



7796 – Creating a sectoral standard and guidance for managing digital data generated from archaeological investigations

Starter for Ten Survey: Summary Report

Jen Parker Wooding and Manda Forster

7796 – Creating a sectoral standard and guidance for managing
digital data generated from archaeological investigations

Start for Ten Survey: Summary Report

Prepared on behalf of:

Historic England

Compiled by:

Jen Parker Wooding and Manda Forster

DigVentures

The Workshop
Victoria Yard
26 Newgate
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8NG

hello@digventures.com

0333 011 3990

@thedigventurers



Purpose of document

This document provides a summary of survey data collected as part of the HE funded project '7796 – Creating a sectoral standard and guidance for managing digital data generated from archaeological investigations'. Its purpose is to provide a background to how practitioners currently work with, manage and archive digital data in archaeological projects.

DigVentures is a Registered Organisation of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. DigVentures accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the project sponsors and executive, for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

Social Value Act

DigVentures is a social enterprise dedicated to designing and delivering publicly focused archaeology projects. We are constituted as a limited company, with a constitution reflecting the wider social, economic and environmental benefits of the projects we deliver.

Copyright

© DigVentures Limited 2019

Document Control Grid

Project Name and HE Reference:	7796 Creating a sectoral standard and guidance for managing digital data generated from archaeological investigations. Communications Plan
Author(s)	Jen Parker Wooding PhD ACIfA Manda Forster PhD MCIfA
Origination date:	10/12/2018
Revisers:	Manda Forster PhD MCIfA
Date of last revision:	04/06/2019
Version:	2.1
Summary of changes:	Updated with comments from PAB



Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Starter for Ten	1
2	Survey Respondents	1
2.1	The Dig Digital Beta Group	1
2.2	The Starter For Ten survey respondents	5
3	Survey Responses: ALL RESPONDENTS	6
3.1	How would you rate your knowledge of standards required for digital data in archaeological archives?	6
3.2	How would you rate your organisation's knowledge of standards required for digital data in archaeological archives?	6
3.3	Where would you currently seek advice about digital data collection or management in archaeological projects?	7
3.4	Have you ever accessed or used any of the following documents / guidance?	7
3.5	Have you used any other guidance or best practice documents relating to digital archives?	9
4	Advisory roles (Local and National Advisors)	9
4.1	For which type of body do you set the requirements for archaeological projects?	9
4.2	Do you currently refer to or set specific requirements for contractors relating to digital data?	9
4.3	If YES, can you provide an example of the requirement you include regarding digital data collection or long-term preservation?	9
4.4	Do you refer to ClfA Standards and guidance for best practice regarding the management of archaeological archives?	10
4.5	Do you require that the project is recorded on a regional or national register / index at the start of the project?	10
4.6	Are you able to check if requirements are being met?	10
4.7	Anything to add about setting the requirement for digital data in archaeology projects?	10
4.8	Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?	10
5	Project team role	11
5.1	Do you feel that the requirements for digital data as part of the archaeological project archive are clearly stated in the project brief?	11
5.2	Do you have an internal organisational policy or process for managing digital data within projects?	11
5.3	How digital is your workflow? Using the scale below, show the extent that the following types of project data are digital?	11
5.4	In your experience, to what extent is digital data actively managed during project delivery in the following ways?	12
5.5	Do you feel that digital data is fully embedded in everyday project archive processes?	12
5.6	Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?	12



6	Archive Respository / Museums	13
6.1	Do your deposition guidelines refer to digital archives?	13
6.2	Does your repository collect, and curate digital material deposited as part of an archive?	13
6.3	Are you able to use digital archive data for education or learning within your organisation?	13
6.4	Are you able to make digital data accessible to researchers?	14
6.5	Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?	14
7	Historic Environment Officers / Managers	14
7.1	What type of digital data from archaeological projects do you find most relevant to the HER?	14
7.2	How do you currently access digital data which relates to archaeological projects in your region?	14
7.3	Are there ways that the HER would benefit from greater access to the digital data collected during an archaeological project?	14
7.4	Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?	15
8	Conclusions	15
8.1	What do we know now?	15
8.2	Implications for the Dig Digital project	16

Figures

Figure 1:	Beta Group demographics – job role, location and gender	3
Figure 2:	Beta Group and ClfA membership	4
Figure 3:	Starter For Ten survey respondents by role	5
Figure 4:	Job roles - Dig Digital Beta Group and Starter For Ten survey respondents	5
Figure 5:	Starter For Ten survey – standards for digital data in archaeological archives	6
Figure 6:	Start For Ten – finding advice on digital data management	7
Figure 7:	Starter For Ten – use and implementation of guidance documents in archaeology	8
Figure 8:	Starter For Ten – digital work processes	12

Tables

Table 1:	Job roles for Beta Group members	2
Table 2:	Beta Group Members and the digital knowledge scale	2
Table 3:	Starter For Ten – management of digital data in project delivery	13



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Starter for Ten

This report summarises the results of the #DigDigital Survey 1: Starter for ten focusing on digital archives in archaeology. The survey was undertaken between 13/11/2018 and 08/12/2018, circulated directly to Dig Digital Beta Group members, ClfA members, ClfA Registered Organisations, HER Forum members, ALGAO, SMA Members and FAME members.

The aim of this survey was to find out how people think about, plan for and manage digital data on a day to day basis. The information provided illustrates that the management of digital data varies considerably across the historic environment sector with consistency of approach a major factor for concern. A theme running through the answers across all roles was the requirement for consistent guidance, and a consistent approach to the requirements as outlined in briefs. The provision of training across all roles, not just those directly associated with archiving, was also highlighted to ensure widespread knowledge and accountability.

2 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

2.1 The Dig Digital Beta Group

At the start of the project, a general call was circulated for interested individuals to sign up to a Dig Digital Beta Group. The group will form a central part of the consultation and implementation planning process, facilitating a degree of testing prior to wider circulation. The project team hoped to enlist the support of 100 individuals which reflected a good cross section of archaeological practitioners. When the Beta Group sign up was closed at the end of 2018, 185 people had signed up to get involved.

Beta Group participants were asked to answer a few questions on signing up, so we could review the representativeness of the sample group against the archaeological profession in the UK. The group is very well balanced geographically, with a wide regional distribution covering all UK regions and comparable with the Archaeological Market Survey 2018 data (Aitchison, forthcoming). The largest group of individuals is based in the South West (n=32, 18%), with most other regions fairly well covered (between 12 and 25 people, 7 and 14%) and smaller groups in the north (North East n=8, 4%; North West n=7, 4%), Wales (n=6, 3%) and Northern Ireland (n=3, 2%) (see Figure 1).

The job roles of Beta Group members are also representative, with most sectors where archaeologists work covered – no recent comparable data for the distribution of roles is available for direct comparison. It is worth noting that a number of people selecting more than one role to summarise their work. In total, 16 different role headers were included with 185 individuals selecting 416 roles in total. Of those roles the largest group were field archaeologists (n=66, 16%) and the smaller groups National Government Advisors and HER Officers / Managers (for both groups n=8, 2%). The full data is shown in Table 1 below.

