

Sovereign power to information scientists!

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Journal of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Archaeology™ (JIIA) online since 10 October 2003 (static site in HTML 4.01; now called Version 01), was launched as an online journal specialised in archaeology, with an intercultural and interdisciplinary vocation. It evolved into the Archaeological Disciplinary Repository aligned with the Open Access Archiving Protocol (OAI-PMH), a resource repository from the viewpoint of open knowledge, open content, and digital libraries.

At the beginning of 2005 the value-added presentation portal, which was developed through an open source Content Management System, was enhanced with the JIIA MyOpia Repository™, the archive of the Journal, achieved with the open source Myopia software, that was developed by the University College London (UCL) for the collection of research of that institution (in the current structure of JIIA that implementation was then called Version 02).

After 4 April 2006, the JIIA MyOpia Repository (as a result of various circumstances) was replaced by the higher performing JIIA Eprints Repository™: an enormous undertaking, faced alone, the crossing of a tempestuous sea, having as the sole vision the promotion of open access to research in the field of archaeology.

The mission was accomplished with the creation of a digital library for archaeological research, an open archive linked to the Journal, one of the few such implementations in this field internationally.

For years, true scientists have input their research (in the fields of medicine, physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc.) in open archives, making it freely accessible. The archaeologists are terribly and morbidly jealous of their ideas! The circulation of ideas comes only through magazines and interpersonal communications, in groups, during conventions! The traditional copyright politics prevent the free circulation of ideas! The transfer of rights to the publishers from the authors inhibits the optimisation of research through other reasonable channels! Since the beginning of 2007, this new portal replaces and updates the preceding one (that had been stagnant for months due to technical reasons): this is Version 03; it is still supported by the JIIA Eprints Repository (open to updates and improvements), realised with the Eprints open source software, developed at the School of Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton, UK, by a team of developers headed by Christopher Gutteridge.

The JIIA Eprints Repository, a disciplinary repository, is the crux of a more complex structure that will more concretely define itself over time and in parallel with the methodological developments of the relative problems, in addition to the decisive developments of the adaptation to the standard with which the tools, used in this field, should interact, even if they have already clarified the constituent elements of the entire polycentric structural network. Nevertheless we are well aware of the serious factors that in archaeology constrain the open access dissemination of archaeological research unlike more traditional scientific fields fully served for decades by disciplinary repositories where research is collected in pre-print or post-print form without any sort of inhibition, and without fear of losing control and of the power on the studies and on the study subjects, factors that heavily restrain archaeological research, destining them exclusively to paper output, and furthermore only in Italian, synonymous with low visibility, with limited access and predominantly spread by the traditional, but solid and irreplaceable libraries.

We demand best practices in the area of transfer of rights, with the involvement of the principal players, publishers and authors, in order to restore balance in the area of circulation of scientific communication in archaeology; as was investigated by the SHERPA project (SHERPA: 'Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access' is a UK-based project; SHERPA is funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee, JISC, and the Consortium of Research Libraries, CURL; it is part of the JISC-funded FAIR program, Focus on Access to Institutional Resources), that drafted the SHERPA/ROMEO list (Publisher copyright policies & self-archiving).

We appeal to the necessity of contributing to the drafting or the integration of a specialised classification system for the archaeological bibliography (starting from the list of subject matter in the Library of Congress), just as the ad-hoc classification systems exist for the scientific disciplines; for archaeology, a subject that is by now equipped with a complexity involving other disciplines, or rather, non-discipline, strongly cross-sectional, still afflicted by antiquarian rigitations!

In particular, we demand a more elaborate hierarchical articulation of archaeological interests, of ancient history, and of the scientific disciplines related to archaeology (specifically the new terminology and expressions, such as 'archaeogenetics'™, 'archaeozoology'•), in order to provide librarians and scholars in information science with more sophisticated instruments for the qualification and cataloguing of the bibliographic resources of archaeological subjects (in particular, digital resources), and classification focused on a more targeted traceability and visibility online.

We maintain that it is necessary to reshape the OPAC specialists in archaeological research, in semantic and multilingual terms, also through ontological means that can capture semantic knowledge, and that implement the non-Western alphabets of Eastern European or near-Eastern languages...how much knowledge remains unknown!

We maintain that it is necessary to disseminate primary data inside the hard and powerful shell of "metadata"™, of web semantics, of ontology, through validation by the authority (public or private) that published the data, through a digital signature.Â This necessity, dictated by the shining development of the information society and the learning society, is generating new approaches to archaeological reasoning; the era of global communication imposes the encapsulation of primary data within ontological reasoning, in the semantic network, and the metadata framework.

The learning society forces the immediate availability of knowledge, as well as primary data, freely useable by everyone, also in a collaborative mode, in compliance with the expectations of the Web 2.0 and of folksonomy, in order to develop new value-added knowledge in the domain and sub-domains of archaeology.

The global archaeology of "born digital"™ originated in this manner, that imposes different approaches and reasoning!

We demand, to that end, best practices in the production of OAI architecture aimed at the dissemination of primary data (Open Data Repository), also open to collaborative organisation, in networks, of extremely high quality data, with the primary goal of preserving valid and well-formed content, aligned with the international standards that offer the best guarantees of long-term support and development.

Our colossal challenge is just beginning, more mature and aware, more sparkling than ever, by prioritising and moving these binding imperatives!

So sovereign power to information scientists, ontologists, to metadata designers, cognitive scientists: these are now fulfilling the revolution of archaeology, if anyone was not already aware of this!

Italian text (pdf format)