Greetings! My name is Chris Nicholson and this month (October 1st) I was hired to be the new Executive Director at the Center for Digital Antiquity and tDAR. I come to Digital Antiquity from the University of Wyoming, where I served as the Director of the Water Resources Data System and Wyoming State Climate Office for the past 8 years. My most recent research has focused on human paleoecology and paleoclimates, with my geographic interest spanning both North America and Eurasia.
I’m truly excited to be working for Digital Antiquity and am optimistic about our future, both from the perspective of broadening the archaeological community’s awareness of the importance of archiving digital data, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Digital Antiquity. As more archaeologists learn about and understand the ethical and legal obligations we have to facilitate open access research, the better off we are as a discipline. Reproducibility and transparency are topics that transcend the science community, and archaeology is not immune; this issue is truly a global one. Our European colleagues, recognizing this, have coined the phrase “Digital Dark Age”, and it is our hope and goal at Digital Antiquity that North American archaeologists are cognizant of the importance of not falling behind other disciplines when it comes to archiving, preserving, and ultimately sharing data.

Over the next several months I’ll be reaching out to many of you, but if you have yet to hear from me, please feel free to contact me. I’m looking forward to sustaining long-standing relationships and collaborations, as well as cultivating new ones. Please contact me at Christopher.M.Nicholson@asu.edu or 480-965-6510.

Leigh Anne Ellison promoted to Assistant Director

Congratulations to Leigh Anne Ellison on her recent promotion to Assistant Director of the Center for Digital Antiquity! Leigh Anne joined the staff in 2012 as Sales and Marketing Coordinator, and was promoted to Program Manager in 2017. She has extensive professional experience including work as a Project Director for archaeological fieldwork in Mexico and Honduras, where she studied social variability among commoners. She also has considerable field experience in the US, working as a Field Archaeologist on various projects throughout Hawaii, Arizona, and Colorado. Leigh Anne holds a Master’s degree in Anthropology from Northern Arizona University and a bachelor’s degree in Anthropology and Art History from Wellesley College. A frequent presenter at archaeology conferences and workshops, Leigh Anne advocates globally for Digital Antiquity and the use of TDAR for the long-term preservation of, and access to, archaeological data. She will continue to serve as the primary point-of-contact for Digital Antiquity’s clients, users, and customers.
ARIADNEplus grant focuses on building an international data portal

Partnering with 26 other countries, Digital Antiquity is part of the 5 year ARIADNEplus research grant (2019-2023). ARIADNEplus is the continuation of the successful ARIADNE project: Advanced Research Infrastructure for Archaeological Data Networking in Europe, 2013-2017. The original ARIADNE work focused on integrating 36 European Union archaeological repositories, and building a platform to support searching their integrated catalogue of unpublished reports, images, maps, databases and other archaeological information.

The "plus" grant expands the integrated partners list to include the U.S. (Digital Antiquity), Argentina (National Scientific and Technical Research Council), Israel (Israel Antiquities Authority) and Japan (National Research Institute for Cultural Properties). The new portal will extend geographical and temporally, while providing various services to researchers to process and re-use the data. For more information, check out their informative website available in 14 different languages.

Digital Antiquity Board of Directors member Dr. Julian Richards (ADS, UK) is one of the principal investigators for ARIADNEplus.

Digital Antiquity Senior Digital Curator Rachel Fernandez is responsible for identifying datasets in tDAR and uploading them to the ARIADNE Portal.

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New feature in tDAR allows fielded searches in a database

We are working on an exciting new search feature that will soon be available in tDAR. Lead Digital Software Engineer Jim deVos has been developing this new tool as a part of ASU Professor Michelle Hegmon’s NEH funded grant “From Library to Laboratory: Developing Tools to Enhance the Use of Digital Archaeological and Other Humanities Collections.”

Currently, users can search FOR a database in tDAR but not WITHIN that database. To explore the contents a user must first download the database, open it, and then use SQL queries to find what they are looking for. The new tDAR feature will allow users to search within databases based on the field (column) names and unique values. With this interface users will be able to see the unique values in each field (column), select the values they are interested in, and use Boolean terms to query a single field or multiple fields.

