# TOWN & SCHOOL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Brookline's Experience

October 22, 2009

STATED GOAL

"In order to halt the growing 'performance gap' between the private and public sectors and to respond effectively to the taxpayers and customers of the Town in the 21st century, a long-range vision for IT is needed. The goal is to create a "blueprint" that offers an objective assessment of the overall Town and School technology resources and expenditures; articulates a vision for IT; identifies application and technology priorities; and defines effective policies and procedures for IT governance and decision making."
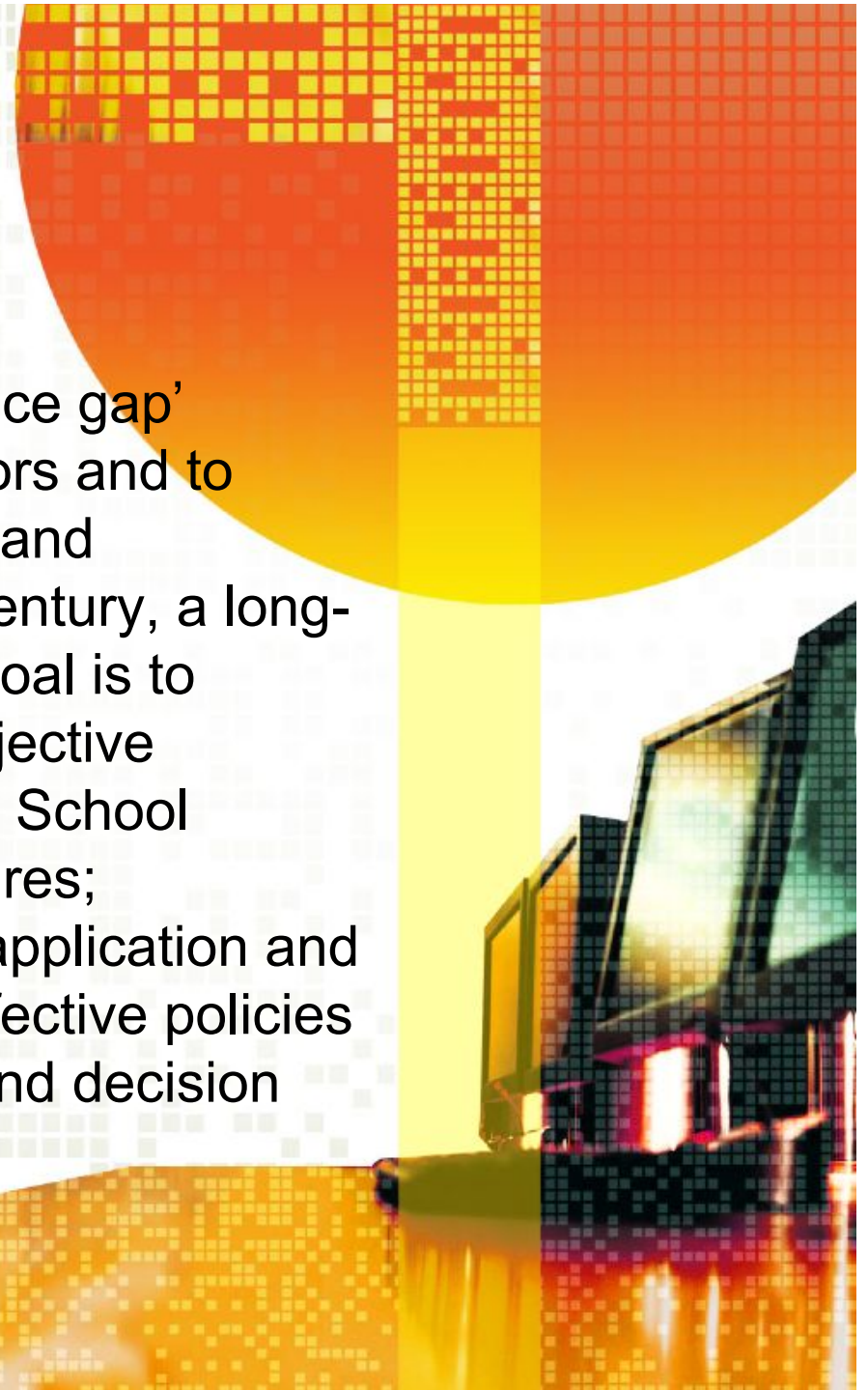
HISTORY

