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# **Tongcheng Travel (780 HK)**

# **Recovery in sight**

Despite epidemic resurgence, we expect Tongcheng to deliver faster-than-peers growth on stronger monetization, resilient hotel and high exposure in low-tier cities. 3Q22E momentum was slightly disrupted (forecasting rev/ adj. net profit +5%/-37% YoY, at low end of guidance), but almost priced in. Hotel would keep resilient (+25% YoY), while transportation suffered more (-12% YoY), in our view. Looking ahead, we suggest investors to look beyond short-term softness in 2H22E (stricter control in Oct holiday), and expect TC to recover from Nov and then to benefit from potential travel limit relaxation (on 12-month horizon). We reiterated our confidence on its share gain in the long run, backed by Tencent traffic and enriched offerings. To factor in Covid impact, we trimmed TC's FY22-24E earnings forecast by 0-14%, with new TP at HK\$18.2. We view recent sector selloff as a good entry point, given its attractive valuation, solid fundamentals and low regulation risk.

- 3Q22 momentum disrupted by epidemic resurgence, but well priced in. We expect 3Q22E recovery with slower pace (rev +5% YoY, at low end), mainly on epidemic resurgence. Accommodation biz would keep resilient, and we forecast rev +25% YoY in 3Q22E (at high end of guidance), with take rate >9%. 2Q22 would be the ADR trough, and we expect ADR up to RMB200 in 3Q22E. Room nights was estimated to achieve single-digit growth YoY in 3Q22E, thanks to lower exposure in high-tier cities. Transportation would suffer more from lockdown disruptions, forecast rev to drop 12% YoY in 3Q22E (vs. previous guidance of -5%~0%). Given strong PMS and ads, other rev performed well, we modelled +42% YoY in 3Q22E (vs. prior +22% YoY), in our estimates. Margin would be slightly diluted, as ads budget invested before epidemic resurgence, but with lower ROI. We expect 3Q22E adj.net profit at RMB223mn (below previous guidance), with NPM at 11%.
- Recovery in sight, with fundamentals intact. Stricter control dampened travel momentum in Oct Golden Week, suggesting a soft quarter in 4Q22E (forecasting rev -10% YoY). However, we expect Nov to see moderate recovery after 20<sup>th</sup> CPC. On a 12-month horizon, we believe TC would be one of the beneficiaries from stabilization of COVID cases and potential lockdown relaxation. By leveraging its powerful traffic and low-tier market edge, TC would continuously gain share ahead, with resilient hotel and stronger monetization.
- Maintain BUY. We trimmed TC's FY22-24E earnings forecast by 0-14% to reflect epidemic resurgence impact. Maintain BUY with new TP at HK\$18.2 (implying 25x FY23E P/E).

## **Earnings Summary**

(YE 31 Dec)	FY21A	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E
Revenue (RMB mn)	7,538	6,726	8,417	9,694
YoY growth (%)	27.1	(10.8)	25.1	15.2
Adj. net income (RMB mn)	1,296	811	1,444	1,737
Adj. EPS (RMB)	0.59	0.37	0.65	0.78
YoY growth (%)	35.9	(37.5)	78.1	20.3
Consensus EPS (RMB)	NA	0.28	0.59	0.77
P/E (x)	19.7	31.4	17.6	14.7
P/B (x)	3.4	3.8	3.0	2.6
Yield (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
ROE (%)	5.0	1.4	4.8	5.8
Net gearing (%)	Net cash	Net cash	Net cash	Net cash

Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates

## **BUY (Maintain)**

Target Price HK\$18.2 (Previous TP HK\$20.0)
Up/Downside +45.6%
Current Price HK\$12.5

