

Assessment 2: Consider the requirements of formal publication, including standards for writing, editing and style, for a range of archaeological project outputs

Grey literature report case study: Cornwall Archaeological Unit

At my place of employment, Cornwall Archaeological Unit (hereafter CAU), the primary output for archaeological work is grey literature reports. The end product takes the form of a report which is then supplied to the client and eventually made public via the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). Ordinarily, the report is produced a solely digital output, and no physical copy of the report is produced. If the client specifically requests it, then a hard copy can be provided in an A4 ring-bound report. As the report is intended to be viewed digitally, this affects the layout and format of the report. For example, in the past, when hard copies were always produced, the images would often be included as an appendix at the back of the report, however as the viewing of a report in PDF format makes it impractical to flick back and forth through the pages of the document, images are generally placed as close to the relevant text as possible. In addition, and where practical, it is also possible to hyperlink within the document which allows the user to quickly link from text to images in the document with a single click.

Grey literature documents have a very high level of detail, with far more detail than other outputs such as journal reports. Historic Building Record reports will go into minutiae detail regarding individual aspects of a building, with measurements provided where relevant. Multiple plans may be produced of the same area, such as one to show phased development, and one to show a photo direction plan. As such reports are produced as part of the planning process, additional information is included that would not be included in a purely academic publication. This might include specialist reports in appendices, finds catalogues, selected entries from the photographic archive, and transcriptions of primary sources.

Map regression is a normal part of historic building and other archaeological reports, and so usually every available map will be included in the document, even where no visible change is identified between periods. This is contrasting to something like a journal article where concision is key and there would simply not be the page space to provide this level of detail.

CAU reports follow a basing report template of headers, which for a historic buildings report would be as follows:

- Summary
- Introduction
 - Project background
 - Aims
 - Methods
 - Desk based assessment
 - Fieldwork
 - Post-fieldwork
- Location and setting
- Designations
- Site history
- Historic development of the building
- Building description
- References
 - Primary sources

- Publications
- Websites
- Appendix 1: photographic archive
- Appendix 2: written scheme of investigation

Additional optional sections may be added into this format, such as a statement of significance, a further contextual discussion (such as may be required for a Level 4 buildings survey), or additional appendices as needed for transcribed primary sources, contexts, client briefs etc.

Grey literature reports have some level of review to ensure that the documents are made to the same standard. The report is initially written by the author or authors and then checked by a member of staff. This is usually the project manager, and this person may or may not be the author of the report. The report is then sent to the overarching Projects Manager at the unit, who proofreads the document again. This is then sent back to the author or project manager to make corrections, at which point it is then converted to a PDF by a member of the admin team to send to the client. Thus, there is some level of review to the report production process and an assurance of quality.

The timescale to produce reports can vary greatly, depending on client needs, financial pressures, project size and continuity. This can range from one week for a small assessment to several years for large projects without any pressures. The timescale between the first draft of the report being completed, to it being sent to a client, in which time it needs to be approved and amended, is usually quite short and can happen within the same week.

This format of publication output has no restriction in terms of page length, word count, number of images (which can be in full colour). It can be as short or long as it needs to be and there is no restriction on the type of images that can be included so long as CAU has the right permissions to use the images. Images which are copyrighted, and permission has not been granted or obtained to use them, must only be referenced, and linked if available online.

The style of reports at CAU is led and influenced by several guidance documents for their grey literature outputs. The primary influencing document is *Cornwall Archaeological Unit reports: guidelines* (Cornwall Archaeological Unit, 2018). This document states the overarching aim of CAU's reports, which is "to produce consistent, readable and professionally produced reports on the findings of its work" (Cornwall Archaeological Unit, 2018, p. 1). The guidance gives information on basic formatting, with Verdana being the default font that the organization uses. It specifies that the content and structure of the document should adhere to the basic report template provided for different project types (see above chapter). The guidance includes notes for providing map images, guidance on creating the report for its intended target audience, and on text formatting and capitalisation (Cornwall Archaeological Unit, 2018, p. 2). There are also short sections of guidance on specific aspects of reporting such as how to discuss certain archaeological features, measurement standards, and in-text citations. The referencing system used in the reports is an adaptation of the Harvard system, and similar to that used in academic writing.

Academic journal case study: Cornish Archaeology

Journal articles produced by CAU are almost always published in *Cornish Archaeology*, a journal run by Cornwall Archaeological Society. The journals usually contain around 10-15 articles per volume. CAU's style guide has been created with this in mind, and as discussed below, there are significant similarities between how the two publications are prepared. This

ensures cohesion and saves time when journal articles are written from an existing report. The articles are normally written after the production of a grey literature report, and so elements of the report can be reworked into the article easily; both publications include a summary of results at the beginning and a bibliography at the end. Articles in Cornish Archaeology ordinarily use a combination of black and white and colour images, with colour only being used on illustrations and photographs where necessary.

