PREFORMA

FUTURE MEMORY STANDARDS

PREFORMA (PREservation FORMAts for culture information e-archives) is a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) project co-funded by the European Commission, under its FP7-ICT Programme.

The main objectives of the project are:

► the development and deployment of an open source, software licensed, reference implementation for file format standards aimed at any memory institution (or other organisation with a preservation task) wishing to check conformance with a specific standard;

► the establishment of a long-term sustainable ecosystem around the developed tools with a variety of stakeholder groups, including developers, digital preservationists and standardisation bodies.

The reference implementation will consist of a set of modular tools and procedures for gaining full control over the technical properties of digital content intended for long-term preservation.

DIGITAL CONTENT

Digital content is stored in files with specific file containers and encodings for capturing text, images, sound and moving image, depending on the systems and use cases the files originate from.These files can be produced by external organizations and transferred to memory institutions, or in-house by memory institutions as digital reproductions of collection items.
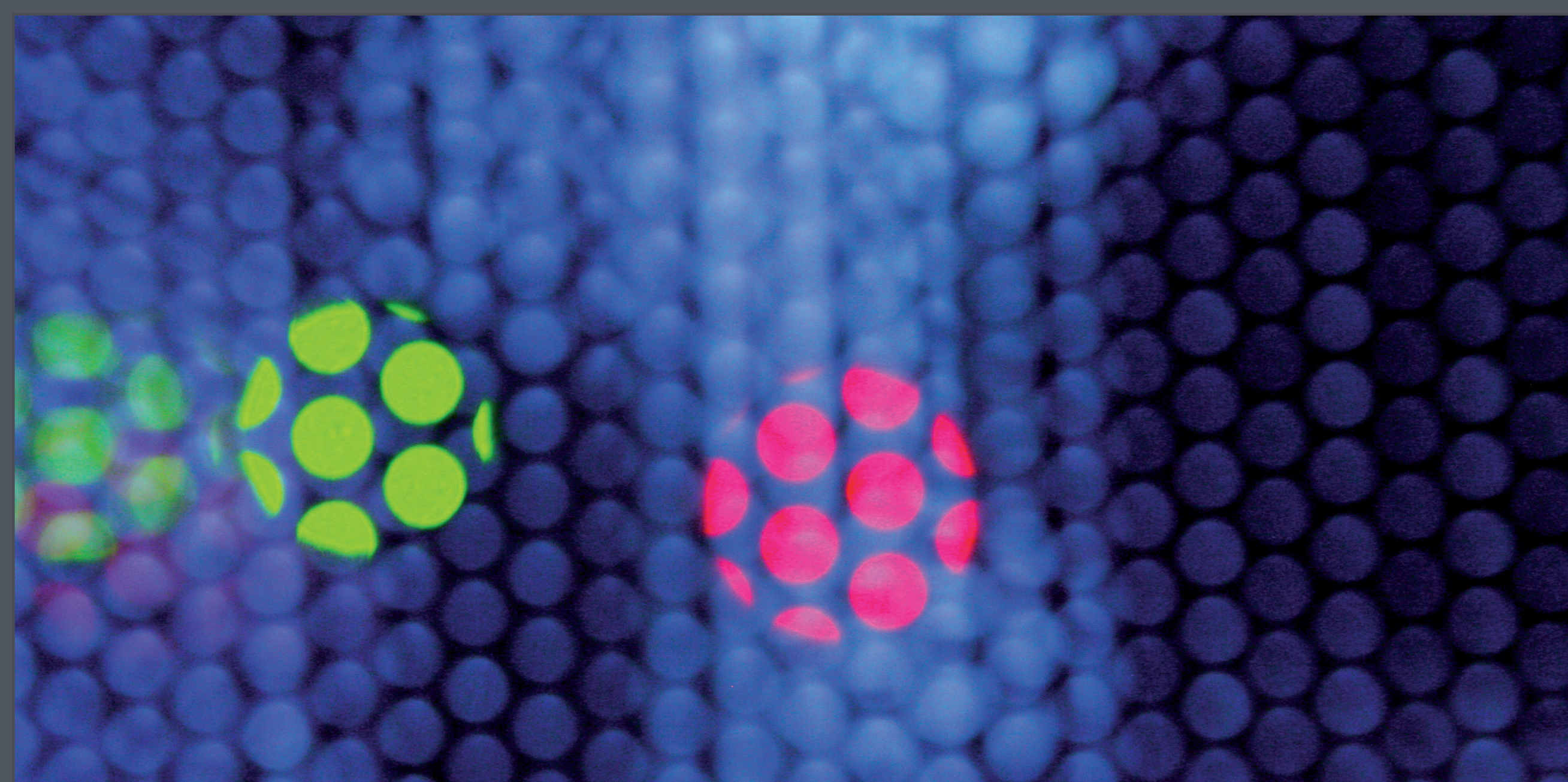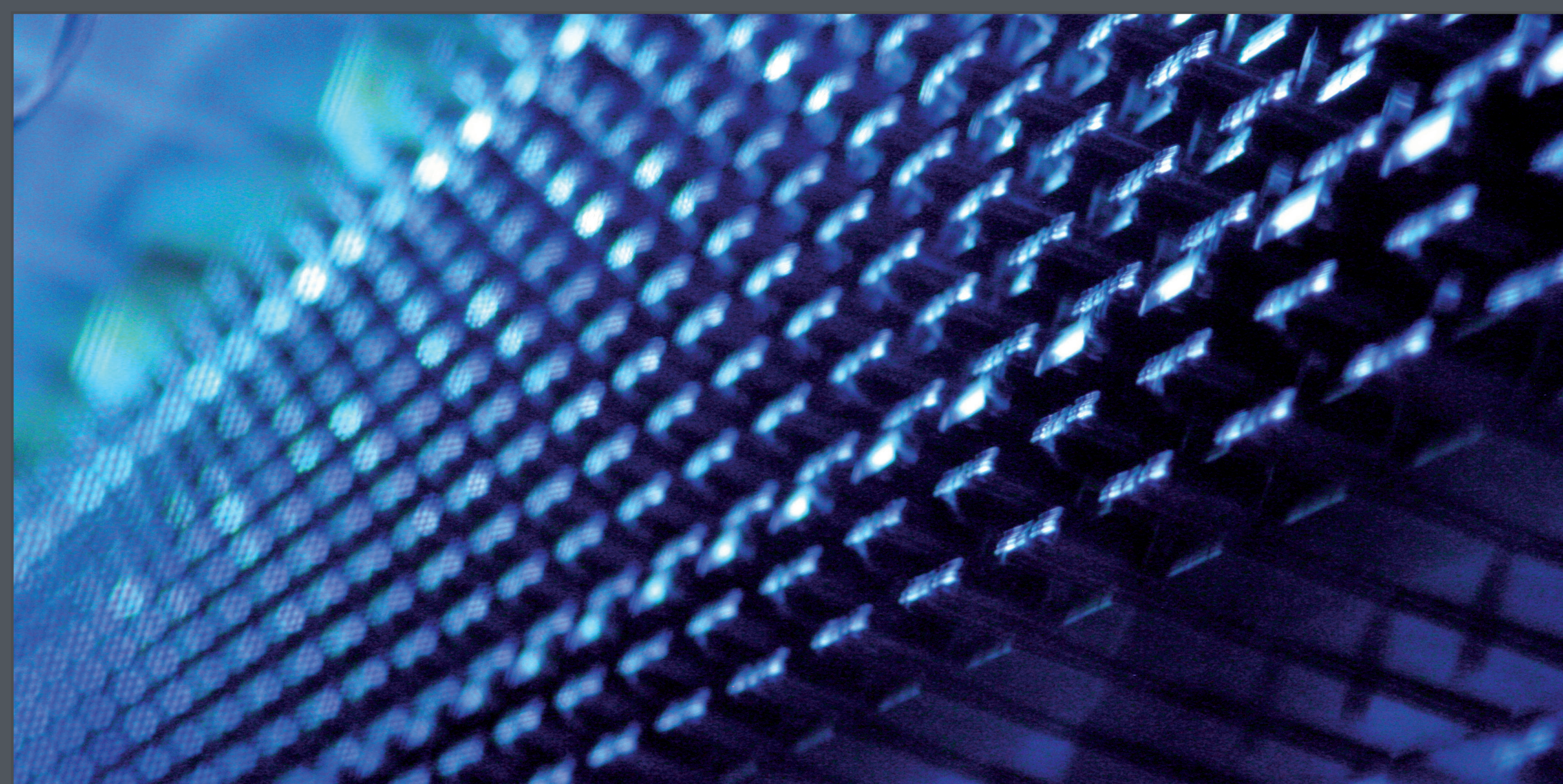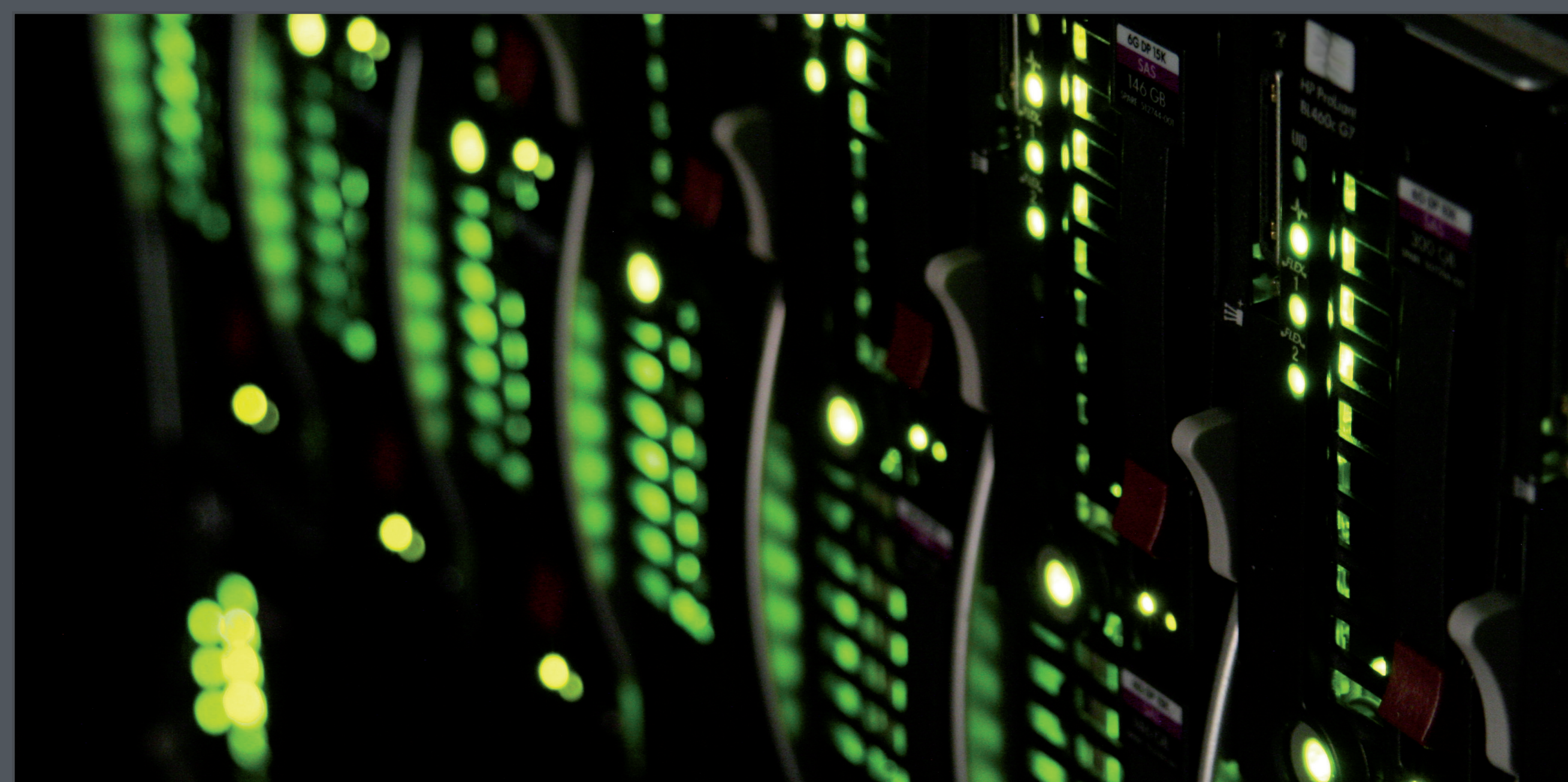
LONG-TERM PRESERVATION

Long-term preservation of these files requires exact knowledge and control over their technical properties, allowing memory institutions to develop an appropriate preservation strategy for the digital content (e.g. by transforming, re-packaging and emulating these files).

FULL CONTROL

To obtain this knowledge and control, preservation files are usually generated using "standard" file formats, which normalize the way digital content is captured in a digital file. Yet, these preservation files are always generated using software that implements one particular interpretation of the "human readable" specifications in the "standard" document. Inevitably, ambiguities in these specifications lead to different interpretations and hence software producing different implementations of the "standard" file format.

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