



...wrapping people in warm blankets since 1992

*** Helping families in need**

In 1991, a knitting yarn retailer in Wausau, Wisconsin, Evie Rosen, decided there had to be a way she could help the homeless. Her simple concept of asking customers, friends and the community to knit and crochet 7" X 9" sections that would be joined into afghans grew into a nationwide program that has produced more than 80,000 afghans. These afghans have been donated to victims of natural disasters, battered women's shelters, the homeless, and others less fortunate than ourselves.

In 1994, the Craft Yarn Council of America, a non-profit association of American yarn spinners, distributors and publishers, took the program under its wing, broadening awareness by initiating links with national organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Cooperative Extension Service. In 2002, Warm Up America! was incorporated as a 501C3 tax exempt, charitable organization.

How it works...

Warm Up America! (WUA!) works so well because it allows people to make a difference, whether they complete one small section or an entire afghan. Volunteers donate their time to crochet and knit a 7" X 9" rectangle (or more). Sections are either joined by individuals or groups in a community and donated locally or sent to Foundation headquarters for joining and distribution.

The beauty of so many different participants is that a WUA! afghan resembles a patchwork quilt of many colors and textures, just as the participants-and recipients-represent the varied faces of America.

Collection of Completed Sections and Assembly of Afghan Blankets

Volunteers are encouraged to work with friends, co-workers and family members to complete an afghan and donate it in their community. However, when that is not possible, the Foundation's office serves as a collection point both for completed individual sections and for completed afghans. Generally, 49 individual sections are needed to complete one adult-size afghan. To facilitate the assembly process, a staff member "bags" 49 sections with yarn for sewing them into a completed afghan. These bags are distributed to local volunteers who assemble the afghans and return them to the Foundation's offices.

Distribution of Afghan Blankets

The Foundation maintains a list of charitable agencies, which provide services to homeless, battered women's shelters and people in need. These agencies request afghans, which are delivered to them on a first-come, first-served basis. As afghan blankets are received by the Foundation, they are shipped to the agency on the top of the list. Contact is maintained with the agencies on the Foundation's database before and after shipping the afghans. Staff members pack and arrange for shipping of the afghans to the agencies.

Who receives the afghans?

WUA! afghans are distributed to individuals and families in need through community service organizations as well as through chapters of national organizations such as the American Red Cross. Sponsors of WUA! in communities around the country are encouraged to donate completed afghans within their own community in the true spirit of "neighbor helping neighbor." The Foundation also assembles and stockpiles afghans at its North Carolina office. A list of afghan requests is maintained and as afghans become available they are shipped to the next name on the list. Agencies to which the Foundation has donated afghans include:

Battered women's shelters
Nursing homes
Teenage pregnancy homes
Hospitals and clinics
Daycare centers

Churches
AIDS facilities
Homeless shelters
Hospice care facilities



You can make a difference to someone in need by crocheting or knitting one or more 7" by 9" sections for Warm Up America!, by joining sections into completed afghans, donating yarns and needles/hooks to groups in your community, or contributing money to expand WUA! to groups nationwide, including everyone from children to older adults.

Community, Church and Older Adult Organizations & Businesses

What's a healthy activity for a lunch hour that also builds team spirit? WUA!, of course! Increasingly, employers of large and small corporations are encouraging employees to get involved with charitable activities, meeting at lunchtime or after work. The Foundation is working to develop a WUA! lunchtime program to present to corporations nationwide as a health benefit for employees. The crafts are portable, easy to pick up for small amounts of time, and proven stress relievers. Weight Watchers Magazine even recommended knitting and crochet as a healthy alternative to eating!

Whether you are an Extension Agent, 4-H leader, Family, Career and Community Leader of America, a Family & Consumer Science or art teacher, Scout or Camp Fire leader, Warm Up America! is a cost-effective and fun program that can satisfy any teaching mandate or situation.

Ask for volunteers. This can be as informal as talking over the back fence to a neighbor or if you are in an office setting, posting a notice on a bulletin board. If there is an ongoing organization or church group to which you belong, ask that one meeting be designated to Warm Up America! and suggest that members bring needles and any left-over yarn they might have around the house.

Senior Centers

Senior Centers also are an excellent source of teachers as well as volunteers to crochet or knit blocks. In addition, it is helpful to establish a contact with older adult groups because students may need help joining afghan sections together. This is a wonderful way to develop intergenerational relationships!

