Sharing Our Stories

This informal guide has been created to encourage you to share your stories and results and help you think about how you might do this as you design your project.

Please e-mail archaeologyprogramme@hes.scot with any ideas, improvements or case studies that you would like to see included.
Sharing the results of your project - getting the best impact

Why share the results of archaeological projects?

Archaeology projects can engage the public and inspire people, enriching their lives and providing them with new experiences. These positive public impacts reflect well on the heritage sector as a whole by showing its value to society. There may also be legal requirements or ethical reasons for making the results of publically-funded projects freely available.

Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy aims to increase knowledge, understanding, and interpretation of the past, and encourage greater engagement. This document aims to inspire you to share your results, and gives some examples of good practice.

Key Points

- Partnerships with other groups can be a great way of reaching new audiences and pooling resources and experience.
- Identifying and understanding your audiences is crucial.
- It may be better to target key audiences rather than try to be everything to all people.
- A variety of carefully targeted outputs may allow you to spread your message more widely.
- Sharing your results requires proper resourcing, both in time and money – it is not an afterthought.
- Think about how resources you make may be available in the long term, for example, can they be hosted online after the project is complete?
- You should have plans in place to evaluate the impact of your project from the start.
- Be willing to be honest about what worked and what didn’t, and think about how you can share you experiences with others.
- Publications need not be traditional or academic – there are many options available.
- Well-planned events can reach large numbers of people and a wide audience.
- Think carefully about your intended audience for events – does the proposed time or location exclude people?
- Keep an eye out for popular local events you may be able to take part in.
- There is an appetite in the media for stories about archaeology which are visual, engaging, or personal. Identify the stories in your project which are surprising or capture the imagination.
- Teaching resources should be geared toward the Curriculum for Excellence and or recognised awards such as Heritage Heroes to ensure they are of most use to teachers and young people.
- Social media channels aren’t a quick-fix replacement for other ways to share results, like academic publications, and require thought around resourcing, planning, and archiving.
- Remember some forms of engagement can exclude some just as they engage others – for example, not everyone will have access to digital or online content.
- Ensuring some information is freely available online under open data licenses is a key way of spreading the word and making sure your information is accessible.
- Online, consider placing your content where people already are, such as Wikipedia, rather than trying to get them to come to you.
- Resources created to spread the word about your project are not an alternative to formal archiving, make sure you are aware of your core responsibilities.
**Why plan to share the results of my project before I have even begun?**

It is crucial to think about the public impact of your project, and how you will assess it, in advance. Information can be shared in many different ways, from specialist academic publications to open days where members of the public can become directly involved. You will often get the best results when you plan on how you will share information throughout your project rather than leaving it until the end. It may also be a key part of how any funding application will be assessed, so it is important to show that due consideration has been given to how this will be achieved.

**Who do you want to reach?**

Different activities are likely to reach different audiences, so it is important to consider these early in the project. Not all projects are going to appeal to everyone so be realistic, and remember projects with a limited specialist interest can still have a large impact. You may your audience falls in to three broad categories – a non-expert audience, not specifically interested in your project, a more informed specialist or local audience, or an expert audience. These audiences will have different expectations so you will want to think about how you create bespoke content addressing these groups and how it will be targeted toward them. Depending on where your project takes place and the subject matter, you may wish to consider producing content in [Gaelic](https://www.gaelic.org) or Scots.

**What resources do you have?**

Some projects will benefit from a much broader approach than others so you should consider the resources you have available and what size of audience you wish to reach. Sharing your results should be a core part of your project. You should think carefully about what resources you have available. Academic publications, even short journal papers, can take many months to produce. Open days require a number of committed and organised volunteers to be successful. Even simple forms of information such as leaflets may require specialist input. Online content, such as blogs and social media, also require resourcing – to be effective it needs to be curated, and requires regular updating and promotion.

**Can I work with other groups and organisations?**

Partnering with local groups or other organisations can often be an excellent way of tapping into new audiences and sharing resources and experience. The University of [Aberdeen’s Northern Picts Project](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ahp/) worked closely with local artist’s collective [Rhynie Woman](https://www.rhyniewoman.co.uk) who ran a number of activities alongside their excavations. These included a pop-up museum and café and an event which was attended by most of the village of Rhynie where the project took place. Many of the best examples given in this guidance were done in partnership, so you should consider how you can work together with other groups to get the greatest impact from your project.

