Open Data Perspectives and Problems: An Archaeological Perspective

Presented in:
Sharing is Caring: Challenges and Opportunities in Producing Open Data

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Michigan State University
Archaeology and Big Data
BIG DATA

Volume: Data Size
Velocity: Speed of Change
Variety: Different Forms of Data Sources
Veracity: Uncertainty of Data
Volume: Data at Rest
- Terabytes to exabytes of existing data to process

Velocity: Data in Motion
- Streaming data, milliseconds to seconds to respond

Variety: Data in Many Forms
- Structured, unstructured, text, multimedia

Veracity*: Data in Doubt
- Uncertainty due to data inconsistency & incompleteness, ambiguities, latency, deception, model approximations
Volume: Archaeological data represent a large volume, but not when compared to physics or medicine.
Velocity:
Archaeologists do relatively little data streaming, so velocity is not one of our problems.
Variety:
In this area, we beat almost every other discipline
Veracity:
Another big area for archaeologists because we use “messy” data that is not structured and often not comparable.
Legacy Data

- Messy
- Not disciplinarily structured
- Long time depth – data collected 150 years ago can be very significant
Data Sensitivity: A Huge Issue

- Most people unaware that archaeological data are sensitive
- Site files exempt from Freedom of Information Act requests
- Compliance work
- Ownership of data
- Legal issues
Are There Ways to Share or Open Archaeological Data?
Examples

Preservation
Depositories
TDAR: The Digital Archaeological Record
ADS: Archaeology Data Service, Great Britain
Welcome to Open Context
Open Context reviews, edits, and publishes archaeological research data and archives data with university-backed repositories, including the California Digital Library.

Content Map and Timeline

Number of Records
50
100
150,000
(Forthcoming)
Example

DINAA:
Digital Index of North American Archaeology
Digital Index of North American Archaeology (DINAA)

The Digital Index of North American Archaeology (DINAA) is a multi-institutional undertaking to create interoperability models for archaeological site databases in the eastern United States. The 2-year project, which is funded by the National Science Foundation, commenced September 1, 2012. View the technical proposal.

This page provides ongoing information about the progress of the project. Visit the links below to learn more about this project. We also broadcast updates to the community via the NASA (National Association of State Archaeologists) listserv. We welcome your questions, comments, and other participation in this project, so please comment on the blog posts or contact us directly by emailing project PIs David Anderson and Josh Wells.

- Project Overview (Aug. 8, 2012)
- Initial Announcement (Aug. 7, 2012)
- Initial Communication with the National Association of State Archaeologists (NASA) (Aug. 24, 2012)
- Data Transfer Instructions (Oct. 31, 2012)
- Second Communication with the National Association of State Archaeologists (NASA) (Nov. 2, 2012)
- DINAA Annual Report (October 2013)
- Florida and Georgia Site Files Launch DINAA Project (December 2013)
- Program for the DINAA Workshop at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (March 19-20, 2014)
- Explore a draft release of the data, updated in August 2014 with Alabama and Virginia site file records

Additional Project News and Updates:

DINAA @ SAA

The DINAA project had a very successful reception at the 79th Annual Society for American Archaeology conference in Austin, TX last month. With several presentations spanning traditional conference papers, posters, and a lightning talk at the Digital Data Interest Group meeting, conference-goers were provided with no shortage of opportunities to learn about multiple aspects of [...]
DINAA Search for Indiana Archaeological Sites

Map of Counts by Region
38,353 records

Applied Filters
- General Keyword Search: Search Term: 'Indiana'
- Description: Has period
- Project: Digital Index of North American Archaeology (DINAA)

General Keyword Search
Indiana

Filtering Options
- Has period
  - Period
    - 38,353

Context
- Digital Index of North American Archaeology (DINAA)
- Descriptions (Common Standards)
- Descriptions (Project Defined)
- Numeric Descriptions (Project Defined)
- Date Descriptions (Project Defined)

Search results 1 to 20 of 38,353

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Label</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Early (BCE/CE)</th>
<th>Late (BCE/CE)</th>
<th>Thumbnail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Linked Open Data

Is this a solution for the problems of managing and sharing archaeological data?
Documentation