- '93 – Town created Finance Dept, which included Information Services

- Dec, '99 – first time concept of merged IT dept's discussed with Superintendent

  - Separate Town & School organizations at the time, both with Directors reporting to a dept head -- Town director reported to the Finance Director and School director reported to the Deputy Super. of Schools

- Dec, '00 – re-engaged with the Super. and the concept of developing an "IT Blueprint" was agreed to

- Winter, '00 / Spring '01 – RFP for consultant developed, issued, ultimately awarded to Pacific Technologies, Inc. (PTI) for $140K
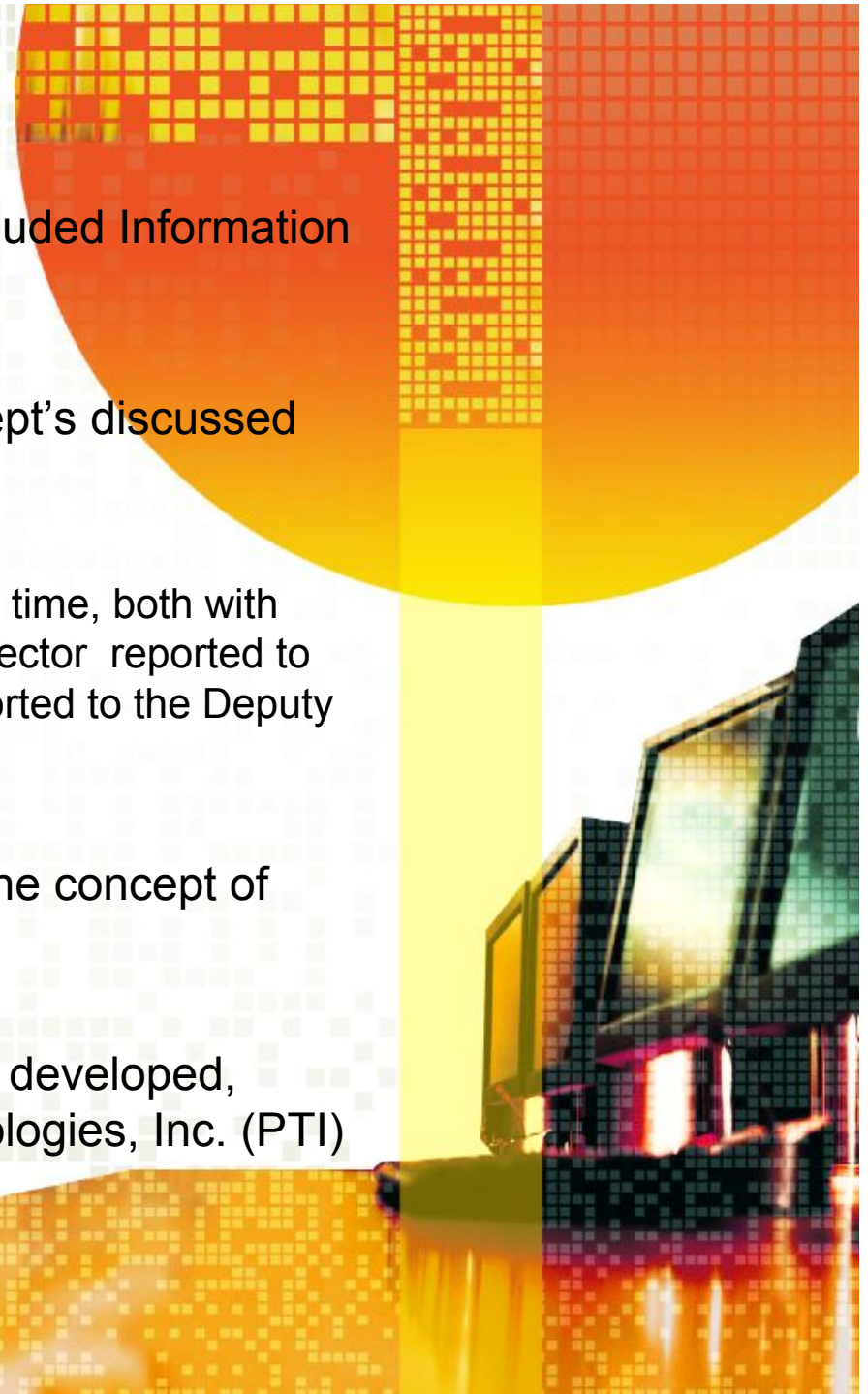
APPROACH TO STUDY