Cornish Archaeology is a peer reviewed journal and so the article is likely to be read by several different people before it is published. This will be the editor(s) in the first instance, who decide whether the article should be accepted, returned for revision, or rejected (Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2023, p.1). It is normal for the article to be returned for revision in many cases. Once the article has been accepted by the editor(s), it is then normal for the content to be reviewed again by one or more anonymous referees before the content is published (Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2023, p.1). This review can affect the timescale, which could go on for several years with revisions, as there is no specified submission date provided by the Society.

Articles are charged to commercial submitters at a price per page, and so this needs to be considered when costing for project or post-fieldwork costs to ensure that the price charged is covered.

The content of a journal article is of course heavily influenced by the style guide. The most obvious influencing element of the article is the word limit. For Cornish Archaeology, the word count must be a minimum of 5,000 words and a maximum of 12,000 words, although longer texts would be accepted in the case of important larger sites. The style guide asks that images for the article are provided in a separate Word document, rather than in-text (Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2023, p.1). This is in order to allow the graphics designers to easily compile the articles into a journal publication. This does mean however that preparing the article takes slightly longer than if the article were prepared with the images in the text. In contrast to a grey literature report, it is preferred that in a journal article the content is presented thematically or chronologically and “findings... should be preferably be integrated, not presented separately” (Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2023, p.1). For example, the contents of the writing should not be presented trench by trench, as it might be in a grey literature report, as it does not effectively convey the significance of the findings. This is often tackled in grey literature reports by following on from trench-by-trench descriptions with a discussion section. Similarly, for a building, it would not be useful, or interesting, to include room-by-room descriptions of the building when a general description and highlighting of important and interesting features would better contribute to an overarching narrative. The style guide also states that “there should be a concluding discussion of the significance of the results, including relevant comparisons with other sites, and their implications” (Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2023, p.1). The writing style employed for these articles should be clear, avoiding jargon, and technical terms explained when they must be used. The writing should be done in the third person, past tense (Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2023, p.2), and people are to be referred to by their job title/function rather than be named (such as the planning officer, the National Trust house manager, the contractor etc.), and naming should be saved for an acknowledgments section.

Academic journal case study: Internet Archaeology

A modern alternative to traditional printed journal publications is Internet Archaeology. Internet Archaeology is run by the University of York and the Archaeology Data Service. In contrast to the other publications discussed in this essay, Internet Archaeology is an Open Access, not for profit publication, meaning that no money is charged for reading it (Internet Archaeology, 2020), and its content can be reused without any problems pertaining to copyright. The fact that the journal is online, also means that articles can be published without the same limits as a physical volume, and it is possible to include video or other interactive elements into an article, which would formerly have been impossible in print.

The journal has a lengthy but flexible editorial policy. Unlike many of the other publications discussed in this essay, Internet Archaeology does not have to pertain to topics residing within the UK. The subject can cover “all archaeology and related topics”, covering “any time”, “anywhere” (Internet Archaeology, 2020). The journal is peer-reviewed, with an article initially undergoing a screening by the editor, and then a blind review by an expert or experts on the topic. As such an author can expect a 2-4 month wait between the submission of an article and completion of the first draft (Internet Archaeology, 2020).

As the journal does not charge a subscription fee, it falls upon the author to provide the funding for the article, and the fees are dependent on the length and nature of the article (Internet Archaeology, 2020). In some cases the article can have its fee waived, for example if the author is from a developing country, or it may be possible to gain funding from sources such as author’s grants, government agencies or university departmental research committees and library open access funds (Winters, 2011).

As the journal is solely online, there is no minimum or maximum word count, and unlike other types of publication, it is possible to make direct linkage to underlying data. It is possible for the author to have searchable indexes within the articles, giving direct access to the primary data (Internet Archaeology, 2020). The journal is academic, and therefore proper referencing is standard.

An example of an article using linkage to underlying data is WallGIS: A Database and GIS for Hadrian's Wall (Murphy and Collins, 2024), where the article has links to the database discussed in the article, which is archived by the Archaeology Data Service. It is also possible to include videos in the article (Anichini *et al*, 2020), however, this does not always stand the test of time as they rely on links to external sites (Welham *et al*, 2015).