Beta Group members were also asked about gender, ClfA membership and their digital knowledge (expressed as a confidence scale). Gender groups broadly reflect the known data for the archaeological profession (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013), with 46% (n=85) female respondents, 53% male (n=97) and 1% (n=2) other (compared to 46% female and 54% male in the 2013 study). ClfA membership is slightly elevated in the Beta Group with



approximately 67% of respondents being members of the professional body. By comparison, the recent Archaeological Market Survey 2018 data shows that ClfA membership has reached just over 50% of the profession (Aitchison, forthcoming).

The final question was a finger in the air test for the confidence of our Beta Group members when it came to digital knowledge. Participants were asked to position themselves on a digital knowledge scale from Confused (0), through the mid-point of 'I know what I need to know' to Expert at the top end (100). This was later categorised on a more sensitive scale, allowing us to pick out the absolute beginners from those with working knowledge (see Table 2). On this basis, the Beta Group members are generally knowledgeable with 36% (n=65) having a working knowledge, 22% (n=41), very knowledgeable and 20% (n=36) in the expert category. A good proportion of people did elect to put themselves in the 20 – 50% end of the scale (21%, n=40), with only a single person putting themselves as totally confused (1%, n=1).

Table 1: Job roles for Beta Group members

<i>Beta Group survey roles</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Total</i>
<i>Planning archaeologist</i>	21	5%
<i>National Govt</i>	8	2%
<i>Archives Manager / Museum</i>	58	14%
<i>HER Officer / Manager</i>	8	2%
<i>Student</i>	14	3%
<i>Field archaeologist</i>	66	16%
<i>Project Manager</i>	39	9%
<i>PX Manager</i>	22	5%
<i>Consultant</i>	29	7%
<i>Environmental/finds</i>	20	5%
<i>Geomatics</i>	9	2%
<i>Specialist (other)</i>	22	5%
<i>Illustrator / photography</i>	22	5%
<i>Community archaeologist</i>	20	5%
<i>Researcher at a University</i>	26	6%
<i>Archives Office/Manager</i>	32	8%

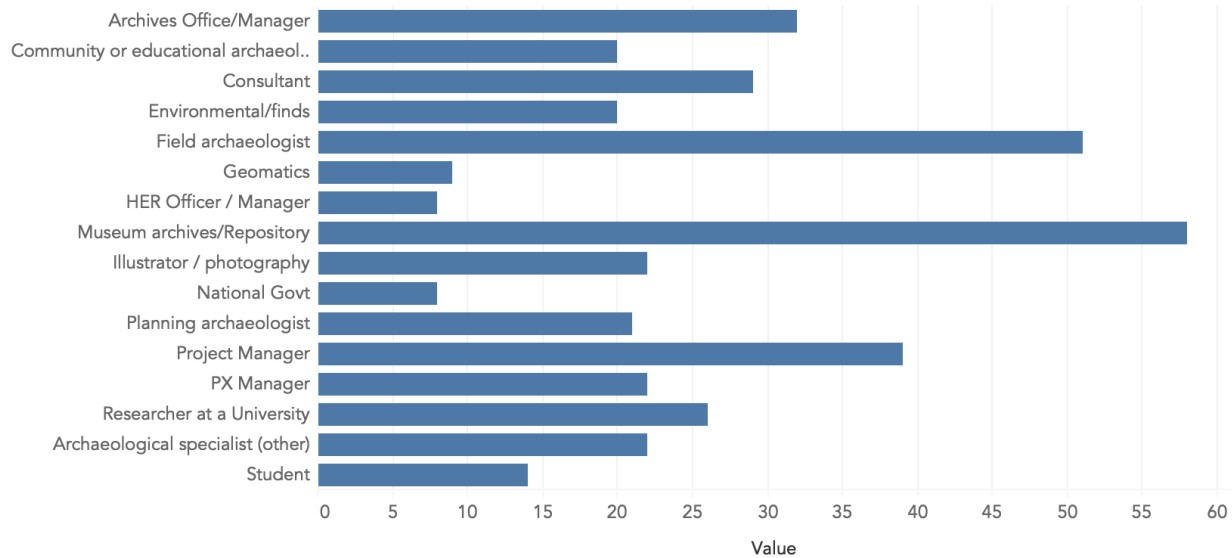
Table 2: Beta Group Members and the digital knowledge scale

<i>Category</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Total</i>
<i>Absolute beginner 0 - 20</i>	1	1%
<i>Learning the ropes 20 - 39</i>	19	10%
<i>Need to know 40 - 49</i>	21	11%
<i>Working knowledge 50 - 69</i>	65	36%
<i>Knowledgeable 70-80</i>	41	22%
<i>Expert 80-100</i>	36	20%



Figure 1: Beta Group demographics – job role, location and gender

Job roles



Location

UK Region1	% UK Region	Total
Northern Ireland	2%	3
Wales	3%	6
North West	4%	7
North East	5%	9
East Midlands	7%	12
Scotland	7%	13
London	9%	16
Yorkshire And The ..	9%	17
West Midlands	11%	21
East	12%	22
South East	14%	25
South West	17%	32