- Different excavation methods bring differing documentation
- Comparison of different documentation sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAYER AND ARBITRARY LAYER</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Consistency of Soil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Colour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Texture</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4. Bedding</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5. Inclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Post-Depositional Features</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7. Basal Boundary</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPOSIT</th>
<th>12. Compaction</th>
<th>Loose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Colour</td>
<td>Dark Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Texture</td>
<td>Silt Clay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Inclusions</td>
<td>Charcoal Large, Sub-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 building</td>
<td>Small, Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contamination:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linked Data

Linked Data is about using the Web to connect related data that wasn't previously linked, or using the Web to lower the barriers to linking data currently linked using other methods. More specifically, Wikipedia defines Linked Data as "a term used to describe a recommended best practice for exposing, sharing, and connecting pieces of data, information, and knowledge on the Semantic Web using URIs and RDF."

This site exists to provide a home for, or pointers to, resources from across the Linked Data community.

Part of the Linking (LOD) Data Project Cloud Diagram, click for full and historical versions...
Prototype Controlled Vocabulary searching
What about comparing records across different countries?
Semantics
One Concept - one meaning – different terms

Stratigraphic Unit

- Stratum
- Behälter (Troy)
- Spit
- Locus
- Level
- Context
- Unit
- Layer

ARIADENE
**Barrier: Semi-controlled vocabularies...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deposit Colour</th>
<th>Deposit Texture</th>
<th>Deposit Compaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Reddy) Brown</td>
<td>Dark orange/brown</td>
<td>Plastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9Reddy brown</td>
<td>Orangy brown, very light</td>
<td>Sticky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Firm</td>
<td>Fatty (wet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown red</td>
<td>Dark brown</td>
<td>Sticky/firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark brown</td>
<td>Dark grey brown</td>
<td>Sticky/firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark orange</td>
<td>Dark orange loam</td>
<td>Sticky/firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark patches</td>
<td>Yellow brown</td>
<td>Sticky/firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark orange loam</td>
<td>Yellow/orange brown</td>
<td>Sticky/firm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"...another of my examples has something about some flint that is ‘snuff coloured’ & I don’t know if I’ve ever seen snuff, let alone know what colour it is, or might have been over 150 years ago, and I would think it would make sense to take some kind of integrated approach from the outset,...” [G. Carver]

**For data entry:** Semi-controlled vocabularies represent a useful compromise somewhere between descriptive & controlled vocabularies, the best of both worlds!

**For data retrieval:** The worst of all worlds (Re. find all the iron age post holes)

This problem arises from trying to do two different things within a single input field. Should do both, but separately – **1) describe using free text description fields, and 2) index using controlled index index fields**
LOD Heritage Vocabularies: http://www.heritageidata.org

Heritage Data
Linked Data Vocabularies for Cultural Heritage

Vocabularies
We have used the STEP vocabulary to create an LOD data model, which has then been exported to SKOS format, and each vocabulary has been linked to the appropriate domain. There are direct links to each vocabulary, and there are also available downloads and a hierarchical listings for each vocabulary.

English Heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEME</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>DOWNLOADS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE</td>
<td>MINERALOGY</td>
<td>SKOS (RDF)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HUMIDIFICATION</td>
<td>SKOS ( RDF)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DENDROCHRONOLOGY</td>
<td>SKOS ( RDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING MATERIALS (EH)</td>
<td>THESARUS OF MAIN CONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>SKOS ( RDF)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MATERIbL TYPES (eg. the walls)</td>
<td>SKOS ( RDF)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOR INDEXING</td>
<td>SKOS ( RDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEATHER</td>
<td>SKOS ( RDF)</td>
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Recent Posts
- Vocabularies in a useful form
- Term suggestion, in a widget. What's a widget?
- Linked Open Data: a practical introduction for libraries, museums and archives – CIGS Event
- Wanted: Fledgling Moustache-wielding Crime Novelist with a penchant for URLs.
- How many beans make 5? or One man's fish is another man's poisson

Recent Comments
- Heritage Vocabularies; widgets now available | Archaeogeomancy: Digital Heritage Specialists on Vocabularies in a useful form
Example: Aztalan

- Aztalan – a prehistoric archaeological site in Southern Wisconsin dating AD 800-1200.
- Has been examined and excavated by both amateur and professional archaeologists for over 175 years.
The Aztalan Site [47 JE001] Jefferson County, Wisconsin

Aztalan National Historic Landmark

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Aztalan - Looking west
Aztalan – looking south
WATERTOWN CHRONICLE.