Although the Internet Archaeology website does not provide information online to measure access to a specific article, it is possible to see how much the website is currently being used. The map below (Figure 1) shows the locations of current website viewers at the time of writing. The maps also show what article the person was viewing, what device they were using, how many pages they viewed and what city they were in. It is likely, however, that this information would be skewed using virtual private networks. Nonetheless, it shows that the website is receiving an active viewership from across the globe.

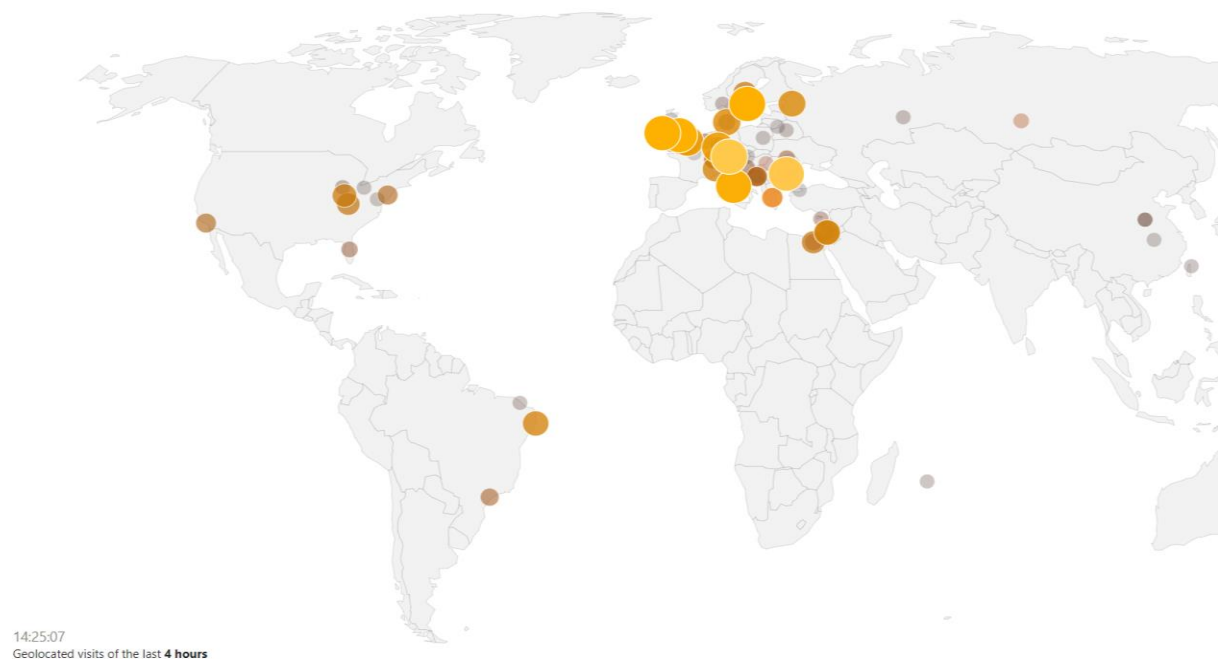


Figure 1 Map of Internet Archaeology users at 2:45pm on the 13th of January 2025 (Internet Archaeology, 2025).

Examples in book publishing: Oxbow and Routledge

The format for a book, in comparison to the other archaeological outputs discussed above, is the least restrictive. A book can be created to any size and the author has more control over the colours and positions of images used in the text. There will be requirements for editing and publication, assuming that the work is not self-published, and there will be a minimum number of pages needed in order to put a spine on the book. Each publisher will have its own set of rules, guidelines, and requirements in order for a work to meet and conform to their style and criteria. For example, Oxbow Books, which publishes works on a wide variety of archaeological topics, has published a guide to help prospective authors, and is separated into three formats; edited collections of papers, monographs (discussed in the next section) or excavation and research reports. For edited collections of papers or excavation and research reports, the publisher states that these types of works will likely require funding in order to make their publication viable (Oxbow Books, n.d., pp. 1-2). Important details that the publisher requires when assessing a work for publication are:

- A one-page summary with aims, how the book has originated, or background to the project (Oxbow Books, n.d., pp. 1-2)
- Abstracts of the collected papers in the book and confirmation that the contributors have agreed to take part (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)
- A timescale for getting the draft to the publisher (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)
- An approximate word count (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)
- Requirements for colour illustrations or fold-out pages as these would require funding (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)
- A justification – for why the publisher is right for the book, the target audience, consideration of competing titles, what makes the book stand out, potential groups or

organisations that the book can be marketed to and five places where the book should be sold (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)

- The publishers state that they do not undertake peer reviewing for papers and reports and that this must be undertaken before the draft is sent to them (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)
- Deadlines, connected conferences, potential grants and relevant projects also need to be announced to the publisher as this will influence the decision on whether it should be published (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)
- Whether the author would be willing to purchase the books themselves (thereby part self-funding the publication), (Oxbow Books, n.d., p. 1)

