DIGITAL ANTIQUITY

a new world of Archaeological Preservation, Innovation, and Research

tDAR

Building, Improving, and Maintaining the Digital Archaeological Record

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Background

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Thanks for joining us for the latest issue of Digital Antiquity *eNews*. We have several topics to report about. First, Digital Antiquity staff attended the 45th annual meeting of the **Society for Historical Archaeology** in Baltimore, Maryland. Second, we are extremely pleased to announce a new grant from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, awarded to the Center for Digital Antiquity to continue its work. Next, we highlight several important changes to tDAR software. Regular readers know that Digital Antiquity continuously updates tDAR to improve its function, interface and user-friendliness. Then, we invite loyal subscribers and new readers alike will be interested in the variety of features we've added in **two tDAR updates**. Next, we encourage readers to sign up for the **DA – tDAR workshops** scheduled for Wednesday 18 April (1 – 4 pm) and Saturday 21 April (1 – 4 pm) during the Society for American Archaeology's annual meeting in Memphis. These workshops will show participants how to use tDAR to improve their use of archaeological data and information: we hope to see you there! Finally, readers will be interested in the diverse array of new documents, images and other materials **recently uploaded to tDAR**.

Digital Antiquity and Historical Archaeology

Digital Antiquity brought tDAR to the Society for Historical Archaeology's annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology from January 4-8, 2012 in Baltimore, Maryland. Dozens of historical archaeologists stopped by the Digital Antiquity exhibit table to say hello and learn about tDAR. Based on their interest, we were inspired to share some historical archaeology with *eNews* readers. Here is a short list of some very exciting historical archaeology projects currently in tDAR:

- **An Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture**: Through a collection of documents and datasets, this project explores eighteen Bay-area sites from the early Historic Period in terms of issues such as culture contact between colonists and Indigenous peoples, the beginnings of the plantation system, slavery, and consumption of various materials. The project serves to unify data across the area, allowing valuable comparison of artifact types and densities at each site, improving our understanding of early colonial life.
- **The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project**: This important project is a joint effort by researchers from Western Michigan University and the city of Niles, Michigan to investigate, record and preserve the Colonial Period site of Ft. St. Joseph, which was occupied sequentially by the French and the British. Consisting of documents, images, and datasets in tDAR, this

prolific project proves the worth of archaeological endeavors explicitly involving the public.

- **The Archaeology of African Burial Ground National Monument, New York**: This extensive collection of National Park Service and associated documents presents the findings of an interdisciplinary team of researchers--including archaeologists, bioarchaeologists and historians--on the African Burial Ground, which was 'rediscovered' in 1989 during preparations for the construction of a large tower by the US General Services Administration. The reports highlight the cultural and physical struggles of marginalized African populations in 17th-18th century New York. They illustrate the extreme contrast between lower Manhattan as a ghettoized space during the late Colonial and early post-Revolutionary periods and the *chic* contemporary neighborhoods of SoHo and NoLita, providing an imperative historical lesson about inequality in America.

A New Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant

Digital Antiquity was recently awarded a new grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to continue its work of improving access to archaeological information and ensuring that archaeological data, documents, images, and other kinds of information are preserved for future use. Beginning in March 2012, the grant will enable Digital Antiquity to increase the amount of data in tDAR, enhance its features and infrastructure, and continue to build the community of tDAR contributors and users. For more details about the new Mellon grant as well as the history of Digital Antiquity, **read** the Arizona State University press release.

Digital Antiquity at the 2012 SAA

We are happy to announce that we will be in attendance at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Memphis, Tennessee from April 18-22, 2012. We hope you will attend one of our workshops or forums, visit our booth (#615) in the Exhibition Hall, or stop by one of the many events to which Digital Antiquity staff is contributing. To learn more about our involvement at this year's SAA meeting, check out **this article** in the News section of our website.

tDAR Updates

Since the last issue of *eNews*, tDAR has undergone two software updates. Following the established alphabetical trend, these updates were named Fluvial and Grid. Through these improvements, Digital Antiquity has provided a variety of new features to tDAR users, which are summarized here. More specific information is available in news articles on **Fluvial** and **Grid** on the tDAR website

New tools provided by the updates include Creator pages and Collections. A Creator page is somewhat like a 'profile' for a social media website. It is a place where all information and files can be privately viewed, and where users can adjust their information according to

dynamic needs. We believe that Creator pages allow for more flexibility in using tDAR and provide an excellent 'snapshot' of tDAR files: the user can see all of her/his files, organized alphabetically by title within type-level subsections. Users can also edit their information including adding a description or updating the information they provided when they registered. In addition to the Creator page, the user dashboard has also been improved to increase the speed of viewing resources. Another new tool for organizing your tDAR files is the Collection—a completely user-defined group of tDAR resources that can be used to efficiently share, access, and maintain data. Because permissions for viewing or modification can be granted at the Collection level, this should save institutional users significant time in allocating work to others using tDAR. Finally, you will find three new investigation types and three new material types available on the record entry page: remote sensing, geophysical survey, heritage management, textile, hide, and basketry. You can read more about these **investigation types** and **material types** in tDAR on the website.

Pre-existing features have also been overhauled to create a more user-friendly experience in tDAR. Data integration (for datasets) now has a simplified user interface and provides a results summary to improve the user's ability to check work before saving. The Batch Upload tool template has been improved with better labels, examples, help text, and error messages. Search result relevance has been improved, and search functionality has been overhauled in terms of the user's ability to limit the search, sort results, and download search results as spreadsheets. Resource view pages are more streamlined, image viewing is improved, inheritance has been enhanced for resources that are part of a project, and a template has been embedded for cleaner printing. Dataset view pages now show previews of data and metadata, and during dataset creation, rows can be linked to other tDAR resources (such as image files). Additional file types RTF (for documents) and TAB (for coding sheets) are now supported, and PDF files automatically receive special tDAR cover sheets with complete record citation information. To support citation, tDAR now automatically creates a DOI—Digital Object Identifier, a unique and permanent identifying 'tag'—for uploaded files. This ensures that no matter the transformations a file goes through as tDAR changes, it has a persistent identifier to anchor it.

We hope you will **contact us** with your feedback and suggestions on these changes to tDAR!

2011 Digital Antiquity Grants Program

The working period for the 2011 Digital Antiquity Grants Program closed on December 31, 2011, and our grantees are now completing their final reports. We have seen some exciting work result from the Program, and will be featuring some of the grant projects on our website. These grants showcase different types of projects that we believe will serve as models for how to organize certain types of investigations within tDAR. Along with our upcoming video tutorials, the Grants Program features are a part of our continuing commitment to improving the user experience in tDAR. Readers should look for announcements of a 2012 Digital Antiquity grants program in the next few months.