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Contents:
1.1 bcolz at glance

bcolz provides columnar, chunked data containers that can be compressed either in-memory and on-disk. Column storage allows for efficiently querying tables, as well as for cheap column addition and removal. It is based on NumPy, and uses it as the standard data container to communicate with bcolz objects, but it also comes with support for import/export facilities to/from HDF5/PyTables tables and pandas dataframes.

The building blocks of bcolz objects are the so-called chunks that are bits of data compressed as a whole, but that can be (partially) decompressed in order to improve the fetching of small parts of the array. This chunked nature of the bcolz objects, together with a buffered I/O, makes appends very cheap and fetches reasonably fast (although the modification of values can be an expensive operation).

The compression/decompression process is carried out internally by Blosc, a high-performance compressor that is optimized for binary data. The fact that Blosc splits chunks internally in so-called blocks means that only the interesting part of the chunk will decompressed (typically in L1 or L2 caches). That ensures maximum performance for I/O operation (either on-disk or in memory).

bcolz can use numexpr or dask internally (numexpr is used by default if installed, then dask and if these are not found, then the pure Python interpreter) so as to accelerate many internal vector and query operations (although it can use pure NumPy for doing so too). numexpr can optimize memory (cache) usage and uses multithreading for doing the computations, so it is blazing fast. This, in combination with carray/ctable disk-based, compressed containers, can be used for performing out-of-core computations efficiently, but most importantly transparently.

1.1.1 carray and ctable objects

The main data container objects in the bcolz package are:

- **carray**: container for homogeneous & heterogeneous (row-wise) data
- **ctable**: container for heterogeneous (column-wise) data

*carray* is very similar to a NumPy *ndarray* in that it supports the same types and basic data access interface. The main difference between them is that a *carray* can keep data compressed (both in-memory and on-disk), allowing to deal with larger datasets with the same amount of memory/disk. And another important difference is the chunked nature of the *carray* that allows data to be appended much more efficiently.

On his hand, a *ctable* is also similar to a NumPy *structured array* that shares the same properties with its *carray* brother, namely, compression and chunking. Another difference is that data is stored in a column-wise order (and not on a row-wise, like the *structured array*), allowing for very cheap column handling. This is of paramount importance when you need to add and remove columns in wide (and possibly large) in-memory and on-disk tables –doing this with regular *structured arrays* in NumPy is exceedingly slow.
Furthermore, columnar means that the tabular datasets are stored column-wise order, and this turns out to offer better opportunities to improve compression ratio. This is because data tends to expose more similarity in elements that sit in the same column rather than those in the same row, so compressors generally do a much better job when data is aligned in such column-wise order.

### 1.1.2 bcolz main features

bcolz objects bring several advantages over plain NumPy objects:

- Data is compressed: they take less storage space.
- Efficient shrinks and appends: you can shrink or append more data at the end of the objects very efficiently (i.e. copies of the whole array are not needed).
- Persistence comes seamlessly integrated, so you can work with on-disk arrays almost in the same way than with in-memory ones (bar some special attention to flush data being required).
- *ctable* objects have the data arranged column-wise. This allows for much better performance when working with big tables, as well as for improving the compression ratio.
- Can leverage Numexpr and Dask as virtual machines for fast operation with bcolz objects. Blosc ensures that the additional overhead of handling compressed data natively is very low.
- Advanced query capabilities. The ability of a *ctable* object to iterate over the rows whose fields fulfill some conditions (and evaluated via numexpr, dask or pure python virtual machine) allows to perform queries very efficiently.

### 1.1.3 bcolz limitations

bcolz does not currently come with good support in the next areas:

- Limited number of operations, at least when compared with NumPy. The supported operations are basically vectorized ones (i.e. those that are made element-by-element). But with is changing with the adoption of additional kernels like Dask (and more to come).
- Limited broadcast support. For example, NumPy lets you operate seamlessly with arrays of different shape (as long as they are compatible), but you cannot do that with bcolz. The only object that can be broadcasted currently are scalars (e.g. `bcolz.eval("x+3")`).
- Some methods (namely *carray.where()* and *carray.wheretrue()* do not have support for multidimensional arrays.
- Multidimensional *ctable* objects are not supported. However, as the columns of these objects can be fully multidimensional, this is not regarded as an important limitation.
bcolz depends on NumPy and, optionally, Numexpr. Also, if you are going to install from sources, and a C compiler (Clang, GCC and MSVC 2008 for Python 2, and MSVC 2010 for Python 3, have been tested).

## 2.1 Installing from PyPI repository

Do:

```bash
$ easy_install -U bcolz
```

or:

```bash
$ pip install -U bcolz
```

## 2.2 Installing Windows binaries

Unofficial Windows binaries are provided by Christoph Gohlke and can be downloaded from:

http://www.lfd.uci.edu/~gohlke/pythonlibs/#bcolz

## 2.3 Using the Microsoft Python 2.7 Compiler

As of Sept 2014 Microsoft has made a Visual C++ compiler for Python 2.7 available for download:

http://aka.ms/vcpython27

This has been made available specifically to ease the handling of Python packages with C-extensions on Windows (installation and building wheels).

It is possible to compile bcolz with this compiler (Jan 2015), however, you may need to use the following patch:

```bash
diff --git i/setup.py w/setup.py
index d77d37f233..b54bfd0fa1 100644
--- i/setup.py
+++ w/setup.py
@@ -11,8 +11,8 @@ from __future__ import absolute_import
 import sys
 import os
 import glob
```

```bash
@@ -11,8 +11,8 @@ from __future__ import absolute_import
 import sys
 import os
 import glob
```
2.4 Installing from tarball sources

Go to the bcolz main directory and do the typical distutils dance:

```
$ python setup.py build_ext --inplace
```

In case you have Blosc installed as an external library you can link with it (disregarding the included Blosc sources) in a couple of ways:

Using an environment variable:

```
$ BLOSC_DIR=/usr/local  (or "set BLOSC_DIR=\blosc" on Win)
$ export BLOSC_DIR      (not needed on Win)
$ python setup.py build_ext --inplace
```

Using a flag:

```
$ python setup.py build_ext --inplace --blosc=/usr/local
```

It is always nice to run the tests before installing the package:

```
$ PYTHONPATH=.    (or "set PYTHONPATH=." on Windows)
$ export PYTHONPATH (not needed on Windows)
$ python -c"import bcolz; bcolz.test()"  # add `heavy=True` if desired
```

And if everything runs fine, then install it via:

```
$ python setup.py install
```

2.5 Testing the installation

You can always test the installation from any directory with:

```
$ python -c "import bcolz; bcolz.test()"
```
3.1 Tutorial on carray objects

This section has been moved to ipython notebook tutorial_carray.

