

# Archaeology Data Service

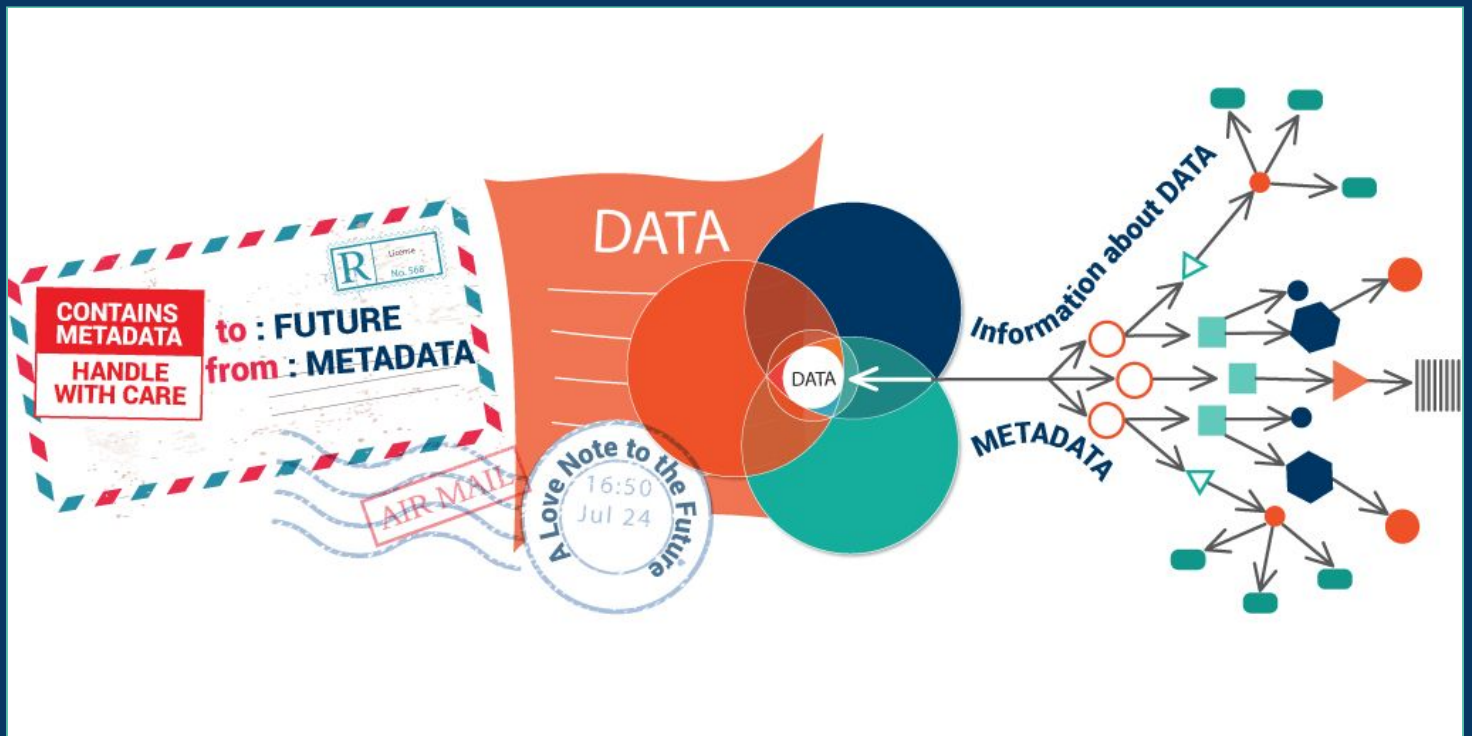


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## Curatorial Strategy

## Document Control Grid

| Revision | Author/Contributor                        | Date of revision  | Revision Note                          | Status          |
|----------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.1      | Jenny O'Brien                             | 8th November 2019 | First Draft - circulation to TE        | First Draft     |
| 1.2      | Tim Evans and Jenny O'Brien               | 07/06/2020        | Collaboration and Action Plan creation | Second Draft    |
| 1.3      | Jenny O'Brien                             | 13/07/2020        | Revisions                              | Third Draft     |
| 1.4      | Jenny O'Brien, Julian Richards, Tim Evans | 23/07/2020        | Revisions and Circulation to ADS Staff | For circulation |

# 1. Introduction

This document aims to assess the current situation regarding the metadata collected by the ADS to describe its collections, and the objects and files within those collections, and to put forward a vision and pathway to achieving a richer value-added archive through more efficient and effective metadata collection, creation, and use.

