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To Whom it may concern:

PREservation FORMAts for culture information/e-archives: MediaArea Proposal

I am delighted to offer my wholehearted support for MediaArea's proposal to develop a modular and open-source conformance checker for the Preforma project.

The tools described in this proposal are of enormous value to the field and with this team I would be assured that the tools developed would fully deliver against the brief. Tate recently led the community of practice core expert group on video art for Presto4U, a European funded co-ordinating action. In this capacity Tate worked with a number of institutions across Europe and the United States who are engaged in moving their video art collections from tape based to digital video file based storage and delivery. The challenges presented by lack of conformity between wrappers and data streams was identified as one of the most significant risks associated with sustaining consistent playback of video.

As part of our work at Tate and also within the context of the European funded project Pericles, Tate is actively involved in research related to playback consistency, the documentation of technical environments, quality control, and conformance checking. These interests align directly with the objectives of the Preforma project.

Tate has worked directly with Dave Rice on two projects in the past year. Firstly, during the summer of 2014, Dave Rice delivered training on the use of FFMPEG and QCTools. Tate hosted this training predominantly for staff and members of the community of practice engaged in the preservation of video art from across Europe. In addition we also welcomed representatives from the British Library and a commercial company offering post production facilities. The training was extremely well organised and clearly delivered. The set up was expertly planned and supported; enabling trouble free hands on sessions. The feedback on the evaluation forms was overwhelmingly positive. This provided us with first-hand experience of the effective and efficient delivery of a toolset developed by members of this team. BAVC QC

tool set is now being used at Tate as part of the standard toolset for conservators and archivists working with video.

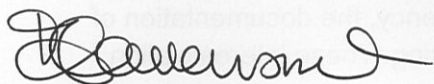
Secondly, Tate commissioned Dave Rice to produce a report on the challenges of sustaining consistent playback. In preparation for this Dave attended a meeting in London. Throughout the process Dave has listened carefully to members of the user community, enabling him to target the report effectively to their needs. Dave Rice delivered an excellent paper which will shortly be published on Tate's website and is set to have a significant impact.

There is valuable cross over between those who are members of the team involved in the development of this conformity checker and those who delivered the BAVC QC tool set. The BAVC QC Tool set is perhaps the most significant recent tool development for those working in the preservation of video. This tool set has provided a means of examining video material that previously would not have been possible for the majority of conservators and archivists. It therefore now forms an essential cornerstone to ensuring that the new generation of those who are caring for our collections are equipped with the skills and training to respond to a file based environment. This large project was expertly managed and delivered, with team members often going the extra mile to ensure that the tool was as accessible as possible to a broad group of potential users. Having worked with a number of technology providers and software developers I was particularly impressed by this team's close understanding of the target communities, their commitment to training and outreach as well as their excellent technical knowledge. The project team have a proven track record in producing tools of real and lasting value to the community and in genuinely supporting the community to access them.

I have no hesitation in personally endorsing the work of the MediaArea team and have complete confidence in their ability to meet the objectives of the Preforma Challenge Brief through software development, training, community involvement, standardization, and collaboration.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Dr. P. Laurenson
Head of Collection Care Research
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PreForma Project

February 26, 2015

Artefactual Systems is a Canadian company which specializes in developing and implementing open-source, open-standard technologies for archival collections and digital repositories. Artefactual Systems is pleased to offer its support for MediaArea's application to design a toolset for the PreForma project. We feel that as audiovisual preservation and file conformance validation specialists, MediaArea is in a unique position to offer the necessary expertise and infrastructure to support the use of matroska, ffv1 and lpcm as preservation formats for audiovisual holdings. In addition to providing a reliable source of testing and feedback to the project, Artefactual Systems' contribution would take the form of integrating elements of the toolset with Archivematica, an open-source digital preservation platform, and the Archivematica Format Policy Registry, which supplies format-specific rules for format identification, validation and normalization to Archivematica and other open-source digital preservation tools.