3.2 Tutorial on ctable objects

This section has been moved to ipython notebook tutorial_ctable.

3.3 Writing bcolz extensions

Did you like bcolz but you couldn’t find exactly the functionality you were looking for? You can write an extension and implement complex operations on top of bcolz containers.

Before you start writing your own extension, let’s see some examples of real projects made on top of bcolz:

- **Bquery**: a query and aggregation framework, among other things it provides group-by functionality for bcolz containers. See [https://github.com/visualfabriq/bquery](https://github.com/visualfabriq/bquery)

- **Bdot**: provides big dot products (by making your RAM bigger on the inside). Supports matrix . vector and matrix . matrix for most common numpy numeric data types. See [https://github.com/tailwind/bdot](https://github.com/tailwind/bdot)

Though not a extension itself, it is worth mentioning **Dask**. Dask plays nicely with bcolz and provides multi-core execution on larger-than-memory datasets using blocked algorithms and task scheduling. See [https://github.com/dask/dask](https://github.com/dask/dask).

In addition, bcolz also interacts well with **itertools**, **Pytoolz** or **Cytoolz** too and they might offer you already the amount of performance and functionality you are after.

In the next section we will go through all the steps needed to write your own extension on top of bcolz.

3.3.1 How to use bcolz as part of the infrastructure

Go to the root directory of bcolz, inside docs/my_package/ you will find a small extension example.
Before you can run this example you will need to install the following packages. Run `pip install cython`, `pip install numpy` and `pip install bcolz` to install these packages. In case you prefer Conda package management system execute `conda install cython numpy bcolz` and you should be ready to go. See `requirements.txt`:

cython>=0.20  
numpy>=1.7.0  
bcolz>=0.8.0

Once you have those packages installed, change your working directory to `docs/my_package/`, please see pkg.example and run `python setup.py build_ext --inplace` from the terminal, if everything ran smoothly you should be able to see a binary file `my_extension/example_ext.so` next to the `.pyx` file.

If you have any problems compiling these extensions, please make sure you have a recent version of bcolz as old versions (pre 0.8) don’t contain the necessary `.pxd` file which provides a Cython interface to the carray Cython module.

The `setup.py` file is where you will need to tell the compiler, the name of you package, the location of external libraries (in case you want to use them), compiler directives and so on. See `bcolz setup.py` as a possible reference for a more complete example. Along your project grows in complexity you might be interested in including other options to your `Extension` object, e.g. `include_dirs` to include a list of directories to search for C/C++ header files your code might be dependent on.

See `my_package/setup.py`:

```python
from setuptools import setup, Extension
from Cython.Distutils import build_ext
from numpy.distutils.misc_util import get_numpy_include_dirs

# Sources
sources = ["my_extension/example_ext.pyx"]

setup(
    name="my_package",
    description='My description',
    license='MY_LICENSE',
    ext_modules=[
        Extension("my_extension.example_ext",
                  sources=sources,
                  include_dirs=get_numpy_include_dirs(),
                  libraries=['my_extension'],
        ),
    ],
    cmdclass={'build_ext': build_ext},
    packages=['my_extension'],
)
```

The `.pyx` files is going to be the place where Cython code implementing the extension will be, in the example below the function will return a sum of all integers inside the carray.

See `my_package/my_extension/example_ext.pyx`

Keep in mind that carrays are great for sequential access, but random access will highly likely trigger decompression of a different chunk for each randomly accessed value.

For more information about Cython visit [http://docs.cython.org/index.html](http://docs.cython.org/index.html)

```python
import cython
import bcolz as bz
from bcolz.carray_ext cimport carray
from numpy cimport ndarray, npy_int64
```
@cython.overflowcheck(True)
@cython.boundscheck(False)
@cython.wraparound(False)

cdef my_function(carray ca):
    
    Function for example purposes

    >>> import bcolz as bz
    >>> import my_extension.example_ext as my_mod
    >>> c = bz.carray([i for i in range(1000)], dtype='i8')
    >>> my_mod.my_function(c)
    499500

    
    cdef:
    ndarray ca_segment
    Py_ssize_t len_ca_segment
    npy_int64 sum=0

    for ca_segment in bz.iterblocks(ca):
        len_ca_segment = len(ca_segment)
        for i in range(len_ca_segment):
            sum = sum + ca_segment[i]

    return sum

Let's test our extension:

    >>> import bcolz
    >>> import my_extension.example_ext as my_mod
    >>> c = bcolz.carray([i for i in range(1000)], dtype='i8')
    >>> my_mod.my_function(c)
    499500
4.1 First level variables

```
bcolz.__version__
    The version of the bcolz package.
```

```
bcolz.dask_here
    Whether the minimum version of dask has been detected.
```

```
bcolz.min_dask_version
    The minimum version of dask needed (dask is optional).
```

```
bcolz.min_numexpr_version
    The minimum version of numexpr needed (numexpr is optional).
```

```
bcolz.ncores
    The number of cores detected.
```

```
bcolz.numexpr_here
    Whether the minimum version of numexpr has been detected.
```

4.2 Top level classes

```
class bcolz.cparams(clevel=None, shuffle=None, cname=None, quantize=None)
    Class to host parameters for compression and other filters.
```

Parameters clevel : int (0 <= clevel < 10)

    The compression level.

shuffle : int

    The shuffle filter to be activated. Allowed values are bcolz.NOSHUFFLE (0),
    bcolz.SHUFFLE (1) and bcolz.BITSHUFFLE (2). The default is bcolz.SHUFFLE.


