

Assignment 2: HPAR7006 Archaeological Project Reporting

Introduction

Understanding the different mechanisms by which archaeologists disseminate their results, including the standards for writing, editing and style for different archaeological project outputs, demonstrates how researchers share the knowledge they have gained. Disseminating this knowledge appropriately is a key part of the research process and the multiple methods of publication utilised by archaeologists appeals to different target audiences and are suited to different types of project outputs.

This report will consider requirements such as standards for writing, editing and style for multiple publication methods including grey literature, journal articles, monographs, report series, magazines and newsletters. It will look at the various standards and guidance documents that exist for each of these methods of dissemination then compare and contrast real publication examples that demonstrate the application of these standards. Case study examples will include archaeological assessment reports by DigVentures and Cotswold Archaeology, research articles published by the journals *Antiquity* and *Internet Archaeology*, monograph publications by Historic England and the East Anglian Archaeology report series, and finally news articles published in *Current Archaeology* magazine and the PAST newsletter of the Prehistoric Society.

Each section concludes with a brief overview of that publication method, establishing similarities and differences in content, structure, editing and style from the examples provided. This highlights the different target audiences and suitability of each method for different types of project output. The report then concludes with an overall summary of what was learnt from reviewing each publication method.

Grey Literature

Archaeological grey literature is ubiquitous throughout the sector and whilst style and format may vary slightly, the majority of reports tend to be very similar and have a closely aligned

content and structure in order to meet industry standards and requirements. These requirements include those of local government archaeological planning officers who must approve such reports where a pre-development planning condition exists. Advice notes have been created by planning officers detailing the prescribed content, such as ALGAO (2015). This advice is based on and complements the overarching industry standards and guidance issued by Historic England and ClfA (ALGAO, 2015, pp. 3), which are founded on well-established ethical principles such as the ClfA Code of Conduct (ClfA, 2014a).

An archaeological assessment report, for example, is a requirement of Historic England (2015, pp. 10) as well as ClfA standards and guidance for excavations (ClfA, 2014b, pp. 12) and should contain at least seven distinct elements which are clearly stated in section 3.5 of ClfA (2014b, pp. 13). This is complemented by the advice of ALGAO (2015, pp. 7) which further advises on content requirements. However, whilst the content and structure of any given report-type is likely to be very similar between different archaeological practitioners, the house-style and format can vary. By comparing and contrasting two archaeological assessment reports compiled by two different archaeological organisations, Swain *et al.* (2022) on behalf of DigVentures and Wilson (2018) on behalf of Cotswold Archaeology, some similarities and differences can be observed.

The content and structure of both reports is near identical and follows the requirements of ClfA (2014b) and ALGAO (2015). Both start with a summary of the project and results before a more in-depth introduction to the site and its historical background. Next are the project aims and objectives, the methodology, then the results and specialist contributions, before a discussion of the results and their potential for further analysis. Appropriate tables, figures and appendices are attached to the end.

The report written by Swain *et al.* (2022) on behalf of DigVentures, clearly exhibits an in-house style. The company branded colours of green, white and black form the colour scheme of the document, reflecting the company logo. A simple front page shows only the title, authors and company logo. The chosen text font is easy to read and visually the document is very simple and free from distractions, making the archaeology the focus of attention. The report written by Wilson (2018) on behalf of Cotswold Archaeology also exhibits an in-house style, beginning

with a very different front page. The title along with the company name and brand, but no authorship, is displayed alongside stock company photos, badges, logos and report numbers all against a deep-blue backdrop. Whilst the main content of the report is formatted very similarly to the DigVentures report, the font is different and there is no use of coloured text. However, the overall style is again free from visual distractions and keeps the archaeological results the focus of attention.

Both reports contain figures and illustrations at the end but there are noticeable differences. The site location figures are markedly different with the Cotswold version being dominated by a gridded Ordnance Survey map containing a simple outline of the site at a local landscape scale. The DigVentures version contains three GIS-based map-views of reducing scale, including a satellite image. The DigVentures report makes use of annotated ortho-rectified imagery as a medium of displaying an archaeological site plan, adding an extra layer of detail. The Cotswold report uses more traditional digitally-drawn site plans. However, both methods display the required illustrative information as set out by ClfA (2014b, pp. 14) and ALGAO (2015, pp. 8), which specifies key illustrations including a site plan, photos of important sections, contexts and artefacts.

According to the project summary table at the start of both reports, they have each gone through a formal editing and review process where another member of staff has undertaken quality assurance checks, holding the report accountable to industry standards and guidance as well as the company's own professional expectations. This review process has been conducted by individuals within the organisation who are not named authors to ensure accountability via an independent check. These independent quality assurance checks are an established project management principle according to Historic England (2015, pp. 12). Wilson (2018, pp. 1) states that the issued report is a second iteration, having been edited after comments from an external conservation team. Swain *et al.* (2022) underwent five iterations before the final version was submitted, showing that both reports have undergone changes as a direct result of being receptive to feedback from multiple reviewers.