**How do I evaluate the impact of my project?**

It is an on-going challenge for community heritage to assess the impact of their activities. Although it is simple to count the number of visitors to an open day or interactions on social media, it is much harder to assess how the experience of engaging with archaeology might impact on an individual. Often a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is best – either way, these require planning and should be considered at the start of the project to ensure you are recording and evaluating as you go.

Evaluations of community heritage projects often take the form of case studies, where project organisers reflect on their experiences and consider what worked and what could have been done more effectively. Some projects may bring in external organisations with expertise in evaluating people’s experiences of projects. When fewer resources are available, simple methods such as encouraging participants and the public to give anonymous feedback can be useful.

It is important to share the lessons you have learned from you projects, and to be honest about your experiences. Many case studies of community heritage have been published in journals like [Public Archaeology](https://www.gods-ark.org.uk/) and the [Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage](https://jcah.org.uk/), or shared in local journals or professional or special interest magazines. Regular networking events and conferences are also often a good place for groups to share their experiences and learn from each other.

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*‘not only is more research required into the benefits of community archaeology, but also new methodologies are called for.’*

- *Evaluating community Archaeology in the UK*
Sharing the results of your project - ideas and examples

Print or Online Publications

Traditionally, academic publications were the main output for archaeology projects. You can find specific guidance on academic publications at the end of this guide. These types of publications remain important but they can often be expensive to both funders and the public, resource intensive, and reach a narrow audience. There are a wide variety of forms of publication which may give your project greater impact.

CASE STUDY

BOOKLET

‘The Archaeology of Dun Deardail’, was published by Forestry Commission Scotland in 2018. This book was about an Iron Age Hillfort in Glen Nevis. The text was written in an engaging and readable way, combined with images of artistic and creative engagements with the material. It also focused on the experiences of those involved in the project to give it a more relatable, personal aspect.

Example art from ‘The Archaeology of Dun Deardail’ © Forestry Commission Scotland by Alan Braby

These can be books tailored to a wider audience by carefully considering their format and content. They can also complement online content, such as digital trails, story maps or digital collections. The North of Scotland Archaeology Society have published a series of small pocket-sized guidebooks summarising their research.

Inventive and unusual formats for sharing the results of heritage and archaeology include novels or even comic books. Publications come in many forms and can reach varied audiences.

Remember that publications often require external expertise to design and produce, and there could be associated costs.

CASE STUDY

LEAFLET AND DIGITAL TRAIL

Another example is a leaflet and associated digital trail. It was produced to promote the Phoenix Futures Trail in North Lanarkshire which encourages people to explore local sites in Strathclyde Country Park. This was published as part of an award-winning collaboration between the Clyde and Avon Landscape Partnership and Phoenix futures, a charity supporting people with drug and alcohol problems. It is available online and in the local area, and is likely to be effective in reaching local audiences and visitors to the area.
**Press, Radio, and Television**

Traditional media remains an important way to reach a wide range of people. Some archaeological projects contain elements which are of a broad national or even international interest. Personal, visual, and engaging stories are likely to have a broader appeal than detailed or specialist aspects of projects, and you should seek to identify parts of your project which may capture the public imagination.

Recent work on monumental sculpture from the Antonine Wall was featured both in print and on BBC Radio Scotland, when a story about the colourful and gory decoration of the sculpture garnered wide-spread interest. Work by the SCAPE Trust was featured on the Channel 4 TV series, *Britain at Low Tide*.

Although not all projects will be of national interest, shorter summaries of projects can be placed in publications which reach communities of interest, *Current Archaeology, British Archaeology, History Scotland*, or *Archaeology Scotland’s magazine*.

**CASE STUDY**

**EVENTS**

A community event in 2018 at Queens Park, Glasgow, *Langside450*, allowed various heritage groups to engage with an audience of over 10,000 people that attended an event with a mix of activities such as live music, plays, and food and drink.