    Select the compressor to use inside Blosc.

quantize : int (number of significant digits)

    Quantize data to improve (lossy) compression. Data is quantized using
    np.around(scale*data)/scale, where scale is 2**bits, and bits is determined from the
quantize value. For example, if quantize=1, bits will be 4. 0 means that the quantization is disabled.

In case some of the parameters are not passed, they will be set to a default (see ‘setdefaults()’ method).

See also:
cparams.setdefaults

Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clevel</td>
<td>The compression level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cname</td>
<td>The compressor name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quantize</td>
<td>Quantize filter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuffle</td>
<td>Shuffle filter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods

```python
setdefaults([clevel, shuffle, cname, quantize]) Change the defaults for compression params.
```

```python
static setdefaults(clevel=None, shuffle=None, cname=None, quantize=None)
Change the defaults for compression params.
```

Parameters

- **clevel**: int (0 <= clevel < 10)
  The compression level.

- **shuffle**: int
  The shuffle filter to be activated. Allowed values are bcolz.NOSHUFFLE (0), bcolz.SHUFFLE (1) and bcolz.BITSHUFFLE (2). The default is bcolz.SHUFFLE.

- **cname**: string ('blosclz', 'lz4', 'lz4hc', 'snappy', 'zlib')
  Select the compressor to use inside Blosc.

- **quantize**: int (number of significant digits)
  Quantize data to improve (lossy) compression. Data is quantized using `np.around(scale*data)/scale`, where scale is 2**bits, and bits is determined from the quantize value. For example, if quantize=1, bits will be 4. 0 means that the quantization is disabled.

If this method is not called, the defaults will be set as in defaults.py:

```python
{"clevel=5, shuffle=bcolz.SHUFFLE, cname='lz4', quantize=None"}
```

```python
class bcolz.attrs.attrs (rootdir, mode, _new=False)
Accessor for attributes in carray/ctable objects.

This class behaves very similarly to a dictionary, and attributes can be appended in the typical way:

```python
attrs['myattr'] = value
```

And can be retrieved similarly:
value = attrs['myattr']

Attributes can be removed with:

```
def del attrs['myattr']
```

This class also honors the `__iter__` and `__len__` special functions. Moreover, a `getall()` method returns all the attributes as a dictionary.

CAVEAT: The values should be able to be serialized with JSON for persistence.

Methods

```
getall
```

Also, see the `carray` and `ctable` classes below.

### 4.3 Top level functions

**bcolz.arange**

```
bcolz.arange([start], stop[, step], dtype=None, **kwargs)
```

Return evenly spaced values within a given interval.

Values are generated within the half-open interval `[start, stop)` (in other words, the interval including `start` but excluding `stop`). For integer arguments the function is equivalent to the Python built-in `range` function, but returns a carray rather than a list.

**Parameters**

- **start** : number, optional
  
  Start of interval. The interval includes this value. The default start value is 0.

- **stop** : number
  
  End of interval. The interval does not include this value.

- **step** : number, optional
  
  Spacing between values. For any output `out`, this is the distance between two adjacent values, `out[i+1] - out[i]`. The default step size is 1. If `step` is specified, `start` must also be given.

- **dtype** : dtype
  
  The type of the output array. If `dtype` is not given, infer the data type from the other input arguments.

- **kwargs** : list of parameters or dictionary
  
  Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

**Returns**

- **out** : carray
  
  Bcolz object made of evenly spaced values.

  For floating point arguments, the length of the result is `ceil((stop - start)/step)`. Because of floating point overflow, this rule may result in the last element of `out` being greater than `stop`.

**bcolz.eval**

