



CIFA2021 ONLINE: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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SESSION TITLE

Create, share + engage. The archaeologists guide to digital content and social media

SESSION ABSTRACT

The production of digital content and distribution through social media platforms plays a significant part in informing users, promoting, influencing and challenging perception. Yet, so far archaeology as a discipline has struggled to fully realise the potential benefits and value that this form of communication has to offer.

During the pandemic, many organisations have looked to online platforms to continue to fulfil their requirements of public outreach. This rapid shift may seem like a necessary move in their current situation but there are many pitfalls and considerations one must make when dealing with a new medium.

How do we create digital content such as YouTube videos, podcasts and virtual events and then harness tools such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to share and engage effectively? How do you use these tools to proactively challenge misconceptions, more accurately depict our profession and communicate the wider value of our work? How much engagement is really taking place and how can archaeologists measure success?

This practical session will consider and explore the role that social media platforms and digital content play in promoting the profession to the public through a series of presentations from content creators and social media strategists. We will consider case studies, address and overcome challenges, answer your questions and share in our presenter's insight into digital engagement in the heritage sector.

SESSION PROGRAMME

13:15 – 13:20	Introduction <i>Christopher Wakefield, PHD student, University of York</i>
13:20 – 13:50	Archaeologists in Quarantine. The Power of Social Media Networking <i>Natasha Billson, Commercial Field Archaeologist and Creator of Behind the Trowel</i>
13:50 – 14:20	Digging for influence: why social media is a valuable tool we should be adding to our kit <i>Rachel McMullan, RSK Group</i>

14:20 – 14:45	A journey into the unknown: the ADS's voyage into expanding its dissemination of digital archives <i>Teagan Zoldoske, University of York</i>
14:45 – 15:00	Break
15:00 – 15:30	From on the ground to online: taking the Festival of Archaeology digital <i>Dr Claire Corkill, Council for British Archaeology</i>
15:30 – 16:00	No, a Podcast will Not Solve Your Outreach Problem <i>Tristan Boyle, The Archaeology Podcast Network</i>
16:00 – 16:30	Online Archaeological Engagement: Promoting a Profession? <i>Christopher Wakefield, PHD student, University of York</i>

SPEAKER ABSTRACTS

Digging for influence: why social media is a valuable tool we should be adding to our kit

Rachel McMullan, RSK Group

People spend an increasingly large amount of their time online and a significant portion of that time is spent scrolling through social media. Archaeology as a discipline has so far struggled to fully realise the potential benefits and value this form of communication has to offer. This paper will explore how social media can be used in archaeology for recruitment as well as influencing and improving the public image of the commercial archaeology sector. This paper will present two social media case studies: a large archaeology company (Headland Archaeology) and an independent Youtube channel of a commercial archaeologist, along with their metrics and how they measure success on their platforms. This paper will also discuss the pros and cons of archaeology themed social media accounts and the challenges encountered with putting archaeological content online and how they can be overcome.

Archaeologists in Quarantine. The Power of Social Media Networking

Natasha Billson, Commercial Field Archaeologist and Creator of Behind the Trowel

Social media has revolutionised the way we communicate and engage within the archaeological community and the public. We now live in a social media world dominated by consumer value; our society produces, consumes, and circulates information, rapidly. As an industry we must ask ourselves, how can archaeology stay current? What can commercial archaeology units contribute and benefit from the fast-paced consumer culture? Within the archaeology social media community, students and lecturers have found efficient platforms for sharing their expertise with ever widening and diverse audiences. Yet, the impact of social media on commercial units remains only partially examined. How can companies use Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube effectively and within their social media policies. And make content adaptive for different social media platforms? This paper will focus on my personal experience in building a brand "Behind The Trowel" and livestream

YouTube show Archaeologists in Quarantine. As well as case studies from content creators who actively use social media platforms to educate public audiences about archaeology.

A journey into the unknown: the ADS's voyage into expanding its dissemination of digital archives

Teagan Zoldoske, University of York

As a digital archive, the ADS sees social media as a way to draw in new users and expose people to different archives to encourage the re-use of the digital data we preserve. We do this by publicising archives as they are released and bringing attention to older archives through the use of social media hashtags. The ADS has been using social media for many years to promote our data and events but at the start of 2019, we began a revitalisation of our social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn) and expanded to Instagram. This paper will focus on the promotion of our archives, specifically, how the use of social media has affected the engagement with our archives, pre- and post-2019, including 2020 lockdown. Additionally, we will explore what has and hasn't worked for us during 2019/2020 and whether or not the increase in effort has been worthwhile.

From on the ground to online: taking the Festival of Archaeology digital

Dr Claire Corkill, Council for British Archaeology

The CBA's Festival of Archaeology provides 100s of opportunities for the public to participate in archaeology through events organised by organisations and community groups across the heritage sector. In 2020 the impact of Covid-19 meant transforming an on the ground Festival to one largely based in a virtual environment, creating a unique opportunity to explore how physical events could be transformed and presented online.

With over 300 events and 500,000 digital engagements, taking the Festival online allowed us to continue to engage with the public and showcase archaeology across the UK. This presentation will look at some of the opportunities and challenges created by digital delivery and consider some of the pros and cons of taking public engagement online.

No, a Podcast will Not Solve Your Outreach Problem

Tristan Boyle, The Archaeology Podcast Network

During the pandemic, many organisations have looked to online platforms in order to continue to fulfil their requirements of public outreach. There have been many quiz nights, virtual tours and speaking events in addition to new digital content being created. This rapid shift may seem like a necessary move in their current situation but there are many pitfalls and considerations one must make when dealing with a new medium. Podcasts are an extremely valuable tool, which are increasingly growing in popularity; however their simple nature belies the great amount of effort and knowledge needed to create a successful project that engages and informs. This presentation will cover a number of examples and useful information from six years of producing podcasts on the Archaeology Podcast Network and advising heritage organisations during the pandemic.

Online Archaeological Engagement: Promoting a Profession?

Christopher Wakefield, PHD student, University of York

Archaeological companies have access to a wider suite of digital technologies than ever before. From streaming and Q&As to memes and vlogs, social media are powerful tools for archaeologists seeking to raise awareness of their work and engage audiences. Yet, online archaeological engagement, particularly among commercial companies, is poorly understood and there is a sector-wide absence of critical analysis of online outputs.

Social networking sites (SNS) are ubiquitous features of modern life but how prevalent is their use within the UK's development-led sector? Given the prominent role SNS play in digital archaeological engagement, how much engagement is really taking place and how can archaeologists measure success? This paper discusses these questions using a Facebook-derived, pre-pandemic dataset of both ClfA Registered Organisations (ROs) and Non-ROs that explores company attitudes and approaches towards social media alongside user responses.

In a world where the media landscape is now radically different from the turn of the century, how should development-led archaeology be thinking about the long-term goals and impact of SNS use? With the sector facing an increasing number of challenges, this paper argues that it is now more important than ever to meaningfully engage with social media. SNS are far from perfect but these online platforms can help archaeology to proactively challenge misconceptions, more accurately depict our profession and communicate the wider value of our work.