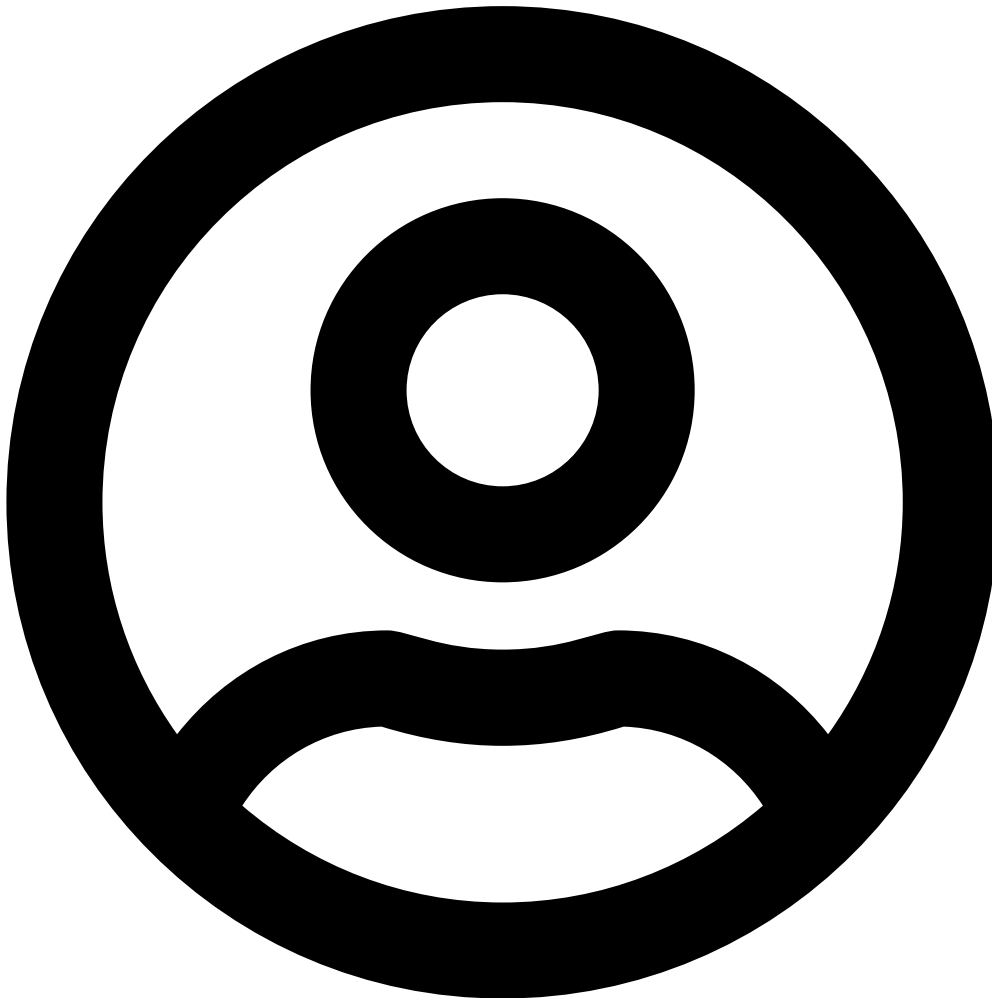




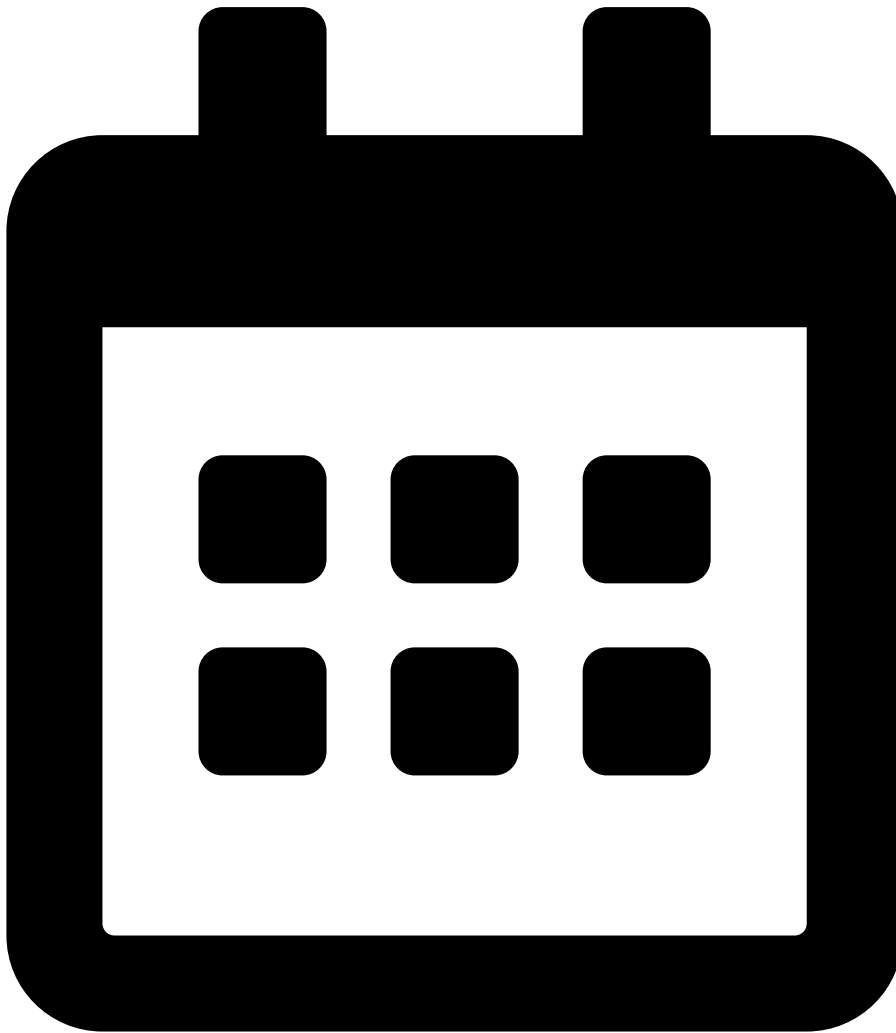
One Year at Somali Public Agenda: A Journey of Growth and Purpose