Location and gender

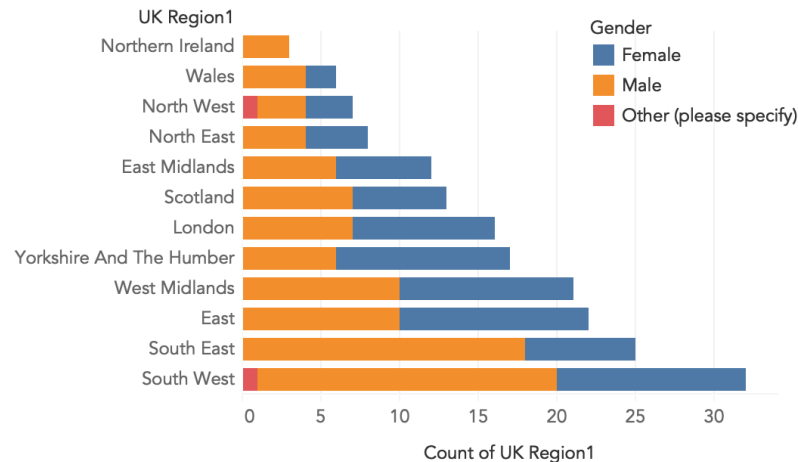
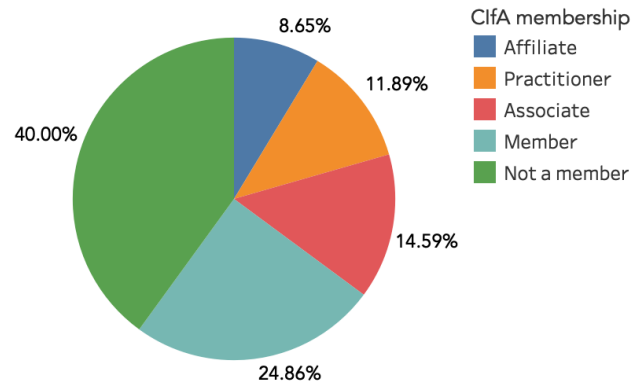
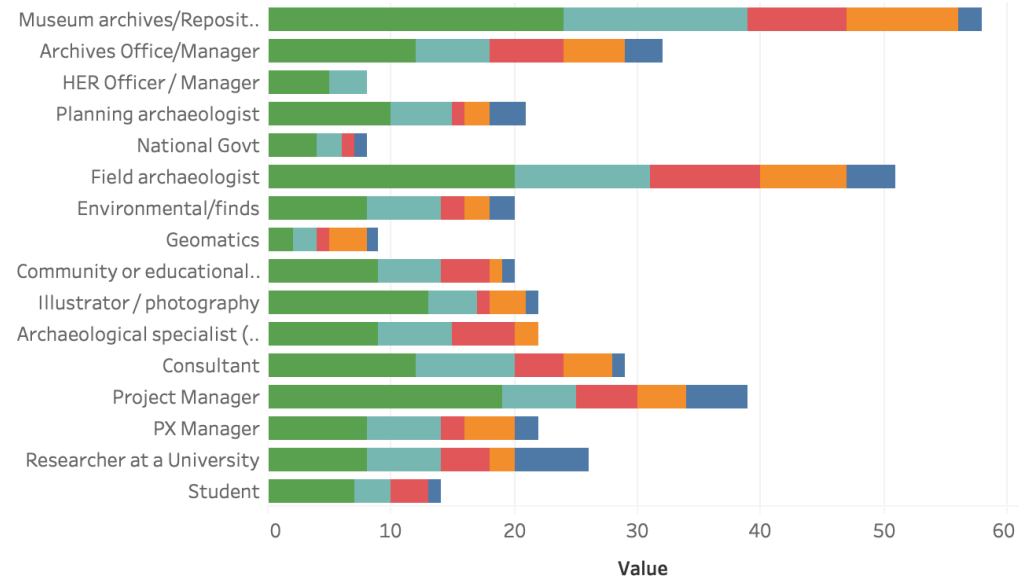


Figure 2: Beta Group and ClfA membership

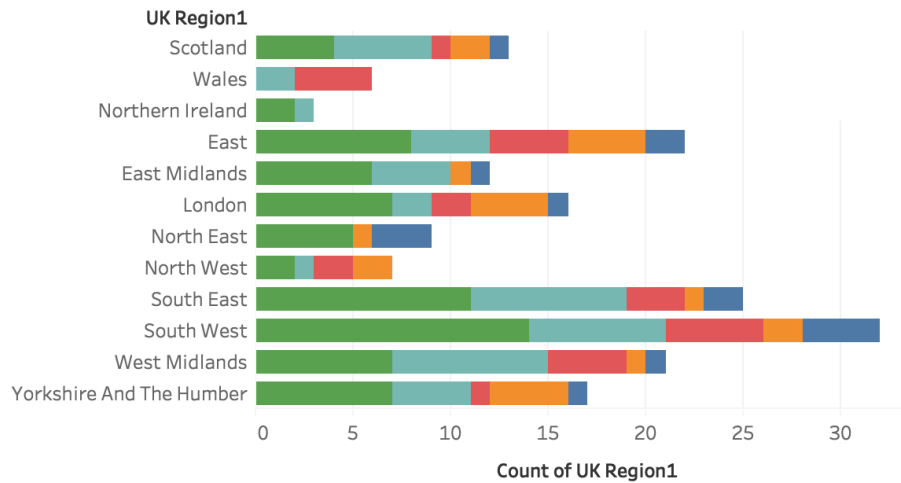
ClfA membership



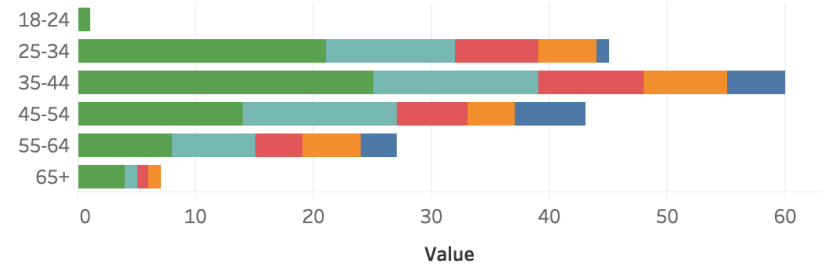
Job role



Location



Age



2.2 The Starter For Ten survey respondents

There were 312 survey responses in total across five assigned roles (see Figure 1). These included those working within a HER, those working within advisory roles (Local or National Advisors), those working with archives, specifically involving their curation (Archive Curators, Museum Curators), those working as part of project team, including project design, field work, analysis and post excavation processes (Project team member) and, finally those who have a general interest in digital data in archaeology (Interest). The HER (n=35, 11%), Advisors (n=27, 9%) and Archive Curators (n=35, 11%) were similar in size in terms of respondents, with the Interest role attracting a few more (n=47, 15%). However, when the Project Team role is amalgamated it is by far the largest group (n=168, 54%). The distribution of roles is broadly comparable with the Beta Group members, though with greater numbers of HER roles and Museum roles visible in the Starter for Ten respondents (see Figure 2).

