

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE

NEW WAYS IN RESEARCHING AND PRESENTING THE PAST

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Although being dedicated to the past of mankind, archaeology is well on its way to the Information Age. Excavations, the preservation of monuments and objects as well as research activities produce more data each day. However, increasing amounts of data are no panacea against methodological mistakes or missing creativity to impart knowledge to others – data has to be selected, analysed and evaluated. In short: “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted” (Cameron, 1963, p. 13).

This session was dedicated to innovative ways in researching and presenting the past in the early 21st century, featuring communications on various digital methods. It aimed at circulating scientific research and its results on the one hand, and at promoting their potential to create new methodologies and models. Although these groundbreaking innovations include both digital and analogue developments from our point of view, the presentations submitted were all on technological aspects. Nevertheless, the force is also with the analogue world as illustrated by various innovative projects of the last years.

Telling the history of the world as a facebook timeline (Oversheet, 2011) showed that – admittedly superficial but hilariously funny – books on history can address a wide audience. Astonishingly, simple innovations turn out to be most useful sometimes as illustrated by a publication of punches on Samian ware (Thomas & Greiner, 2005).¹ Providing the illustrations on laminated sheets in a ring binder, this work facilitates the analysis of this important type of Roman finds a lot.

However, the most common solutions to deal with the growing amounts of data produced by scientific research involve computing. Reflecting this, the session’s communications covered a wide range of technological methods, well-established tools like GIS analyses (D. Maio) as well as the application of game engines and real-time 3D simulations for scientific purposes (A. Goren *et al.*). 3D documentation and presentation of archaeological excavations was further discussed in a paper on two cases studies using structure-from-motion (J. Seubers). Two other communications dealt with database solutions – a comparison of different DBMS adjusted for certain purposes (A. Maspoli) on the one hand, and a presentation of different catalogues published online (G. Scriba/U. Stockinger) on the other. New digital methodologies are a topic widely discussed in recent conferences.² These efforts to promote, evaluate and jointly develop technological applications further are absolutely necessary to guarantee methodological progress in archaeological research. Besides, the involvement of a scientific audience as wide as possible is essential to prevent that we eventually find ourselves asking what informatics and new media have ever done for us.³ We hope the following articles highlight some new ways in communicating scientific research to fellow archaeologists, other researchers, and the public, and whet your appetite to explore these ways, to not stop at their end, and to find completely new ways.

1. The project is still ongoing, with additional sheets on further punches being published.

2. See also the session *Non-stop revolution! New technologies applied to Archaeology* within the JIA 2015 or several sessions at the EAA 2015 at Glasgow (e.g. *3D Cultural Heritage: Scientific Applications and Communication Mediums, Communicating and Democratising Archaeology through Digital Transparency, It Belongs on the Internet – Communicating Archaeology Online or Re-defining Authenticity in the Age of 3D Digital Reproductions*).

3. See on lacking thankfulness for benefits gained from inventions resp. invaders the classic by Monty Python: <https://youtu.be/ExWfh6sGyso> [Access date: 30/10/2015].

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