

Data sharing in archaeology: vision, nightmare or reality?

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The sharing of data via internet technologies is an obvious and basic principle of our information society today. Based on data accessible free of charge by initiatives Open Data¹ or INSPIRE² we are able to observe the independent development of thousands and millions of large and small scale internet applications for traditional web or smartphones. In contrary to the growing amount of data accessible in the web and requested by a wide range of users and developers, it can be stated without doubt that archaeological data are still widely unpublished. Even if forward-looking projects can be observed in certain countries or regions³ the overall development of digital archaeological data across Europe shows no significant step forward towards an active sharing of data. In contrary to this lack of development we can observe that data resp. information from the field of cultural heritage and especially archaeology is particular demanded by the public and private sector. Information from this field may be part of a high number of applications for different use cases such as tourism or education.

This presentation shall discuss possible causes of the hitherto lack of sharing of archaeological data (meta-, raw, and aggregated data) and shall determine the impact of potential key factors like institutional issues, traditional thinking or technological barriers. Based on the current barriers and lacks the needs and requirements can be analyzed in order to enable data sharing in the field of archaeology. This shall be done from an internal and external point of view.

Based on the lacks and needs of the current situation this presentation shall furthermore discuss the possibility of an open archaeological data initiative and discuss a core set of data sharing principles for the field of the archaeology. Archaeological data, gathered mostly by tax money, can significantly contribute to the socioeconomic benefit of the society and help raising the public awareness for the importance of the archaeology.

¹ for example: <http://opengovernmentdata.org/>

² <http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

³ <http://openarchaeology.net/>