Standing on the shoulders of giants
(3 tales of digital preservation)
Enduring value, digital inheritance
and the information age

Digital Data in 2002
Digital Archaeology: not an option
Policy Building for preservation
Other issues

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Will future generations of scholars be able to use the data sets we have created?

Hopefully, perhaps, maybe, who knows?
Strategies for Digital Data

Findings and Recommendations from Digital Data in Archaeology: A Survey of User Needs

Cadw
DoENI
English Heritage
Historic Scotland
RCHME
RCAHMS
RCAHMW

AHDS
ECAI
Archaeology Data Service
The projected growth in the use of computers in British archaeology
The present state of digital archiving in UK archaeology

The popularity of certain storage options

- Tape: 22%
- Floppy disc: 23%
- CD-ROM: 14%
- Hard disc: 28%
- Network: 13%
The present state of digital archiving in UK archaeology

The popularity of typical strategies for protecting physical media
The archaeological record is decaying faster in digital form than it would have done in the ground

... and then there was Newham
The Newham Archive contained ...

- 6432 individual files
- 1500 excavation reports (or parts thereof)
- 700 database files
- 1200 geophysics files
- 200 separate projects
- approx. 150 excavations
The Newham Archive: Lessons

This is no way to do business!
Physical Media not the main problem
Software problems (migration)
Data to information (documentation)
Planning for re-use
Forward planning is much cheaper
Digital Archive Pilot Project Excavation Records (DAPPER)

Finding appropriate archival and publication levels
• “Index Level Archive”
• “Assessment Level Archive”
• “Research Archives”
• “Integrated Archives”

• Integrating archive and publication
• An ongoing debate (watch this space!)
Collateral issues

IPR
Business models for digital preservation
Costs of failure
Sustaining creativity
Awareness raising
Will future generations of scholars have anything to work with?

It’s our responsibility to ensure that they do
Preservation from the outset
If we lose our focus on this issue, then we risk failure

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There are professional reasons why we should want to preserve:

The archaeological record

Research values

Access = preservation

Professional recognition

Problems with conventional publication
What are the values of good scholarship?

Creativity
Consistency
Economy
Reference to scholarship
Comprehensiveness
Articulacy
Appeal to empirical base
Hypothesis / Hermeneutic driven
Peer acclaim

Of all these, only comprehensiveness presents serious challenge for E-scholarship