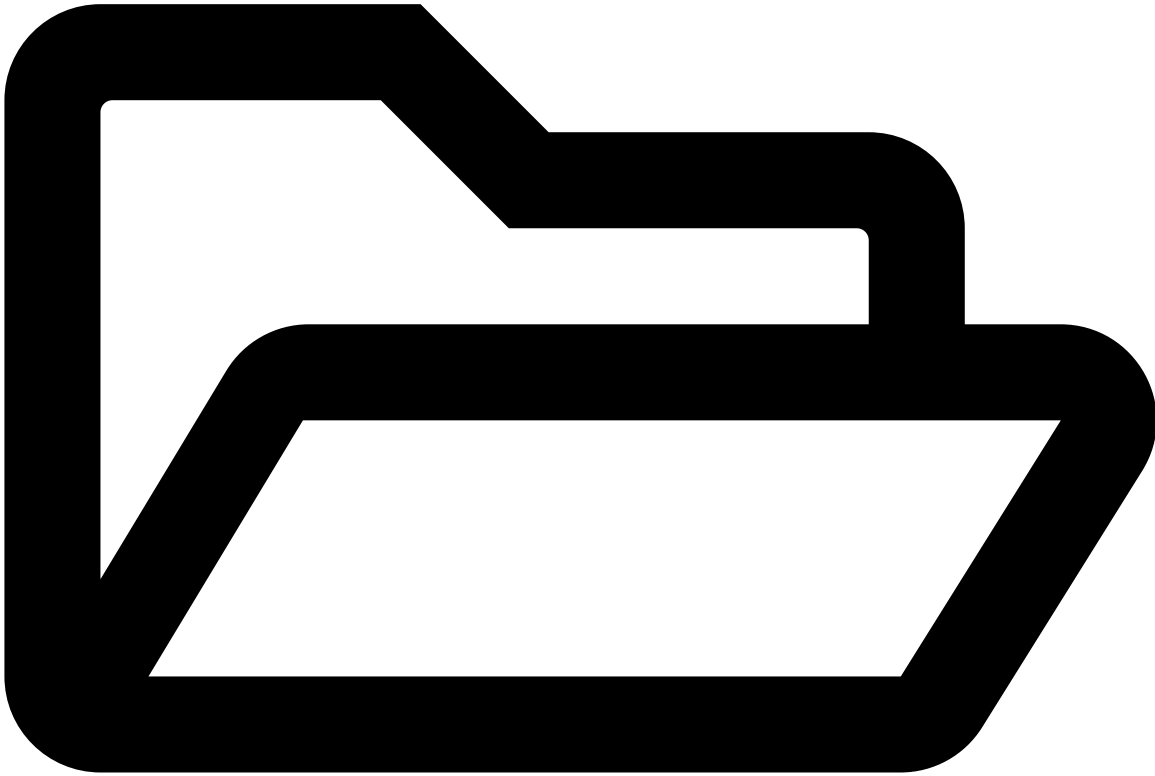
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Somali Public Agenda



