chatting #fieldnotes

rethinking notetaking workflows in field archaeology

Isto Huvila

Department of ALM | Uppsala University
Information studies | Åbo Akademi University
isto.huvila@abm.uu.se
www.istohuvila.se

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The current standardised forms-based pro-forma paradigm of documenting observations in field has proven to be tenacious.

The **structured pro-forma approach has many advantages.** It 1) **helps to standardise documentation practices**, 2) it **is easy to implement in paper-based document workflow** and as the large majority of archeological database systems show, it has been 3) **easy to implement in digital systems** as well.

The **approach has been criticised** as being inflexible and for giving precedence to formal and from interpretative and contentual perspectives empoverished documentation (e.g. Pavel, 2010). More recently, for instance, the advocates of, for instance, semantic web, linked data and wiki-based database approaches (e.g. Niccolucci et al., 2009; Huvila, 2012) have remarked that with the currently available technologies, there are no technical needs to deploy similarly rigid user interfaces as there can be argued to be in workflows based on paper-based documentation or relational data model.

#fieldnotes

#fieldnotes approach is based on combination of the metaphor of a chat service (familiar to most of us from services like ICQ, AOL messenger, and iMessage) and a hashtag-based semantic annotation system. In addition to a traditional forms based view and wikisource view, users are offered a possibility to enter notes on an arbitrary order on different units and structures within the excavation and by making references to external documents and data. References to known entities can be provided as #hashtags, URIs or system-specific semantic annotations. The concept is system-independent and can be implemented on a variety of platforms. A proof-of-concept system has been implemented on a Semantic Mediawiki + PHP/CLI.


```
>> u321 structure #s8 continues to #u322
>> #s8 ((above::s7))
>> #s7 reminds of wall in dx.doi.org/xx/xxx
...
```

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