

Building a Website for your Project

BAJR/WikiArc Practical Guide

by
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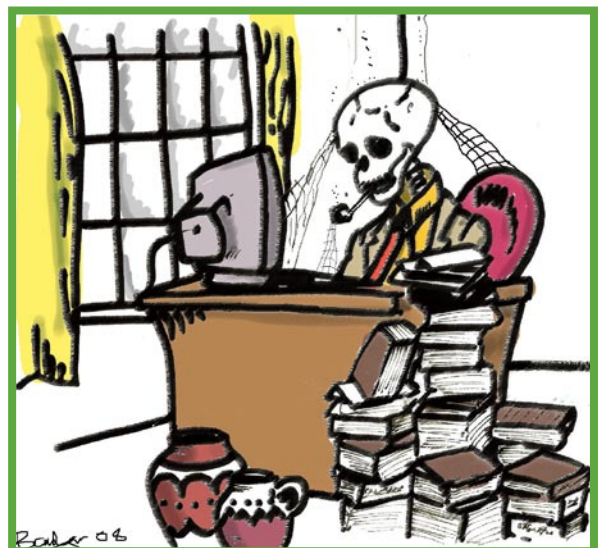


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This guide is designed to help you think about some of the things you might want to consider before building a website for your site or project, as well as to give some brief guidance to get you started. It also provides links to a few good examples now available on the Internet.
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Don't wait too long to get your project online!

1. BEFORE YOU START

Always spend time planning what you want to include on your website before you put anything online. Here are a few things you should consider:

1.1 Who will visit the website?

You should think about who is likely to use the website, so you can build a site that they will find easy to use, informative and interesting. Visitors might include:

- **Local people who want to know more about the area**

These people may be extremely interested in the work you are doing, but might not have much previous knowledge of archaeology, so it is important to provide information about what is going on that is clear, and not too technical - never assume prior knowledge, but never talk down to people either.

- **Adults who want to get actively involved.**

This group could be local people (or not-so-local people, such as archaeology students from universities) who want to work as volunteers on the project, so it is very important to give clear details of how they can help and whom they should contact.

Don't forget that not all volunteers will want to dig – some might prefer to work with finds or to carry out historical research, so remember to be clear about what work is available for those who want to volunteer.

- **Children.**

If you are creating a website that is meant to express how much fun it is to be an archaeologist, or how great the project is for kids, then make sure it is not so full of facts and figures that it is just plain boring. Think about including games to play (there are a number of free resources out there), downloadable sheets and perhaps having an interactive zone.

- **Groups wanting to visit the project.**

There might be groups (perhaps from schools or local history societies) who want to visit the site, so include information about who they should speak to, and whether tours are available and if so when. You could even provide some useful background to the project, so they already know a little about what you are doing and why when they arrive.

- **Other archaeologists.**

They are likely to want far more technical information about specific aspects of the project (for example particular types of finds that have been recovered or how different features are located across the site) - although they will probably welcome simple summaries as well!



*Community archaeology at South Cadbury, Somerset.
Photo by Matthew Law*

1.2 What content to put on the website?

Think about what you want to put on the site, and how you would like to organise it. Take a look at some other archaeology websites to see what they have done. You may want to include a news section, photographs (and even videos) from the site, information about the work you are doing right now and also the history of the site. The Internet is also a great place to publish archaeological data and reports. Many types of data can be published online that would be difficult and expensive to put into a paper publication. The most important information is how people can contact you and what they can do to help; but it is up to you to be as creative as you like when planning what will go on the site. (See 'free ways to a dynamic website' below).

What happens next?

What will happen after the fieldwork is finished? The website will still be there, so it would be a good idea to explain that the digging is over. However there is still a lot more you can do with the website. For example post news about the lab work that is going on with the finds, as well as a summary of all the fieldwork and what you found. If you choose to publish any of your data and reports online, these will be a valuable research resource for other archaeologists. If the site was on land with public access, you might like to use the website to help people to visit the area and understand what you found, by writing a walking tour of the site explaining where the different features were and what you think they were for, which they can download and print or, more ambitiously, you could create an mp3 audio tour to download. The website should inspire people long after your work is over.