July 16, 2025



Reflections From Our Team

One Year at Somali Public Agenda: A Journey of Growth and Purpose



Exactly a year ago today, in July 2024, I joined Somali Public Agenda (SPA). As the saying goes, “Time flies!.” It seems like yesterday to me, but my memories here feel like ten years of work experience. The journey was unforgettable, but it has just started.

Somali Public Agenda is a non-profit think-and-action tank based in Mogadishu, Somalia. The institution conducts research, forums and discussions, capacity-building training, and produces podcasts in both video and audio formats. So, why did I join SPA, one of the most influential think tanks in Somalia?

There were two main reasons. The first reason takes me back seven years. In the middle of 2017, after conducting some surveys, I published my first book, [Jamashada Haweenka](#). The book was based on dating techniques, especially how Somali women would like to be treated before marriage. I gathered all the information I could get and explained it step by step.

Without professional experience in conducting surveys, I finally dared to publish it. Two hundred copies were sold in the first year. At that moment, it was a big achievement for me. In the book’s introduction, I pledged to write the second volume of *Jamashada Haweenka* in the future, which would focus on how Somali women would like to be treated after marriage. After years and years, I told myself that it was important to learn research methods and tools. I believed that it would help me write the next volume professionally.

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Then, an opportunity to join SPA came up. This was one of the reasons for accepting the offer.

The second reason was to expand and develop my professional career. This institution is more than an institution; SPA is where talent is nurtured, challenged, and released to fly. It prepares staff for a bright future, equipped with experience and personal development.

In July 2024, I was appointed Communications and Learning Coordinator at Somali Public Agenda. These two departments are responsible for some of the core SPA work. The SPA Learning Lab, formerly known as the SPA Center for Learning and Development, offers capacity-building training and workshops. We conduct blog writing and research methods trainings—two flagship SPA trainings aimed at advancing the culture of writing—on a bi-annual and annual basis. From the beginning of every training to the end, I have had an amazing experience of how these trainings are conducted with the help of Farhan Isak, the SPA Deputy Director and former SPA Learning Lab Director.

I experienced personal growth through working with professional instructors such as Dr. Mohamud Garre, Abdishakur Awil, Shakir M. Abdullahi, Farhan Isak, and Mahad Wasuge. These professionals teach young trainees research and writing skills they never learned at university using the simplest methods. But for me, they've taught life lessons. They interact with the students in a friendly way, and their explanations sometimes include practical examples and moral stories.

My second role at SPA is in the communications department, which allowed me to support SPA with my experience in the media. From 2009 to 2023, I worked with five radio stations and three TV stations. Our tasks during my first year at Somali Public Agenda were great. Thanks to my good friends, Jacfar Mohamed, now the head of Benadir Radio, and Abbas Mohamed, with whom I had previously worked. I also want to thank Ruweido Shidane for her wonderful contributions to this and all SPA departments. Without her, we would not have been able to accomplish some important tasks.

