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YOSHI SODEOKA

Computing

Microsoft Has a Plan to Add DNA Data Storage to Its Cloud

Tech companies think biology may solve a looming data storage problem.

by Antonio Regalado

May 22, 2017

Based on early research involving the storage of movies and documents in DNA, Microsoft is developing an apparatus that uses biology to replace tape drives, researchers at the company say.

Computer architects at Microsoft Research say the company has formalized a goal of having an operational storage system based on DNA working inside a data center toward the end of this decade. The aim is a "proto-commercial system in three years storing some amount of data on DNA in one of our data centers, for at least a boutique application," says Doug Carmean, a partner architect at Microsoft Research. He describes the eventual device as the size of a large, 1970s-era Xerox copier.

Internally, Microsoft harbors the even more ambitious goal of replacing tape

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