This handy new tool has been designed to work specifically with the Mimbres database, to be piloted within a single table where the fields and values describe attributes of specific Mimbres bowls. The new search feature will link the database values with the related images in tDAR. Future enhancements will expand this feature to work on any database in tDAR.

Be sure to try out the new field search option in MimPIDD in the upcoming tDAR release!

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Senior Digital Curator Rachel Fernandez completes project in Ghana

In the fall of 2018, tDAR’s Senior Digital Curator Rachel Fernandez joined Ann Stahl and Lisa Goddard from the University of Victoria to co-lead an intensive, hands-on workshop for thirty Ghanaian students, faculty, and staff at the University of Ghana in Accra. This workshop was the first phase of the Improving African Futures Using Lessons from the Past (IAfF) project, which seeks to sustainably archive and provide digital access to the archaeological and cultural heritage resources of Ghana through partnership with and empowerment of local Ghanaian communities. By providing educational opportunities in digital data management, including project organization and developing data bases and appropriate metadata, students gained experience digitizing documents, photos, and audiovisual recordings, and drafted plans to guide their digital data curation projects. Throughout the week-long workshop, Rachel utilized tDAR as a vehicle to illustrate best practices for digital data management.

Following last year’s success, Rachel returned to Ghana in July 2019 to help complete the project’s second phase and ambitious goal to create the Ghana Heritage Web Portal. This online resource repository will not only benefit archaeologists and scholars, but local communities and the broader public, as well. By working together, Rachel, the other project team members, and the local Ghanaians participants began building shared standards of professional practice that will be used to guide future archaeological research and sustainable knowledge dissemination in Africa and elsewhere. Learn more about this innovative, collaborative project by visiting the Ghana Heritage Collection Rachel created in tDAR.
Roosevelt Digital Database Project
Workshop success

tDAR serves as the digital archive for the Theodore Roosevelt Dam archaeological projects, a set of extensive, multi-site archaeological investigations undertaken by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to mitigate the impact of raising water levels in the reservoir behind the Theodore Roosevelt Dam along the Salt River in the Tonto Basin east of Phoenix, Arizona. Carried out in the 1990s, the excavations produced a plethora of documents and datasets, many of which are now readily discoverable and accessible in tDAR.

As we shared in our last newsletter, post-doctoral research scholar Katherine Dungan has been working to wrangle this wealth of information into easily navigable and user-friendly collections in tDAR. To help guide her efforts, Dr. Dungan held a very productive Roosevelt Database Users Workshop last month, with lively participation from SHESC graduate students Robert Bishoff, Chris Schwartz, Chris Caseldine, and Caitlin Wichlacz; Digital Antiquity staff Jim deVos, Leigh Anne Ellison, Rachel Fernandez, and Mary Whelan; archaeologist Josh Watts, Center for Archaeology and Society (CAS) Archaeological Research Analyst Krista Eschbach, and CAS Co-director and associate professor Matt Peeples. This group offered several suggestions for improving the presentation and usability of the Roosevelt databases and Roosevelt material in tDAR.

Be sure to check the Roosevelt collection pages in tDAR and the CAS website over the coming months for improvements and updates! Do you have a suggestion of your own you would like to share with us? Connect with us anytime by emailing comments@tdar.org or utilize the social media buttons at the bottom of this newsletter to find us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.
tDAR on the MOVE

Director Chris Nicholson and senior tDAR staff members are looking forward to participating in a number of upcoming archaeological meetings and conferences. Look for us in sessions, stop by our booth, or email Leigh Anne Ellison (LeighAnne.Ellison@asu.edu), Rachel Fernandez (Rachel.Fernandez.1@asu.edu) or Chris Nicholson (Christopher.M.Nicholson@asu.edu) to have coffee and talk about what tDAR can do for you.


- **Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA)** [https://sha.org/conferences/](https://sha.org/conferences/), January 8-11, 2020 Boston, Massachusetts


- **Society for American Archaeology (SAA)** [https://www.saa.org/annual-meeting/](https://www.saa.org/annual-meeting/), April 22-26, 2020, Austin, Texas