Figure 3: Starter For Ten survey respondents by role

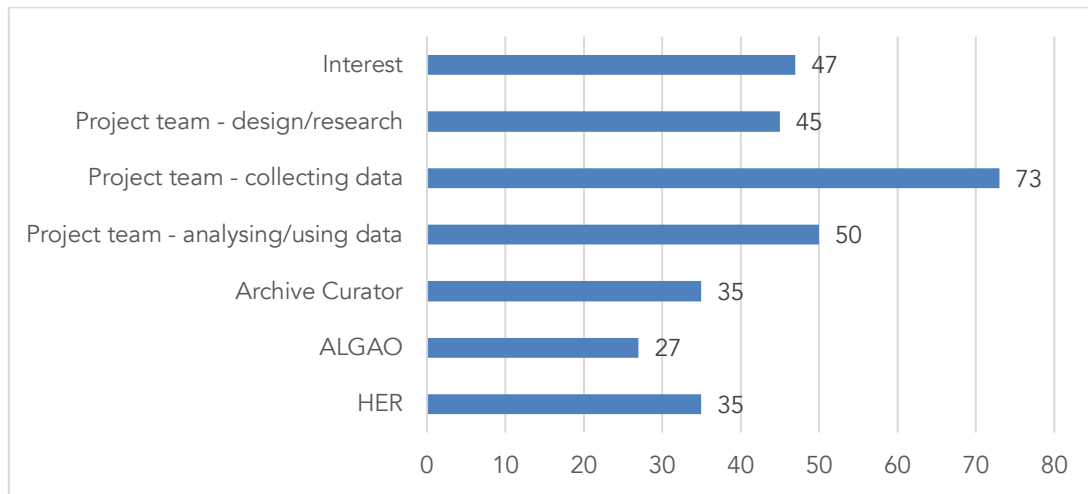
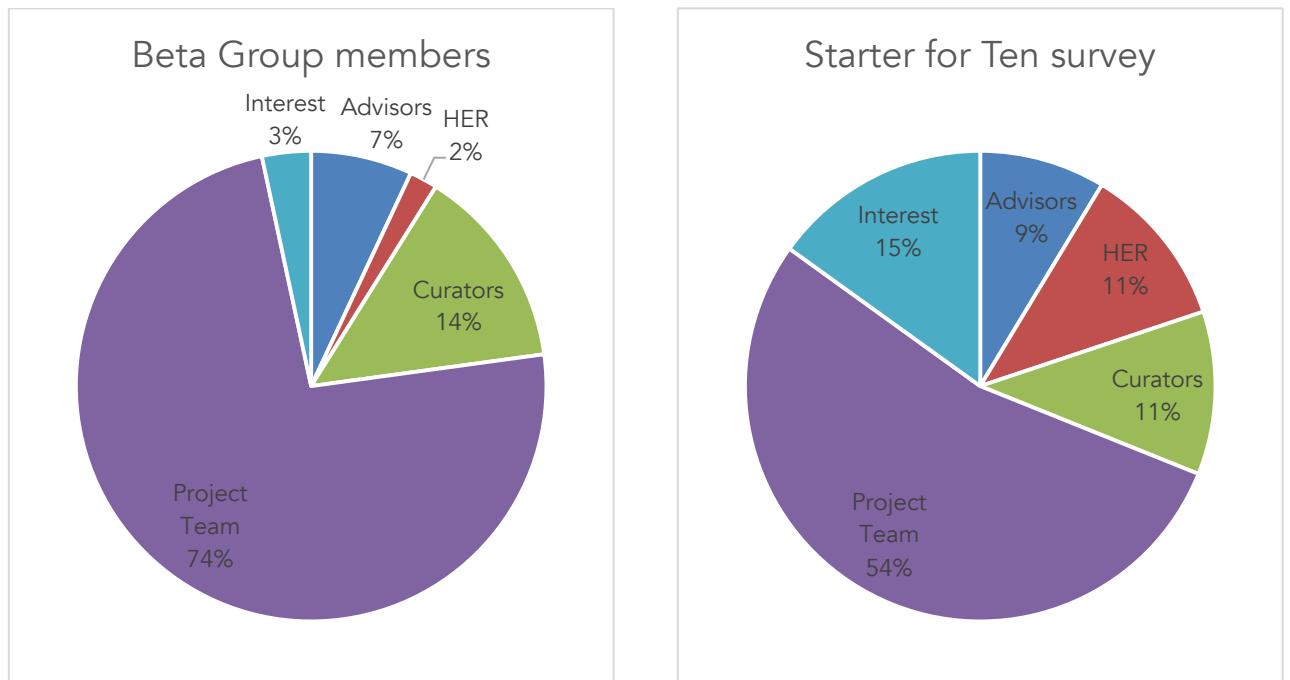


Figure 4: Job roles - Dig Digital Beta Group and Starter For Ten survey respondents



3 SURVEY RESPONSES: ALL RESPONDENTS

3.1 How would you rate your knowledge of standards required for digital data in archaeological archives?

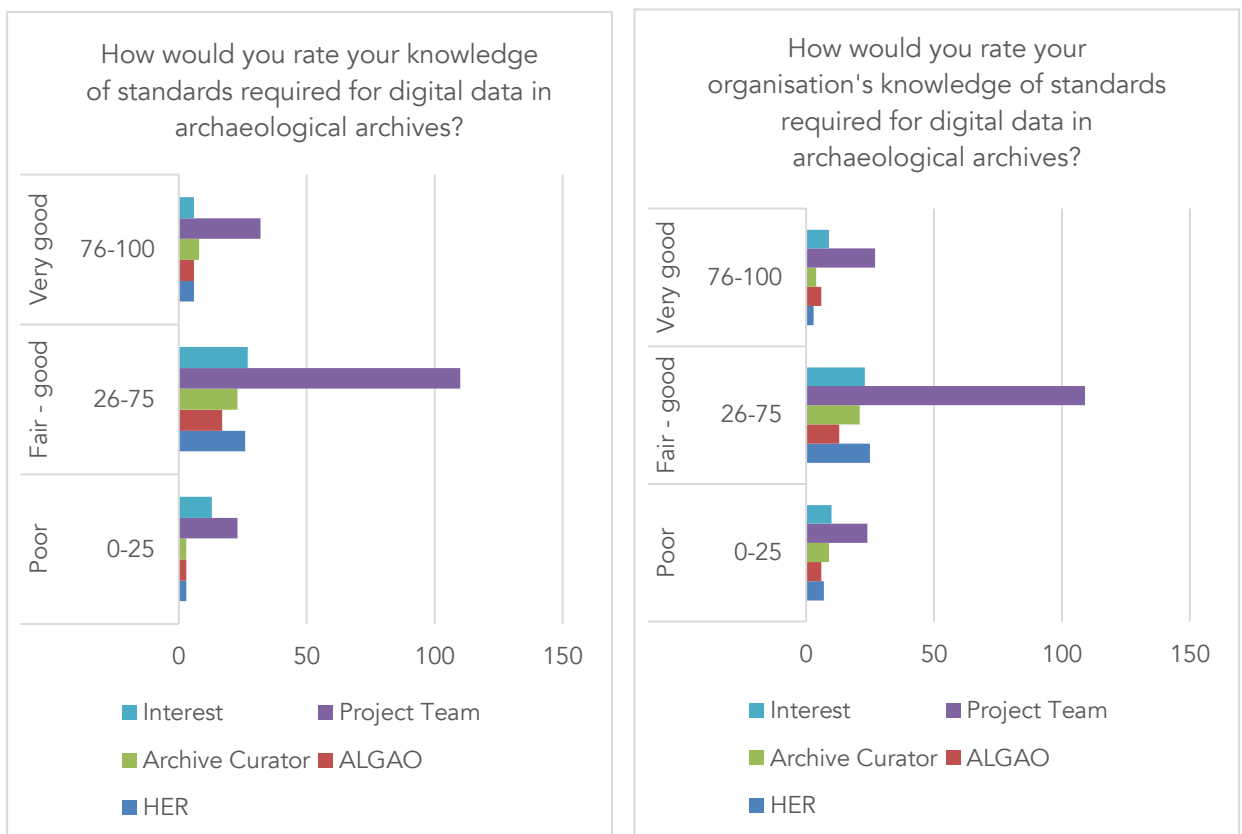
Summary: There were 306 responses. Across all roles most respondents considered themselves to have fair to good knowledge of the standards required for digital data in archaeological archives. Of those, 5% indicated they had no knowledge at all and 2% indicated they were extremely knowledgeable.