Overall, it is clear that both reports are very similar in content, structure, style and editing processes, with the only noticeable differences being within the house-styles of the document

and the format of the illustrations. This demonstrates that whilst some subtle differences inevitably do exist between professional practitioners, the formalised and standardised requirements of archaeological reports as project outputs are well established in the sector. This suggests an appeal to very specific target audiences, such as local government planning officers.

Journal Article Publication

Peer-reviewed journal articles are held to some of the highest standards of writing, editing and style because of their reputation for contributing to genuine new and original research. For example, the journal 'Antiquity' will only consider a submission for peer-review if it can demonstrate discipline-wide interest, originality, clarity and delivers a strong argument (Antiquity, 2021, pp. 2). However, to be at least somewhat reflective of the similarities and differences between standards for content, editing and style for the many archaeological journal publications in existence, a comparison between different journals is necessary.

With regard to standards for content, in the example of a research article submission to the journal 'Antiquity,' the paper must present significant advances in archaeological research, draw from contemporary literature and use appropriate methods for answering clear research aims (Antiquity, 2021, pp. 1). There are no restrictions imposed on areas, periods or regions of research but the results must be new, significant and relevant to an international audience. An example of this can be seen in Matthiesen *et al.* (2022), an article that researches the impact of climate change on wetland sites around the world. Climate change is a very current issue, its impact is very significant, it applies globally and the article draws some new and useful conclusions regarding managing wetland sites in this context.

In the example of a research article submission to the journal 'Internet Archaeology,' there are no set rules or requirements regarding the content and the guidance (Internet Archaeology, 2020) encourages the author to be innovative. Articles can be simply excavation reports, studies on methodologies, scientific processes, artefacts and more besides (Internet Archaeology, 2020, pp. 2). There are no limits to word count or the number of figures and the journal also welcomes publications involving 3D models, video and audio-based media

because of its digital platform. An example of this can be seen in Kowarik *et al.* (2022), a paper that researches Prehistoric salt production in Austria. The article contains many more figures and photo plates compared to Matthiesen *et al.* (2022) and also numerous embedded videos and 3D models throughout. This is perhaps reflective of the extra room for illustrative creativity available when publishing on a digital platform rather than a print journal (such as *Antiquity*) and also implies different target audiences for each journal.

Some of the strictest rules come in terms of structure and style for an article in *Antiquity* (*Antiquity*, 2021). There is a set structure to the submission with a requirement for some sections to be in separate documents, be in certain file formats and have redacted versions for anonymous editing (*Antiquity*, 2021, pp. 3). The journal clearly has its own house-style with specified word and figures limits, font style, line spacing, style for citing historic dates, radiocarbon dates and referring to classical or historical authors. There are even rules for styles of in-text numbering used, abbreviations, use of capital letters, spelling and punctuation amongst others. Great attention is paid to the style of referencing required, with the Harvard-style being the chosen version. Four pages of the eleven-page guidance document (*Antiquity*, 2021, pp. 7-10) are dedicated to specific requirements for referencing and bibliographies.

Conversely, guidance on structure and style is much more relaxed for an article in *Internet Archaeology*. The simple and short guidance for structure centres around clarity, suggesting regular summary sections, clear headers and highlighted key points with a focus on the results and their importance (*Internet Archaeology*, 2020, pp. 7). The style and formatting requirements are equally as relaxed, with only a few very basic house-style necessities (*Internet Archaeology*, 2020, pp. 5). There are no font, text-size or file-type requirements, with the guidance advising that these will be adjusted anyway during the publication process. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the requirements are firmer for referencing and are very similar to those for '*Antiquity*,' with the Harvard style of referencing again being the chosen style (*Internet Archaeology*, 2020, pp. 9).

This contrast between structure and style can be seen by comparing Kowarik *et al.* (2022) and Matthiesen *et al.* (2022). The former article has plentiful in-text section headers presented as

numbered large font, bold-type headers accompanied by summary clarification in italics, making it easy to signpost the article's content. Matthiesen *et al.* (2022) has just three non-numbered sections; an introduction, discussion and conclusion, with occasional sub-headers in italics. The approach is simpler, the font is smaller and of a different type. The consistency of the house-style throughout makes the document visually tidier and more appealing but gives comparatively less signposting to the reader. However, perhaps the most notable difference is the structure and frequency of the figures and photos in Kowarik *et al.* (2022), where almost every page in the seventeen-page article has at least one whilst some pages are almost completely dominated by them. In contrast, Matthiesen *et al.* (2022) has just four figures in the whole fifteen-page article. Again, this approach appears tidier and the article looks less busy, but less illustrative information is imparted compared to Kowarik *et al.* (2022).