Retail Stores

Yarn stores and crafts departments are another good resource for teachers. Many are willing to donate discontinued yarn if asked.

CIP Teachers

The Craft Yarn Council of America sponsors an educational program called the Certified Instructors Program, which has trained thousands of knitters and crocheters to become teachers. A graduate of this program might be in your community and available to assist you as well. Contact Craft Yarn Council (E-mail: cycainfo@aol.com or 800-662-9999), if you are looking for a teacher.

Supplies

Evie Rosen, the creator of Warm Up America!, saw the program as a way for everyone to get involved in helping the homeless. Costs for this project can be kept to a minimum. It's a terrific way to use up odd skeins and balls of yarn. Ask friends or parents for extra yarn;

you'll be surprised what turns up. Post notices at churches and synagogues, libraries and recreation centers. Craft yarn, needles and hooks are also readily available at a reasonable cost in all major chain stores, craft chains and needlework stores nationwide.

Acrylic yarns, which are machine washable and dryable, are the ideal yarns for making Warm Up America! afghans because of their easy-care properties. However, a variety of natural fibers and blends also work well. With just one 3.5-oz. skein, students can make several 7" by 9" sections.

Youth

Kids are discovering knitting and crocheting and the Warm Up America! Program is one of the reasons. Young people across the country are teaming up with their peers to Warm Up America!, helping others, and in the process are discovering these crafts are fun and relaxing. Plus, the added benefits of Warm Up America! are:

- * Community service
- * Self esteem
- * Problem solving
- * Math and motor-skill development
- * Intergenerational activity
- * Fun group project
- * Learning an enjoyable skill that will last a lifetime

* For after-school programs, Warm Up America! provides students with all of the above benefits. In addition, knitting and crocheting are clinically proven stress relievers, strengthen motor coordination and are a welcome break from straight academics.

* Students can spearhead a community-wide Warm Up America! drive, collecting donations of yarn and coordinating volunteers to knit and crochet. To join all of the sections into warm afghans, stage an assembly party in the school gym.

Ten Teaching Tips from the Pros

1. **KEEP IT FUN.** Your young students must enjoy what they are doing. Let them see that you are having fun.
2. Have a model to display of a project so your students can see what they will be making.
3. Select simple projects that will interest your young students;
 - projects that can be completed quickly,
 - use brightly colored yarns, and
 - have extra supplies on hand.

4. Keep the lessons short to accommodate the short attention span of children.
5. Don't expect perfection. They are trying. That is what is important. Praise them! Find something to compliment;
 - "I like that yarn color!"
 - "You have been a good listener today!"
 - "Your stitches are looking so good!"
 - "I like the way you are holding your crochet hook!"

REMEMBER KEEP IT FUN!!!!

6. Showing is better than telling. Demonstrate the skill that you want them to do.
7. Put something in their hands as soon as possible. Many teachers have found it easier to begin by giving students a hook or needles with a few rows of crochet or knitting completed. Students learn the basics more easily and then go back and learn foundation chain or cast on, which can be tricky for beginners because of their tension.
8. Children need to have a sense of accomplishment. Provide them with frequent progress reports.
9. When a child is having difficulty with a skill, show them an alternative, if possible.
10. When teaching teenagers:
 - do not "dumb down" your instructions, but recognize their interests are different,
 - treat them as adults not like "large children,"
 - choose projects that match their interests,
 - consider current fashion trends.

Additional tips include:

*We encourage you to photocopy the how to crochet and knit illustrations from the Craft Yarn Council of America Web site and distribute them. Attractive how-to booklets are available in craft and fabric stores and chain stores as well.

*Use light-colored or brightly colored, smooth, standard-weight yarn (worsted-weight) because it is easier for a beginner to see how a stitch is formed.

* To crochet or knit "perfect" Warm Up America! sections, cut a 7" by 9" cardboard template. Use the template as a guide; it's easier to handle than a measuring tape and great for kids.

* If you are able to have a series of classes, it's nice to let the children keep their first project. For example, Norma Ellman, a teacher in New York, has kids make a long strip

of knitting for their first project (approximately 10 stitches wide). She then shows them how to weave the edges together to make a skinny purse, headband, or how to stuff it to create a long skinny snake or other fun animals, etc.

