

# From Discovery to Delivery

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## ArchSearch NEWS: the online catalogue of the ADS

This summer witnessed the launch of the 'next generation' system for interfacing with ADS data collections. ArchSearch II involved a complete hardware and software upgrade. Data and the tools which serve it across the Internet to users are now distributed over a group of information servers with a powerful Sun E250 computer joining our existing equipment. An enterprise (large business) level software platform of an Oracle 8i database and Macromedia's ColdFusion (middleware that mediates between database and web server) has allowed the provision of semantically enhanced ways to interrogate resources held by the ADS. All this 'behind the scenes' work has necessarily been accompanied by an overhaul of the interface and associated user support systems into our current house style. This section of the ADS News looks at some of the new tools now available.

The new basic search interface (shown below) allows simple queries or 'builder' searches through the continued refinement of your results set. The Search by resource option allows users to specify which collections they wish to search, for example, a researcher might only be interested in sites covered by the Northumberland Sites and Monuments Record. An enhanced click on Map search now allows keywords to be specified, for example, users can now specify 'Roman' in a defined geographical area. Thus for the first time those most important of archaeological attributes, space and time, can be brought together.

*Click on image for larger view.*

Delivery, the other side of resource discovery has also been upgraded. Users still get the traditional ArchSearch format of brief records with hot links to more detailed information, as shown above.

*Click on image for larger view.*

Alternatively, results of interest can be selected and displayed in tabular form (see below). The user can also control which fields will be displayed. In the original version of ArchSearch it was only ever possible to view one record at a time, and it was only possible to view all the fields at once for any given record.

In addition to viewing records on a table, it is also now possible to create small files for import into local desktop applications. So, a researcher can find the records that interest them and then import them into their own systems. This new development was introduced specifically in response to user consultation when the system was being designed.

*Click on image for larger view.*

These are just some of the enhancements now available to users of ArchSearch. If you haven't used ArchSearch II recently then it will be worth taking some time to find out about other recent innovations: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>.

*ArchSearch News is brought to you by the ADS technical team: Tony Austin, Keith Westcott and Jo Clarke ([collections@ads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:collections@ads.ahds.ac.uk))*

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## Dealing with the digital revolution: the OASIS project

The OASIS project aims to provide access to the growing body of archaeological 'grey literature' and to make it available to researchers. OASIS is a collaborative venture between the ADS, English Heritage, and the Archaeological Investigations Project, supported initially by the Research Support Libraries Programme.

Planning policies have increased greatly the number of archaeological studies undertaken in England, conducted by consultants or field units operating to briefs set by local government. In most cases, concluding research reports are lodged with the originating government agency. Although public consultation is possible through Sites and Monuments Records, reports are often unknown or inaccessible to academic researchers. Consequently, academic research is weakened by its ignorance of the most recent and wide ranging research on any given topic.

*Click on image for larger view.*

The OASIS project was developed to provide a unified index to archaeological investigations, a means of accessing the associated 'grey literature', and a method by which the index could be maintained.

Earlier phases of the project (reported in previous issues of ADS News) saw the creation of a web-based data submission form (see below) to gather information from fieldworkers, then send it to the relevant local authorities. With the help of English Heritage, this form is now being used in a variety of trials to ensure that the parties involved can use and generate data with confidence. Recent innovations have included procedures for agencies to review their own records, or review records that will be delivered to them. Research is also taking place to establish whether OASIS can grow from an indexing service to a document delivery and preservation service.

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*For more details on the OASIS project and the data entry form, see*

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>

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## Enter the ARENA ...

The ARENA project, Archaeological Records of Europe: Networked Access has been active since March 2002. Supported by the EU Culture 2000 programme it brings together partners from six European nations, who have responsibility for preservation and access for archaeological data. Partners include the ADS, Danish National Agency for Cultural Heritage, Museum Project in Norway, the Institute of Archaeology in Iceland, the Poznan Archaeological Museum and CIMEC, the Institute for Cultural Memory in Romania.

ARENA is a 'path-finding' project looking into a common European information architecture for archaeological data. The 'path-finding' centres on the construction of a web portal that will search across archaeological data held by the partners. This portal will allow access to common index records and detailed research data on large excavations such as Vorbasse and Danebury.

The project is a steep learning curve, so the partners need to communicate effectively with each other. However, it is not the purpose of ARENA to keep its research to itself: partners hold seminars highlighting issues raised and disseminating the lessons learned. ARENA held its first roundtable at the European Association of Archaeologists in Thessaloniki, bringing together eight EU-funded projects to present their work. This generated a considerable discussion regarding a network of European archaeology, first suggested by Henrik Jarl Hansen - one of the founders of ARENA - in 1992. Ten years since that first proposal, the number of projects working on different aspects information sharing was encouraging. ARENA will make an important contribution to this longer term vision.

For now, partners have decided on the data sets available and are ensuring that the research archives are technically robust and properly documented.

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*For more details on ARENA , or to find out about future meetings, see the ARENA project web site at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/arena/>*

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# Sustaining the Research Agenda: Enhancing the Digital Resource (2003)

## A seminar with the Archaeology Data Service, York 29th Jan 2002

The Archaeology Data Service invites you to a one-day seminar at the King's Manor, University of York on Wednesday 29th January. The workshop will map current and future developments in the fields of online accessibility and digital archiving for researchers in the HE sector and allied issues such as funding digitisation projects and intellectual property rights. It will assist the creation, dissemination and use of high quality digital research resources. It will inform the development of funding applications, highlighting strategic issues of concern to those who fund projects. Places are limited. Please confirm your place by Wednesday 15th Jan 2002.

### How much will it cost?

The workshop is free, but a charge of 10 ukp will be requested for each participant to offset the cost of lunch and refreshments

The workshop is designed for:

- Holders of major research grants such as AHRB, British Academy, NERC, Leverhulme grants
- Holders of digitisation or resource enhancement grants from those bodies above, based in HE or FE
- Those intending to apply for any of the above
- Unfunded researchers in the HE or FE sectors
- Researchers who have completed significant projects in the last five years in HE or FE
- Graduate students on the verge of completing their research or post-doctoral fellows at any stage in their research

### Where can I find out more?

Telephone (01904) 433954

Fax: (01904) 433939

Email: [help@ads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:help@ads.ahds.ac.uk)

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/workshop/research03.html>

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## Guides to Good Practice

ADS Guides Are Now Published so far ...

- Archiving Aerial Photography and Remote Sensing Data
- Digital Archives from Excavation and Fieldwork
- GIS Guide to Good Practice
- Geophysical Data in Archaeology

... with guides from our sister services on: Digitising History, Creating and Documenting Electronic Texts, Creating Digital Performance Resources, Creating Digital Resources for the Visual Arts and GIS for Historians. All guides are available from [Oxbow Books](#) and online at:

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/g2gp.html>

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## Credits ...

The Archaeology Data Service (ADS) is part of the [Arts and Humanities Data Service](#), and resides at the [University of York](#). It is jointly funded by the [Joint Information System Committee](#) and the [Arts and Humanities Research Board](#). The ADS collects, describes, catalogues, preserves and provides user support for digital resources created during archaeological research. The ADS promotes standards and guidelines for best practice in the creation, description, preservation and use of spatial information to the AHDS. For those classes of archaeological data where archival bodies exist, the ADS collaborates to promote greater use of existing services.

ADS NEWS and ADS ONLINE are edited by William Kilbride, [email](#). Thanks to contributors and to Jonathan Bateman for layout. Printed at the University of York. If you have any ideas about articles or features for the next issue in Spring 2003, then write to me at the email address given.

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