



First Aid for Specialist Digital Archives – the how, what, why and where of digital data in archaeology projects

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This workshop will introduce FAIR principles and the practice of digital data management in archaeological projects, with an aim to enabling access to archaeology from digital archives. We'll describe how information within archaeological projects contributes to the site archive, what digital archives should include and how data is documented. The aim will be to understand more about specialist data and how we can apply FAIR principles to digital archives – and what that means for the specialist reporting.

The session is delivered as part of the Dig Digital project, delivered by DigVentures, with ClfA, on behalf of Archaeological Archives Forum. It is funded by Historic England.

The times below are a guide only – sessions may not stick to these times, but we will finish at 16.00!

14.30 – 14.35 Introduction and starting poll

14.35 – 14.50 Digital Data in Archaeology – where does it come from?

A quick warm-up before we get into the details – what kinds of digital data is created as part of the archaeological project, and at what stage in the journey?

14.50 – 15.05 FAIR guiding principles

Looking from the perspective of digital data management in archaeology projects, the workshop will first discuss FAIR guiding principles: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. How are these four principles relevant to archaeology, and how do they support greater access for users of archaeological archives? Looking from the perspective of an individual archaeological project, participants will understand what they should expect to see from archives in a FAIR-er world.

We'll discuss how the globally relevant FAIR principles map against industry standards and guidance in relation to the whole archaeological project, from early project planning, use of OASIS and through to deposition. We'll also look at tools which are available to archaeologists and stakeholders to use to help keep digital data managed in a FAIR way.

15.05 – 15.25 Guidance for managing digital data in archaeological projects

Introducing the Dig Digital guidance, we'll review the kinds of information which an archaeological archive will include, and how it should be managed to meet FAIR guiding principles. For this section of the workshop, we'll look at three key tools, examining how they are used within archaeological projects to support digital data management and access.

- The *Data Management Plan* which provides an iterative framework for all digital data management, from data acquisition to deposition.
- ClfA's *Selection Toolkit* and how it should be used in the management of digital data archives, to help decision-making around data deposition and ensure the integrity of the final deposited archive.
- *ADS metadata tables*, and the kinds of information which a digital archive should include about all aspects of its contents.

15.25 – 15.45 Over to you! Exploring archaeological sites online

The requirements of industry standards and guidance, such as ClfA Standards, means that material will increasingly become available via digital archive repositories, and easily located via OASIS.

This will provide a growing resource that can help us all understand an archaeological site, period or location, prior to opening up any boxes. The curation of digital archives within specialist repositories such as ADS and signposting via OASIS, should make the process of discovery and dissemination of information about different elements of a project far easier for everyone...

The final section of the workshop asks participants to delve into archive examples and complete a small group task. Through discussion and by undertaking this task, we will think about the data we choose to include in archives, how we document that and how easy it is for others to use that information for research and to support engagement with archaeological projects.

15.45 – 16.00 The big finish – any questions and closing poll

We'll wrap up with any questions and a closing poll to reflect on archaeology, access and digital data...

The Dig Digital project is very much in an implementation stage, working with archaeological organisations to make sure digital archive are managed to the standards required by ClfA. The project is ongoing and we will be looking at developing additional tools and resources to support FAIR archaeological archives – if you have any ideas about how the project might better support finds specialists, let us know!



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About the Dig Digital project

The workshop is delivered as part of the Dig Digital project, a HE-funded creating guidance for everyday archaeological data management. The project is ongoing, entering an implementation stage to help archives creators understand more about good practice for digital archives. It is being delivered by DigVentures with CIFA, on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum.

You can find the guidance and growing resources here:

<https://www.archaeologists.net/digdigital>

With new tools, resources and training, now is a great time to get to grips with what you and your teams might need to know about digital data in archaeological projects.

Who is the workshop aimed at?

This workshop is aimed at archaeological finds specialists who are interested in understanding more about digital archive creation, management and deposition.

The workshop is endorsed by CIFA and will outlined relevant learning outcomes to support 1.5 hours of CPD.

Workshop learning outcomes

This workshop provides some supporting knowledge for the National Occupational Standard:

AE5.1 Develop procedures for information resource dissemination, deposition and archive

Through attending this course, participants will be able to:

1. Be more confident in talking about how digital data in archaeological archives is created and managed
2. Understand FAIR principles and their relevance to archaeological projects
3. Describe how CIFA standards are relevant to digital data management in archaeology
4. Understand how a Data Management Plan should be used within archaeological projects, and how that can support access to information
5. Understand what tools are available to help support access to digital data from archaeological projects