#### **China Internet Sector**

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 Stock Data

 Mkt Cap (HK\$ mn)
 32,296

 Avg 3 mths t/o (HK\$ mn)
 64.80

 52w High/Low (HK\$)
 19.00/ 9.00

 Total Issued Shares (mn)
 2,227

 Source: Bloomberg

 Shareholding Structure

 Tencent
 21.38%

 Trip.com
 20.86%

 T Rowe Price
 5.95%

 Source: Bloomberg

 Share Performance

 Absolute
 Relative

 1-mth
 -15.2%
 -4.3%

 3-mth
 -8.0%
 12.4%

 6-mth
 -2.8%
 25.9%

 Source: Bloomberg

## 12-mth Price Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Auditor: PwC

**Related Reports** 

Recovery on good track - 23 Aug 2022



# **Expecting recovery from Nov, after epidemic resurgence**

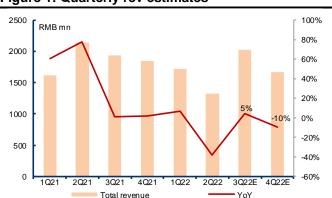
Slower recovery on epidemic resurgence, but almost priced in.

Given rising cases and stricter travel limits, 3Q22E recovery pace slowed down, with rev +5% YoY, at low end of previous guidance. Margin would be slightly diluted by S&M efforts (ads budget invested before epidemic resurgence, but with lower ROI). We forecast NPM at 11% in 3Q22E (adj. NP at RMB223mn, vs. previous guidance of RMB300mn-400mn). However, 2H22E softness and Covid policy uncertainty were almost priced in recent pullback.

**Resilient hotel to continue.** Backed by rising short-haul travel and deeper penetration of low-tier cities, we forecast accommodation rev +25% YoY in 3Q22E (vs. previous guidance of +20%-25%), with take rate >9%. 2Q22 would be the ADR trough, and we expect ADR up to RMB200 in 3Q22E. Room nights was estimated to achieve single-digit growth YoY in 3Q22E (above peers), thanks to lower exposure in high-tier cities.

**Transportation would suffer more.** We forecast transportation rev to drop 12% YoY in 3Q22E (vs. previous guidance of -5%~0%), dragged by lockdown disruptions. Air ticketing volume would suffer more than train ticketing. Given strong PMS and ads, other rev performed well, we modelled +42% YoY in 3Q22E (vs. prior +22% YoY), in our estimates.

Figure 1: Quarterly rev estimates



Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 2: Hotel biz at resilient growth



Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 3: 3Q22E financial review

RMB mn	1Q20	2Q20	3Q20	4Q20	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22E	QoQ	YoY	Consensus	Diff %
Revenue	1,005	1,200	1,915	1,813	1,614	2,138	1,939	1,846	1,718	1,319	2,031	54%	5%	2,049	-1%
Operating Profit	(53)	49	293	92	215	335	280	65	138	(128)	119	-193%	-57%	204	-41%
Net profit	(56)	55	248	80	170	291	226	27	101	(135)	58	-143%	-74%	143	-59%
Adj. net profit	78	196	373	307	296	418	351	250	245	112	223	99%	-37%	262	-15%
Margin (%)															
Gross Margin	65.0%	72.3%	72.0%	73.7%	74.7%	76.4%	73.9%	20.5%	72.5%	70.9%	74.0%			71.5%	
Operating Margin	-5.2%	4.1%	15.3%	5.1%	13.3%	15.7%	14.4%	3.5%	8.0%	-9.7%	5.9%			7.0%	
Adj. net margin	7.8%	16.3%	19.5%	16.9%	18.4%	19.5%	18.1%	13.6%	14.3%	8.5%	11.0%			12.8%	
Growth (%)															
Revenue (YoY)	-43.6%	-24.6%	-7.2%	-7.3%	60.6%	78.1%	1.3%	1.8%	6.5%	-38.3%	4.7%			5.6%	
Revenue (QoQ)	-48.6%	19.4%	59.5%	-5.3%	-11.0%	32.5%	-9.3%	-4.8%	-7.0%	-23.2%	54.0%			55.4%	
Operating Profit	-128.1%	-77.5%	-15.6%	-13.4%	-509.0%	580.7%	-4.4%	-29.6%	-36.0%	-138.4%	-57.4%			-27.3%	
Adj. net profit	-82.6%	-43.2%	-11.1%	-7.2%	279.5%	113.1%	-5.6%	-18.5%	-17.3%	-73.2%	-36.7%			-25.4%	