Be as inclusive as possible:

- Project Steering Committee – consisted of IT directors / managers, IT staff, and "heavy users" of IT from across the enterprise

- Citizen Focus Group

- Survey of all Town and School employees re: satisfaction with IT services

- Meetings with various user groups
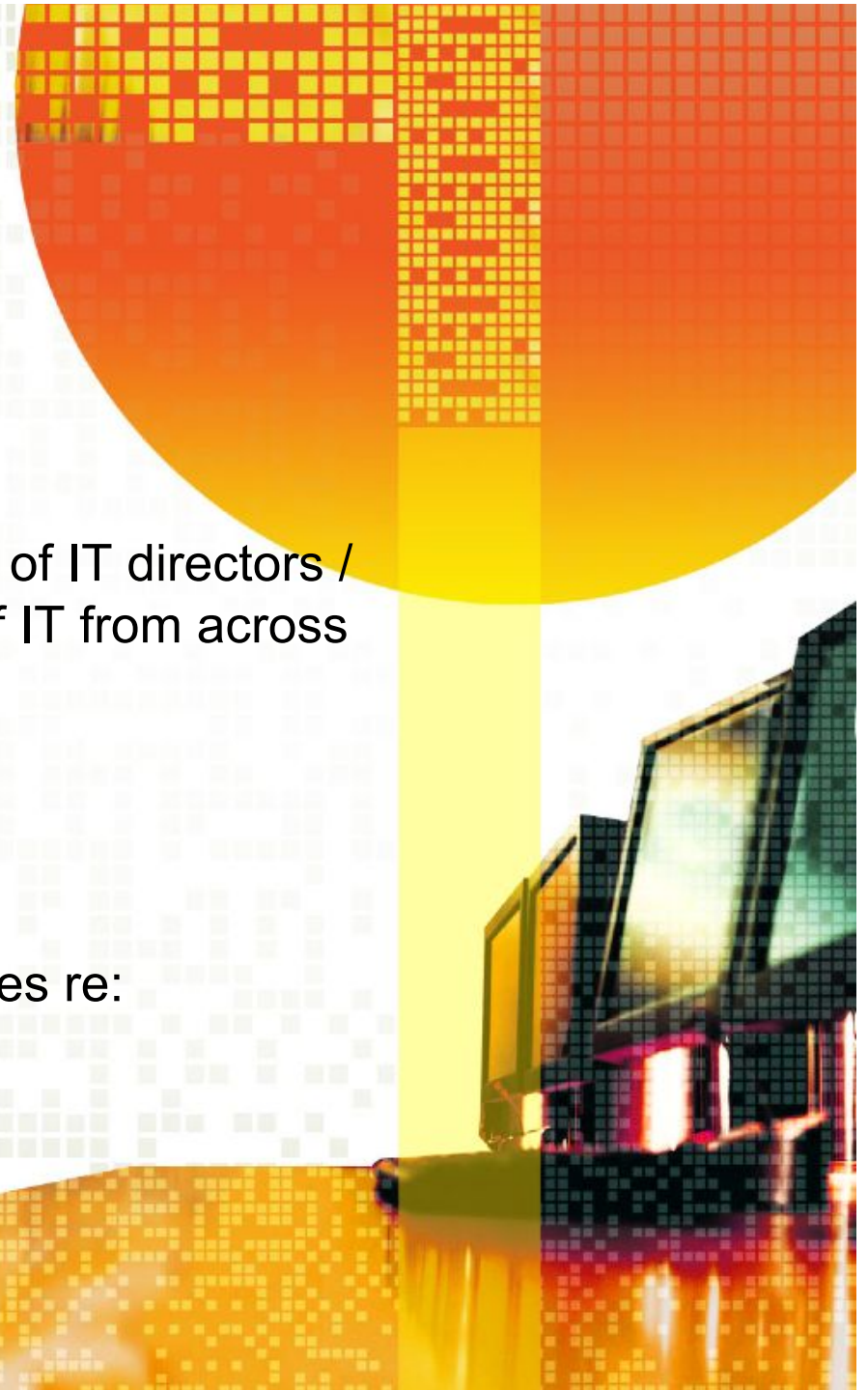
FINDINGS