VOL. IV.—NO. 32. WATERTOWN, WIS.—WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1881. WHOLE NO. 138.

THE CHRONICLE.

Boldest Annual Prove Festivitas.

A tale of the adventures of the

Indians, in their annual festivity,

shown by the columns below.

The chronicles of the various

tribes, in their annual festival.

The history of the annual festivity

of the Indians, as related by the

columns below.

The records of the annual festivity

of the Indians, as described by the

columns below.

The accounts of the annual festivity

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Madison July 6, 1830

Dear Sir,

A few days ago, when at Astaban examining some ancient works, I was informed that you had made some investigations there in former times, and wishing to ascertain all the facts respecting their interest, I take the liberty of asking you to give me an account of the results of your examinations and reflections. Did you find the remains of cloth? Are the works in your opinion uses of defense — and for what reasons? Generally, I would be happy to receive any full information you may communicate on the subject.

I find Judge Hays' original map requires some corrections and additions. I shall present it to the public a thorough and correct one.

Geo. Hays.

Your truly,

J. A. Lapham.
Fig. 34.—Section of refuse pit V-81.
Some examples of Aztalan ceramics
Chipped stone hoes

Projectile points or “arrowheads”
Ground stone axes

Discoidals or gaming stones

Ground stone pendant

Sandstone abraders
Animal bone

Animal bone made into artifacts
Shell beads; shell from Florida coast

Mussel shell hoes
Copper tools; Lake Superior copper

Copper maskettes
Charred corn kernels

“Aztalan brick”
Aztalan houses
one end
12.
mammal head at base bone length 5 1/2 inches

bone, broken at base 1.2 1/4 inches
broken at base l. 3 inches
rolled shell temper l. 1 1/4 inches

on rim, exemplar brown, shell temper
groove, improper shell temper

bone, ground point, polished, broken end l. 2 1/4 inches

brown piece, encased on edge 2 1/4 inches

painted rim red

shell tempered

designed

9.17

2 1/4 inches
Aztalan GIS showing all excavations through 1996
A. 10YR3/2 Clay Loam
B. 10YR3/2 Clay Loam with flecks of charcoal
C. 10YR4/3 Sand with fine gravel
D. 10YR3/4 Clay Loam with 10YR3/4 sand mottles (x)
E. 10YR2/2 Loam
F. 10YR3/4 Silt Loam with large mottles of 10YR6/8 clay; mussel shell scattered throughout
G. 10YR3/1 Silty Clay Loam with thin layers of other soils
H. 10YR3/4 Sand
I. 10YR3/3 Clay Loam
J. 10YR5/3 Clay with shell
K. 10YR3/3 Silty Loam
L. 10YR5/4 Clay Loam
M. 10YR3/2 Clay
N. 10YR4/3 Sand
O. 10YR3/3 Silt Loam
P. 10YR2/1 Silty Clay Loam with thin layers of soils of different colors
Q. 10YR4/3 Silty Clay Loam
R. 10YR3/4 Sand
S. 10YR2/1 Silty Clay Loam
T. very mottled layer with sand that is 10YR5/4, Clay that is 2.5YR2.5/3, Clay that is 10YR6/3, and Clay Loam that is 10YR4/2
U. 10YR2/1 Silty Clay Loam
V. 2.5YR6/2 Silty Clay Loam
W. 10YR33 Sand with some charcoal
X. 10YR4/4 Sand
Y. 10YR6/3 Clay with lots of mussel shell
### TABLE 4. Aztalan 2013 Gravel Knoll and West-of-Palisade Radiocarbon Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Name</th>
<th>Measured C14 Years (Years RCYBP)</th>
<th>Measured Calibrated C14 Years (BP)</th>
<th>Error +/- (Years)</th>
<th>Upper Limit (Cal BP)</th>
<th>Lower Limit (Cal BP)</th>
<th>Mean Calibrated Year AD</th>
<th>Lower Age Limit (AD) - 2 sigma</th>
<th>Upper Age Limit (AD) - 2 sigma</th>
<th>Material dated</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GK1 Beta-374816</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>Charcoal – AMS Unit 4, Fea 4a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GK2 Beta-374817</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Carbonized wood – AMS – Unit 3, PM2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GK3 Beta-374818</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>1670</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Carbonized wood – AMS – Unit 3, PM2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GK4 Beta-374819</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>1025</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>Wood: Radiometric Unit 2, Fea 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP1 Beta-374821</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>Charcoal – AMS Unit 25, Fea 101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP2 Beta-374822</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>1130</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>Charcoal – AMS Unit 25, Fea 101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP3 Beta-375567</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>Charcoal – AMS Unit 24, Fea 103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates reported as radiocarbon years before present consider the year 1950 to be the ‘present’ date.