**Public Lectures, Events, Open Days**

Public events may not have the longevity of printed or online publications but they can reach a large number of people and have the potential to inspire and engage. In many areas there are pre-existing special interest societies who hold lectures – this provides a way of reaching an audience who are likely to already be interested in local heritage. Open days on excavations, particularly when they are well-advertised or happen after media coverage, can attract many visitors.

Creative engagements with heritage such as music, art, or theatre may attract new audiences. Attendance at external events can also be a good way of reaching people. Such events may have a much larger or more varied audience than those with a heritage theme alone.

Remember that certain parts of the community will often struggle to find the time to attend events during the week. You should consider free events with family-friendly activities at the weekends to reach families. You may also wish to contact local schools to reach young people. Think about whether the location of your event will exclude people with limited mobility or extra support needs. Lectures, open days, and events require a significant investment in person hours, and will often require individuals with good communication skills and enthusiasm so you should consider how best to use the people you have.
Exhibitions – Traditional and Online

Results of archaeological projects can be used to create resources for learning and teaching, and can form the basis of museum exhibitions.

Your project can work with local communities, interest groups or hard to reach audiences to co-create exhibitions. Many local libraries, museums, or community spaces can accommodate small exhibitions.

Digital exhibitions can also be a good way of sharing your project, such as Shepherding on Ardkinglas Estate created by Here We Are. This project captured local archaeology and oral history in a modern, accessible, engaging format. The project allowed information important to the local community that would otherwise have been lost to be displayed and preserved for future generations and for future study.

Learning Resources and Awards

Teaching and learning resources can be an effective legacy for your project. They can be used to teach children in an engaging way, and may be useful to youth groups, such as the Young Archaeologist’s Club. These can be explicitly linked to outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence. This allows resources to be used more easily by time-poor teachers keen to deliver heritage-based education.

Alongside learning and teaching resources you may be able to offer awards to young people through the Heritage Hero Awards. These have recently been recognised as a Scottish Youth Award, meaning that it is a vocational award which will be valuable to students and young people.

Working with teachers or people with relevant experience, is a great way to create quality resources that can be easily re-used. While designing activities to test the resources out and allowing time to include any feedback can also make them more user-friendly.

Good quality resources can reach large numbers of children over time, especially if they are provided online in centralised portals such as Learning Scotland’s Past - Heritage Learning Resources Portal, where teachers will be likely to find them.
Social media, Blogs & Online Experiences

CASE STUDY

EVENTS

A video summarising the Northern Picts Project was shared on social media and picked up by National Geographic – by spring 2018 it had almost 400,000 views from all over the world.

Image of excavation in progress at Rhynie, Tap o’ Noth in Background © Northern Picts Project.

Social media platforms can be a low-cost way of reaching a large number of people. Online groups can create a sense of community, and may allow those who live far away from your project or who are not able to attend physical events to feel involved.

Online and social media content requires commitment, organisation and resourcing. Frequent updates may be required in order to keep followers interested or attract new ones, and users may expect social media pages to respond quickly to comments or other interactions. A good tip for social media activity is the rule of thirds – one third should be original content, one third should be sharing the work of others, and one third should be interactions with your online community. It is therefore important to consider who will manage online interactions to ensure this is well-considered and well-organised. Just as there may be local interest groups in many areas there are also online communities. It may be worth identifying online communities of interested or local history groups to share content to.

Occasionally online material can reach extremely large and international audiences. Social media often does best when it is linked to exciting and attractive content like images, videos, 3d models or online experiences, such as apps. Wemyss Caves 4D is a great example. Journalists frequently browse online content for stories – blogs and social media posts on Scotland’s Heritage are frequently taken up by traditional press and have appeared in print or on TV or radio.

If possible, you may wish to consider how any online content such as blogs or videos might be archived and how the online communities you create may be interacted with after your project is complete.

CASE STUDY

DIGITAL APPS

The Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) web app ‘Designing Digital Engagements: The SERF Hillforts Project’ provides a practical and accessible way for a wider audience to engage with an excavation and explore how evidence is interpreted by archaeologists. The interactive resource allows the user to discover the hillforts from the sky to the soil, through the artefacts they yield and the evidence left behind. Different voices and interpretations are presented through videos and discussions.

