

SEADDA

Saving European Archaeology from the Digital Dark Age

Challenges and opportunities for virtual archaeological data stewardship

Moving the SEADDA COST Action Online

CHNT, Vienna, 2 November 2021

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UNIVERSITY *of* York



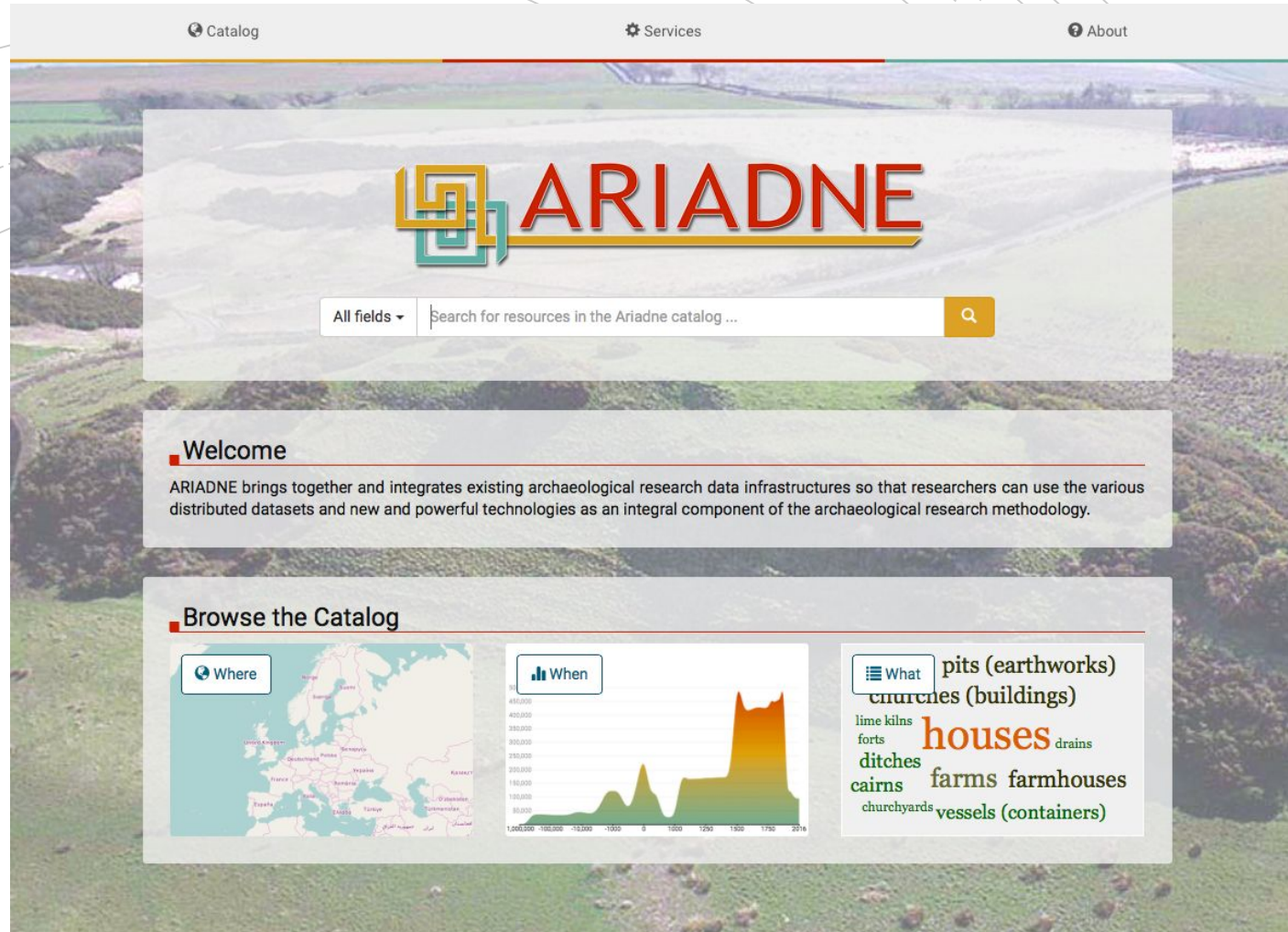
COST Action SEADDA (CA18128)
is funded by the Horizon 2020
Framework Programme of the
European Union.