```
bcolz.eval(expression, vm=None, out_flavors=None, user_dict=None, blen=None, **kwargs)
```

Evaluate an `expression` and return the result.
**Parameters** expression : string

A string forming an expression, like ‘2*a+3*b’. The values for ‘a’ and ‘b’ are variable names to be taken from the calling function’s frame. These variables may be scalars, carrays or NumPy arrays.

vm : string

The virtual machine to be used in computations. It can be ‘numexpr’, ‘python’ or ‘dask’. The default is to use ‘numexpr’ if it is installed.

out_flavor : string

The flavor for the out object. It can be ‘bcolz’ or ‘numpy’. If None, the value is get from bcolz.defaults.out_flavor.

user_dict : dict

An user-provided dictionary where the variables in expression can be found by name.

blen : int

The length of the block to be evaluated in one go internally. The default is a value that has been tested experimentally and that offers a good enough peformance / memory usage balance.

kwargs : list of parameters or dictionary

Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

**Returns** out : bcolz or numpy object

The outcome of the expression. In case out_flavor='bcolz', you can adjust the properties of this object by passing any additional arguments supported by the carray constructor in kwargs.

---

bcolz.fill (shape, dtype=float, dflt=None, **kwargs)

Return a new carray or ctable object of given shape and type, filled with dflt.

**Parameters** shape : int

Shape of the new array, e.g., (2, 3).

dflt : Python or NumPy scalar

The value to be used during the filling process. If None, values are filled with zeros. Also, the resulting carray will have this value as its dflt value.

dtype : data-type, optional

The desired data-type for the array, e.g., numpy.int8. Default is numpy.float64.

kwargs : list of parameters or dictionary

Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

**Returns** out : carray or ctable

Bcolz object filled with dflt values with the given shape and dtype.

---

See also:

ones, zeros

bcolz.fromiter (iterable, dtype, count, **kwargs)

Create a carray/ctable from an iterable object.

**Parameters** iterable : iterable object
An iterable object providing data for the carray.

**dtype** : `numpy.dtype` instance

Specifies the type of the outcome object.

**count** : int

The number of items to read from iterable. If set to -1, means that the iterable will be used until exhaustion (not recommended, see note below).

**kwargs** : list of parameters or dictionary

Any parameter supported by the carray/ctable constructors.

**Returns** `out` : a carray/ctable object

### Notes

Please specify `count` to both improve performance and to save memory. It allows `fromiter` to avoid looping the iterable twice (which is sloooow). It avoids memory leaks to happen too (which can be important for large iterables).

**bcolz.iterblocks** *(cobj, blen=None, start=0, stop=None)*

Iterate over a cobj (carray/ctable) in blocks of size `blen`.

**Parameters**

- **cobj** : carray/ctable object
  
The `bcolz` object to be iterated over.

- **blen** : int
  
The length of the block that is returned. The default is the chunklen, or for a ctable, the minimum of the different column chunklens.

- **start** : int
  
  Where the iterator starts. The default is to start at the beginning.

- **stop** : int
  
  Where the iterator stops. The default is to stop at the end.

**Returns** `out` : iterable

This iterable returns data blocks as NumPy arrays of homogeneous or structured types, depending on whether `cobj` is a carray or a ctable object.

**See also**:

`whereblocks`

**bcolz.ones** *(shape, dtype=float, **kwargs)*

Return a new carray object of given shape and type, filled with ones.

**Parameters**

- **shape** : int
  
  Shape of the new array, e.g., `(2, 3)`.

- **dtype** : data-type, optional
  
  The desired data-type for the array, e.g., `numpy.int8`. Default is `numpy.float64`.

- **kwargs** : list of parameters or dictionary
  
  Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.
bcolz Documentation, Release 1.1.0

Returns out: carray or ctable

Bcolz object of ones with the given shape and dtype.

See also:
fill, zeros

bcolz.zeros(shape, dtype=float, **kwargs)
Return a new carray object of given shape and type, filled with zeros.

Parameters

shape: int
Shape of the new array, e.g., (2, 3).

dtype: data-type, optional
The desired data-type for the array, e.g., numpy.int8. Default is numpy.float64.

kwargs: list of parameters or dictionary
Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

Returns out: carray or ctable
Bcolz object of zeros with the given shape and dtype.

See also:
fill, ones

bcolz.open(rootdir, mode='a')
Open a disk-based carray/ctable.

Parameters

rootdir: pathname (string)
The directory hosting the carray/ctable object.

mode: the open mode (string)
Specifies the mode in which the object is opened. The supported values are:
• ‘r’ for read-only
• ‘w’ for emptying the previous underlying data
• ‘a’ for allowing read/write on top of existing data

Returns out: a carray/ctable object or IOError (if not objects are found)

bcolz.walk(dir, classname=None, mode='a')
Recursively iterate over carray/ctable objects hanging from dir.

Parameters

dir: string
The directory from which the listing starts.

classname: string
If specified, only object of this class are returned. The values supported are ‘carray’ and ‘ctable’.

mode: string
The mode in which the object should be opened.

Returns out: iterator
Iterator over the objects found.
4.4 Top level printing functions

bcolz.array2string(a, max_line_width=None, precision=None, suppress_small=None, separator=' ', prefix='', style=repr, formatter=None)

Return a string representation of a carray/ctable object.

This is the same function than in NumPy. Please refer to NumPy documentation for more info.

See Also: set_printoptions(), get_printoptions()

bcolz.get_printoptions()

Return the current print options.

This is the same function than in NumPy. For more info, please refer to the NumPy documentation.

See Also: array2string(), set_printoptions()

bcolz.set_printoptions(precision=None, threshold=None, edgeitems=None, linewidth=None, suppress=None, nanstr=None, infstr=None, formatter=None)

Set printing options.

These options determine the way floating point numbers in carray objects are displayed. This is the same function than in NumPy. For more info, please refer to the NumPy documentation.

See Also: array2string(), get_printoptions()

4.5 Utility functions

bcolz.set_nthreads(nthreads)

Sets the number of threads to be used during bcolz operation.

This affects to both Blosc and Numexpr (if available). If you want to change this number only for Blosc, use blosc_set_nthreads instead.

Parameters nthreads : int

The number of threads to be used during bcolz operation.

Returns out : int

The previous setting for the number of threads.

See also:

blosc_set_nthreads

bcolz.blosc_set_nthreads(nthreads)

Sets the number of threads that Blosc can use.

Parameters nthreads : int

The desired number of threads to use.

Returns out : int

The previous setting for the number of threads.

bcolz.detect_number_of_cores()

Return the number of cores in this system.

bcolz.blosc_version()

Return the version of the Blosc library.
bcolz.print_versions()
  Print all the versions of packages that bcolz relies on.

bcolz.test(verbos=False, heavy=False)
  Run all the tests in the test suite.

  If *verbos* is set, the test suite will emit messages with full verbosity (not recommended unless you are looking into a certain problem).

  If *heavy* is set, the test suite will be run in *heavy* mode (you should be careful with this because it can take a lot of time and resources from your computer).

### 4.6 The carray class

class bcolz.carray
  A compressed and enlargeable data container either in-memory or on-disk.

carray exposes a series of methods for dealing with the compressed container in a NumPy-like way.

  **Parameters**

  array : a NumPy-like object
      This is taken as the input to create the carray. It can be any Python object that can be converted into a NumPy object. The data type of the resulting carray will be the same as this NumPy object.

  cparams : instance of the *cparams* class, optional
      Parameters to the internal Blosc compressor.

  dtype : NumPy dtype
      Force this *dtype* for the carray (rather than the *array* one).

  dflt : Python or NumPy scalar
      The value to be used when enlarging the carray. If None, the default is filling with zeros.

  expectedlen : int, optional
      A guess on the expected length of this object. This will serve to decide the best chunklen used for compression and memory I/O purposes.

  chunklen : int, optional
      The number of items that fits into a chunk. By specifying it you can explicitely set the chunk size used for compression and memory I/O. Only use it if you know what are you doing.

  rootdir : str, optional
      The directory where all the data and metadata will be stored. If specified, then the carray object will be disk-based (i.e. all chunks will live on-disk, not in memory) and persistent (i.e. it can be restored in other session, e.g. via the *open()* top-level function).

  safe : bool (defaults to True)
      Coerces inputs to array types. Set to false if you always give correctly typed, strided, and shaped arrays and if you never use Object dtype.

  mode : str, optional
      The mode that a persistent carray should be created/opened. The values can be:
      - 'r' for read-only
- ‘w’ for read/write. During carray creation, the rootdir will be removed if it exists. During carray opening, the carray will be resized to 0.
- ‘a’ for append (possible data inside rootdir will not be removed).

**Attributes**

- **atomsize**: 'int'
- **attrs**: The attribute accessor.
- **cbytes**: The compressed size of this object (in bytes).
- **chunklen**: The chunklen of this object (in rows).
- **chunks**: object
- **cparams**: The compression parameters for this object.
- **dflt**: The default value of this object.
- **dtype**: The dtype of this object.
- **itemsize**: 'int'
- **leftover_array**: Array containing the leftovers chunk (uncompressed chunk)
- **leftover_bytes**: Number of bytes in the leftover_array
- **leftover_elements**: Number of elements in the leftover_array
- **leftover_ptr**: Pointer referring to the leftover_array
- **len**: The length (leading dimension) of this object.
- **mode**: The mode used to create/open the mode.
- ** nbytes**: The original (uncompressed) size of this object (in bytes).