Screen grab from the SERF web app © University of Glasgow

‘The presentation and sharing of archaeological knowledge with and to the public … requires firm commitment to public engagement, and a clear strategic approach.’

Public Archaeology in a Digital Age
There are many reasons why people choose to freely share data as openly as possible. Many people cite the ethical obligation to make the results of publically-funded research available to the public, others feel that sharing information and ideas promote innovation. Information which is easily available is more likely to be used and shared further.

Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy recognises this and seeks to ‘make knowledge more discoverable, accessible, referable, and reusable’. As part of your project, you may already be obliged to archive your results in a publically-accessible repository such as the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) or local Historic Environment Records (HERs) and report your findings through Discovery and Excavation in Scotland and/or OASIS. However, there is more you can do to make your information as widely available as possible.

There is a move at a national, and indeed international level to make publically-funded data as open as possible. The Scottish Government’s Open Data Strategy (2015) sets out open data policy for government organisations and reflects the approach taken by many other institutions in Scotland. Many non-governmental institutions, such as Edinburgh University are leading on open data too. One aspect of this movement is to offer publications as open access – freely available online. For more information read our Open Access section below under Academic Publications.

A key aspect of open data is issuing information under an open data license, such as creative commons licenses. These are popular, simple, and internationally-recognised licenses which allow you to retain copyright of your data whilst also allowing others to use, share or even modify it. One area where these are particularly useful is for images – you may wish to issue promotional images of your projects under these licenses which will make them easy to find and share by others, including the press, and educational institutions.

You may also wish to consider contributing information to free and widely used platforms, such as Wikipedia. Wikipedia is an online encyclopaedia, which is the largest and most widely used reference work in the world, and the world’s fifth most popular website. Information on Wikipedia must be properly cited, using only reliable sources, and research has shown that its accuracy is comparable to written reference works such as Encyclopaedia Britannica. Information on Wikipedia is issued under an open license - CC-BY-SA - and is free to use, share, and re-use. Putting information on Wikipedia makes the results of your project visible to a global audience.

Beware: Hosting information on free repositories is not a substitute for formal archiving!

You should ensure that this does not conflict with any copyright requirements of your chosen archive. However, making some images, text or other material available as open data is a great way of sharing your project and making it more easily discoverable and usable for others. These websites are where most people turn first for information – why not take your information to them rather than expect them to come to you?
Sharing the results of your project

**Academic publications - print, e-books and open access**

**Why produce an academic publication?**

Academic publications are often where the most detailed and extended accounts of project results can be given. Although specialist academic publications can have a small audience, they can still have a big impact. They have the benefit of peer review, and allow specialist information to be shared.

In the past few years, there have been many changes in academic publishing and there are a greater number of options available than ever before. It’s therefore very important to shop around publishers to maximise the impact of your publication. This short guide provides helpful advice on the benefits and drawbacks of various options. You can find the key points summarised below. You can also contact the Archaeology and World Heritage team for advice at archaeologyprogramme@hes.scot.

**Key points**

- Publications which are available in an electronic format tend to be used more
- Libraries and universities increasingly favour e-publications in their acquisitions, which means more students and young people are likely to use them
- E-publications are easier to integrate into academic courses and their key texts – great for reaching students and young researchers.
- E-publications can offer a wide range of formats which may be able to do things not possible in print.
- Publications which are Open Access can receive more downloads, mentions, and citations
- Publishers offer a wide variety of options for electronic and OA versions of publications – at a wide variety of costs.
- Researchers like print because of their usability and tangibility
- Although journal articles are increasingly going online, print monographs are likely to remain important for some time to come.
- Traditional printing is most cost effective over large print runs, and supports the widest range of formats. It is therefore best for publications with a more wide or general interest
- Print-on-demand can be significantly more cost-effective in smaller runs, and may be best for publications which have a more specialist interest
- Print-on-demand is much less susceptible to going permanently out of print
- Some publishers can offer print, electronic publication and Open Access together, it doesn’t have to be either/or
What is Open Access and why do it?

A key aim of Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy is improving the delivery of archaeology by widening access and participation.