As it can be seen from this truncated list of requirements, while the freedoms granted in creating a book are greater, so are the challenges in getting the book published. This is because specialist reports and essays have a very small target audience and so the publisher needs to consider whether it is commercially viable to undertake the production of the volume. Oxbow Books make the process of publication clear with a simple page on their website (Oxbow Books, 2025). There are six stages in their process, with an aim of six to eight months from step two to six. The six steps are as follows

1. Contract: This follows if the work was accepted for publication and will include an agreed submission date for the draft manuscript (Oxbow Books, 2025a).
2. Manuscript submission: The publisher check that they are happy with this draft copy and puts it into their style template.
3. Language edits and style check: An editor then reviews the book, checking for inconsistencies in the work and ensuring that the language is in line with the publisher's overall style (Oxbow Books, 2025a).
4. Typesetting: At this point, an initial proof copy of the book is produced (Oxbow Books, 2025a)
5. Proof stage: The author then receives this proof copy and it is checked through by the author. It is expected that by this stage corrections will be minimal, as the text should already have been checked prior to submission and again by an editor. The author is charged if there are significant edits still needed at this stage. Further proof copies are then produced until the book has been perfected (Oxbow Books, 2025a)
6. Printing: At this point, the author is sent an approval form, and once signed, the book is produced to the standard of the final proof.

These are the requirements and process for formal publication with just one publisher. Another publisher may have entirely different steps or requirements. For example, Routledge ask authors to provide suggested book titles, expected tables of contents, international appeal, secondary audiences, and pros or cons of competing titles compared to the author's own book (Taylor & Francis, 2025a, pp. 3-4). They also require that the author has published journal articles in their specialist field previously (Taylor & Francis, 2025a, p. 1). This contrasts with journal articles themselves where no similar requirement exists. They also have a manuscript preparation guide (Taylor & Francis 2025b).

Monograph requirements: Oxbow Books

A monograph is similar to a book, but usually has one author, and covers a single specialised academic subject. It is longer than a journal article and has an academic target audience

(Charlesworth Author Services, 2025). The requirements from Oxbow Books for the publication of a monograph is similar to their other books, however there are some key differences:

- There is no requirement for self-funding.
- The publisher offers a peer review service as part of the package.
- If the monograph covers landscape or garden archaeology then there is a maximum word count of 100,000 - books on this subject are published under the Windgather Press branding (Oxbow Books, 2025b).

If a monograph is part of a series, then there will be a necessity to conform the new book with the style of the previous work.

Magazine examples: Current Archaeology and British Archaeology

Articles might be prepared for magazines, especially when there has been an important discovery or a project that requires public outreach. The magazine Current Archaeology specifies the requirements for submissions to their magazine. The guidance states that the intended target audience for their magazine is “Middle Market”, that being somewhere between “popular” and “academic/professional” (Current Publishing, 2024). The writing style for the magazine is informal, with the aim to not write in the format of a formal archaeological report and asks the author to imagine they are giving a lecture to a local society (Current Publishing, 2024). The magazine provides its own editing service, after which the article is returned to the author for reworking and finalisation (Current Publishing, 2024). The magazine states that articles are normally 400 words per page, with 50 percent of the page covered with images, but does not state what the maximum or minimum length of the article should be (Current Publishing, 2024). They do not accept referencing in-text, as it is not a formal publication, and accept the text in any format (Current Publishing, 2024). This is unlike other publications which usually require full referencing and need the text in Word format. Also, unlike some publications such as Cornish Archaeology, the images in magazines are full colour throughout, (Current Publishing, 2024) unless the images were originally black and white. They are even able to work with slides or prints if the required images are in these formats rather than digital files (Current Publishing, 2024).

Current Archaeology differs slightly from the British Archaeology Magazine. British Archaeology is more welcoming to research articles and has a longer word count of 3,500 to 5,000 words, with longer articles possible in certain circumstances (British Archaeology, 2025). However, it does still require that the articles are in clear engaging language that is suitable for both professional archaeologists and the general public (British Archaeology, 2025). Like Cornish Archaeology, there is a requirement that the article avoids jargon, or explains it where necessary (British Archaeology, 2025). In addition to the article, British Archaeology requires the author to include a short statement about themselves of 50-100 words stating who they are, and what group or organization they are affiliated with (British Archaeology, 2025). The magazine has no deadline for general submissions but require an article two months prior to publication if the author wants to be published in a specific issue (British Archaeology, 2025).

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