Headline: Generally, those completing the survey appeared to have some knowledge of digital data standards required for archaeological archives but there is also potentially some substantial doubt across those operating within the sector as to whether their knowledge is up-to-date and relevant in different parts of the UK.

3.2 How would you rate your organisation's knowledge of standards required for digital data in archaeological archives?

Summary: There were 296 responses. As with the assessment of individual knowledge above, the results were similar across all roles for the levels of perceived organisation knowledge. The majority considered their organisations to have a fair to good knowledge of the standards required for digital data, though the results do indicate that in some cases respondents thought their organisations knowledge was poorer than their own. A total of 4% indicated that they considered their organisations to have no knowledge at all with 3% indicating their organisations were extremely knowledgeable. These results may reflect knowledge being restricted to certain personnel directly working with archives or digital data, and as a result, there is a disconnect across organisations, with some unaware of the standards required.

Figure 5: Starter For Ten survey – standards for digital data in archaeological archives

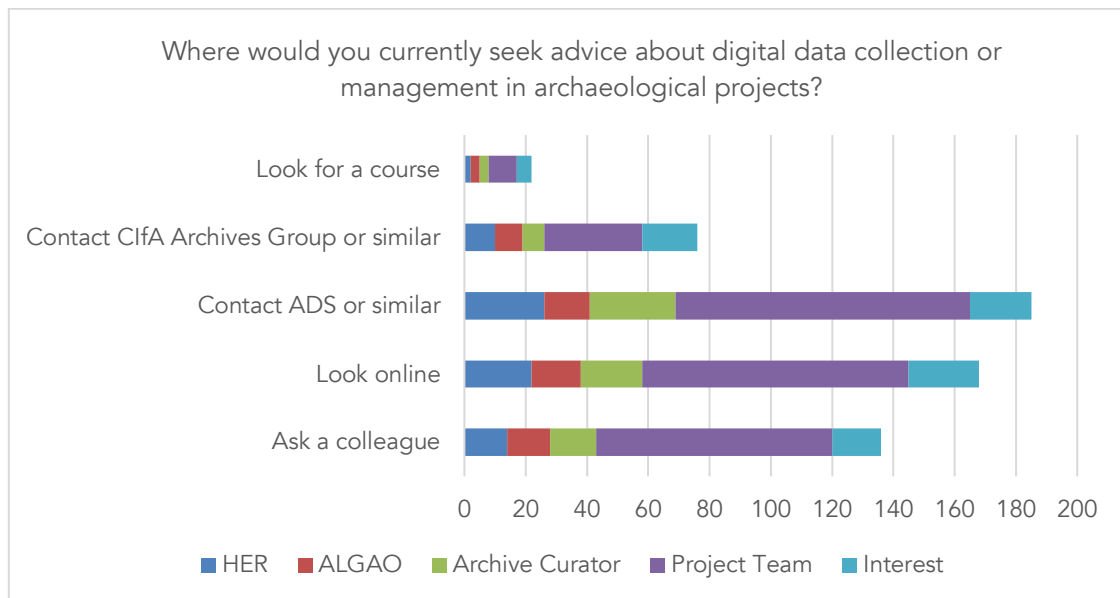


3.3 Where would you currently seek advice about digital data collection or management in archaeological projects?

Summary: Across all roles 43% of respondents indicated that they would contact ADS or similar to seek advice about digital data collection, followed by looking online (24%) and asking a colleague (19%). Contacting the ClfA archives group and looking for a training course were the least popular options. Other suggestions included regional options including RCAHMW and the SMR forum Scotland, in addition to contacting the local HER/curator, CBA, PAS, local units, museum guides, library resources and other ClfA groups such as the Information Management group.

Headline: These answers indicate that people want to access information and guidance quickly and easily. There is seldom the time or resource to attend a training course unless it is directly associated with a person's role, therefore, access to information online or via a colleague is favourable and more cost effective.

Figure 6: Start For Ten – finding advice on digital data management



3.4 Have you ever accessed or used any of the following documents / guidance?

Respondents were asked if they had accessed or used any of the following documents:

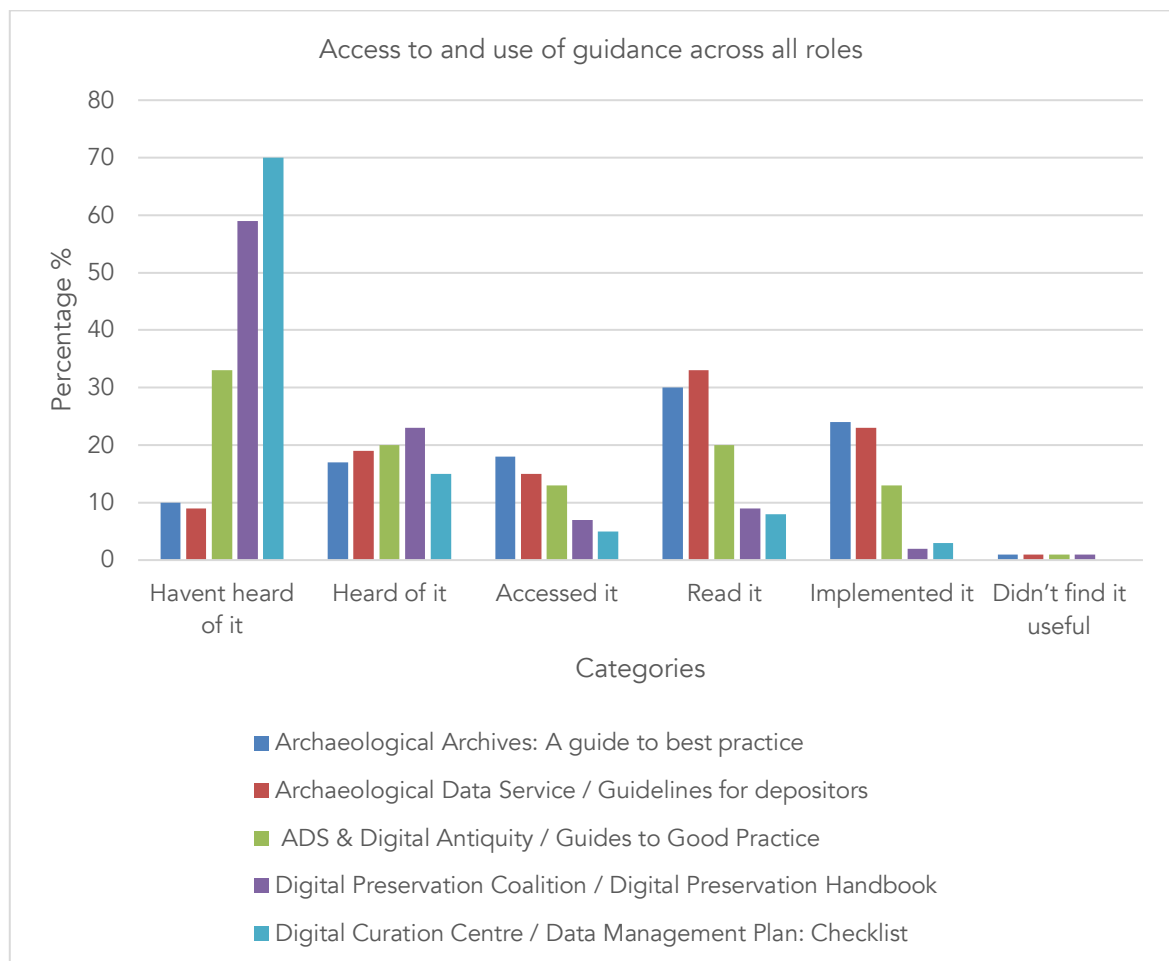
- Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice (AAF / Brown 2007): Across all roles 17% of respondents indicated that they were aware of this document, with 30% indicating they had read it and 24% implementing it. 10% of respondents were not aware of the document; these were largely from the project team and interest roles.
- Archaeological Data Service / Guidelines for depositors: Across all roles 19% of respondents indicated that they were aware of this document, with 33% indicating they had read it and 23% implementing it. 9% of respondents were not aware of the document; these were largely from the project team and interest roles.
- ADS & Digital Antiquity / Guides to Good Practice: Across all roles 20% of respondents indicated that they were aware of this document, with 20% indicating