## The current situation

### The Digital Archive

The ADS is the only Trusted Digital Repository for Heritage and Historic Environment data in the UK. At the time of writing, we preserve and provide access to 46 journals, 3205 deposited data collections containing 783,640 objects including over 588,200 images. We also provide access to over 1.7 million metadata records, including over 341,000 bibliographic references.

### The Catalogue

Each of our collections has a catalogue entry containing, administrative, descriptive, preservation, and provenance information which allows users to search our collections using keywords and filters.

Each digital object now has the capacity to be described in a similar way to the collections via the Object Management System (OMS) which was designed in 2012 and implemented in 2014. Over the past five years, populating the OMS with the basic discovery and technical metadata, provided by our depositors and derived from the files themselves, has become a routine part of the ADS archiving procedures.

### The Website

The ADS holdings are split between three separate search tools:

- Archsearch for searching for short records about a monument or historic environment event from the UK;
- ADS Library for reports, books or articles about the historic environment of Britain and Ireland; and

- The ADS Archives for raw data.

Each collection within the Archive is currently formed according to how the data was deposited and usually relates to a particular project or event. Every collection has a textual introduction about the project, generally provided by the depositor, with the descriptive metadata associated with the collection displayed on a dedicated 'Metadata' page.

## Look how far we've come!

- We have a robust stable archive with each file and file group identified, both in terms of having unique ids for every file and in terms of identifying the file type, assigning a checksum, and creating the basic technical metadata at point of ingest.
- 81% of our digital objects have some form of title in the OMS.\*
- Over 915 of our collections are made available on the website via an OMS-based web template.
- Each representation of a file or group of files can be matched as a single resource (object) and associated with the relevant metadata files and/or OMS metadata.
- We can assign [PREMIS](#) relationships between objects. There are currently approximately 250,000 PREMIS relationships recorded in the OMS.
- We have a database structure flexible enough to record a range of different object associations, thematic groups, identifiers and creators.

*\*Based on a search eliminating 'DUMMY OBJECTS'; 'NO TITLE' and titles less than 10 characters in length.*

## The Challenges We Face

- 1. DISCOVERY:** Using our metadata to ensure that our objects are easily findable by our users, as our archive grows, each object becomes harder to find meaning we need to assure, manage, surface, and create descriptive metadata more effectively in order to maintain the visibility of our collections. There is also an increasing need to open up the archives to new types of users and re-use scenarios, surfacing the metadata we hold and create in different ways.
- 2. VALUE:** Adding value to our collections through record enhancement and curation: this will increase the flexibility in terms of how we create collections and exhibit those collections which will facilitate reaching new audiences.
- 3. BALANCE:** Investing in our users to address the imbalance between depositor and user engagement and endeavoring to meet modern expectations when it comes to our website.
- 4. RECOGNITION:** Portraying the work of the archivists through the website in order to demonstrate the variety of tasks undertaken during preservation and curatorial work.
- 5. CHANGE:** Fostering an environment of continual change:  
*“The rub is that the digital challenge for archives can never be completely solved. This is not about moving from one relatively steady state of archival practice to a new steady state for digital. We are moving from relative stability to continual change”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/Archives-Unlocked-Brochure.pdf>.