*If you prefer to begin your knitting instruction with the basics, Evie Rosen, one of the top knitting teachers in the country, suggests following the knitting method of casting on. Following this method, you create your foundation row by knitting each stitch on to the needle. Children immediately begin to learn the technique for making a garter stitch.



Yarn

One of the pleasures of crocheting and knitting is working with beautiful yarn colors and textures. All yarn patterns require specific types of yarn, some mention a specific brand of yarn. There are five basic types of yarn:

sport/baby

worsted weight

chunky

bulky

baby/fingering

Each type of yarn has a different thickness or "weight," with fingering being the finest. The term "ply," frequently seen on labels, refers to the number of strands that were twisted together to form the yarn. Yarn content or "fiber content" tells what the yarn is made of: synthetic or natural fibers or combinations of the two. Synthetic yarns, such as acrylics, are easier to wash and can be worn by people sensitive to wool.

Yarn Labels

Yarns have labels that provide all the information that you will need to know, such as the type of yarn it is, the amount and/or yardage in the ball or skein, gauge, fiber content and care instructions. Many labels also include free patterns, which are printed on the inside.

Crochet Hooks

As its name suggests, the "crochet hook" has a notch at one end for catching loops of yarn and drawing them through stitches. Aluminum, plastic and wood crochet hooks are the most commonly used, and often use the letter system for size marking. They range from B (2.25 mm) to S (19 mm), the largest, and come in 6" lengths.

Knitting Needles

Straight knitting needles, which come in aluminum, plastic or wood, are the most commonly used. They come in varying sizes, from 0 (2 mm), the smallest, to size 15 (10 mm) and larger; they are sold in pairs, and come in 10" or 14" lengths. There is a point at one end of the needle, and a knob at the other, which prevents stitches from slipping off.

For large projects like afghans, or sweaters that can be worked in a tube without a seam, "circular knitting needles" can be used. These are long flexible needles with points at both ends. For smaller projects that do not have seams (socks and mittens) "double-pointed knitting needles" are used. These come in sets of four and as their name suggests, there is a point on each end.

Beginner Crochet Block

What you need:

- Worsted-weight yarn, any color or colors
- Size G crochet hook;
- Yarn needle with big eye
- Small scissors

How to begin

Step 1: Hold crochet hook in right hand and make a slip knot on hook.



Step 2: Bring yarn over hook from back to front and grab it with hook.



Step 3: Draw hooked yarn through slip knot and onto hook. This makes one



chain stitch.

Repeat Steps 2 and 3 in sequence 28 more times. You should have 29 chain stitches and one loop will remain on hook.

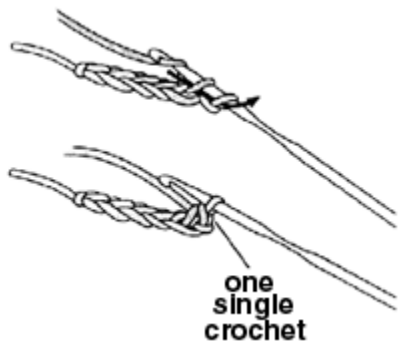


Step 4: Skip the first chain stitch.

Step 5: Insert hook into center of next chain stitch. Draw yarn through the chain stitch and up onto the hook. There are now 2 loops on hook.

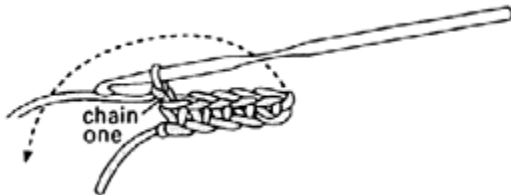


Step 6: Bring yarn over hook from back to front, and draw it through both loops on hook. One loop remains on the hook, and you have just made one single crochet stitch.

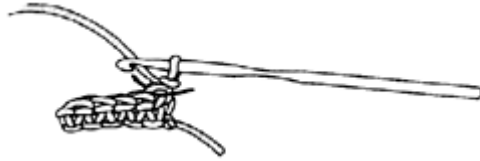


Repeat Steps 5 and 6 in each of the remaining 27 chains--be sure to work in the very last chain. You have now completed one row of single crochet. Measure your work; it should be about 7" wide. If it is too wide, try again with fewer beginning chains. If it is too narrow, try again with more beginning chains.

