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The obsolescence of Information and Information Systems

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In 2016 was started the CERN Digital Memory project with the main goal of preventing loss of historical content produced by the organisation. The first step of the project was targeted to address the risk of deterioration of the most vulnerable materials, mostly the multimedia assets created in analogue formats from 1954 to the late 1990's, like still and moving images on films or magnetic tapes. In parallel was studied today's best practices to guarantee a long life to digital content, either born digital or resulting from a digitization process. If traditional archives and libraries have grown up during centuries establishing recognized standards to deal with the preservation of printed content, the field of digital archiving is in its infancy.

This talk will shortly expose the most surprising challenges when migrating hundreds of thousands of audio, slides, negatives, videotapes or films from the analogue to the digital era. It will then describe how a Digital Memory platform is being built, conform to the principles of the ISO-16363 digital object management norm that defines trustworthy digital repositories. Finally, as all information repository managers are faced with the necessary migration of underlying systems and the obsolescence of the information itself, the talk will explain how a digital archiving platform focusing only on content preservation could be of direct interest for most of the live systems.

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