Source: Company data, Bloomberg



Figure 4: Revenue breakdown

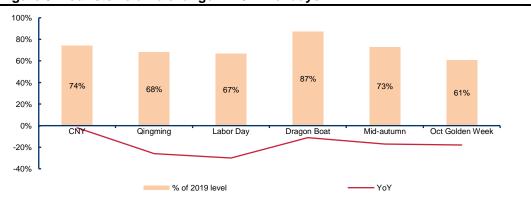
											_		
RMB mn	1Q20	2Q20	3Q20	4Q20	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22E	QoQ	YoY
Total revenue	1,005	1,200	1,915	1,813	1,614	2,138	1,939	1,846	1,718	1,319	2,031	54%	5%
Accommodation reservation	229	384	685	647	459	743	645	562	543	544	806	48%	25%
Transportation ticketing	687	726	1,055	1,003	1,023	1,235	1,125	1,075	1,017	620	986	59%	-12%
Others	89	90	175	162	132	160	170	209	158	156	239	54%	41%

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

## Recovery to resume from Nov

We suggest investors to look beyond Oct softness (holiday season, but with stricter control), and expect OTA to resume recovery from Nov, after 20<sup>th</sup> CPC. Domestic tourists/ travel rev declined 18%/26% YoY in 2022 National holiday, at 61%/44% of 2019's level. To factor in Oct softness, we forecast rev -10% YoY in 4Q22E, with adj. NPM at 13.2% (adj. NP at RMB221mn).

Figure 5: Tourists volume change in 2022 holidays



Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, CMBIGM



## Confident on long-term share gain

## Beneficiary from potential travel limit relaxation ahead

After three-year epidemic disruptions, we expect TC to benefit from cases stabilization and potential travel limit relaxation on a 12-month horizon. Although we don't expect lockdowns relaxation immediately, we think further policy would balance "development" demand. We expect FY23E topline & bottom line to resume positive growth, if epidemic not worsening. Domestic momentum might see stepping-up rebound from 2Q23E, given low base. Outbound travel relaxation ahead would further boost its momentum in FY23E.

## Long-term fundamentals intact, with continous share gain

TC was well positioned to deliver above-industry recovery in the long run, by leveraging its advantage in low-tier cities, resilient hotel momentum and ROI-driven traffic acquisition.

Better recovery with high exposure in promising low-tier cities. We believe low-tier cities would deliver stronger recovery than high-tier market, given less travel limit. OTA App installation ratio in tier-3 and below cities is only 18%, suggesting ample room for OTA penetrating. Compared to Ctrip and Meituan, Tongcheng has higher exposure in low-tier market (56% users in tier-3 and below cities), backed by Tencent powerful traffic and enriched offerings.

Figure 6: Users distribution in TOP3 OTA platforms

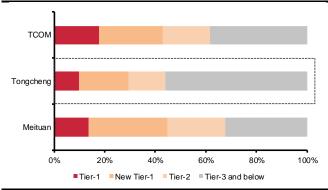
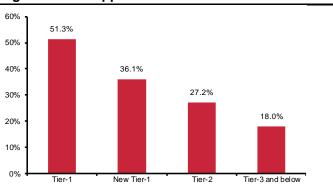


Figure 7: OTA App installation ratio



Source: Analysys, CMBIGM

Source: Fastdata, CMBIS estimates

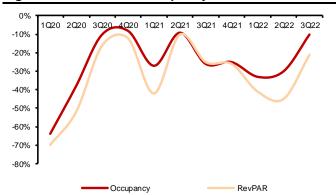
**Solid hotel biz with defensive growth.** Hotel biz would be resilient than transportation segment, for rising demand from short-haul travel to offset strict control impact. China hotel occupancy has climb up to near 2019 level, and RevPAR rebounded from 2Q22 trough. TC delivered stronger recovery in hotel biz (rev +25% YoY in 3Q22E), and we expect this segment to grow at 20% CAGR in FY22-24E.