As one of the early adopters of ffv1 and matroska for video preservation, Artefactual has had the opportunity of working with closely Dave Rice and can attest to his knowledge and expertise in digital preservation, particularly the areas of multimedia preservation and metadata standards. We are confident that MediaArea and his team are well positioned to manage the technical and logistical complexities of the proposed project. We are also pleased to note that MediaArea adopts a completely FOSS (Free and Open Source) approach to digital preservation tool development; we feel that the proposal's emphasis on open-source software and open data standards will help to ensure that effort expended now to support these formats will not be wasted due to software obsolescence, restrictive software licenses and obscure or unsupported metadata schemas. Finally, in our opinion, the underlying technical architecture being proposed will provide a flexible and durable platform for ensuring that the toolset will be usable in a wide variety of digital preservation contexts, and that users of Archivematica in particular will benefit from this work.

Sincerely,



Evelyn McLellan
President, Artefactual Systems Inc.

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Artefactual Systems Inc. company information

Artefactual Systems is a privately owned company incorporated in the Province of British Columbia. Our expertise and interests are in open-source, open-standard technologies for archival collections and digital repositories. The company was incorporated in January 2000 and has been providing archives technology and digital preservation consulting services since that time. Artefactual provides a comprehensive suite of consulting, development, technical support and hosting services, but we are best known for our two open-source software tools, the Archivemata digital preservation system (www.archivemata.org) and the AtoM online access system (www.accesstomemory.org).

Our clients consist almost entirely of archives, libraries and museums. Within the EU, our development partners have included National Library of Wales, Borthwick Library at the University of York, the Mills Archive Trust, Konrad-Zuse-Zentrum für Informationstechnik Berlin, the Institut de Cultura de Barcelona, Archives de France and the Archiefschool at the Hogeschool Van Amsterdam. Our North American development partners have included City of Vancouver Archives, University of British Columbia Library, Yale University Library, the Rockefeller Archive Center, the Museum of Modern Art (Manhattan), Harvard Business School, Simon Fraser University and the University of Alberta. Original seed funding for Archivemata was provided by UNESCO's Memory of the World Subcommittee on Technology and for AtoM by the International Council on Archives. Today the company employs sixteen people full-time and is sustained entirely by client contracts. More information about the company is available on our website at www.artefactual.com.

Archivemata is an integrated suite of open-source software tools designed to ingest and preserve digital objects in conformance with the Open Archives Information System reference model. Archivemata implements the OAIS functional areas of ingest, data management, preservation planning and archival storage, and produces highly interoperable, self-documenting Archival Information Packages. The Archivemata Format Policy Registry is a technological framework for implementing rules-based format identification, validation, metadata extraction and format normalization. Together, Archivemata and the Format Policy Registry provide a highly flexible technology framework which would benefit greatly from the addition of the PreForma toolset to include format-specific conformance and validity checking.

Archivemata was an early adopter of ffv1, LPCM, and Matroska within the context of audiovisual preservation, and includes it in its set of default FPR format policies. In 2011 Archivemata utilized a specification of ffv1 and lpcm in matroska within a normalization strategy for handling born-digital video. Archivemata supports efforts to increase the credibility and standardization of ffv1 and matroska for preservation use through MediaArea's plan, which includes facilitation of standardization work and the development of tools to enable more comprehensive archival control.

HKB

Project Coordination
of

Preforma

03.03.2015

Letter of recommendation

Dear Madam / Sir,

As a Lecturer at the Department of Conservation and Restoration of Modern Materials and Media at the Bern University in Switzerland, I've had the pleasure to interact with PreForma MedialInfo team members Dave Rice and Jérôme Martinez through their MedialInfo and QCTools projects. Both Dave and Jérôme contribute a remarkable extent their time and energy to informing the media conservation community. Not only have they designed indispensable tools for the everyday workflow of memory institutions, they've made an extraordinary effort to raise awareness of file issues in our field.

After a series of successful workshops in Europe and the United States, the community response to the latest developments of QCTools in particular has been extremely positive. Through their excellent communication skills, the QCTools development team has managed to translate the needs and demands of the conservation community into an innovative, easy-to-use tool for media preservation.

Finally, I would like to stress the value of the dual interdisciplinary roles of the PreForma MedialInfo project group. With their positions as experienced archivists in notable media institutions, members Dave Rice and Erik Piil are well-positioned to develop tools that are perfectly-tailored solutions for the archive and museum world. I would be very pleased to implement PreForma MedialInfo's Conch conformance checker in the future and look forward to the progress of the PreForma MedialInfo team on this project.

Kind regards
Agathe Jarczyk

Bern University of the Arts BUA
Departement of Conservation and Restoration
of Modern Materials and Media