Response to ARIADNE

- EU FP7 project under the ‘Infrastructures’ theme, including 23 European partners across 16 countries
- Four-year project: ended January 2017
- 17 Workpackages – primary deliverable: collection level metadata aggregation portal
- Coordinator: PIN Scri - Polo Universitario "Città di Prato" at the University of Florence
- Deputy Coordinator: ADS





Catalog Services About

ARIADNE

All fields ▾ Search for resources in the Ariadne catalog ... 🔍

Welcome

ARIADNE brings together and integrates existing archaeological research data infrastructures so that researchers can use the various distributed datasets and new and powerful technologies as an integral component of the archaeological research methodology.

Browse the Catalog

Where

When

What

- pits (earthworks)
- churches (buildings)
- lime kilns
- forts
- ditches
- cairns
- churchyards
- houses
- drains
- farms
- farmhouses
- vessels (containers)

<https://ariadne-infrastructure.eu/portal/>

ARIADNE Community

- 9 ICT organisations
- 14 archaeological organisations
- 15 Associate partners
- Community building
 - Transnational access
 - Training events
 - Special interest groups



Internal Capacity Building

- Paper was given by partners in Slovenia and Ireland talking about “have’s and have nots” when it comes to having an acceptable place for their archaeological data to be preserved and disseminated in the long-term.
- Plans were made to offer data management workshops to partners in their own countries - Austria and Slovenia both accepted
- Much more successful than anticipated!

Data management workshops

Local ARIADNE partners worked hard to make sure governmental and institutional stakeholders attended, and took on understanding and presenting the state of play in their country



Data management workshops

Level of interest was much higher than expected:

- Pressure from funders to deposit data into an open repository
- Pressure from institutions to deposit data into an open repository
- Funding available; but no guidance
- No appropriate options for archaeological data
- Conversations continued on how to take expertise within ARIADNE and collaborate beyond current network
- Good practice guidance but “one size did not fit all” and working together was going to be critical to moving forward

Challenges

- Archaeological data often derived from non-repeatable interventions
- Digital data more fragile and subject to obsolescence
- Risk losing a generation of research – Urgency!



COST Action SEADDA :

Saving European Archaeology from the Digital Dark Age

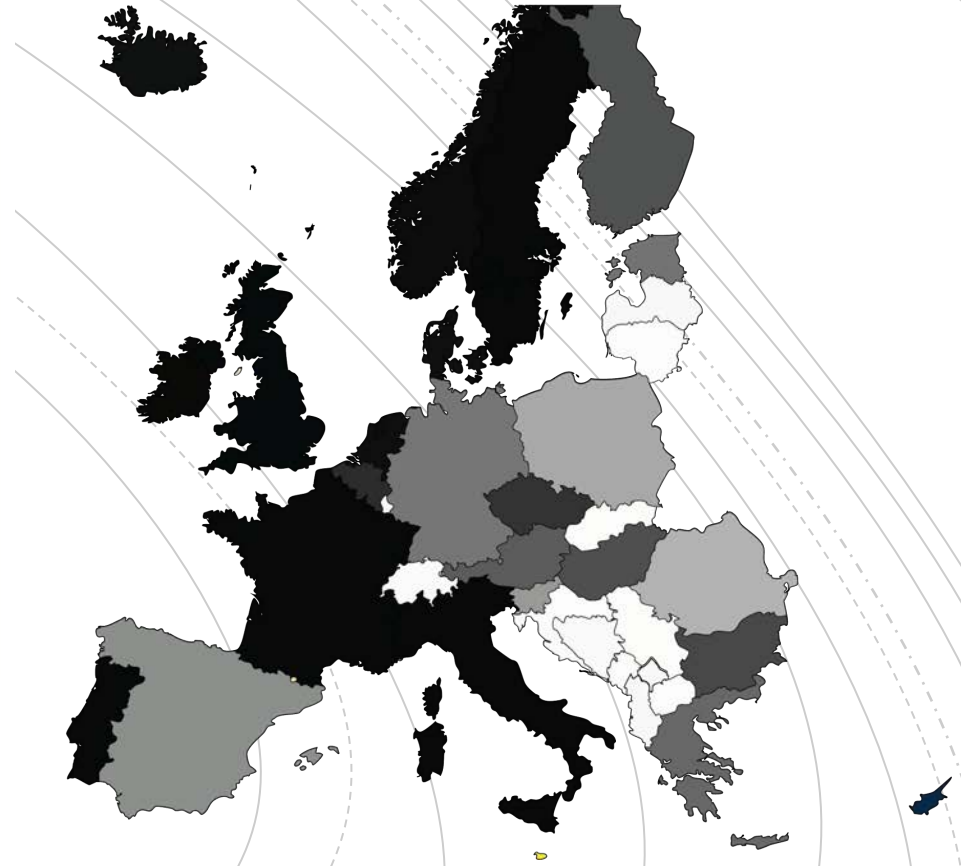
EU funding (four years) for networking: meetings, training sessions, scientific missions, open access publications

- Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union.
- An international community of archaeologists and digital specialists working together to secure the future of archaeological data across Europe and beyond.
- Over 100 members representing 34 COST countries and five International Partner Countries

ARIADNEplus Community

- 41 partners
- 28 countries
- Majority are archaeological partners
- Extending thematic coverage
- Expanding participation

<https://ariadne-infrastructure.eu/>



Stewardship of archaeological data

Objective: To bring together members with varying levels of experience to share their successes and challenges around the stewardship of archaeological data to create a sub-network.

Practical and ethical considerations will be explored:

- Encouragements and resistances to sharing data and making it openly accessible within archaeology
- Who should be responsible in short and long-term for preservation

The starting point for those who wish to begin or progress dialogue in their region or country.

Planning for Archiving

Objective: To identify the practical and technical issues surrounding the creation of an appropriate repository for archaeological data

- Understanding hardware and software options
- Management structures
- Training of archivists

The WG will identify existing best practice, changing future needs, and pragmatic technical and structural solutions.

Preservation and Dissemination Best Practice

Objective: Understand current international best practice for archiving and dissemination, and implementation by existing repositories.

- Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model
- The FAIR Principles
- Repository accreditation
- Cost modelling
- Dealing with data types

Will bring together archaeological digital archivists to share current practice, and survey future trends to understand the changing archaeological and digital landscapes (domain and technology watch).

Use and Re-Use of Archaeological Data

Objective: To understand how to optimise archives and interfaces to maximise the use and re-use of archaeological data. To explore how archaeological archives can better respond to user needs, and ways to document and understand both quantitative and qualitative re-use.

- Explore barriers to re-use, such as IPR and licencing
- Explore design of underlying data structures and their interfaces

Will focus on initiatives like the FAIR Principles and technologies that improve and optimise searching, issues around how data is created, organised and disseminated, different options for interface design, and developing best practice around qualitative re-use.



SEADDA Management Committee meets for the first time in Brussels in 2019.

SEADDA Starts!

Started as a traditional Action, with first Management Committee meeting March 2019 at the COST offices in Brussels, followed by Management Committee and Working Group meeting, held over three days in July 2019, kindly hosted by SEADDA partners in Zagreb, Croatia.

The Management Committee of COST Action SEADDA at the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Croatia in June 2019.



First Year

- Exploratory Workshop for Working Group 1: *Stewardship of Archaeological Data* took place in Gothenburg, Sweden in November 2019
- Exploratory Workshop for Working Group 2: *Planning for Archiving* in Vienna, Austria in December 2019.
- Three Short Term Scientific Missions were underway UK and Spain
- Plans were in place for Working Group 3: *Preservation and Dissemination Best Practice* Exploratory Workshop in March 2020 in The Hague, Netherlands, and the Exploratory Workshop for Working Group 4: *Use and Re-Use of Archaeological Data* in early April in York, UK.
- *And then...*

The Challenges

- Exploratory Workshop in The Hague, scheduled to begin on Monday, 16 March, 2020, cancelled on Friday 13th. Organisers scrambled to deal with chaos and cancellations, but workshop was moved quickly online in shorter one-day format. Partners agreed it was largely successful, if not ideal.
- WG4 Exploratory Workshop went ahead, keeping the three-day format but shortening the amount of contact time each day and including longer breaks.