- **nchunks**: Number of chunks in the carray
- **ndim**: The number of dimensions of this object.
- **nleftover**: The number of leftover elements.
- **partitions**: List of tuples indicating the bounds for each chunk
- **rootdir**: The on-disk directory used for persistency.
- **safe**: Whether or not to perform type/shape checks on every operation.
- **shape**: The shape of this object.
- **size**: The size of this object.

**Methods**

- **append**(self, array) Append a numpy array to this instance.
- **copy**(self, **kwargs) Return a copy of this object.
- **flush**(self) Flush data in internal buffers to disk.
- **free_cachemem**(self) Release in-memory cached chunk
- **iter**(self[, start, stop, step, limit, skip, ...]) Iterator with start, stop and step bounds.
- **next**
- **purge**(self) Remove the underlying data for on-disk arrays.
- **reshape**(self, newshape) Returns a new carray containing the same data with a new shape.
- **resize**(self, nitems) Resize the instance to have nitems.
- **sum**(self[, dtype]) Return the sum of the array elements.
- **trim**(self, nitems) Remove the trailing nitems from this instance.
- **view**(self) Create a light weight view of the data in the original carray.
- **where**(self, boolarr[, limit, skip]) Iterator that returns values of this object where boolarr is true.
- **wheretrue**(self[, limit, skip]) Iterator that returns indices where this object is true.

4.6. The carray class
__getitem__

x.__getitem__(key) \implies x[key]

Returns values based on key. All the functionality of ndarray.__getitem__() is supported (including fancy indexing), plus a special support for expressions:

**Parameters**

key : string

It will be interpreted as a boolean expression (computed via `eval`) and the elements where these values are true will be returned as a NumPy array.

See also:

`eval`

__setitem__

x.__setitem__(key, value) \implies x[key] = value

Sets values based on key. All the functionality of ndarray.__setitem__() is supported (including fancy indexing), plus a special support for expressions:

**Parameters**

key : string

It will be interpreted as a boolean expression (computed via `eval`) and the elements where these values are true will be set to value.

See also:

`eval`

append (`self`, array)

Append a numpy array to this instance.

**Parameters**

array : NumPy-like object

The array to be appended. Must be compatible with shape and type of the carray.

atomsize

atomsize: `int`

attrs

The attribute accessor.

See also:

attrs.attrs

cbytes

The compressed size of this object (in bytes).

chunklen

The chunklen of this object (in rows).

chunks

chunks: object

copy (`self`, **kwargs)

Return a copy of this object.

**Parameters**

kwargs : list of parameters or dictionary

Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

Returns out : carray object

The copy of this object.
cparams
The compression parameters for this object.

dflt
The default value of this object.

dtype
The dtype of this object.

flush(self)
Flush data in internal buffers to disk.
This call should typically be done after performing modifications (__settitem__(), append()) in persistence mode. If you don’t do this, you risk losing part of your modifications.

free_cachemem(self)
Release in-memory cached chunk

itemsize

itemsize: ‘int’

iter(self, start=0, stop=None, step=1, limit=None, skip=0, _next=False)
Iterator with start, stop and step bounds.

Parameters start: int
The starting item.

stop: int
The item after which the iterator stops.

step: int
The number of items incremented during each iteration. Cannot be negative.

limit: int
A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.

skip: int
An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.

Returns out: iterator

See also:
where, wheretrue

leftover_array
Array containing the leftovers chunk (uncompressed chunk)

leftover_bytes
Number of bytes in the leftover_array

leftover_elements
Number of elements in the leftover_array

leftover_ptr
Pointer referring to the leftover_array

len
The length (leading dimension) of this object.

mode
The mode used to create/open the mode.

4.6. The carray class
nbytes
The original (uncompressed) size of this object (in bytes).

nchunks
Number of chunks in the carray

ndim
The number of dimensions of this object.

next

nleftover
The number of leftover elements.

partitions
List of tuples indicating the bounds for each chunk

purge
Remove the underlying data for on-disk arrays.

reshape
Returns a new carray containing the same data with a new shape.

Parameters newshape : int or tuple of ints
The new shape should be compatible with the original shape. If an integer, then the result will be a 1-D array of that length. One shape dimension can be -1. In this case, the value is inferred from the length of the array and remaining dimensions.

Returns reshaped_array : carray
A copy of the original carray.

resize
Resize the instance to have nitems.

Parameters nitems : int
The final length of the object. If nitems is larger than the actual length, new items will appended using self.dflt as filling values.

rootdir
The on-disk directory used for persistency.

safe
Whether or not to perform type/shape checks on every operation.

shape
The shape of this object.

size
The size of this object.

sum
Return the sum of the array elements.

Parameters dtype : NumPy dtype
The desired type of the output. If None, the dtype of self is used. An exception is when self has an integer type with less precision than the default platform integer. In that case, the default platform integer is used instead (NumPy convention).

Returns out : NumPy scalar with dtype
**trim** (self, nitems)

Remove the trailing *nitems* from this instance.

**Parameters**

- **nitems** : int
  
  The number of trailing items to be trimmed. If negative, the object is enlarged instead.

**view** (self)

Create a light weight view of the data in the original carray.

**Returns**

- out : carray object
  
  The view of this object.

**See also:**

- **copy**

**where** (self, boolarr, limit=None, skip=0)

Iterator that returns values of this object where *boolarr* is true.

This is currently only useful for boolean carrays that are unidimensional.

**Parameters**

- **boolarr** : a carray or NumPy array of boolean type
  
  The boolean values.

- **limit** : int
  
  A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.

- **skip** : int
  
  An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.

**Returns**

- out : iterator

**See also:**

- **iter, wheretrue**

**wheretrue** (self, limit=None, skip=0)

Iterator that returns indices where this object is true.

This is currently only useful for boolean carrays that are unidimensional.

**Parameters**

- **limit** : int
  
  A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.

- **skip** : int
  
  An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.

**Returns**

- out : iterator

**See also:**

- **iter, where**

### 4.7 The ctable class

**class** bcolz.ctable.ctable (columns=None, names=None, **kwargs)

This class represents a compressed, column-wise table.

Create a new ctable from *cols* with optional *names*.
**Parameters**

**cols**: tuple or list of column objects

The list of column data to build the ctable object. These are typically carrays, but can also be a list of NumPy arrays or a pure NumPy structured array. A list of lists or tuples is valid too, as long as they can be converted into carray objects.

**names**: list of strings or string

The list of names for the columns. The names in this list must be valid Python identifiers, must not start with an underscore, and has to be specified in the same order as the `cols`. If not passed, the names will be chosen as ‘f0’ for the first column, ‘f1’ for the second and so on (NumPy convention).

**kwargs**: list of parameters or dictionary

Allows to pass additional arguments supported by carray constructors in case new carrays need to be built.

**Notes**

Columns passed as carrays are not be copied, so their settings will stay the same, even if you pass additional arguments (cparams, chunklen...).

**Attributes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cbytes</td>
<td>The compressed size of this object (in bytes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cparams</td>
<td>The compression parameters for this object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dtype</td>
<td>The data type of this object (NumPy dtype).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>names</td>
<td>The column names of the object (list).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nbytes</td>
<td>The original (uncompressed) size of this object (in bytes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndim</td>
<td>The number of dimensions of this object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shape</td>
<td>The shape of this object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>size</td>
<td>The size of this object.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Methods**

- `addcol(newcol[, name, pos, move])`: Add a new `newcol` object as column.
- `append(cols)`: Append `cols` to this ctable.
- `copy(**kwargs)`: Return a copy of this ctable.
- `delcol([name, pos, keep])`: Remove the column named `name` or in position `pos`.
- `eval(expression, **kwargs)`: Evaluate the `expression` on columns and return the result.
- `fetchwhere(expression[, outcols, limit, ...])`: Fetch the rows fulfilling the `expression` condition.
- `flush()`: Flush data in internal buffers to disk.
- `free_cachemem()`: Get rid of internal caches to free memory.
- `fromdataframe(df, **kwargs)`: Return a ctable object out of a pandas dataframe.
- `fromhdf5(filepath[, nodepath])`: Return a ctable object out of a compound HDF5 dataset (PyTables Table).
- `iter([start, stop, step, outcols, limit, ...])`: Iterator with `start`, `stop` and `step` bounds.
- `resize(nitems)`: Resize the instance to have `nitems`.
- `todataframe([columns, orient])`: Return a pandas dataframe out of this object.
- `tohdf5(filepath[, nodepath, mode, cparams, ...])`: Write this object into an HDF5 file.
- `trim(nitems)`: Remove the trailing `nitems` from this instance.
**addcol** (newcol, name=None, pos=None, move=False, **kwargs)

Add a new *newcol* object as column.

**Parameters**

- **newcol**: array, ndarray, list or tuple
  - If a carray is passed, no conversion will be carried out. If conversion to a carray has to be done, *kwars* will apply.
- **name**: string, optional