Step 7: At the end of the row, make one chain stitch, then turn the work counter-clockwise, leaving the hook in the chain.



Now you can begin another row, working into the stitches of the previous



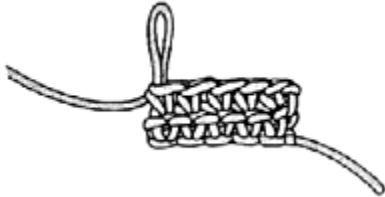
row.

Step 8: Make one single crochet stitch in first stitch and in each remaining stitch of the previous row. Be sure to work into the last stitch. Chain 1, turn.



Repeat Step 8 until the block measures 9" long.

Finishing: Cut the yarn from the skein, leaving a 6" end. Draw the hook straight up, bringing the yarn through the remaining loop on the hook.



Thread yarn into yarn needle and weave back and forth through stitches to secure.

Beginner Knit Block

What you need:

- Worsted-weight yarn, any color or colors
- Size 8, 14"-long knitting needles
- Yarn needle with big eye
- Small scissors

Casting On

Step 1: Make a slip knot on the shaft of one needle. This counts as your first stitch.

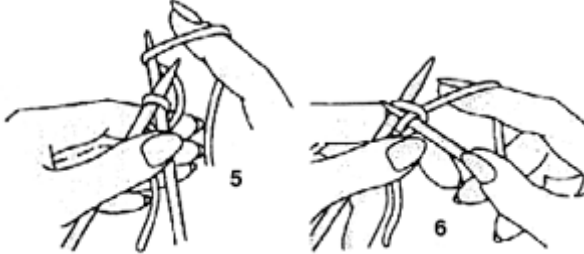


Step 2: Place this needle

in left hand. Hold other needle in right hand to control the yarn. Insert point of right needle, from front to back, into the slip knot and under the left needle.



Step 3: Hold left needle still in left hand, and move left fingers over to brace right needle.



Step 4: With right index finger, pick up the yarn from the ball.



Step 5: Release right hand's grip on the needle, and use index finger to bring yarn under and over the point of right needle.

Step 6: Return right fingers to right needle, and draw yarn through stitch with point of right needle.

Step 7: Slide point of left needle into back of new stitch, then remove right needle.

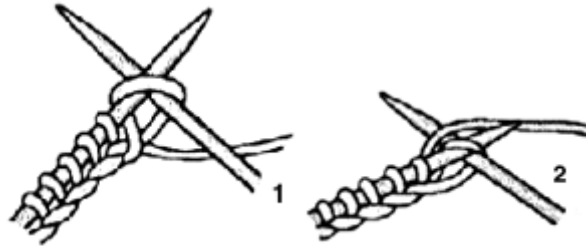
Step 8: Pull ball yarn gently to make the stitch fit snugly on needle. You have now made one stitch (called casting on), and there are two stitches on left needle (slip knot is counted as a stitch).

Step 9: Insert point of right needle, from front to back, into stitch just made, and under left needle.

Repeat Steps 5 through 9, 26 more times, until you have 28 stitches on the left needle. This completes the cast-on row, which is the way all knitting is begun.

First Knit Row

Step 1: Hold needle with stitches in left hand; insert point of right needle in first stitch, from front to back, just as in casting on.



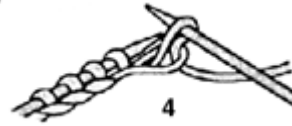
Step 2: With right index finger, bring yarn from ball under and over point of right needle.



Step 3: Draw yarn through stitch with right needle point.



Step 4: This step now differs from casting on: Slip loop on left needle off, so new stitch is entirely on right needle.



This completes one knit stitch. Repeat Steps 1 through 4 in each stitch still on left needle. When the last stitch is worked, one row of knitting is completed.

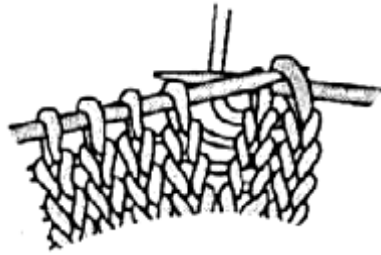
Now measure your work. It should be about 7" wide. If it is too wide, start over and cast on fewer stitches; if it is too narrow, start over and cast on more stitches.