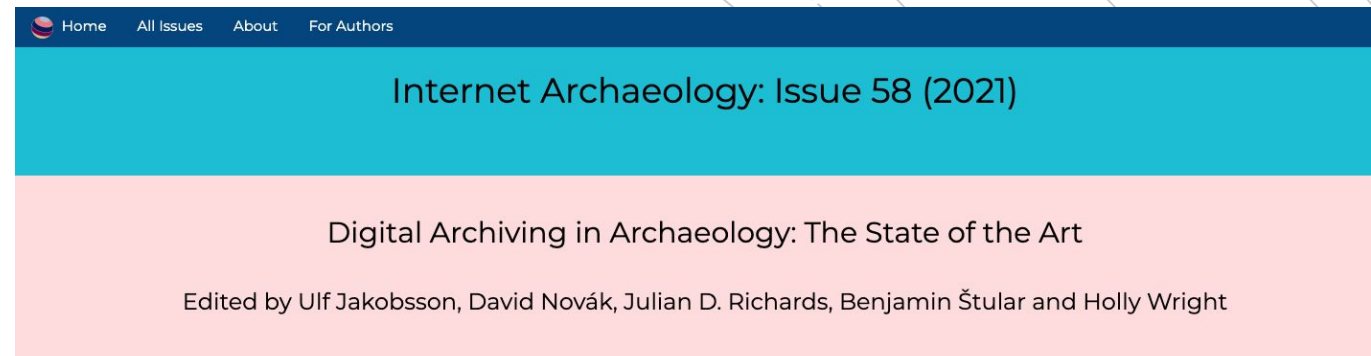
WG4 Exploratory Workshop, April 2020.

The Challenges

- Already apparent by April that “Zoom fatigue” was a real phenomenon, and the concentrated form of in-person meeting or workshop SEADDA members were used to was no longer appropriate.
- Parents with difficult challenges; working while undertaking childcare, providing instruction, all while in a place never designed to be a workspace.
- Patience and understanding overtook professionalism for successful online collaboration, and this was not necessarily a bad thing.
- With a bit of time to organise, some experience and creativity, moving these collaborative experiences online could be done effectively. Showed potential opportunities that should be incorporated in our work going forward.

The Opportunities

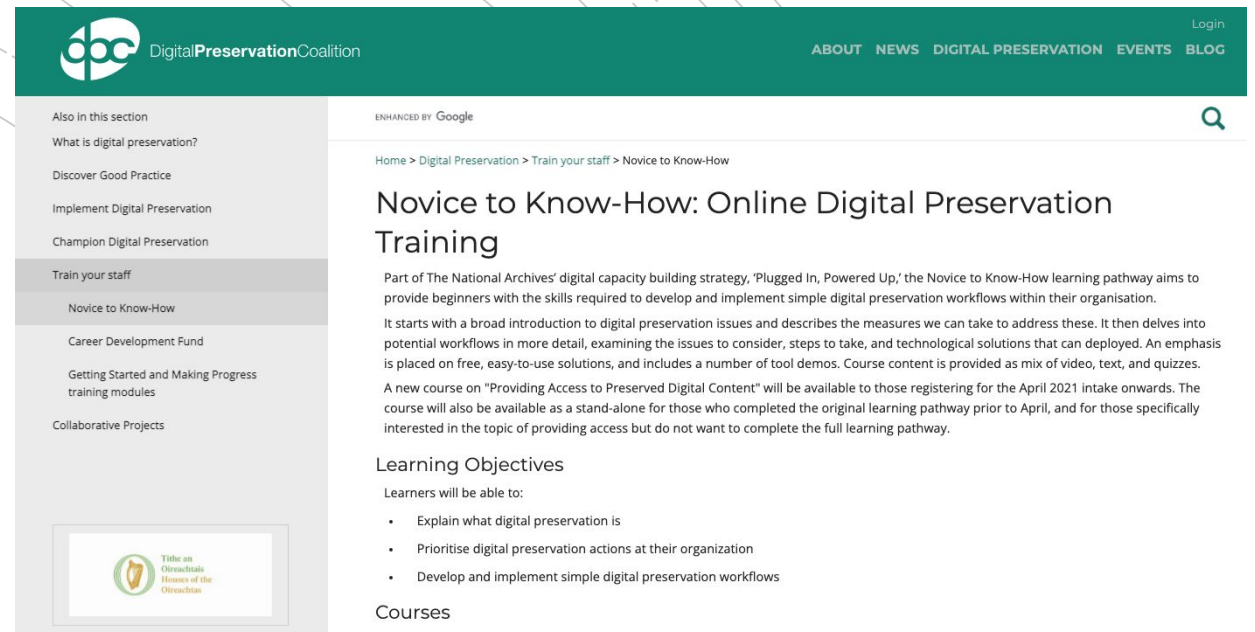
- Focus turned to more ambitious open access publications. Rather than (yet another) online survey, members published an entire themed issue on the state-of-the-art for digital preservation in archaeology representing 21 countries and regions (six more in press).