*Upper and lower age limits are calculated as the two-sigma standard deviation of the calibrated radiocarbon age.
The Future
Teach to the Next Generation
Cultural Heritage Informatics Initiative

Hosted and administered by the Department of Anthropology in partnership with MATRIX: The Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences at Michigan State University, The Cultural Heritage Informatics Initiative is a platform for interdisciplinary scholarly collaboration in the domain of digital cultural heritage. In addition, the initiative strives to equip students with the methodological skills necessary to creatively apply information, communication, and computing technology to cultural heritage materials, questions, and challenges.

from the Cultural Heritage Informatics blog:

Cultural Heritage and Politics: Dealing with the Closure of the Illinois State Museum
October 12, 2015 / Henry Lee

On October 1st the Illinois State Museum (ISM), and its affiliates, closed its doors to the public. The staff is still going to work, but no one is able to visit the 138 year-old museum system. I have spent the past three summers working as a graduate assistant on the Morton Village Archaeological Project, an ongoing collaborative research project between ISM and the Elgin-McHenry Project. I would like to share my experience working with ISM staff, Dr. Michael Corbin, Associate Curator of Anthropology at ISM, and Dr. Michael Conner, Associate Curator of Anthropology at ISM, and have trained undergraduates and volunteers in excavation and laboratory techniques at the Morton Village site, located within 2 miles of the ISM.

Current and Recent CHI Projects

Nkwegjong: The Laking area has a long and deep history of use by Native communities in the Great Lakes. While there were only a few permanent habitations in the area, a number of temporary camps were set up for various reasons. By 1954, more than 40 million sets were around.

Visualizing Southern Television: Between 1942 and 1960, television networks spread across the United States like wildfire. By 1954, more than 40 million sets were around.

Cuboiroti: The Cuboiroti website project is dedicated to a digital image mapping of Africa-inspired religious cultural heritage in the eastern Cuban region of Oriente.

Virtual Black Romulus Cultural Heritage Map: Digitizing and preserving African American history and heritage is an important mission in the digital age. The Virtual Black Romulus Cultural Heritage Map is a 3D model of a site in Cleveland, Ohio, that was once the site of a large African American community.
MSU Campus Archaeology Program
Think About Data Differently
Credit for Publishing Data

Project: San Diego Archaeological Center

The San Diego Archaeological Center (SDAC) is a nationally recognized leader in the curation of archaeological collections, curating collections for the Department of Defense, City of San Diego and private parties. The Center accepts for accession archaeological collections to preserve in perpetuity for the benefit of the public. The Center is dedicated to making the collections available to the public as a cultural resource through educational programming and exhibits, research projects, tours, volunteer opportunities, student internships and cultural use.

This sample of SDAC collections published in Open Context represents only a portion of the overall collections managed by the SDAC.

For more information, please visit the SDAC Website.

Suggested Citation for this Project Overview:

Content Associated with this Project
Items in these categories have been viewed: 111262 times. ( Ranked: 23 of 54)

- Small Find: 3010 items contained in this category.
- Context: 105 items contained in this category.
- Site: 49 items contained in this category.
- Groundstone: 46 items contained in this category.
- Reference Collection: 17 items contained in this category.

Downloadable Tables with this Project
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Associated People
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