Offline S&M and bus ticketing biz to achieve cost-effective user expansion. To deepen lower-tier cities penetration, TC kept S&M efforts on effective channel, coupled with Tencent traffic. We expect its offline S&M to continuously approach new users in lower-tier market, with low TAC. Bus ticketing was not only a user-acquisition way, but it also contributed rising revenue. We estimate bus ticketing biz to maintain triple-digit growth YoY in 3Q22E, ~10% as of total rev.



Figure 8: China hotel occupancy & RevPAR vs. 2019





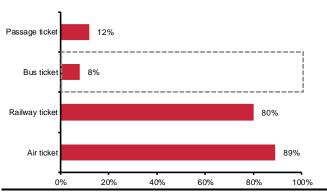


Figure 9: Online penetration of transportation ticket

Source: Analysys, CMBIGM



## A good entry point to accumulate

To factor in short-term epidemic impact, we trimmed TC's FY22E earnings forecast by 14% (suggesting topline/ bottom line -11%/-37% YoY in FY22E), while keeping FY23-24E earnings unchanged temporally. Our TP was adjusted to HK\$18.2 from HK\$20, implying 25x FY23E P/E. We view recent sector selloff as a good entry point, given its attractive valuation, solid fundamentals and low regulation risk.

Figure 10: CMBIGM estimates vs consensus

		CMBIGM		C	Consensus		Diff (%)			
RMB mn, Dec-YE	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	
Revenue	6,726	8,417	9,694	6,956	9,257	11,293	-3.3%	-9.1%	-14.2%	
Gross Profit	4,964	6,288	7,243	5,082	6,879	8,457	-2.3%	-8.6%	-14.3%	
Operating Profit	258	921	1,213	331	1,236	1,739	-22.2%	-25.5%	-30.2%	
Adj. net profit	811	1,444	1,737	859	1,565	2,027	-5.6%	-7.7%	-14.3%	
Adj. EPS (RMB)	0.37	0.65	0.78	0.28	0.59	0.77	30.9%	11.1%	2.2%	
Gross Margin	73.8%	74.7%	74.7%	73.1%	74.3%	74.9%	+0.7ppts	+0.4ppts	-0.2ppts	
Operating Margin	3.8%	10.9%	12.5%	4.8%	13.4%	15.4%	-0.9ppts	-2.4ppts	-2.9ppts	
Adj. net margin	12.1%	17.2%	17.9%	12.3%	16.9%	17.9%	-0.3ppts	+0.2ppts	-0.0ppts	

Source: CMBIGM estimates, Bloomberg

Figure 11: Earnings revision

		New			Old		Diff (%)			
RMB mn, Dec-YE	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	
Revenue	6,726	8,417	9,694	7,039	8,417	9694	-4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	
Gross Profit	4,964	6,288	7,243	5,202	6,288	7243	-4.6%	0.0%	0.0%	
Operating Profit	258	921	1,213	419	921	1213	-38.5%	0.0%	0.0%	
Adj. net profit	811	1,444	1,737	943	1,444	1737	-14.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
EPS (RMB)	0.37	0.65	0.78	0.43	0.65	0.78	-14.9%	0.3%	0.5%	
Gross Margin	73.8%	74.7%	74.7%	73.9%	74.7%	74.7%	-0.1ppts	+0.0ppts	+0.0ppts	
Operating Margin	3.8%	10.9%	12.5%	6.0%	10.9%	12.5%	-2.2ppts	+0.0ppts	+0.0ppts	
Net Margin	12.1%	17.2%	17.9%	13.4%	17.2%	17.9%	-1.3ppts	-0.0ppts	+0.0ppts	

