How to edit the CTRL site record databases

This document describes:
1. The mechanics of adding, editing and deleting contexts, sub-groups and groups
2. Describes the method that can be used to assess the accuracy of edits made to the databases in the course of post-excavation work.

Edits to be made to table CONTEXTS

The following changes may be required to Table CONTEXTS

Field *Type*: if the value reads 'Deposit' and if the deposit is actually a layer edit the value to read 'layer'. This is required should layers need to be mapped . If the value in this field is 'Other' and has been used to refer to finds or artefacts, the value should be edited to read 'Finds Reference'. If the context number refers to masonry (such as a wall), then the context number should be assigned the value 'Masonry'. The same situation applies to the type values 'Skeleton' and 'Coffin'.

Field *PX_Period*: all contexts that are not assigned to sub-groups or groups should be dated unless the date is unknown, in which case the field should be left blank.

Field *Fill of*: Where the fill of field has a missing value or incorrect value this needs to be corrected. If the context does not fill another archaeological context, this field should be left blank.

Edits, Deletes and Additions to table SUB_GROUP

The following possibilities are considered. All **new** numbers assigned **must** be unique across the Context and Sub-group tables for each Event_Code.

To remove contexts from an existing sub-group:
Edit the field PX_Sub-group in CONTEXT table to read 0

To add contexts to an existing sub-group:
Edit the field PX_sub-group in CONTEXT table to the number of the sub-group.

To change the dating, interpretation or description of the sub-group:
Edit the fields for the sub-group in table Sub-group to the required values

To create a new sub-group:
Add a new sub-group number to the field Sub_Group in the SUB_GROUP table. The correct event_code should be assigned to the new sub-group at this stage. Edit the blank fields, PX_Interpretation, PX_Comment, PX_Period as required. To assign contexts to the new sub-group enter, the new SUB_GROUP number into the field PX_SUB-GROUP in table CONTEXT. All contexts within an intervention should be assigned to the sub-group, unless the intention is to assign the deposits to another sub-group.

To delete an existing sub-group:
Only new sub-group numbers assigned in post-excavation analysis may be deleted. Assessment and excavation assigned sub-group records MUST NOT be deleted as this will invalidate the existing archaeological archive. Edit all Context records in table CONTEXT, which are assigned to the deleted sub-group, so that the value in field PX_Sub-group reads 0, then delete the sub-group record in table SUB-GROUP.

Edits, Deletes and Additions to table GROUP

The following possibilities are considered. All Group numbers must be unique across the entire project. This is required since in some circumstances it will be necessary to link together contexts from more than one event code in order to define the blocks of data that will be analysed at a route-wide level. On the receipt of the database, you will have been assigned a block of group numbers which you may choose to use as required. Group numbers will typically be in the range 40000 to 49999. Should you require further Group numbers, these should be applied for at Oxford Archaeology.

To remove sub-groups from an existing group:
edit the field PX_Group so that the value reads 0.

To add sub-groups to an existing group:

edit the field PX_Group in table SUB_GROUP to the number of the Group. Assign the post-excavation event code 'CTRL 1 PX' as the event code.

To change the dating, interpretation or description of the sub-group:
edit the fields for the group

To create a new Group:
add a new group number to the field Group in the table Group. Edit the fields PX_Interpretation, PX_Comment and PX_Phasing as required.

To delete an existing group:
only new group numbers assigned in post-excavation analysis may be deleted. Assessment and excavation assigned sub-group numbers MUST NOT be deleted as this will invalidate the existing archaeological archive. Edit all sub-group records in table SUB_GROUP, which are assigned to the sub-group to be deleted, so that the value in field PX_Group reads 0. Then delete the Group record in table GROUP.

Where new sub-groups or groups are defined it will be necessary to correlate these with the object data tags on the CAD drawings. **The basic rule for this is that each polygon that needs to be represented on the site plan will be tagged with the intervention number unless it has been assigned to a sub-group in which case it will be tagged with the sub-group number.**

Assessing accuracy and how to get the 'right answer'

The query qryReconstructFeaturesPX forms the main method of dealing with these issues. The logic is described fully in SiteMethodology_Draft_003.doc. The main issues are that in the field Deposit, this query should display every context number that might contain finds or samples. This field can be found to the extreme right of the query. The field 'InterventionNo' describes the context that will be mapped if a sub-group has not been assigned. The field

The field SubGroupNo gives the subgroup to which the intervention has been assigned. This means that *normally* it is only necessary when constructing the database to assign a subgroup to the intervention context number. This can dramatically limit the amount of data entry required depending on the nature of the archaeological deposits being described by the database.

When using qryReconstructFeaturesPX to assess the accuracy of subgrouping, the question that should be asked is: "are all the deposits in my subgroup showing in this query?"

If they are not the cause will be generally found in one of the following situations:
1. Have I entered my subgroup number in field Sub-Group in table CONTEXT instead of field PX_Sub-group?
2. Are the context types correctly attributed? Are layers down as layers, walls as masonry and coffins as coffins?
3. If the intervention number field is blank but there is a value in the Fill Of field in table CONTEXTdoes the number in the Fill of field actually exist in the database? Is it actually the correct value?

If you feel that you have correctly dealt with the above issues and the query still appears to be incorrect, then you should contact the Information Systems Officer at Oxford Archaeology.

Finally, blank fields in this query indicate errors in the data. The query is deliberately laid out in such a way that when it is opened, those blank fields are the first thing that you see. Since it is usually prohibitively expensive to make any database 100% accurate, some assessment is required as to whether time should be spent fixing these errors. The criteria that I personally normally apply are:
1. can the site be understood without fixing them?
2. do we rely on analyses of finds or samples where large percentage of the material falls within these errors? An example would be an analysis of Roman pottery: if a major percentage of the Roman pottery is attributable to deposits which are actually errors then our analysis is not much use. If , say, only 3% of the Roman pottery falls within these errors then we know the margin of error on the analysis and can assess whether this would likely effect our results.

Related Documents:

Objects.doc: this describes the inclusion of finds data within the CTRL databases and suggests methods of using that data, applying dating decisions and using the assignment of dates and sub-groups to communicate with specialists.

SiteDataMethodology_Draft_003.doc: this is an unashamedly technical document aimed not at the user of the database but at any technical person who may have the misfortune to assume responsibility for the CTRL data. It describes the technical details of how to construct queries to get the right answer from the databases. Draft_003 is currently out-dated and will be updated to reflect changes in the specification received as the result of work on the Bower Road database, which has effectively been chosen as a 'pilot' for the entire methodology.