A DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

It's been a long time since I've gotten my fingernails dirty, drank a cup of cold tea in a trench, or gotten lost trying to find some site that was last visited in the 1960s. Yep, not much call for a Romanist here in the Ottawa Valley. Fortunately what there is call for, is a 'digital archaeologist'.

…and what is that, exactly?

Learn more about Canada's Greatest Culture* at Canadian Geographic!
http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/so05/indepth/
*I'm biased, yes.

Archaeologists have always been at the forefront in

riding the latest technology in the pursuit of better understanding of the past. It's not for nothing that you're reading a post on a website called 'Day of Archaeology', rather than 'Day of Sociology' or 'Day of Canadian History'. So what do I do? I'm not a GIS guy, or a database guy. I'm in the history department at Carleton as their 'digital humanities' guy, so I try to work through what new media imply for both the doing of history/archaeology and for our understanding of history/archaeology. I normally blog what I'm up to over at Electric Archaeology and I'd be pleased if you went over there and took a look. Topic Modeling, Agent Based Simulation, Game Based Learning, Augmented Reality, Crowdsourcing, Open Peer Review… all these things are in my baliwick.

Today, I'm lesson planning for the fall. My philosophy of teaching has always been to get students doing real work, in the sense that all assignments always contribute to the generation of knowledge. I try to find projects to which their formative and summative assessment exercises may contribute. I'm off in a few minutes to meet the University Archivist, to see if we can use my class (ca 200 students) to crowdsource online transcription and annotation of documents and photographs.

Then, I'm looking into buying an autonomous aerial drone for survey work and photography. I want to use the photographs to create 3d immersive worlds that other archaeologists or the public may then explore, for both outreach and research. Then, polishing up an agent-based simulation of Greek amphorae imitation practices.

But, given that it'll be over 30 C today, I think I'll just end up taking the kids to the river to play, and I'll come back to my work in the cool of the evening. That's one nice thing about being a digital archaeologist – I really can time-shift my hours. On the downside, no regular archaeologist I think has ever had months and months of their work destroyed in an instant, as I did earlier this year.

Above is yours truly talking about some augmented reality + museum cataloguing I did with my first year students this past spring.