they had read it and 13% implementing it. A third of respondents (33%) were not aware of the document; these were largely from the project team and interest roles.

- Digital Preservation Coalition / Digital Preservation Handbook: Across all roles 23% of respondents indicated that they were aware of this document, with 9% indicating they had read it and just 2% implementing it. More than half of the respondents (59%) were not aware of the document; these were largely associated with the project team role (59%), with lower levels ranging from 8-14% across all other roles.
- Digital Curation Centre / Data Management Plan Checklist: Across all roles just 15% of respondents indicated that they were aware of this document, with 8% indicating they had read it and 3% implementing it. Most respondents (70%) were not aware of the document; they were largely associated with the project team role (58%), with lower levels ranging from 9-13% across all other roles.

Headline: Across all roles the AAF Guidelines and ADS Guidelines for depositors were read and implemented most frequently. Respondents were accessing and reading the ADS Guides for Good Practice to a lesser degree. The non-sector specific guidance from Digital Preservation Coalition and Digital Curation Centre were the least heard of, read and implemented across all roles.

Figure 7: Starter For Ten – use and implementation of guidance documents in archaeology



3.5 Have you used any other guidance or best practice documents relating to digital archives?

A variety of other guidance documents or places to access guidance were provided as part of the free text comments. These included contacting the SMR forum Scotland, RCAHMMW or accessing the other online resources available as part of the Digital Curation Centre <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/how-guides>. Utilising Historic England guidance, local authority/museum guidelines, ARCHES, HER audit guidelines, INSPIRE metadata standard and a publication entitled *National Standards for Wales for collecting and depositing archaeological remains* by Whyte & Wilson (2010) were also highlighted.

4 ADVISORY ROLES (LOCAL AND NATIONAL ADVISORS)

4.1 For which type of body do you set the requirements for archaeological projects?

There were 24 responses. Most participants in this category (79%, n=19) answered that they set requirements for archaeological projects on behalf of local government, 17% (n=4) on behalf of national government and 4% (n=1) on behalf of a research body.

4.2 Do you currently refer to or set specific requirements for contractors relating to digital data?

Summary: Of the 24 responses, 50% (n=12) indicated that they were not specific about digital data requirements, but did refer to archive standards more generally, 38% (n=9) indicated that they referred to standards set by another body and 13% (n=3) indicated that they did include specific standards set by their own organisation.

Headline: The survey suggests that only a small percentage of advisors refer to specific requirements which may potentially indicate a lack of knowledge or reflect general sector confusion regarding the requirements for digital data and its long-term curation. Either way, it appears clear that the content within a brief will likely vary to a great degree across the UK, making consistent application of set protocols problematic.

4.3 If YES, can you provide an example of the requirement you include regarding digital data collection or long-term preservation?

Using the comment box, 13 respondents summarised their organisations requirements, with ADS featuring four times as the stipulated requirement. ADS was also listed as a requirement in circumstances where the collecting museum could not accept digital archives. One respondent referred to Historic England guidance especially related to Scheduled Monuments Consent, another stated that in Wales 'a reference to the publication *National Standard and Guidance for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales 2017* is required which contains the RCAHMMW guidance on digital archives' and a third highlighted that in Scotland, 'digital data was to be archived in the National Record of the Historic Environment', as part of Historic Environment Scotland.

Headline: These responses demonstrate the differences in requirements across the United Kingdom and the importance of being aware of different archiving protocols.



4.4 Do you refer to ClfA Standards and guidance for best practice regarding the management of archaeological archives?

Summary: There were 24 responses. Of those, 79% (n=19) indicated that they referred to ClfA Standards and guidance for best practice, 13% (n=3) indicated that they did not and 8% (n=2) indicated that reference to ClfA Standards and guidance was recommended in general, but with no specific detail.

Headline: Reference to ClfA Standard and guidance feature highly in project briefs and advisory documentation. However, it is important to ensure as part of the ongoing review of ClfA documentation that adequate signposting is provided to the relevant guidance.

4.5 Do you require that the project is recorded on a regional or national register / index at the start of the project?

Summary: There were 19 responses. Of those, 26% (n=6) indicated that a museum accession number was used, 37% (n=7) used an HER event number and 79% (n=15) an OASIS record.

Headline: An OASIS record is by far the most popular way of recording a project.

4.6 Are you able to check if requirements are being met?

Summary: There were 24 responses. Of those, 79% (n=19) indicated that they were able to check requirements are being met, whilst 21% (n=4) indicated they were not. However, the reality of being able to do this effectively was raised with the time gap between report production and archive deposition highlighted as an issue in the comments. Others also highlighted the role that ADS (suitability of data) and OASIS (email prompts) play in this process.

Headline: The issue appears to be the circumstances of being able to consistently check requirements are being met, as opposed to having the mechanism to check. The sheer number of projects being monitored by local authority advisors, government cuts and the time lapses between project stages make consistent follow up problematic.

4.7 Anything to add about setting the requirement for digital data in archaeology projects?

In the free text comments, 8 people responded to highlight different issues. These included the fact that the current guidelines were not easy to understand and awareness and consistency in approach across the sector was problematic. Concerns regarding the adequate policing of requirements was also outlined, along with problems associated with resourcing and training. Setting requirements for unknown elements was raised i.e. not knowing what will be found, what post-excavation techniques may be applied etc. With the result being more generic references to ClfA Standards and guidance rather than the inclusion of specific conditions.