Most institutions in Somalia lack a good working environment. You can't feel comfortable in a noisy environment, which often disrupts energy and suffocates creativity. But here is a quiet place that gives you focus. The most important thing is the interaction of the SPA team; we discuss different topics during lunch. It means a lot when you see the directors and the staff having lunch together, discussing ideas and joking.

Although I have previously worked in private and public institutions, adapting to a new job takes time. Fortunately, I found that SPA colleagues work together as a team. This culture

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made my early journey easy to adapt to. Every office at SPA holds special memories in my heart. Although it was just a year, it was equivalent to a decade.

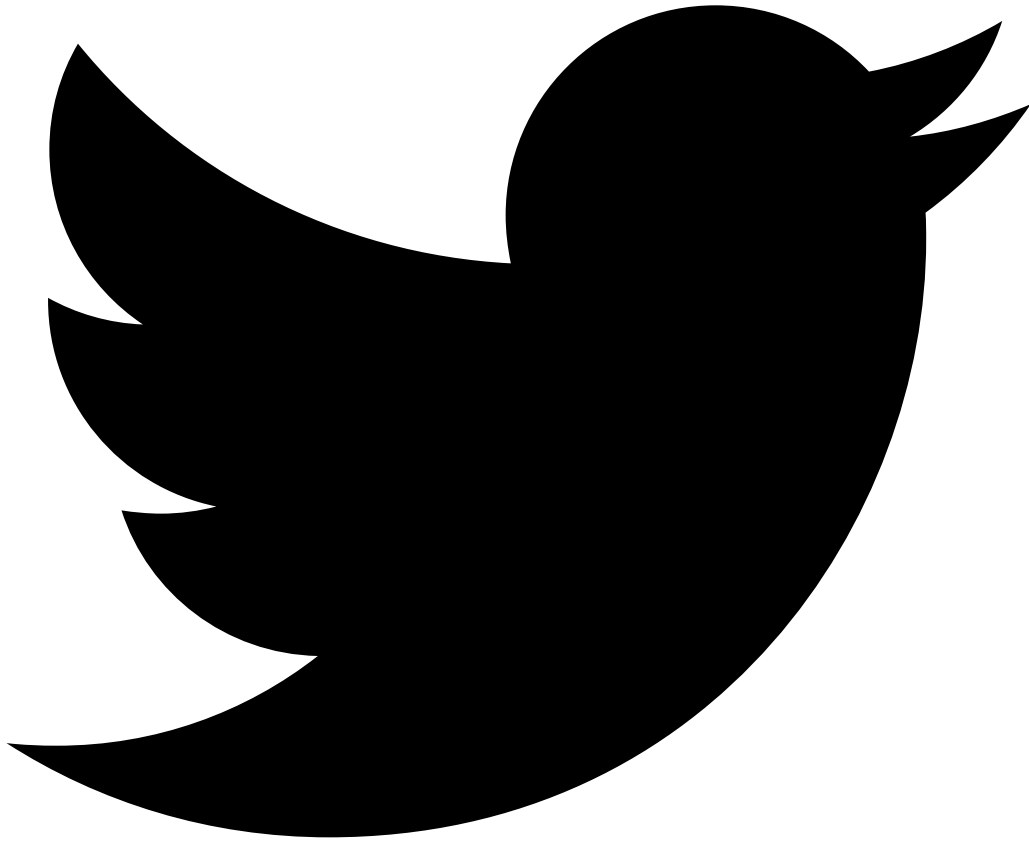


After one year of hard work, I was appointed as the SPA Learning Lab Director. This is my second time as a director—first at Asal TV and now at SPA Learning Lab. It is another exciting role and responsibility for my career. During my role as Learning Coordinator, I connected with professional instructors and trainees at the SPA Learning Lab. It was a great experience, and I hope to connect with more youth and instructors every year.

Lastly, I have never written a reflection blog in my entire career, and this one is my first—hopefully the first of many. Writing about your work is a way to review your progress, and it also creates a lasting memory.

