RED PILL OR BLUE PILL? USING THE MATRIX TO INVESTIGATE THE FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.

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Over the last 25 years the archaeological and Heritage sectors among others have concentrated on how the digital data created and stored on computers can be preserved to the same degree that physical museum objects can be kept for the benefit of others. This interest in digital preservation has been especially strong in the archaeological world where excavation data sets are being increasingly gathered as "born digital" data, using the latest computer technologies, i.e. data created on, and only preservable on a computer. This focus has helped address the principle concerns about "how do we keep this stuff digitally".

The focus of digital archives and museums is now switching from not just simply providing better access to digital archives. Increasingly questions of sustainability that ask how are users in commercial archaeological units, curatorial organizations and academia, along with other members of the public, going to make best (re)use of this growing body of digital information and data.

Using the particular recording practices and life-cycles of stratigraphic and phasing data from archaeological interventions, the AHRC funded Leadership Fellow project The Matrix (https://www.researchgate.net/project/The-Matrix-connecting-and-re-using-digital-records-and-archives-of-archaeological-investigations) is being undertaken to investigate how digital data from archaeological excavations can be made more useful and interesting to a range of users and audiences.

The project has objectives in four main areas of activity
1) Digital Standards;
2) Heritage Data;
3) Stratigraphy Standards;
4) Search Tools;
that aim to address two key research questions:

1. How can we encourage the sharing, linking and interoperability of archaeological data and information, particularly information derived from the commercial sector in order to maximize public value and enhance the research potential of archaeological data?

2. How can we ensure the consistent development, application, encouragement and ultimately enforcement of technical information and data standards and their promotion to others?

Keywords

Heritage Data, data reuse, digital data, digital archives, Stratigraphy, Matrix

Note/comment