- Jan, '02 – final report issued

- Primary concerns:
  - Enterprise-wide IT leadership lacking

  - Separate town & school IT organizations reduce service delivery efficiency

  - IT investment decisions not made on a Brookline-wide basis

  - Teachers and school mgmt dissatisfied with integration of instructional tech into the curriculum
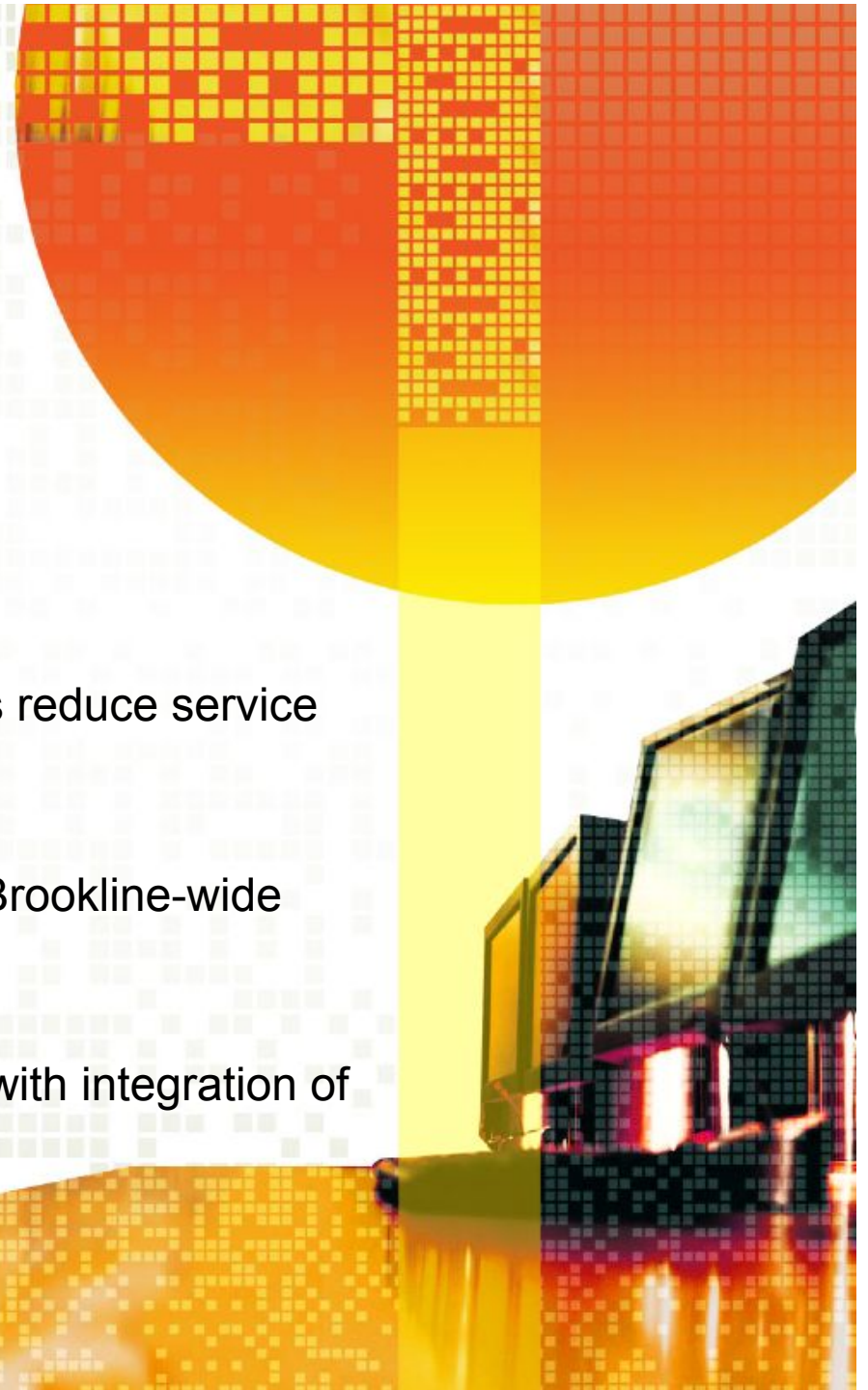
RECOMMEDATIONS