Ibrahim Osman Afrah

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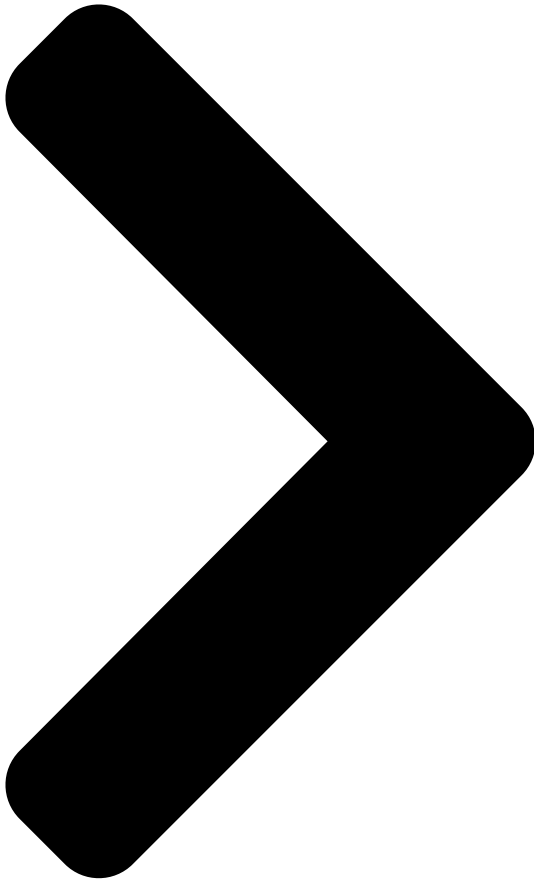
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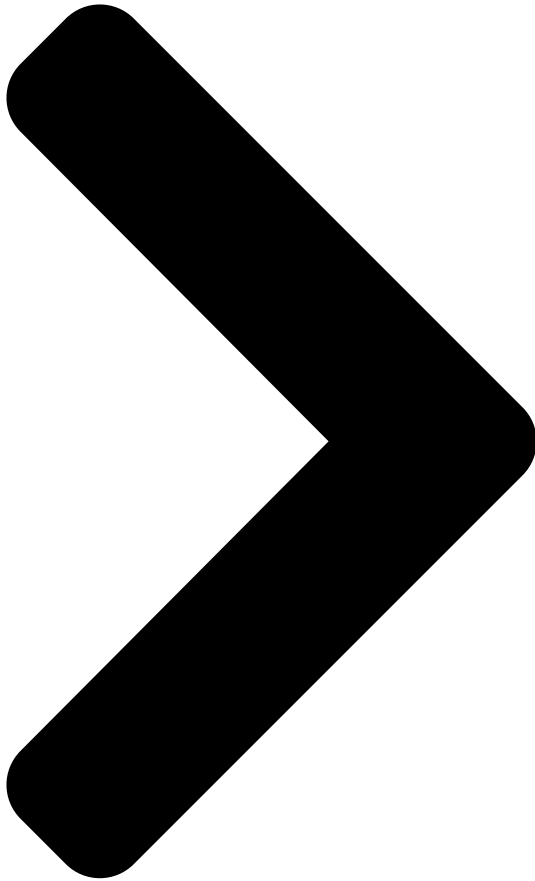