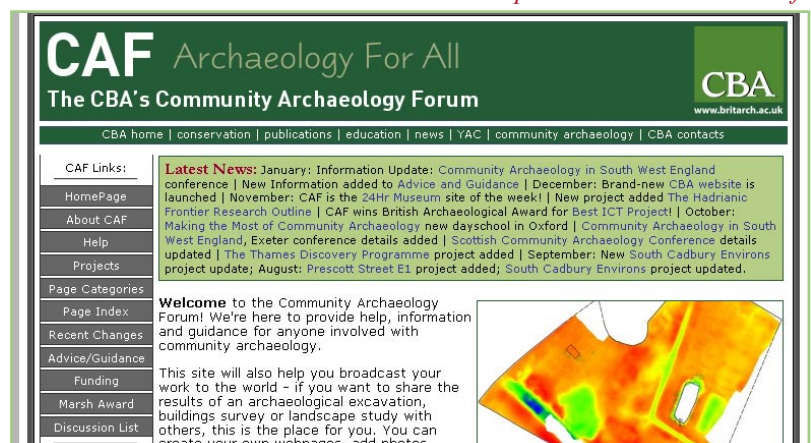
2. BUILDING YOUR WEBSITE

There are a number of ways you can do this even if you don't know a lot about how to make websites, and without even spending any money. . . .

The CBA's **Community Archaeology Forum**

*The CBA's Community
Archaeology Forum'*
<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/caf/>

This website provides free space for you to set up some pages for your project on their website. You will have to be able to use a wiki-style system, and this can take some time to understand, however, once you have learned the format it is easy to update. You could of course use this as a start page, and then link to other resources on other websites.



Free blogging sites

Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>) or
WordPress (<http://www.wordpress.com>).

A free project blog is a good way to set up a relatively simple site that is very easy to use. Although they don't give you a lot of freedom to design your own page layout, you can add (free) templates in Wordpress or add (paid for) customisations that do give you more control.

Free hosting, website builders and content

You can build a more creative website using a free web hosting service with a website builder such as **Weebly** (<http://www.weebly.com>), and you can add pictures or videos to your site by uploading them to a free service like **Flickr** (<http://www.flickr.com>) for pictures, and for videosthere is **YouTube** (<http://www.youtube.com>), or what about using the document share site **Scribd** (<http://www.scribd.com>) for pdf and doc files, which you can embed into your site for users to read.

Paying for a host

If you have a little more technical know-how (*lots of tutorials to help are available on the web*) and are able to spend some money, you might want to buy hosting space for your website, and have more freedom to be creative. Usually these will require a subscription, payable monthly or annually, and should come with a personal domain name and website address, known as a URL (e.g. <http://www.mydigname.co.uk>), as well as a number of features like a website builder.

Content Management Systems (CMS)

If you have paid for a host, another easy way to produce websites is to install a Content Management System (CMS) like **WordPress** (<http://www.wordpress.org> – note the slightly different URL from the other WordPress site), **Website Baker**(<http://www.websitebaker2.org>), **Mambo** (<http://www.mamboserver.com/>), or **Joomla** (<http://www.joomla.org/>).

If you feel more adventurous then free CMS can be easy to use and quite powerful, once you start to add in all the extras. It can cope with lots of people being allowed access to edit, create pages, and add images and other files such as videos and mp3. It is best to have a single person as the overall administrator, just to keep everything running smoothly. This is perhaps suited to more technically savvy creators. Remember the golden rules:

1. Keep it simple
2. Keep it easy to navigate
3. Keep content up to date.

The Dig Hungate website
<http://www.dighungate.com/>



Keep It Simple

Remember when you design the site that it needs to be easy for people to find what they want when they visit the site, so it's best to keep the layout simple. Putting too much information or too many images on the front page is likely to be quite distracting, and may mean that visitors miss important information. Take a look at a few other websites and see what kind of layout you think is easy to find your way around. Don't forget to test your site in lots of different browsers to make sure that your site looks the same in each one.

Accessibility

Keep users with sensory impairment in mind when you design your site. Be sure that they are able to adjust the size of text on your site using their browser, and try not to use too much graphical text. Provide alternative text for images (the `alt` field when you insert images in your website editor). Also remember to use colours that contrast strongly. If your website has audio content, consider providing text transcripts. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has established a series of standards for good use of HTML/ XHTML (the computer languages used for data on a webpage) and CSS (the language used for formatting websites). These are intended to make websites conform to certain rules, making it easier for different browsers to automatically convert your site to different formats - for example Braille or text without pictures. Following these standards will also mean that your website will work on more people's computers, and can also help search engines find your site more easily. The W3C publish guidelines for best practice (see `Help with Accessibility', below).

3. TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT IT

Now you have a nice, new, exciting website, you will want people to come and see it. A good place to start would be by telling the news editor of your local newspaper. Also, find out if there are any other local websites that could post a link to your website. Your local museum or historic environment service might keep an online directory of projects in the area on which you could ask to be included.

There are a number of archaeological organisations that will list details of your project, especially if you are looking for volunteers; for example the CBA publishes a regular list of volunteer opportunities and events called the **CBA Briefing** (<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/briefing>) as well as a directory of websites about archaeology in the UK (<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/archonline>), and **Past Horizons** (<http://www.pasthorizons.com>) has a list of volunteer opportunities around the world as well as an online magazine with articles about volunteer projects - which you could consider writing an article for as well as a toolstore if you need equipment. **BAJR** itself has the one of the

A photo gallery on the Thames Discovery Programme website
www.thamesdiscovery.org



largest directories of archaeology, with contractors, curators, local history centres and resources including funds and grants, software and hundreds of UK based links (<http://www.bajr.org>) If you are a member of a network like **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com>) or **Bebo** (<http://www.bebo.com>), you could create a page for your project with a link to the website.

4. GOING FURTHER

Some archaeology projects have more interactive ways of exploring the site online. For example, **Framework Archaeology's** website about their work at Heathrow has an interactive timeline which changes what is shown on the map as you progress through time (<http://www.framearch.co.uk/t5/interactive-map>), and **OKAPI** at the **University of California, Berkeley** (<http://okapi.wordpress.com>) have created a reconstruction of the Turkish Neolithic site Çatalhöyük within the 3D virtual world **Second Life** (<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Okapi/128.128/0>– to visit this you must have the free Second Life browser available from <http://www.secondlife.com>). To build these you would usually need fairly advanced software knowledge, although there are some things you could do that would be a little easier to learn, for example using **Flickr** and **Google Maps** (<http://maps.google.com>) to put photographs of features from your site on a map, or even building 3D models of what you think any structures you have found might have looked like using **Google SketchUp** (<http://sketchup.google.com>).

You could use free software such as **ARK** (<http://ark.lparchaeology.com>) to publish your archaeological data online, including maps and plans as well as photos and written records of your dig.

Another website that is free to use, and will become a prime source of information for others like you is **Open Archive** (<http://www.openarchive.co.uk>) where you can upload reports onto a searchable map of the UK.

A tour in Okapi Island in the 3D virtual world Second Life shows how archaeologists think Building 77 at Çatalhöyük burnt down. created by Colleen Morgan



5. EXAMPLES

These are some very good archaeology websites. Some are by professional archaeological contractors, and others are by community archaeology groups. It is a good idea to take a look at how other archaeologists use the internet to promote their project before starting your own website.

Heathrow Terminal 5 (by Framework Archaeology):

<http://www.framearch.co.uk/t5>

Thames Discovery Programme: (by Lorna Richardson and L-P: Archaeology. Heritage Lottery Fund supported)

<http://www.thamesdiscovery.org>

Dig Hungate: <http://www.dighungate.com>

Mellor Heritage Project: <http://www.mellorheritage.org.uk>

Prescot Street (by L-P: Archaeology):

<http://www.lparcology.com/prescot>

Silchester (by University of Reading): <http://www.silchester.rdg.ac.uk>

6. OTHER LINKS

Free ways to a dynamic website

Flickr <http://www.flickr.com>

You Tube <http://www.youtube.com>

Panoramio <http://www.panoramio.com>

Scribd <http://www.scribd.com>

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) - if you constantly update your blog or website, consider adding an RSS feed that others can link into and display on their websites, or be informed of changes – see

<http://www.feedburner.com>

Help with Accessibility

RNID guide to producing information for deaf people

http://www.rnid.org.uk/information_resources/factsheets/deaf_awareness/factsheets_leaflets/producing_info_4_deaf_people.htm

Colour contrast analyser

<http://juicystudio.com/services/colourcontrast.php>

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (December 2008) from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>