## What opportunities lie ahead

- **EXPERIENCE:** Five years' practical experience of using the OMS has given the archivists a wealth of learning opportunities, challenges, achievements and lessons learned which, when combined, can be used to make effective and informed future plans when it comes to the curation of our collections.
- **SKILLSET:** Taking on projects such as HERALD has meant that most members of staff have been upskilled in some way when it comes to technical knowledge and practice which can be used in future development plans.
- **ROLE REVIEW:** The recent role review means that there is now a clear hierarchy and allocated responsibilities which allow for strategies and vision to be moved forward. The practice of role review is now established which means that gaps in responsibility can be filled more easily as they are identified.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Increased engagement in social media through new staff can facilitate a better dialogue with our users and widen the reach of our archives to new audiences.
- **FUNDING:** New sources of funding can be used strategically to help meet the challenges identified above. Should funding not be available, then we have an opportunity to review our procedures, use our experience, skillset and management skills to invest in adding value and reach to our collections with a view to securing further funding in the future.

## 2. Vision statement

“To be the primary UK-level historic environment data aggregator and to provide appropriate finding aids and resource discovery mechanisms to allow users to discover primary data and digital resources created in the course of research in archaeology and related disciplines”<sup>2</sup>

### Long-term aims

See Long-term Aims Document

(current document included below)

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<sup>2</sup> Strategic Aim 5 from the ADS Five-Year Strategic Plan October 2016 - October 2021:  
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/about/strategicPlan.xhtml>

# Long-term aims

*Based on the challenges and opportunities we have going forward*

## DISCOVERY

Allow users to search for objects across collections (A1)

Increase the use of external providers as signposts to our data (A2)

Introduce exhibits and events to promote our collections (A3)



## VALUE

Expand use of linked data (B1)

Improve access and display to images (B2)

Create engaging collections (B3)



## BALANCE

Change our workflow to give greater priority to re-use (C1)

Maintain a modern and relevant website (C2)



## RECOGNITION

Show an object's preservation pathway on the website (D1)

Show metadata source and development on the website (D2)

Increase use of staff subject knowledge (D3)



## CHANGE

Adopt change planning into strategies and task allocation (E1)

Expand user engagement and interaction (E2)





### **3. Mission statement**

To provide permanent and Open Access to the UK's archaeological and heritage research.

#### **Overarching Goals**

To hold accurate, consistent, and standardised metadata for all resources within the ADS Archive and to manage and promote collections, using this metadata.

To provide the highest level of service for users of the archive whatever their background or requirements; presenting flexible, accessible, interactive collections for interdisciplinary and international reuse.

### **4. Strategic objectives**

See [Curatorial Objectives Document](#)  
(current document included below)

# Curatorial objectives for the next five years

| <b>PHASE ONE</b><br>PROCEDURES & PREPARATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>PHASE TWO</b><br>DISCOVERY & DISPLAY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>PHASE THREE</b><br>WEB & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>PHASE FOUR</b><br>BRANDING & EXPANDING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>PHASE FIVE</b><br>USER INTERACTION & ENGAGEMENT                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Define and expand data types and resource types</li><li>2. Implement cataloguing interface</li><li>3. Implement cataloguing as part of core archiving procedures</li><li>4. Implement collection creation as part of core archiving procedures</li><li>5. Implement social media tags to facilitate promotion on social media channels</li><li>6. Add the ADS and its collections to the National Archives 'Discovery' Catalogue and review options for similar signposting opportunities.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Upgrade the OMS to a new version (allowing for spatial data and documenting all objects)</li><li>8. Undertake thematic cataloguing projects</li><li>9. IIF for Image Viewing and Description (Stage 1 - investigate and implement as a pilot project)</li><li>10. Display archivist intervention at object level</li><li>11. Redevelop 'browse' collections</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>12. Implement signposting between related collections and objects</li><li>13. Create a single search facility on the website</li><li>14. Implement map-based searching</li><li>15. Allow tagging of images</li><li>16. Implement an annual 'Catalogue Day'</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>17. Utilise AriadnePlus as a new, or alternative, platform for Archsearch</li><li>18. Use WikiData as an alternative platform for bibliographic discovery</li><li>19. Develop the collections catalogue as a brand in itself</li><li>20. IIF for Image Viewing and Description (Stage 2 - expand to all collections)</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>21. Provide Visualisation functionality for the data/metadata we hold</li><li>22. Allow users to engage with and create collections</li></ol> |

## 5. Tactical Plans

The following section translates the yearly objectives into a distinct action plan. The action plan is an evolving document and it is intended that it will be added to, amended, and reviewed on a regular basis as approaches, priorities, and resources change.

