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A guide to managing digital data generated from archaeological investigations

Quick guide #5 – Documentation

What is documentation?

Documentation refers to supporting information that provides a description of the context of the archive (such as project level policies or standards) and the nature of the data included (such as data level processing procedures).

It acts as a user guide for the data and helps future researchers understand and trust the project data, ultimately supporting re-use.

Documentation might include documents, such as an organisational site manual, or a record created to summarise processing that a dataset has undergone, such as for geophysical survey data.

Useful steps to take...

The **Preserved Archaeological Archive** should include documentation to support the data deposited. To facilitate this:

- ✓ Review data in the **working project archive** that needs documentation.
- ✓ **Communicate** the need for team members to document changes and processes which data has undergone.
- ✓ Ask **project specialists** to consider where additional documentation can support their data.
- ✓ Update your **data management plan** to make sure it includes an accurate and up to date summary of documentation.

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Examples of documentation – Project and Data level

- Project / Data Management Plan
- Project / Excavation manual
- Data / Data processing workflow
- Data / Standardised vocabularies
- Data / Specialist typologies

Don't forget

- ✓ Save the version of documentation used within the working project archive, especially where subject to change (eg the *excavation manual*).
- ✓ Create project workflows which capture documentation for data processing.
- ✓ Discuss documentation expected from contributors.
- ✓ Check that data submitted or included in the Working Project Archive includes documentation.

Find out more about documenting data

- Historic Environment Scotland / [Short Guide 13](#)
- UK data service / [Document your data](#)
- ADS / [Documentation and metadata](#)

Link to Dig Digital and other resources

- Dig Digital / [Structure](#)
- Dig Digital / [Process](#)
- Dig Digital / [Document](#)
- ClfA Selection toolkit / [Toolkit](#)