FAIR REUSE OF ARCHIVE DATA

Session

The archaeological research community was an early adopter of digital tools for data acquisition, organisation, analysis, and presentation of research results of individual projects. (Richards 2022). As several projects have shown, digital data can be shared, but how can that data be used? To address those questions, principles and ontologies have been created and are ready to be applied.

One concept is FAIR data. FAIR data is data which meets the principles of Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability (FAIR). The acronym and principles were defined in the journal Scientific Data in 2016.

Digital archive access projects will revolutionise archaeological research and are vital if we want to attain the R in FAIR. However, it is necessary to apply an ontology to the data, otherwise the time needed to understand the semantics of each datasets is insurmountable. CRMarchaeo, an extension of the CIDOC CRM, is one way to link a wide range of existing documentation from archaeological investigations. It was created to promote a shared formalisation of the knowledge extracted from archaeological observations. It provides a set of concepts and properties that allow clear explanation (and separation) of the observations and interpretations made, both in the field and in post-excavation.

Using FAIR principles is critical to the creation of wider pictures of regions or periods and can also be a stepping stone to generating Big Data for further analysis.

In this session we invite presentations from organisations or projects who are addressing these issues. We are particularly interested in applications of the CIDOC CRM and its extension CRMarchaeo but all approaches will be welcomed.

Richards, J. 2022, *Presentation at CHNT Vienna*

Motivation

The motivation is to discuss the integration of a wide range of archaeological excavation archive materials using suitable ontologies, including CRMarchaeo. Healthy discussion of the application of the FAIR principles is required to ensure that best practice emerges by consensus rather than coup d'état. This means we need a body of proficient professional and amateur practitioners able, and willing, to discuss their approaches and experience. This may include the application of CRMarchaeo to describe and encapsulate the semantic meaning of archaeological archives of all eras but it may also encapsulate other ontologies and approaches.

The materials tackled could include historic daybook or narrative text descriptions of archaeological excavations or chance encounters as well as more modern context sheet paper records of systematic excavations. It is also intended to address electronic excavation databases of all flavours and vintages being made interoperable without the need to harmonise away the unique qualities and flavours of chosen excavation methodologies.

Target Audience

The target audience is professional and amateur cultural heritage practitioners who enable access to archaeological excavation archives and wish to discuss their experiences in this arena. These could include archaeologists depositing new excavation archives or researchers attempting to provide access to existing archives to a wider professional and lay audience. Curators of museum deposits of archaeological excavation archives may also inform the debate based on their experience of providing access to the content of archives in their care. This would also apply to archivists who have similar historic excavation archive material in their care.

Keywords

CIDOC CRM #CRMarchaeo #FAIR