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 12: Valuation comps

Company	Ticker	Mkt cap C	urrency	Price C	MBI	CMBI		PE			PS			EV/EBIT	
		(USD mn)		F	Raiting	TP	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E
Tongcheng Trave	780 HK	3,552	HKD	13	BUY	18	31.4	17.6	14.7	3.8	3.0	2.6	67.4	16.9	11.9
China Internet Gi	ants (OTA-re	elated)													
Alibaba	BABA US	167,192	USD	63	BUY	151	8.9	7.5	6.7	1.3	1.2	1.1	7.7	6.5	5.6
Meituan	3690 HK	97,368	HKD	124	BUY	278	NA	52.8	24.2	3.2	2.4	2.0	NA	NA	28.5
Average							8.9	30.1	15.5	2.3	1.8	1.5	7.7	6.5	17.0
OTA															
Ctrip	TCOM US	13,066	USD	20	BUY	30	83.4	17.6	11.8	4.7	3.1	2.4	NA	22.7	13.2
Tongcheng Travel	780 HK	3,552	HKD	13	BUY	18	31.4	17.6	14.7	3.8	3.0	2.6	67.4	16.9	11.9
Booking	BKNG US	71,811	USD	1,809	NA	NA	19.5	15.6	13.4	4.3	3.8	3.4	13.7	11.7	9.9
Expedia	EXPE US	15,104	USD	96	NA	NA	13.5	10.0	8.1	1.3	1.2	1.1	12.0	9.3	7.9
Webjet	WEB AU	1,235	AUD	5	NA	NA	38.7	19.4	15.1	6.1	4.7	4.2	26.9	14.2	11.7
TripAdvisor	TRIP US	3,355	USD	24	NA	NA	28.0	15.4	11.5	2.3	2.0	1.8	20.9	12.4	9.0
Average							35.8	15.9	12.4	3.7	3.0	2.6	28.2	14.6	10.6
Hotel															
H World Group	HTHT US	8,309	USD	26	NA	NA	NA	25.8	18.0	4.2	3.2	2.8	NA	32.3	22.9
Jinjiang Int Hotels	600754 CH	7,045	CNY	54	NA	NA	NA	29.4	20.7	4.2	3.1	2.7	NA	25.1	18.0
BTG Hotels Group	600258 CH	3,308	CNY	22	NA	NA	NA	26.1	18.3	0.6	2.8	2.4	NA	23.1	17.1
GreenTree	GHG US	250	USD	2	NA	NA	10.3	5.3	3.9	1.4	1.1	1.0	8.8	3.9	3.1
Average							10.3	21.7	15.2	2.6	2.6	2.2	8.8	21.1	15.3
Average							29.2	20.2	16.6	3.2	2.5	2.2	22.5	16.2	14.5

