Dig Digital - Joint statement from members of the Archaeological Archives Forum

AAF

The Dig Digital project, an initiative of the Archaeological Archives Forum, has created guidance targeting those who deal with digital data in archaeological projects.

The project, funded by Historic England and delivered by DigVentures in partnership with CIfA, was prompted by the Mendoza report and the formation by Historic England and Arts Council England of the Future for Archaeological Archives Programme. The FAAP programme recognised an inconsistent and unsustainable approach to digital data for archaeological projects and archives. The Dig Digital project was designed to address that issue.

The resource includes background information and practical tools which the AAF encourage organisations and individuals to access and use. The Dig Digital resource is designed to support those working across the sector, with an aim to providing consistent advice through all project stages. Bringing professional expectations into line with the new resource, existing CIfA Standards and guidance have been updated to include:

- A requirement to include a Data Management Plan, proportionate to the scale and complexity of the project, within the agreed archaeological method statement (such as the WSI or Project Design).

- Encouragement to use the Data Management Plan as a live and iterative document through the delivery of the archaeological projects through to deposition.

- Fully embedding digital data into the project archive selection process.

- Deposition of digital data with a trusted digital repository, ideally recognised by the Core Trust Seal scheme.

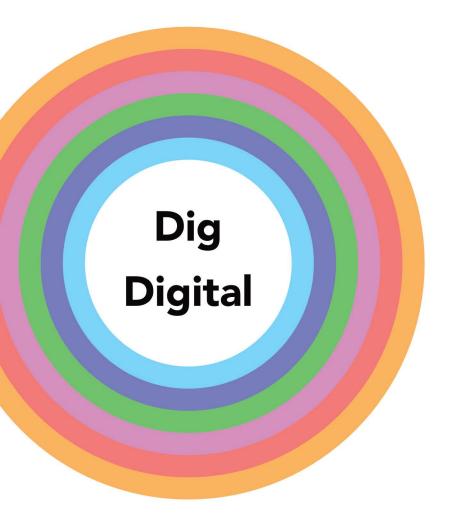This statement is supported by members of the Archaeological Archive Forum, including:

Historic England

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CIfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Dig Digital

www.archaeologists.net/digdigital

Dig Digital

What's in the toolkit?

Key to the sustainable and effective management of digital archives is project planning. The Dig Digital Directory provides an easy look-up document to aid location of relevant materials within the resource.

The guidance includes a template Data Management Plan and example checklist, as well an action plan to implement digital data management methodologies within organisations. Infosheets and quick guides add to the resource pack, providing additional focus to issues or areas which project consultation identified as problematic.

The Dig Digital project has now entered a final project stage to create structured training materials to support implementation. This new work is being delivered by DigVentures and is expected to be live and accessible in 2024. In the meantime, members of the AAF would like to encourage all archaeologists to look at, adapt and make use of the existing resources.

In supporting a good practice approach to the management of sustainable digital data in archaeology, implementation of the Dig Digital resource will move our sector towards FAIR working practices whilst enabling practitioners to meet our industry's professional standards for archives.

Use FAIR principles when collecting, managing and planning to archive digital data - Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable.

CIfA Standards and guidance require that archaeological material is kept in a stable, ordered and accessible archive. For digital data this means a Trusted Digital Repository.

A Data Management Plan (DMP) is required as part of initial project planning and included in key documentation (WSI or PD).

Not all digital material needs to be deposited – an active Selection Policy should consider how and why digital data is selected for inclusion in the preserved Archaeological Archive.

Museums are not equipped to store digital data in perpetuity. Digital data should be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository or national collection.

www.archaeologists.net/digdigital