When the width is correct, begin next knit row as follows: turn right needle and hold it now in left hand. With free needle in right hand, work Steps 1 through 4 of First Knit Row in each stitch. Again take needle with stitches in left hand, and work another row of knit stitches. Work rows of knit stitches until block measures 9" long.

To complete the block, now bind off all the stitches.

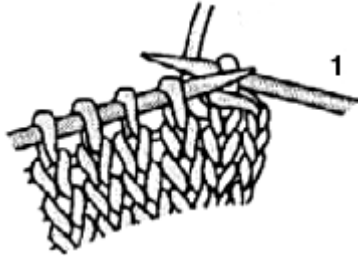
Binding Off

Step 1: Knit the first 2 stitches; insert left needle into stitch you knitted first, and pull it over the second stitch and completely off the needle.

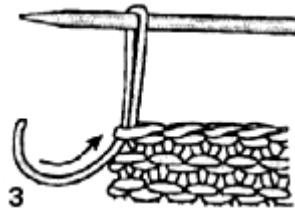


One stitch is now bound off.

Step 2: Knit one more stitch, insert left needle into first stitch on right needle, and pull it over the new stitch and completely off the needle. Another stitch is bound off; don't work too tightly.



Repeat Step 2 until one stitch remains; now cut yarn from skein, leaving a 6" end. With needle draw end up and through last stitch to secure it. Thread yarn end into yarn needle and weave end into several stitches to secure it.



Tips On Joining Warm Up America! Afghans

Afghan assembly tips

Lay out 49 squares on a table or the floor to determine the final arrangement by color and/or texture, then join them using one of the following methods.

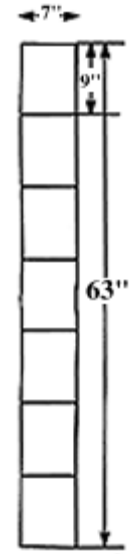


Diagram A

We'd like to point out that the 7" by 9" size was selected because it was a convenient size to join together to form a full-size afghan. We also needed uniformity of size to be able to join sections knitted and crocheted by different people across the country. That is why it is so helpful that the sections you send in be as close to 7" x 9" as possible.

However, if you have an interest in making an entire afghan, you can knit or crochet your afghan to any size or pattern you wish. There is a need, for instance, for baby afghans (approximately 32" by 38") and lap throws, which are much smaller than the standard Warm Up America! afghan. If you want to make several sections, but not an entire afghan, consider knitting or crocheting a 7" by 63" strip (Diagram A). It makes assembling much easier and less time consuming.

Also remember that while sections are supposed to be 7" by 9", everyone's tension is a little different and several brands of yarns have been used, so the size of the blocks will vary. Therefore, it may be necessary to "stretch" some blocks and "ease in" others when assembling.

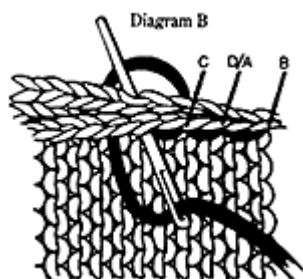
Finally, it is helpful to label wool yarns, sections and afghans because greater care is needed in cleaning wool. It is also better not to mix wool sections with the synthetic yarn sections for the same reason.

Finishing Touches - Joining Squares Assembling A Standard Warm Up America! Afghan

To complete a standard 49" by 63" Warm Up America! afghan requires 49 sections. We've found that forming vertical strips (Diagram A) is a good way to begin. After you have joined sections and completed seven vertical strips, join the vertical strips together.

To join individual sections or strips, we recommend that you:

- Backstitch (Diagram B) or weave (Diagram C) seams together with a yarn needle or



- Crochet the seams together or
- Zig-zag the seams together on your sewing machine using a large-size stitch and a neutral or transparent thread.

FINISHING HINTS

When joining sections, do not pull the working yarn too tightly. Seams should have some elasticity. And keep your stitch line close to the edge so that you do not create a thick, bulky seam.

Depending on what squares wind up on the out-side edge of the afghan, some edges, such as those worked in stockinette stitch, have a tendency to curl. It might be helpful to work two rows of single crochet around the joined squares to give an attractive finished appearance to your afghan.