4.8 Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?

Summary: There were 15 comments. These included more guidance and information regarding what to put in briefs etc but also some highlighted the benefit of having a nationally



adopted industry standard for all to adhere to, rather than lots of different guidance documents to navigate. **Headline:** people want consistency.

5 PROJECT TEAM ROLE

5.1 Do you feel that the requirements for digital data as part of the archaeological project archive are clearly stated in the project brief?

Summary: There were 139 responses. In total 40% (n=55) indicated that the requirements for digital data were not clearly stated, 10% (n=14) indicated that they were and 39% (n=54) indicated the situation was variable.

Headline: These results tie in well with the government advisory role response to the same question (above) whereby half of those responding stated they were not specific about digital data in briefs. The variable approach taken across the UK is evident in the survey responses illustrating consistency of approach as a prominent issue for those undertaking works. The comments provided also highlighted the fact that some involved in projects, for example, the specialists rarely get to see the brief or there isn't a brief in the first place, with some local authorities not issuing them at all. Terminology was also highlighted as an issue, with digital data not being specifically referred to but amalgamated with references to the overall archive.

5.2 Do you have an internal organisational policy or process for managing digital data within projects?

Summary: There were 137 responses. Of those, 46% (n=63) indicated they did have an internal organisational policy or process for managing digital data, 19% (n=26) indicated they did not and 35% (n=48) stated they were working on it.

Headline: It is clear from the survey responses that whilst some organisations do not have specific policies and processes in place, there is an increased awareness of the requirement for more informed management of digital data. Organisations are either creating documentation, reviewing and updating their current documentation or actively seeking help and guidance.

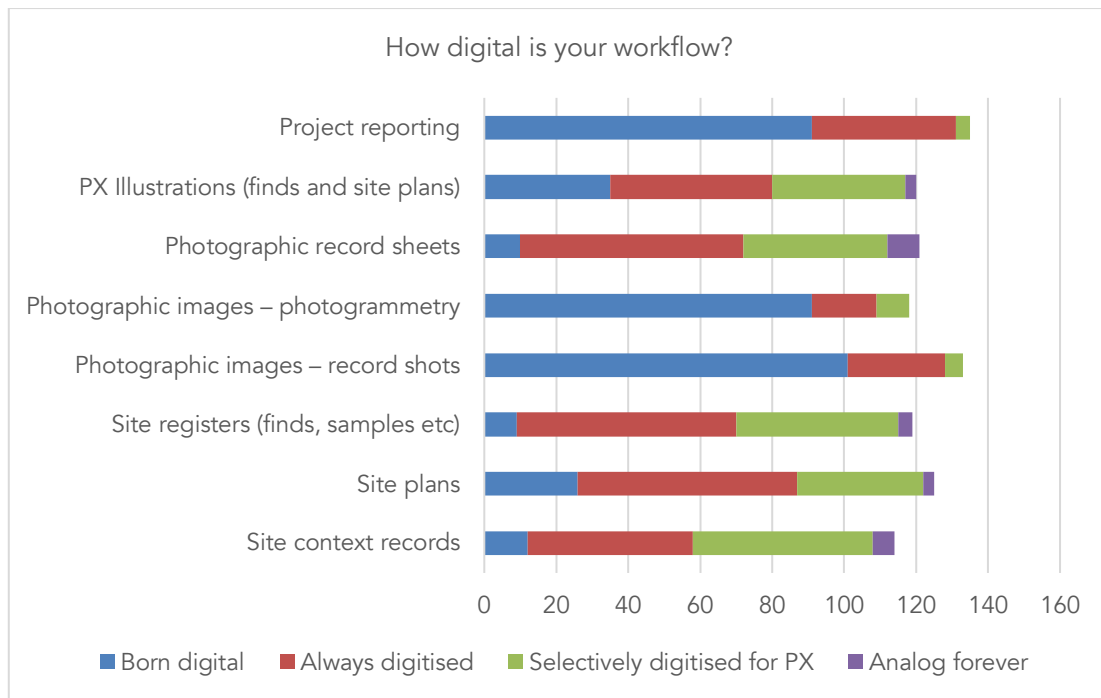
5.3 How digital is your workflow? Using the scale below, show the extent that the following types of project data are digital?

Summary: There were 119 responses which highlighted how digital project data was currently on a scale of being born digital to begin with, to being digitised or remaining in analog form. For the most part photographic images were highlighted as being either born digital, all digitised or selectively digitised. This was also the case with project reporting. As expected, those documents more often used in the field were predominantly digitised or selectively digitised with some remaining in analog form, for example, site records. A smaller quantity of these, however, were highlighted as being born digital which may reflect the wider uptake of digital recording techniques in the field e.g. tablets. The free text comments highlighted how variable the situation was and how it could change on a project by project basis.

Headline: The answers reflect that the sector is at a point of transition with organisations increasingly moving towards the use of born digital data with analog records on a sharp decline. As technology and methods of recording/data capture improve, it is likely that the levels of digitisation will also follow suit and decline until nearly all data is born digital.



Figure 8: Starter For Ten – digital work processes



5.4 In your experience, to what extent is digital data actively managed during project delivery in the following ways?

There were 133 responses and they reflect how variable the management of digital data is across the sector. Of those, at least half indicated that for most projects digital data was being deposited as part of the project archives and that filename conventions were being used throughout projects. Over half indicated that an OASIS record was being completed as a project progressed. However, by comparison having a data management plan, making data accessible as part of the project (for example, using Sketchfab for 3D models), planning for the collection of metadata and the creation and completion of metadata tables was less frequently completed for all projects with these categories scoring the highest for not being completed at all.

5.5 Do you feel that digital data is fully embedded in everyday project archive processes?

Summary: There were 131 responses. Of those, 44% (n=57) indicated that digital data is fully embedded in archive processes but more than half (56%, n=74) answered no.

Headline: Again, this illustrates the current position of the sector within a transition phase as technology and methods develop.

5.6 Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?

There were 128 responses. Of those, 84% (n=107) answered yes and 16% (n= 21) answered no. Free text comments included the requirement for consistent standards across all areas, with specific guidance related to photographic records, 3D modelling and photogrammetry. The benefit of straightforward 'how to' guides focused on archiving digital data and the



different types of digital data was also highlighted. In terms of training, comments focused on ensuring the whole organisation had an awareness of the requirements for digital data with more training providing across all roles and responsibility levels.