The editing process appears similar and equally as stringent for both journals, consisting of a 'double blind' two-stage peer-review before a final assessment by the journal's editors, where it may be rejected at any of these stages. Both sets of guidance documents require a submission is initially checked for adherence to the content, structure and style guidance. It then passes to the journal's editors for an initial decision on suitability before going through peer-review, revisions and then a final editorial decision. This process may be circular if multiple revisions are necessary. The stringent editing processes for both journals represent a form of quality assurance on behalf of the research submitted for publication. By going through multiple levels of checks, reviews and final approval, the article can be held accountable by numerous independent sources, ensuring its genuine contribution to new and original archaeological research.

Overall, it is clear that both journals have similarities reflective of the high standards of writing, editing and style that are universally required for quality-assured new and original archaeological research. However, they also display multiple distinct individual differences that highlight their unique appeal to different target audiences, such as thematic or digitally focussed audiences, around the world. These differences, most notably in structure and style, produce a flexible and dynamic approach to the publication of good quality archaeological research that is inclusive of many different types of research available on different platforms to a diverse range of audiences.

Monographs and Report Series

Many journals will publish extended site reports as monographs and a number of commercial units release their own publications whilst submissions can be made to heritage bodies such as Historic England and the Council for British Archaeology. By comparing and contrasting the publication requirements for an archaeological monograph or extended report from Historic England and the report series 'East Anglian Archaeology,' similarities and differences between standards of writing, editing and style for different avenues of extended manuscript publication can be observed.

All formal publications by Historic England are now managed by Liverpool University Press, who have created publication and submission guidelines for all extended manuscripts on behalf of Historic England (Liverpool University Press, 2022). In terms of content, the guidance is very open with little regulation on what is considered for publication other than a suggestion to consult the topics of previous Historic England publications for inspiration. Whilst the proposed content is an open choice, the manuscript will be rigorously reviewed and edited by a panel of experts who will make a decision to publish based on their perception of how appropriate the submission is to the Historic England readership (Liverpool University Press, 2022, pp. 1). Examples demonstrating this very open guidance on content include diverse publication topics such as; excavations at Housesteads Roman Fort (Rushworth, 2009), specifications and guidance for metric survey (Bryan *et al.*, 2009) and research on radiocarbon dating (Bayliss *et al.*, 2008). Some of these examples do appear to have taken inspiration from previous titles (<https://bit.ly/3hNzD2s>).

The guidance for submission by East Anglian Archaeology (EAA) is very similar and equally as open surrounding the content. Rather than prescribing content, section 1.3 of the guidance explains that it is assessed and edited through academic refereeing (East Anglian Archaeology, 2022), following a very similar approach to Historic England. Consequently, the range of titles available at EAA are equally as diverse (<https://bit.ly/3FYwoNo>). It is clear from both the Historic England and EAA lists of publications that topics and content can be extremely broad. This shows that rather than an overt concern about the chosen subject area

itself, the primary focus of the publishers is editing and review processes to ensure the quality of the content.

Regarding structure and style, the Historic England guidance is again very open. It also recognises the possibility of including non-text sources, such as online data or materials, as part of the publication. Illustrations are considered as unlimited, apart from cost implications, and can be structured either in grouped plates or throughout the text. According to the guidance, this openness is because the final decision on the structure and style of the submission rests with the publisher who will consider issues such as cost and appeal to the target audience (Liverpool University Press, 2022, pp. 2).

Examples of this openness regarding structure and style can be seen by comparing Rushworth (2009) and Bryan *et al.* (2009), two very different monographs published by English Heritage in the same year. Rushworth (2009) is issued in two volumes consisting of 21 chapters. All section headers are non-numbered and the text is styled in two columns per page with figures and illustrations spread throughout where necessary. Additionally, the entire publication including photographs is monochrome. Bryan *et al.* (2009) is structured very differently with seven sections (instead of chapters) containing numbered headers and paragraphs. All figures, illustrations and appendices are at the end of each chapter and use colour. The text is arranged in standard rows instead of columns and the whole document expresses itself much more as a set of numbered standards and guidance, compared to the text-heavy excavation report of Rushworth (2009).

Guidance for structure and style from EAA is comparatively more rigid, detailing requirements for consistent presentation, spelling and punctuation, formats for numbers and measurements, illustrations and referencing style (East Anglian Archaeology, 2022). By comparing Spoerry *et al.* (2016) and Ingham *et al.* (2016), two examples of reports in the series with almost identical structure and style, this desire for consistency can be observed. Unlike a book or a Historic England monograph, these reports are not unique stand-alone publications and form part of a regular series of releases under the umbrella of the EAA. The consistent structure and style observed throughout the series is reflective of a house-style employed to give EAA its own identity and appeal to its regular readership.