- Primary organizational recommendations:

  - Create a central IT Dept led by a CIO, a senior dept head who reports to both Town Administrator + School Super.

  - Establish a formal "IT Help Desk"

  - Create an annual IT investment decision process

  - Formally charter the existing ITAC

  - Establish a Town/School Departmental IT Cmte to provide departmental input and help identify cross-departmental and enterprise application requirements

 - Develop a strategic plan for instructional technology
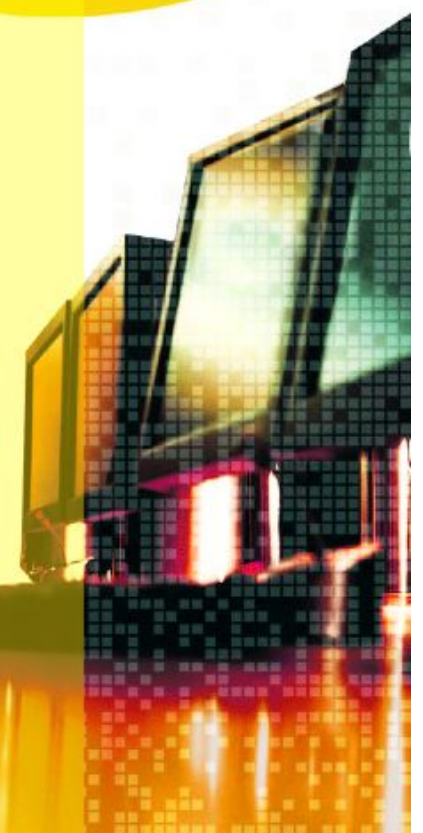
SUMMARY

- Primary Result = raising the profile of the IT Dept from a back-office "data processing" unit under the Finance Dept to a dept-level organization that participates in organization-wide strategic discussions

- A single dept head now responsible for all IT decision making (exclusive of instructional technology)