### **Phase 1 Roadmap visualisation**

The following visualisation gives an overview of the planned stages involved in meeting the Phase One objectives. These stages are detailed further in the [Action Plan Document](#)

(the current document as it stands is included as Appendix 2)

# Phase 1 Roadmap

|                                                          | Q1                                                                                                                                                                           | Q2                                                                                                                          | Q3                                                                                                     | Q4                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Define and Expand Data Types &amp; Resource Types</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data type and resource type definitions documented</li> <li>Specification for tool to add resource type to objects created</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Implement Social Media Tags</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media requirements documented</li> <li>Calendar of events developed</li> </ul>                                                 |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Implement Collection creation</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collection creation procedure written</li> </ul>                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specification for Collection creation tools created</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-collection web template created</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collection proof of concept developed</li> </ul>                    |
| <b>Implement Cataloguing Procedure</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collection-level cataloguing procedure written</li> </ul>                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specification for object-level cataloguing created</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Method for object-level metadata appraisal written</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Object-level cataloguing policy and procedure written</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Add the ADS to the NA Discovery Catalogue</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARCHON ID registered</li> <li>ADS added to Discovery portal</li> </ul>                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map of requirements of all updates to external metadata holders completed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methods for routine updates to all external networks</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review</li> </ul>                                                   |
| <b>Implement internal OMS catalogue interface</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proof of concept identified</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interface created and tested</li> <li>Procedures updates</li> </ul> |
| <b>Management</b>                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First quarter review</li> </ul>                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Half year review</li> </ul>                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Third quarter review</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review</li> </ul>                                            |

## 6. Performance management

The ADS Curatorial Strategy and accompanying Strategy documents represent an ambitious undertaking in terms of staff resource, developments to technical infrastructure, and change management. The implementation of the ADS Curatorial Strategy is subject to the prioritisation of available funding and resource; where strategic priorities allow, the ADS will implement a Performance Management Cycle based on the following principles:

- The Curatorial Action Plan will form the baseline document to inform and drive the necessary steps for practical implementation, where funding and resources allow.
- The Objectives within the Curatorial Action Plan will be included within the ADS Annual Objectives, ensuring that they remain a general strategic priority over an annual cycle.
- The targets and milestones outlined in the Action Plan will be used to allocate Staff resources at the beginning of each month via the ADS Planning Meeting. During these meetings, staff resources will be set according to short-term need and the Strategic Priorities.
- The ADS Planning Meeting will also be used to plan Staff Resource beyond that immediate month (ideally in 3-month cycles).
- At the end of each month, the Curatorial Lead, Deputy Director and Director will meet to review progress against the Action Plan. This meeting will be used to identify problems, additional requirements, and if necessary to revisit timetables.
- At the end of each quarter, a wider 'review' group comprising colleagues representing the Management, Developer and

Curatorial Team will meet to review progress and discuss issues, ideas and act as a general support network for the Curatorial Lead, and ensure staff have the opportunity to learn and engage with the project.

- At the end of the ADS half-year, the Curatorial Lead, Deputy Director, and Director will review progress against the Curatorial Action Plan. This review will aim to assess the success of the project to date, and evaluate the timings, and relationships to other ADS Objectives, of remaining tasks in the same phase. The review will incorporate, where appropriate, planning for the subsequent Phase of work.
- The end of the third quarter will be used to appraise the likely success of achieving all objectives, and ensure satisfactory completion or variation of the particular phase, and assess impact on the next Phase.
- The end of each cycle will be marked by a Curatorial Strategy Away Day for all ADS Staff. Key milestones will be communicated, and there will be a chance to reflect on the work undertaken.

## 7. Bibliography

- 7.1. <https://www.business2community.com/strategy/6-steps-create-effective-business-strategy-01391113>
- 7.2. <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/resource/curation-manual/chapters/archival-metadata/archival-metadata.pdf>
- 7.3. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/the-national-archives-digital-strategy-2017-19.pdf>
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