The Foundation's primary purpose and activity is to promote, organize, implement and assist in the creation of afghan blankets by volunteers and to distribute these blankets through social and governmental organizations and agencies serving needy and homeless people.

To this end, the Foundation:

- * Promotes, trains and encourages individual volunteers and groups to adopt the WUA! program as a local activity;
- * Supports and assists these local volunteers by providing information and instructional materials through its web site and mailings;
- * Acts as a collection point and facility for completed sections to have them assembled into completed afghan blankets, and
- * Collects completed afghan blankets for distribution to various charitable organizations and agencies that hand out the afghans to homeless and needy persons.

Sending Sections to Foundation Offices

Because the Foundation has been inundated with individual knitted and crocheted sections, we encourage you to work locally, joining your sections to others to create warm afghans. Distributing these beautiful patchwork blankets in your own community is a very rewarding experience. However, if that is not possible, you may choose to send your individual sections(s) or afghans to the Warm Up America! Foundation and we'll

join them.

If you send a section(s) to us, please be sure to include your name and address on the inside of the package to let us know who has contributed her/his talents to making these sections. If you complete an entire afghan, tag it with a little note about the knitters and crocheters who made it. Ship sections and/or afghans to:

Warm Up America! Foundation, 2500 Lowell Rd., Ranlo, NC 28054

Keep in touch

Drop us a note and send photos. We'd like to include them at our web site. We like to know who you are, if you worked with others, the number of sections (or afghans) completed and where the afghans were distributed. Make your local newspaper, television, and radio stations aware of what you and your friends are doing. The media is especially interested in reporting on worthwhile community programs and the exposure will result in more volunteers.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding this program (wua@aol.com). And, if you send us a photo, we'll try to get it on the "Meet the People Who Warm Up America!" page.

Local Charities That Accept Afghans

Project Linus Provides handmade blankets to seriously ill and traumatized children. Project named after the Peanuts character Linus who carried a security blanket around. Contact in SLC is John Barfuss at 801-548-1479.

The Road Home This homeless shelter has a family section, a teenage mother section and a mens facility located at 210 S. Rio Grande Street, SLC. They provide a new blankets on all the beds to welcome individuals to the shelter. They need 1000 blankets a year but could use 2-3000. Contact is Celeste Eggart at 801-328-8996.

Burn Trauma ICU The Burn Trauma Unit located at the University of Utah hospital gives blankets and quilts to their burn patients , not just for comfort but to help retain body temperature for optimal healing. Contact Brad Wiggins, nursing educator for the unit, at 581-2008.

The Christmas Box House This temporary shelter for abused and neglected children 0-18yrs old provides each child with a blanket which they are able to take with them when they leave. Paul Evans, the author, started this shelter and funds it, but could always use help. Contact is Shauna Johnson at 284-3300.

Primary Childrens Hospital Provides blankets on the beds for patients being admitted. When a child is seriously ill or dies, the staff will pull a new, special blanket to give to the child. Contact is Marie Hendricksen at 588-3675.

Newborn Intensive Care Unit The NICU at the University Hospital provides blankets for all premature babies, (the advantage here is they do not have to be very big!) The staff will keep special handmade ones to wrap seriously ill or dying babies in and give the blanket to the parents as a keepsake. Contact number is 581-2747.

American Red Cross The national Warm Up America Foundation works closely with the American Red Cross to stockpile blankets for distribution in natural disaster situations. The local contact number is 323-7000.

The Salvation Army They service the homeless and low income populations and provide blankets to those in need. Contact number is 322-1253.

211 This is a national referral center for community service organizations and assistance programs. They are able to give you additional charities such as Teen Shelters, Battered Womens Shelter, Utah AIDS Foundation, Hospice Programs, ect. We do have a local call center in SLC that can be reached by dialing **211** or 978-3333. Other counties serviced with a 211 call center are Summit, Tuilla, Weber, Davis, and Utah. (www.informationandreferral.org) or (www.volunteerinsaltlake.org)

Web Sites

"C" is for Crochet Pattern Library

<http://www.seafore.com/index.html> or <http://seafore.8m.com>

Craft Yarn Council of America

<http://craftyarncouncil.com/>

Crochet.About.com

<http://crochet.about.com/>

Crochet Partners

<http://www.crochetpartners.org/>

The National Needlework Association

<http://www.tnna.org/>