- Enterprise-wide approach to IT

- While up-front costs required, incalculable savings over long-term by eliminating "end runs" by dept's and the costs associated with such a fragmented IT investment process
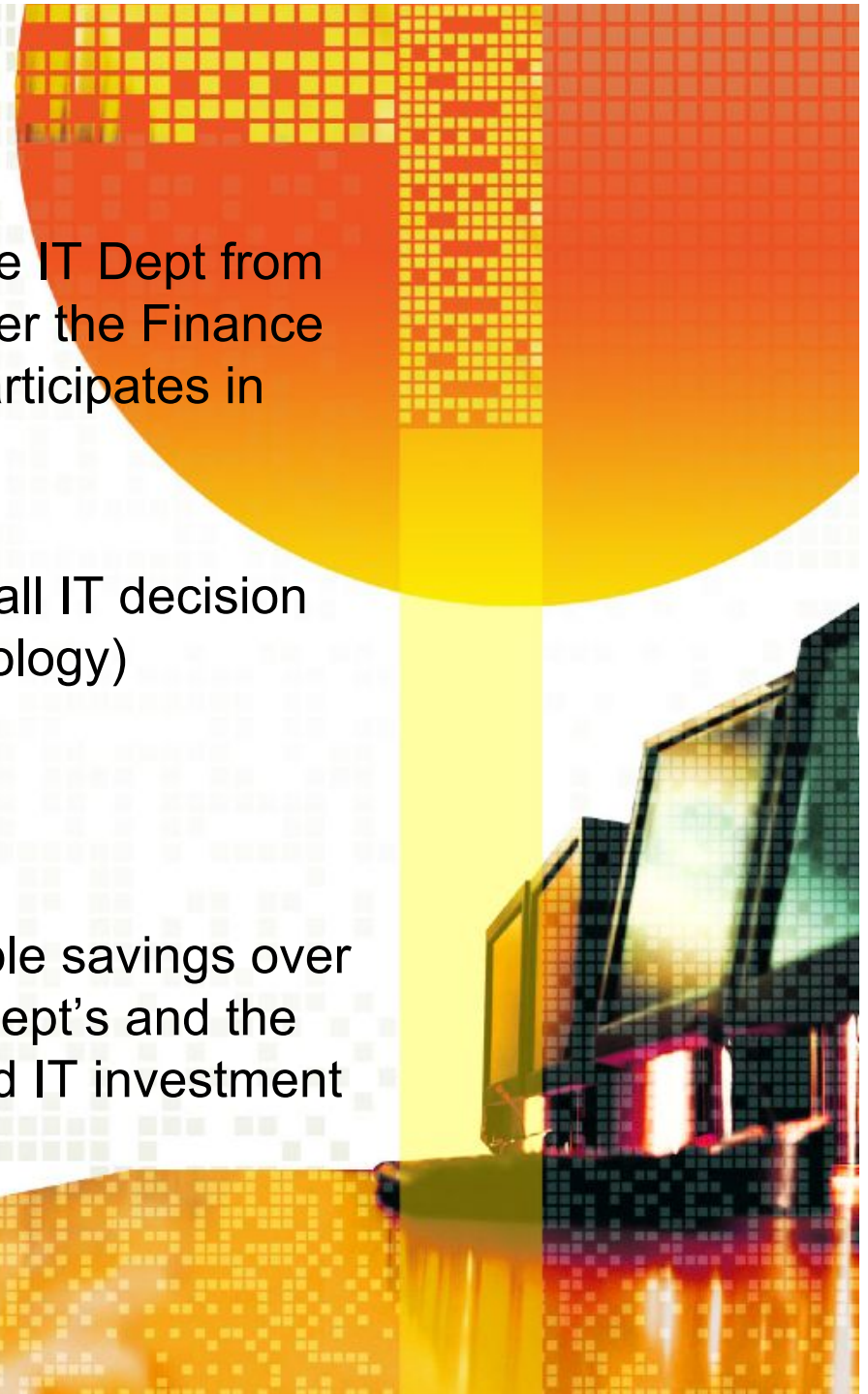
Now for Some Reality……….

