later abandoned—and why.

A low-friction pipeline for speaker selection

1. Call for Speakers

Topics regularly circulated to the WG-ML mailing list and channel.

2. Abstract Submission

Provide a brief outline of the approach, results, and confirmation of non-confidentiality.

3. Leadership Curation

WG-ML leadership curates the agenda to ensure diversity of topics and alignment with the mutual learning theme.

Moving from shared knowledge to open-source tools

Phase 1: Knowledge Sharing

Disseminating practical ML/AI insights across the ASWF community.

Phase 2: Networking

Connecting individuals across different studios working on similar problems.

Phase 3: Collaboration Incubation

Identifying common pain points to form new WG-ML sub-projects and ASWF open-source tools.

What do you have to add?