Source: Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates



# **Financial Summary**

FY20A	FY21A	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)	F I ZUA	FIZIA	F 1 44E	FY23E	<b>FIZ4E</b>
5,933	7,538	6,726	8,417	9,694	Profit before tax	398	875	270	934	1,226
1 9/15	2.400	2 440	2.852	3 472	D&A	370	384	380	304	400
•	*	•	•	·						
			-		σ .	` ,		` ,		434 315
	_					` ,				2,584
(1,001)	(1,000)	(1,702)	(2,120)	(2,401)	net dasii ii diii operating	100	1,504	1,040	2,004	2,004
(1,246)	(1,344)	(1,265)	(1,532)	(1,764)	Capex & investments	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
(2,131)	(3,036)	(2,933)	(3,291)	(3,684)	ST investments payments	(247)	(124)	0	0	C
	(572)	(510)	(544)	(582)	ST investments proceeds	0	0	0	0	C
			_	_		, ,		_		(222)
		_	_	_	Net cash from investing	(773)	(194)	(200)	(200)	(200)
		_	_	_	Equity raised	0	0	0	0	C
002	000		02.	.,		_				0
23	12	13	13	13	· ·	, ,	_	_	_	(13)
		0	0	0		177	` '	` ,	` ,	(13)
398	875	270	934	1,226	<b>G</b>		` ,	` ,	` ,	` ,
					Net change in cash	(461)	1,698	832	2,141	2,371
(72)	(161)	(49)	(159)	(208)	· ·	(6)	0	0	0	0
2	10	0	0	0	3 3	2,271	1,804	3,503	4,334	6,475
328	723	222	775	1 018	,	1 804	3 503	4 334	6 475	8,846
	_			,	-	-	•		-	8,846
	-,		.,	.,		1,001	-,	,,,,,,	-,	-,
					-					
					Key ratios					
FY20A	FY21A	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	YE 31 Dec	FY20A	FY21A	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E
10,284	9,918	9,456	9,004	8,545	Sales mix (%)					
1,226	1,313	1,395	1,472	1,543		32.8	32.0	36.3	33.9	35.8
380	380	380	380	380		58.5	50 1	51 1	53.0	50.5
										13.7
7,481	6,961	6,421	5,881	5,341	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
216	216	216	216	216						
210	210	210	210	210						
6	57	53	64	74	P&L ratios (%)					
					Gross Margin	71.4	74.9	73.8	74.7	74.7
8,830	10,154	10,819	13,342	16,017	PreTax Margin	6.7	11.6	4.0	11.1	12.7
2,020	1,792	1,626	2,008	2,312	Tax Rate	17.0	17.0	18.0	17.0	17.0
4,913	4,767			4,767	Adj. net margin	16.1	17.2	12.1	17.2	17.9
_	_	_	_	_						
1,804	3,503	4,334	6,475	8,846		2.1	2.2	2.7	2.7	2.0
4 234	4 393	4 055	4 950	5 699	( )					2.8 54.8
-	-		•	,	,					511.0
2,001	2,646	2,467			Inventory turnover days	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2 120	1 621	1 446			Net debt / equity ratio (%)	Net	Net	Net	Net	Net
2,120	1,021	1,440	1,010	2,004	rvet debt / equity ratio (70)	cash	cash	cash	cash	cash
64	77	93	111	134						
					Returns (%)					
863	863	863	863	863		2.4	5.0	1.4	4.8	5.8
		113	113	113	ROA	1.7	3.6	1.1	3.6	4.3
										_
529	529	529	329	528						
221	221	221	221	221	Per share data					
					Adi. EPS (RMB)	04	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.8
14,017	15,063	15,605	16,780	18,248	DPS (RMB)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	(7)	(7)	(7)	(7)	BVPS (RMB)	6.3	6.8	7.0	7.6	8.2
_	` '		16,787	. ,	` '	_	_	_	_	
	1,945 3,471 516 (1,697) (1,246) (2,131) (522) 65 99 21 382 23 (7) 398 (72) 2 328 954  FY20A 10,284 1,226 389 0 7,481 216 6 8,830 2,020 4,913 92 1,804 4,234 4,9 2,001 2,120 64 863 113 529 221 14,017	1,945 2,409 3,471 4,458 516 671 (1,697) (1,890) (1,246) (1,344) (2,131) (3,036) (522) (572) 65 124 99 98 21 69 382 895 23 12 (7) (33) 398 875 (72) (161) 2 10 328 723 954 1,296  FY20A FY21A 10,284 9,918 1,226 1,313 389 389 0 16 7,481 6,961 216 216 6 57  8,830 10,154 2,020 1,792 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503 4,234 4,393 4,913 4,767 92 92 1,804 3,503	1,945	1,945	1,945         2,409         2,440         2,852         3,472           3,471         4,458         3,434         4,457         4,893           516         671         852         1,108         1,330           (1,697)         (1,890)         (1,762)         (2,128)         (2,451)           (1,246)         (1,344)         (1,265)         (1,532)         (1,764)           (2,131)         (3,036)         (2,933)         (3,291)         (3,684)           (522)         (572)         (510)         (544)         (582)           65         124         0         0         0           99         98         0         0         0           21         69         0         0         0           382         895         258         921         1,213           23         12         13         13         13           (7)         (33)         0         0         0           3388         875         270         934         1,226           (72)         (161)         (49)         (159)         (208)           2         10         0         0         0     <	1,945	1,945	1,945	1,945	1,945



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