- Governance will always be challenging

- Process is good, outcomes are better

- Money drives behavior

- There will always be holes
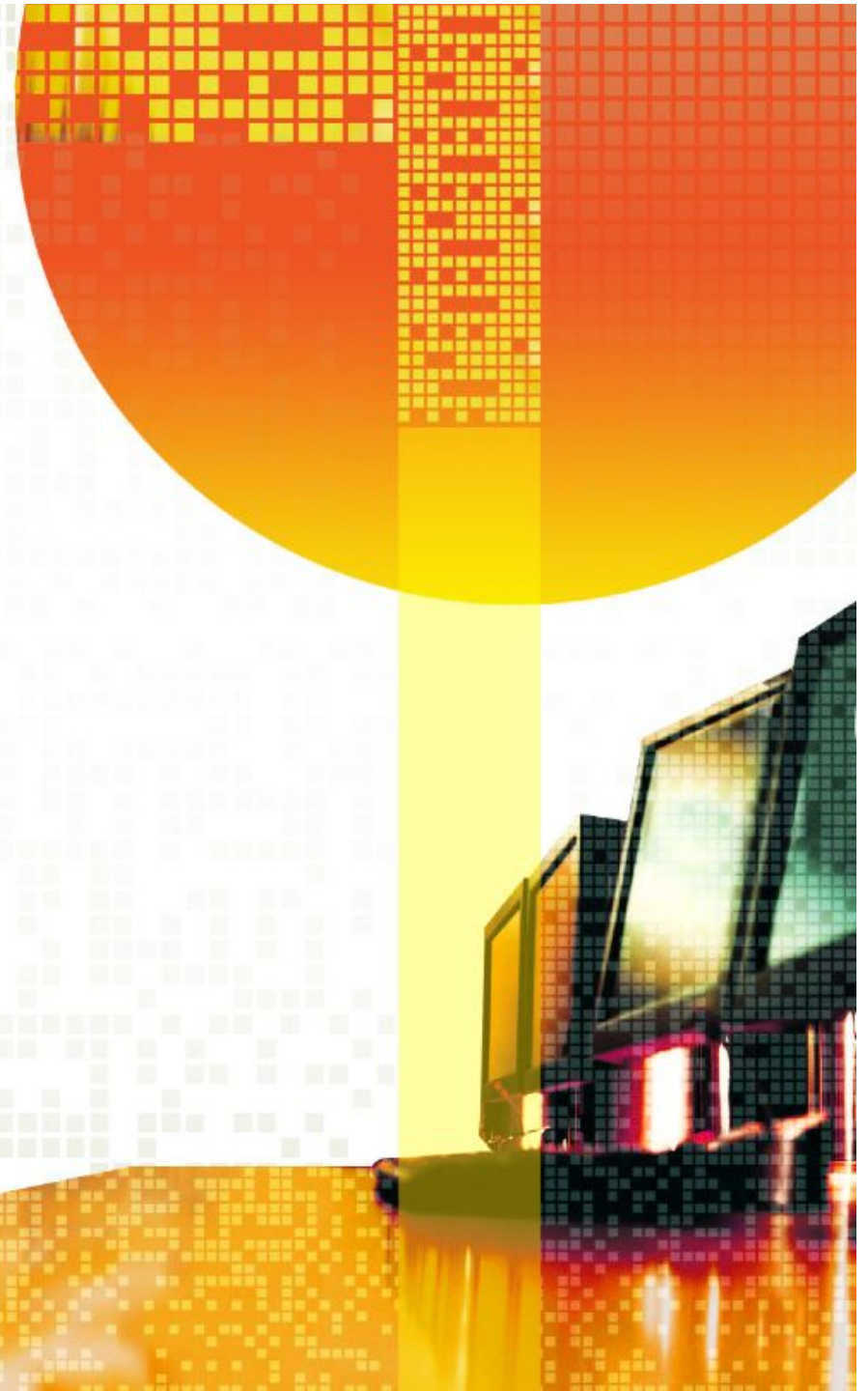
Thank you

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