This special issue of Internet Archaeology is jointly sponsored by [COST Action](#), [SEADDA](#) and the [European Archaeological Consilium \(EAC\)](#). It originated in a SEADDA workshop hosted by the [Swedish National Data Service](#) in Gothenburg in November 2019, in which participants presented the current state-of-the-art for digital archiving in their respective countries, with additional contributions from SEADDA members and others invited by the EAC Working Group for Archaeological Archives.

The Opportunities

- Meant to have a practical discussion workshop in Year 2, but instead decided to experiment with a collaboration with SEADDA members the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC).
- SEADDA was given access for 30 people to the month-long DPC Novice-to-Know-How training.
- SEADDA members also ran weekly workshops to tailor the training for archaeological data and create interaction.



The screenshot shows the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) website. The header includes the DPC logo, the text 'Digital Preservation Coalition', and navigation links for 'ABOUT', 'NEWS', 'DIGITAL PRESERVATION', 'EVENTS', and 'BLOG'. A search icon is visible in the top right. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Digital Preservation > Train your staff > Novice to Know-How'. The title of the page is 'Novice to Know-How: Online Digital Preservation Training'. The introductory text states: 'Part of The National Archives' digital capacity building strategy, 'Plugged In, Powered Up,' the Novice to Know-How learning pathway aims to provide beginners with the skills required to develop and implement simple digital preservation workflows within their organisation. It starts with a broad introduction to digital preservation issues and describes the measures we can take to address these. It then delves into potential workflows in more detail, examining the issues to consider, steps to take, and technological solutions that can be deployed. An emphasis is placed on free, easy-to-use solutions, and includes a number of tool demos. Course content is provided as mix of video, text, and quizzes. A new course on "Providing Access to Preserved Digital Content" will be available to those registering for the April 2021 intake onwards. The course will also be available as a stand-alone for those who completed the original learning pathway prior to April, and for those specifically interested in the topic of providing access but do not want to complete the full learning pathway.'

Learning Objectives
Learners will be able to:

- Explain what digital preservation is
- Prioritise digital preservation actions at their organization
- Develop and implement simple digital preservation workflows

Courses

The Opportunities

- Rather than holding stewardship workshops in English and requiring international travel. Members will hold national workshops in national languages. Requests need to be “bottom up” from local organisers where there is a need for capacity building. Portugal, France, Ireland and Turkey are already participating. Lower risk of disruption, but also a better outcome!
- The COST Association is also experimenting with Virtual Networking, providing funding for virtual workshops and extended “visits” between members for knowledge transfer. Has given us more avenues for small-scale, more bespoke interaction between members.
- In person meetings are planned for Year 3 of SEADDA (and are still very important), but we have changed the way we think about running a networking grant...

What did we learn?

- **Obvious:** greater access for members who would not normally have their travel costs covered (International members from non-COST countries largely outside of Europe)
- **More subtle and unexpected:** more targeted access for knowledge exchange with people who are connected to SEADDA members, not just the members themselves. Previously, only one or two individuals from a particular institution or country, were eligible for travel costs to attend a workshop or meeting.
 - Members tend to be more senior researchers or practitioners involved at a policy level, but have students or colleagues who would benefit from the practical and technical knowledge sharing.
 - With travel costs no longer an issue, members became extended networks, who could put forward a range of people who might benefit.
 - Access could be thrown open to any person nominated by a member, which was incredibly popular and useful. Senior researchers were no longer conduits for knowledge transfer within SEADDA; their students and colleagues were able to participate directly, broadening and more deeply embedding the collaboration SEADDA was meant to facilitate. Networking reach was probably doubled.

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Archaeology Data Service

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk>

SEADDA COST Action

<http://seadda.eu>



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