Table 3: Starter For Ten – management of digital data in project delivery

	All projects	Some projects	Rarely	Not at all
DMP	33	34	41	23
Oasis	77	36	4	16
Metadata planning	29	51	31	18
Filename conventions	61	40	24	12
Selection	39	51	28	14
Metadata tables	17	47	38	30
Accessible data	10	56	34	31
Archived	60	56	10	7

6 ARCHIVE RESPOSITORY / MUSEUMS

6.1 Do your deposition guidelines refer to digital archives?

There were 29 responses. Of those, 72% (n=21) indicated that their deposition guidelines referred to digital archives with 10% (n=3) stating that they did not. A total of 17% (n=5) stated 'other'. Some comments highlighted that guidance was currently being updated but the majority indicated that ADS was stipulated as the designated repository.

Headline: Reference to digital archives within museum deposition guidelines is becoming commonplace.

6.2 Does your repository collect, and curate digital material deposited as part of an archive?

There were 24 responses. Of those, 46% (n=11) indicated that it was required or recommended that digital data be deposited with ADS or similar. Similarly, 46% (n=11) also indicated that it was required that digital data be deposited as part of the archive. Just 8% (n=2) required that digital data be deposited as part of the archive and with ADS and 0% indicated that they only accepted physical archive materials.

Headline: The use of ADS as a repository for digital data is supported here and across other survey answers. However, further information is required regarding the specific requirements for digital data deposited as part of the general archive.

6.3 Are you able to use digital archive data for education or learning within your organisation?

There were 27 responses. Of those 67% (n=18) stated that they were able to use digital archive data for education and learning purposes in their archive role; for the most part this included the use of digital photographs. The rest indicated that this was not really an option.



6.4 Are you able to make digital data accessible to researchers?

There were 29 responses. Of those, 76% (n=22) indicated they were able to make digital data accessible to researchers with the remainder answering that they were not.

6.5 Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?

There were 27 responses. The overwhelming majority 96% (n=26) indicated there was a requirement for additional guidance and training with 4% (n=1) answering no. Free text comments included the provision of museum training related to understanding better the different digital formats used by organisations in order to try and make it easier for researcher to access information. Advocacy training was also highlighted. In terms of guidance, the ethics of digital data was included along with the requirement for more general guidance on what the curation of digital data entails, the costs involved and to stress the importance of using the Archaeology Data Service.

7 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OFFICERS / MANAGERS

7.1 What type of digital data from archaeological projects do you find most relevant to the HER?

There were 35 responses. Most comments highlighted reports, photographs, GIS data, polygonal data, shape files and geophysics data as the most relevant forms of digital data, though anything related to a site in a digital format was considered important.

7.2 How do you currently access digital data which relates to archaeological projects in your region?

The answers to this question were varied. Some stated that digital data was supplied by the contractor or consultant, some requested it or searched for it themselves. It ranged from being sent by email, file sharing or on a CD ROM/other storage device or alternatively accessed online via Oasis/ADS.

Headline: The means of accessing data to enhance the HER is extremely variable with some having to specifically request the data.

7.3 Are there ways that the HER would benefit from greater access to the digital data collected during an archaeological project?

The comments were varied but generally agreed that having greater access to digital data collected during an archaeological project would be beneficial. Some highlighted that being consistently provided with digital data in the first place, and for it to be in a consistent format would be helpful. Others highlighted that being included, and consulted on, from the outset of a project would make a difference. Access or links to archived GIS information was outlined as being of use, especially for planning purposes. Greater access to specialist reports, shapefiles of features and investigation areas was also included in the comments, as well as, having the trench locations and feature plots provided digitally which would enable more accurate mapping within the HER. It was stated that 'data entry could be significantly streamlined' if HERs were able to obtain feature and finds data in a digital format.



Headline: More inclusion and consistent provision of data would ensure that the HER was able to utilise the information to better enhance the HER record, support future projects and increase public benefit.

7.4 Are there any areas where you think additional guidance or training would be helpful for you or your organisation?

There were 26 responses. Of those, 73% (n= 19) indicated that additional guidance or training would be helpful and 27% (n=7) said no. Free text comments included the fact that more information on the sizes of digital data that an HER might expect to deal with would be helpful, in addition to more detailed guidance on digital images, photographs and long term storage options for digital data in general.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 What do we know now?

The majority of people working responding to both the Beta Group and Starter for Ten surveys have a good knowledge of the standards required for digital data in archaeological projects. The implication is that most people are used to working with digital data, and understand how that data is used as a part of archaeological projects. Where people seek advice, they tend to look online, ask a colleague or where more specific advice is required, they would contact ADS or a similar body.

Despite this general confidence in using digital data, the survey reveals that everyday working knowledge of organised digital data management is more limited. Whilst many individuals have accessed and implemented *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice* (30% having read it and 24% implementing it), guidance which is more focused on data standards and management, such as *ADS & Digital Antiquity: Guides to Good Practice*, appears to be less well known (20% have read it, 13% implemented it). The very practical Data Management Plan Checklist provided by the Digital Curation Centre is the least well know, with 8% indicating they had read it and 3% implementing it.

This is reflected in the responses with particular roles, where the lack of data management processes throughout project delivery is evident. Within the project planning stages, 50% of local government advisors do not include specific requirements for digital data – although the other side if that is that 50% do. As 79% of Advisors referred to ClfA Standards and guidance for best practice, there is an implicit requirement to meet ClfA standards in the majority of project briefs.

The Project Team responses indicate a similar balance, with 40% of respondents agreeing that requirements for digital data were not clearly stated, 10% indicating that they were and 39% that the situation was variable. This would seem to reflect a variability in pre-project documentation in archaeological projects, and may well be linked to regional variation across the UK. The use of digital data across projects provides a clear indication that some methods and techniques are common to many investigations – especially in photography and reporting. Plans, registers and context records are more often collected using more traditional methods, but will often be digitised as the project progresses. Active management of digital data throughout the project is also variable, with the responses indicating that some good practice is common (OASIS records), whilst other areas are rare (use of data management plans, metadata planning and production of metadata tables). It is also clear that some processes are



only in play for some projects, suggesting that planning for digital data management is not embedded across organisations and all projects.

Museum curators responded that digital archives are considered in deposition guidelines, but that there is need for clarity as to what should be expected. The overwhelming majority 96% (n=26) indicated there was a requirement for additional guidance and training, especially around which digital formats are used by organisations and how that data might be made more accessible. HER officers and managers suggested that a more consistent provision of data would ensure that the HERs were able to utilise information better, enhancing the public record, supporting future projects and increase public benefit. A large number of individuals 73% (n= 19) also indicated that additional guidance or training would be helpful. Free text comments cited more detailed guidance on digital images, photographs and long term storage options for digital data in general would be helpful.

8.2 Implications for the Dig Digital project

The Start for Ten survey and the responses of Beta Group participants have demonstrated the need for the Dig Digital project. Survey data has provided a clear indication that current practice around the collection and management of digital data at every stage of an archaeological project is variable, and that further guidance is needed to help support the profession. The data also supports the need for clear signposting how ClfA Standards relate to digital data management and the development of guidance on how processes and documentation at different stages of an archaeological project can support meeting those standards.