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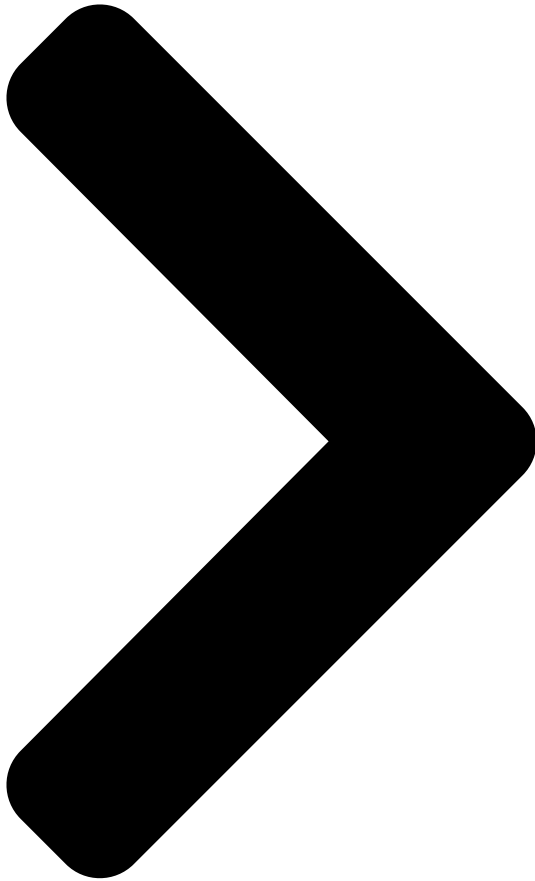
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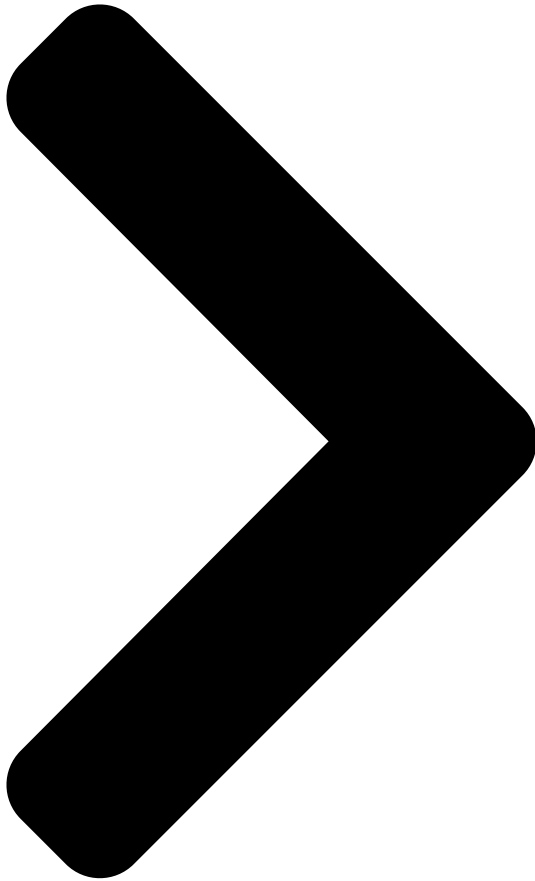