Open access publications are freely available to anyone who wants to access them online. They are issued under an open license, usually Creative Commons. A recent study by SpringerNature (2017) has shown that OA publications have a significantly wider reach than those that are not open access. In some cases OA publications can have as many as fifteen times more downloads, up to 50% more citations, and ten times more online mentions.

As of 2016, the Research Excellent Framework (REF) requires qualifying journal articles to be OA, and this may be extended to other types of publications in future. Different publishers have different OA offers, and it is worth comparing these in detail before choosing where to publish. For example, some may lodge articles on Open Access repositories such as DOAB or DOAJ, and may host articles in different places.

HES offers to fund up to 100% of open access costs for Archaeology Programme projects in order to encourage this. More information can be found in our Open Access Policy.

Print, electronic, or both?

Electronic

More publications are becoming available online, and evidence suggests where this is the case, usage tends to be high. As e-journals and e-books have become more common, libraries have adapted how they acquire books. Electronic publications take up no shelf space, are easier for researchers to access, and they can sometimes be bought at significantly lower cost. Libraries therefore have a preference for electronic publications in their new acquisitions. For many of the same reasons, e-publications are more likely to find their way on to academic course readings lists – this solves the issue of a large number of students competing to secure a small number of key books immediately before an essay is due! This means that young researchers may be more likely to use publications that are available electronically and they are likely to keep this habit up as they progress into the profession or academia.

Print

In recent years more academic monographs are being published, but there are fewer overall readers. This makes it more difficult for monographs to be commercially viable. This may mean sponsors and funders are required more often and they may need to pay higher subventions to allow for an affordable cover price. In recent years, HES has frequently paid as much as £8,000 - £17,000 in order to see a run of 300 monographs published at an affordable cover price. Print still remains important - most authors and readers report they prefer to use print publications because they are easier to use when doing research. They enjoy seeing, handling, and collecting them. Although journals are increasingly moving online, the take up for e-monographs has been slower. However, although most authors and readers report preferring print, the evidence shows that they tend to use electronic publications significantly more.

Both!

Crucially it does not need to be an either/or, some publishers offer both formats together alongside Open Access, and this may often be the best way of meeting the needs of a wide audience.
E-journal, e-book, or enhanced e-book?

There are a wide range of options of electronic publications.

Most journals are now also available electronically (some exclusively), and researchers are increasingly accessing these online. E-books are becoming more common, and formats can vary from a simple online version of a print book to formats designed specifically for online use.

Enhanced e-books can offer material not possible in print – such as embedded video or sound content, animations, or the opportunity for interactive discussion. They may also link to external content, such as archival material on a digital repository like ADS. This may encourage others to engage with or reuse this data.

Some examples of enhanced e-books are given below:

- Debates in the Digital Humanities
- Enchanting the Desert
- Using Primary Sources
- Glastonbury Abbey: Archaeological Excavations 1904 - 1979

Print-on-demand or traditional printing?

In recent years, lowering costs and improving quality of digital printing has made print-on-demand more common. In this form of printing, books are printed in small batches as needed rather than in a single large print run. This cuts down on expensive storage and transport costs and means that books will not ‘go out of print’ if there is demand for them. This is particularly important for Archaeology Programme projects as HES does not fund reprints.

This also means that specialist publications can be commercially viable and cheaper for authors and sponsors, whilst also being of a high quality. Traditional printing is better value over large print runs, and often allows for a wider range of options for format, printing, and binding – this makes traditional printing good for publications which will have a wide public appeal beyond a specialist or local audience.
Find out more

**Community Archaeology and Engagement, Theory and Practice**


**Assessing and Evaluating Projects: Method and case studies**


The Journal of Community Archaeology And Heritage (2014-Present). Contains many case studies of community archaeology and engagement from across the globe. https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ycah20/current

**Using Social Media and Digital Technology**

Richardson, L (2014). *The Day of Archaeology: Blogging and Online Archaeological Communities*, European journal of post-Classical Archaeologies. 4 – 421-446 http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1431013

**Open Access and Open Data**


Contact Wikimedia UK for free advice at scotland@wikimedia.org.uk
Open Access Key Sources


Examples of Enhanced E-books