  - The name for the new column. If not passed, it will receive an automatic name.
- **pos**: int, optional
  - The column position. If not passed, it will be appended at the end.
- **move**: boolean, optional
  - If the new column is an existing, disk-based carray should it a) copy the data directory (False) or b) move the data directory (True)
- **kwars**: list of parameters or dictionary
  - Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

**See also:**

*delcol*

**Notes**

You should not specificy both *name* and *pos* arguments, unless they are compatible.

**append** (*cols*)

Append *cols* to this ctable.

**Parameters**

- **cols**: list/tuple of scalar values, NumPy arrays or carrays
  - It also can be a NumPy record, a NumPy recarray, or another ctable.

**cbytes**

The compressed size of this object (in bytes).

**cols = None**

The ctable columns accessor.

**copy** (**kwargs**)

Return a copy of this ctable.

**Parameters**

- **kwars**: list of parameters or dictionary
  - Any parameter supported by the carray/ctable constructor.

**Returns**

- **out**: ctable object
  - The copy of this ctable.

**cparams**

The compression parameters for this object.
delcol (name=None, pos=None, keep=False)
    Remove the column named name or in position pos.

Parameters name: string, optional
    The name of the column to remove.

pos: int, optional
    The position of the column to remove.

keep: boolean
    For disk-backed columns: keep the data on disk?

See also:
    addcol

Notes

You must specify at least a name or a pos. You should not specify both name and pos arguments, unless they are compatible.

dtype
    The data type of this object (numpy dtype).

eval (expression, **kwargs)
    Evaluate the expression on columns and return the result.

Parameters expression: string
    A string forming an expression, like ‘2*a+3*b’. The values for ‘a’ and ‘b’ are variable names to be taken from the calling function’s frame. These variables may be column names in this table, scalars, carrays or NumPy arrays.

kwargs: list of parameters or dictionary
    Any parameter supported by the eval() top level function.

Returns out: bcolz object
    The outcome of the expression. You can tailor the properties of this object by passing additional arguments supported by the carray constructor in kwargs.

See also:
    eval

fetchwhere (expression, outcols=None, limit=None, skip=0, out_flavor=None, user_dict={}, vm=None, **kwargs)
    Fetch the rows fulfilling the expression condition.

Parameters expression: string or carray
    A boolean Numexpr expression or a boolean carray.

outcols: list of strings or string
    The list of column names that you want to get back in results. Alternatively, it can be specified as a string such as ‘f0 f1’ or ‘f0, f1’. If None, all the columns are returned. If the special name ‘nrow__’ is present, the number of row will be included in output.

limit: int
    A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.
skip : int
An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.

out_flavor : string
The flavor for the out object. It can be ‘bcolz’ or ‘numpy’. If None, the value is get
from bcolz.defaults.out_flavor.

user_dict : dict
An user-provided dictionary where the variables in expression can be found by name.

vm : string
The virtual machine to be used in computations. It can be ‘numexpr’, ‘python’ or ‘dask’. The
default is to use ‘numexpr’ if it is installed.

kwargs : list of parameters or dictionary
Any parameter supported by the carray constructor.

Returns out : bcolz or numpy object
The outcome of the expression. In case out_flavor=‘bcolz’, you can adjust the properties
of this object by passing any additional arguments supported by the carray constructor
in kwargs.

See also:

whereblocks

flush()
Flush data in internal buffers to disk.
This call should typically be done after performing modifications (__settitem__, append()) in persistence
mode. If you don’t do this, you risk losing part of your modifications.

free_cachemem()
Get rid of internal caches to free memory.

This call can typically be made after reading from a carray/ctable so as to free the memory used internally
to cache data blocks/chunks.

static fromdataframe (df, **kwargs)
Return a ctable object out of a pandas dataframe.

Parameters df : DataFrame
A pandas dataframe.

kwargs : list of parameters or dictionary
Any parameter supported by the ctable constructor.

Returns out : ctable object
A ctable filled with values from df.

See also:
ctable.todatatable
Notes

The ‘object’ dtype will be converted into a ‘S’tring type, if possible. This allows for much better storage savings in bcolz.

static fromhdf5(filepath, nodepath='/ctable', **kwargs)
Return a ctable object out of a compound HDF5 dataset (PyTables Table).

Parameters
filepath : string
  The path of the HDF5 file.
nodepath : string
  The path of the node inside the HDF5 file.
kwargs : list of parameters or dictionary
  Any parameter supported by the ctable constructor.

Returns
out : ctable object
  A ctable filled with values from the HDF5 node.

See also:
ctable.tohdf5

iter(start=0, stop=1, outcols=None, limit=None, skip=0, out_flavor=<function namedtuple>)
Iterator with start, stop and step bounds.

Parameters
start : int
  The starting item.
stop : int
  The item after which the iterator stops.
step : int
  The number of items incremented during each iteration. Cannot be negative.
outcols : list of strings or string
  The list of column names that you want to get back in results. Alternatively, it can be specified as a string such as ‘f0 f1’ or ‘f0, f1’. If None, all the columns are returned. If the special name ‘nrow__’ is present, the number of row will be included in output.
limit : int
  A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.
skip : int
  An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.
out_flavor : namedtuple, tuple or ndarray
  Whether the returned rows are namedtuples or tuples. Default are named tuples.

Returns
out : iterable

See also:
where
names
The column names of the object (list).

 nbytes
The original (uncompressed) size of this object (in bytes).

 ndim
The number of dimensions of this object.

 resize(nitems)
Resize the instance to have nitems.

    Parameters:
        nitems : int
            The final length of the instance. If nitems is larger than the actual length, new items will
            be appended using self.dflt as filling values.

 shape
The shape of this object.

 size
The size of this object.

todataframe (columns=None, orient='columns')
Return a pandas dataframe out of this object.

    Parameters:
        columns : sequence of column labels, optional
            Must be passed if orient='index'.
        orient : {'columns', 'index'}, default 'columns'
            The “orientation” of the data. If the keys of the input correspond to column labels, pass
            'columns' (default). Otherwise if the keys correspond to the index, pass 'index'.

    Returns:
        out : DataFrame
            A pandas DataFrame filled with values from this object.

See also:
ctable.fromdataframe

 tohdf5 (filepath, nodepath='ctable', mode='w', cparams=None, cname=None)
Write this object into an HDF5 file.

    Parameters:
        filepath : string
            The path of the HDF5 file.
        nodepath : string
            The path of the node inside the HDF5 file.
        mode : string
            The mode to open the PyTables file. Default is 'w'rite mode.
        cparams : cparams object
            The compression parameters. The defaults are the same than for the current bcolz envi-
            ronment.
        cname : string
Any of the compressors supported by PyTables (e.g. ‘zlib’). The default is to use ‘blosc’ as meta-compressor in combination with one of its compressors (see cparams parameter above).

See also:

ctable.fromhdf5

**trim(nitems)**
Remove the trailing nitems from this instance.

**Parameters**

`nitems` : int

The number of trailing items to be trimmed.

**where(expression, outcols=None, limit=None, skip=0, out_flavor=<function namedtuple>, user_dict={}, vm=None)**
Iterate over rows where expression is true.

**Parameters**

`expression` : string or carray

A boolean Numexpr expression or a boolean carray.

`outcols` : list of strings or string

The list of column names that you want to get back in results. Alternatively, it can be specified as a string such as ‘f0 f1’ or ‘f0, f1’. If None, all the columns are returned. If the special name ‘nrow__’ is present, the number of row will be included in output.

`limit` : int

A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.

`skip` : int

An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.

`out_flavor` : namedtuple, tuple or ndarray

Whether the returned rows are namedtuples or tuples. Default are named tuples.

`user_dict` : dict

An user-provided dictionary where the variables in expression can be found by name.

`vm` : string

The virtual machine to be used in computations. It can be ‘numexpr’, ‘python’ or ‘dask’. The default is to use ‘numexpr’ if it is installed.

**Returns**

`out` : iterable

See also:

`iter`

**whereblocks(expression, blen=None, outcols=None, limit=None, skip=0, user_dict={}, vm=None)**
Iterate over the rows that fullfill the expression condition on this ctable, in blocks of size blen.

**Parameters**

`expression` : string or carray

A boolean Numexpr expression or a boolean carray.

`blen` : int

The length of the block that is returned. The default is the chunklen, or for a ctable, the minimum of the different column chunklens.

`outcols` : list of strings or string
The list of column names that you want to get back in results. Alternatively, it can be specified as a string such as ‘f0 f1’ or ‘f0, f1’. If None, all the columns are returned. If the special name ‘nrow__’ is present, the number of row will be included in output.

**limit**: int

A maximum number of elements to return. The default is return everything.

**skip**: int

An initial number of elements to skip. The default is 0.

**user_dict**: dict

An user-provided dictionary where the variables in expression can be found by name.

**vm**: string

The virtual machine to be used in computations. It can be ‘numexpr’, ‘python’ or ‘dask’. The default is to use ‘numexpr’ if it is installed.

**Returns** **out**: iterable

The iterable returns numpy objects of blen length.

**See also**:

See `py:func:<bcolz.toplevel.iterblocks>` in toplevel functions.
5.1 Changing explicitly the length of chunks

You may want to use explicitly the `chunklen` parameter to fine-tune your compression levels:

```python
>>> a = np.arange(1e7)
>>> bcolz.carray(a)
carray((10000000,), float64) nbytes: 76.29 MB; cbytes: 2.57 MB; ratio: 29.72
  cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1)
[0.0, 1.0, 2.0, ..., 9999997.0, 9999998.0, 9999999.0]
>>> bcolz.carray(a).chunklen
16384  # 128 KB = 16384 * 8 is the default chunk size for this carray
>>> bcolz.carray(a, chunklen=512)
carray((10000000,), float64) nbytes: 76.29 MB; cbytes: 10.20 MB; ratio: 7.48
  cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1)
[0.0, 1.0, 2.0, ..., 9999997.0, 9999998.0, 9999999.0]
>>> bcolz.carray(a, chunklen=8*1024)
carray((10000000,), float64) nbytes: 76.29 MB; cbytes: 1.50 MB; ratio: 50.88
  cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1)
[0.0, 1.0, 2.0, ..., 9999997.0, 9999998.0, 9999999.0]
```

You see, the length of the chunk affects very much compression levels and the performance of I/O to carrays too. In general, however, it is safer (and quicker!) to use the `expectedlen` parameter (see next section).

5.2 Informing about the length of your carrays

If you are going to add a lot of rows to your carrays, be sure to use the `expectedlen` parameter in creating time to inform the constructor about the expected length of your final carray; this allows bcolz to fine-tune the length of its chunks more easily. For example:

```python
>>> a = np.arange(1e7)
>>> bcolz.carray(a, expectedlen=10).chunklen
512
>>> bcolz.carray(a, expectedlen=10*1000).chunklen
4096
>>> bcolz.carray(a, expectedlen=10*1000*1000).chunklen
16384
>>> bcolz.carray(a, expectedlen=10*1000*1000*1000).chunklen
131072
```
5.3 Lossy compression via the quantize filter

Using the \texttt{quantize} filter for allowing lossy compression on floating point data. Data is quantized using \texttt{np.around(scale*data)/scale}, where scale is $2^\text{bits}$, and \texttt{bits} is determined from the quantize value. For example, if quantize=1, bits will be 4. 0 means that the quantization is disabled.

Here it is an example of what you can get from the quantize filter:

```python
In [9]: a = np.cumsum(np.random.random_sample(1000*1000)-0.5)
In [10]: bcolz.carray(a, cparams=bcolz.cparams(quantize=0))  # no quantize
Out[10]:
carray((1000000,), float64)
nbytes: 7.63 MB; cbytes: 6.05 MB; ratio: 1.26
cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1, cname='blosclz', quantize=0)
[ -2.80946077e-01 -7.63925274e-01 -5.65575047e-01 ..., 3.59036158e+02
3.58546624e+02 3.58258860e+02]
In [11]: bcolz.carray(a, cparams=bcolz.cparams(quantize=1))
Out[11]:
carray((1000000,), float64)
nbytes: 7.63 MB; cbytes: 1.41 MB; ratio: 5.40
cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1, cname='blosclz', quantize=1)
[ -2.50000000e-01 -7.50000000e-01 -5.62500000e-01 ..., 3.59036158e+02
3.58546624e+02 3.58258860e+02]
In [12]: bcolz.carray(a, cparams=bcolz.cparams(quantize=2))
Out[12]:
carray((1000000,), float64)
nbytes: 7.63 MB; cbytes: 2.20 MB; ratio: 3.47
cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1, cname='blosclz', quantize=2)
[ -2.81250000e-01 -7.65625000e-01 -5.62500000e-01 ..., 3.59036158e+02
3.58546624e+02 3.58258860e+02]
In [13]: bcolz.carray(a, cparams=bcolz.cparams(quantize=3))
Out[13]:
carray((1000000,), float64)
nbytes: 7.63 MB; cbytes: 2.30 MB; ratio: 3.31
cparams := cparams(clevel=5, shuffle=1, cname='blosclz', quantize=3)
[ -2.81250000e-01 -7.63671875e-01 -5.65429688e-01 ..., 3.59036158e+02
3.58546624e+02 3.58258860e+02]
```

As you can see, the compression ratio can improve pretty significantly when using the quantize filter. It is important to note that by using quantize you are loosing precision on your floating point data.

Also note how the first elements in the quantized arrays have less significant digits, but not the last ones. This is a side effect due to how bcolz stores the trailing data that do not fit in a whole chunk. But in general you should expect a loss in precision.
Defaults for bcolz operation

You can tailor the behaviour of bcolz by changing the values of certain some special top level variables whose defaults are listed here. You can change these values in two ways:

- In your program: the changes will be temporary. For example:

```python
bcolz.defaults.out_flavor = "numpy"
```

- Manually modify the `defaults.py` module of the bcolz package: the changes will be persistent. For example, replace:

```python
defaults.out_flavor = "bcolz"
```

by:

```python
defaults.out_flavor = "numpy"
```

Generally, only the former is needed.

### 6.1 List of default values

**out_flavor**

The flavor for the output object in `eval()` and others that call this indirectly. It can be ‘bcolz’ or ‘numpy’. Default is ‘bcolz’.

**vm**

The virtual machine to be used in computations (via `eval()`). It can be ‘python’, ‘numexpr’ or ‘dask’. Default is ‘numexpr’, if installed. If not, ‘dask’ is used, if installed. And if neither of these are installed, then the ‘python’ interpreter is used (via numpy).

**cparams**

The defaults for parameters used in compression (dict). The default is {‘clevel’: 5, ‘shuffle’: True, ‘cname’: ‘lz4’, quantize: 0}.

See Also: cparams.setdefaults()
Indices and tables

- genindex
- modindex
- search
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