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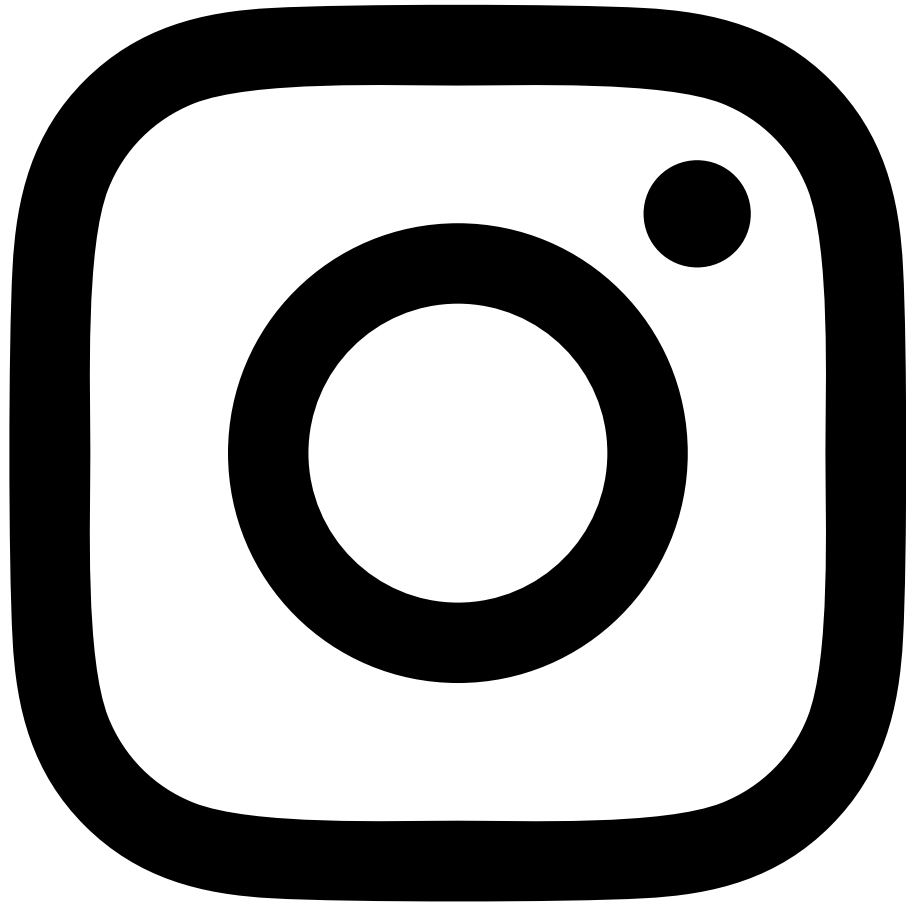
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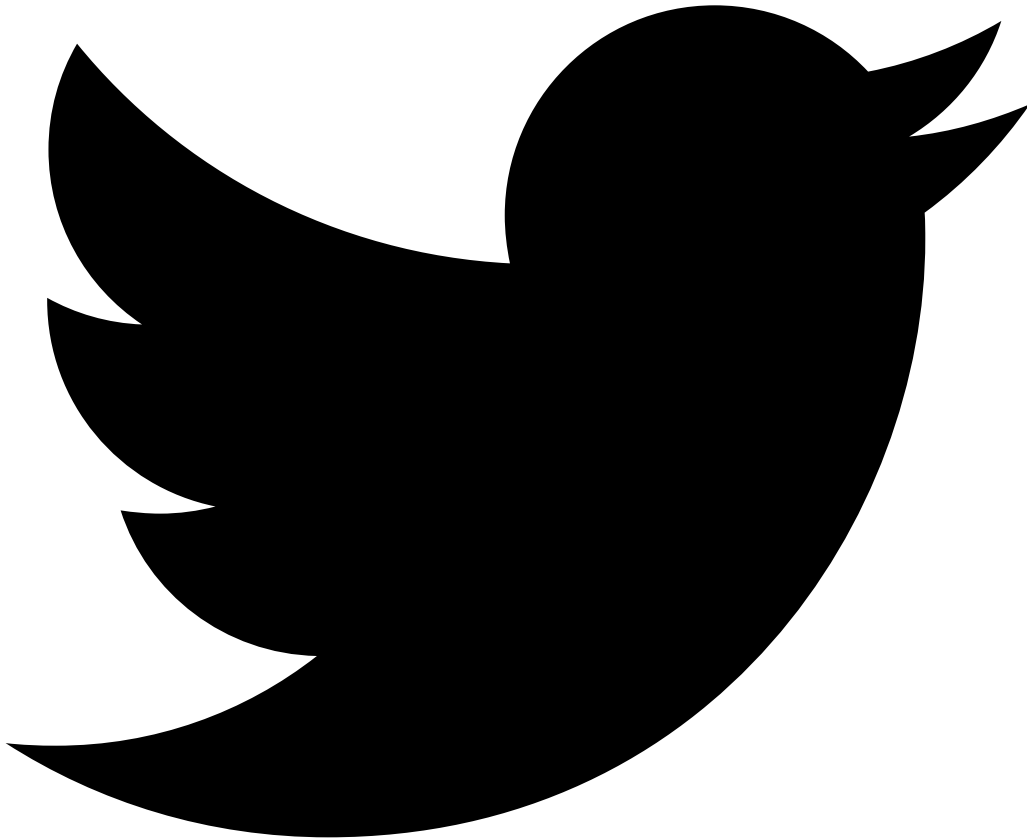
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