Overall, whilst it is clear there are some differences between the publication requirements of the extended-report series EAA and formal publications by Historic England, both avenues are very similar in their openness regarding content. The guidance seems to be reflective of an inclusive approach to research publication, providing authors with the freedom to disseminate their own innovative research in a creative way that targets a diverse audience range. However, this freedom is balanced by a particularly stringent editing and review process designed to regulate the quality of the content, rather than the content itself. Where differences between the EAA and Historic England guidance occur, they seem to be related to issues of structure and style. This is perhaps indicative of the different platforms to which the two organisations publish, with Historic England focussing on more stand-alone publication projects whilst EAA is a continuous running report series with a more inherent focus on consistency and house-style.

Magazines and Newsletters

There are numerous magazines and newsletter publications that summarise archaeology news and recent discoveries in a much more informal setting than the traditional methods of publication considered above. These avenues tend to target a much wider audience, including the general public, being less focussed on the specific detail surrounding rigorous academic research and more on simply sharing and discussing the results and news from the discipline as a whole. Some examples of this include Current Archaeology magazine and 'PAST,' the Prehistoric Society's newsletter. They are discussed below, along with their respective guidance and requirements for content, structure, editing and style.

Current Archaeology magazine was launched in 1967 and self-professes as 'middle market' and 'not academic/professional' (Current Archaeology, 2022a). Instead, it exists to bring news of sites and discoveries directly from the excavators themselves with an emphasis on why they are important and what the discoveries mean (Current Archaeology, 2022b). Consequently, the guidance for contributors is considerably different compared to traditional types of formal publication. It asks contributors to avoid the structure and style of traditional archaeological reports and to 'just tell the story' (Current Archaeology, 2022a). There are no

references or bibliographies to be included and no specific rules on content, with the magazine aspiring to be inclusive of all groups and areas that make up archaeology. Editing is also more relaxed, with no rigorous peer-review stage. Instead, the process is much more co-operative with the contributor, who in turn is allowed to 're-work' the editor's own edits should they choose (Current Archaeology, 2022a).

The Prehistoric Society's newsletter (PAST) was launched in 1986 to produce short articles based on discoveries and fieldwork from the prehistoric period along with society news and events (The Prehistoric Society, 2022a). According to the newsletter's minimal and light-touch guidance (The Prehistoric Society, 2022b), standard articles are expected to be around 800 words with two images and the longest around 1200 words with four images. Again, the key difference between this more informal type of publication and the traditional formal methods previously discussed is centred around style. Contributions are expected to be 'written in an accessible style' without references or bibliographies. Emphasis is also placed on ensuring 'attractive illustrations' are a part of the submission (The Prehistoric Society, 2022b).

Comparing a recent feature in Current Archaeology magazine (Current Archaeology, 2022c) and an article from the autumn 2022 issue of the PAST newsletter (Sheridan, 2022) demonstrates the much more informal nature of these pieces compared to the traditional methods of formal publication previously discussed. Both articles are short, no more than a couple of pages including photos and figures, of which both pieces contain no more than four. Neither contain references or bibliographies and instead refer to opportunities to find out more. The Current Archaeology article is conversational in places, quoting discussion with the excavators themselves. The PAST article is again very informal, opening with the word "Scorchio!" and contains a casual cartoon illustration.

Both articles are not meant to impart detailed technical research results or be subject to intense scrutiny or academic review and editing processes. Instead, they exist to simply signpost interesting archaeology-related news or discoveries, sharing them with a diverse professional and public audience from many backgrounds in a style, structure and format that is open, easy to read and understand. These methods of publication are more about promoting the archaeology in itself, rather than contributing directly to academic knowledge.

Summary and Conclusions

This report has considered the requirements of formal publication, including standards for writing, editing and style for methods including grey literature, journal articles, monographs, report series, magazines and newsletters. It has shown how grey literature reports adhere largely to guidance for content, structure, editing and style prescribed by overarching industry standards and local government planning advice, focussing largely on that audience. It goes on to demonstrate that journal articles, monographs and report series are subject to very high standards of editing for quality assurance purposes but are much more open regarding the topic of research, structure and style, promoting inclusion and diversity in areas of research and audiences being targeted. Finally, a review of magazines and newsletters shows that guidance for content, structure and editing is generally much more relaxed and reflects a different aim; to simply signpost archaeological research and results by promoting archaeology and generating interest from both a professional and a public audience.

Publication is a fundamental part of archaeological research, sharing the knowledge gained during the process with worldwide audiences now and into the future. Disseminating new knowledge contributes to wider cultural understanding as well as being a method of preserving our shared past. Consequently, understanding the methods of best practice by which archaeologists publish their research is key and reflects the importance of mechanisms by which new knowledge is disseminated.

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