

THE DIGIBERS PROJECT. THE SOCIALISATION OF RESEARCH IN THE DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF IBERIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

MERITXELL MONRÓS¹, MARIA CARME BELARTE^{1,2}, ETHEL ALLUÉ^{3,4},
LLUIS BATISTA^{3,4}, PILAR CAMAÑES¹, JOAN CANELA¹, GEMMA DOMÈNECH⁵,
MARTA FONTANALS^{4,3}, PAU OLMOS¹, JORDI PRINCIPAL⁶, ANTONI ROJAS⁵

Aquest treball està dedicat a la memòria de Lluís Batista (1966-2018)

ABSTRACT

We present the preliminary results of the DIGIBERS project, undertaken in 2017 by three Catalan institutions involved in the study of Archaeology and Heritage: the ICAC, the ICRPC and the IPHES. We began with the aim of drawing up a pilot project for the socialisation of research. Through the use of digital media as dissemination channels, we emphasised the content, preparation and presentation of the materials as key factors in making the knowledge gained from archaeology and heritage research accessible to the public. Our objective was to adapt the language and content of research dissemination to a wider audience, with a particular emphasis on secondary school students and youth, who currently show little interest in accessing the contents of disseminated research, especially in non-digital formats. Cooperation with the educational sector was essential in selecting the content and means of dissemination. The result was a series of audiovisuals entitled ArcheoClips. We Explain Archaeology. In 2017 we made the first episode in the series, a short video focusing on the excavation and study of an Iberian necropolis as an example to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of archaeology.

RESUM

Presentem els resultats preliminars del projecte DIGIBERS, desenvolupat durant l'any 2017 per tres institucions catalanes dedicades a l'estudi de l'arqueologia i el patrimoni: l'ICAC, l'ICRPC i l'IPHES.

1. Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica
2. Institució Catalana per a la Recerca i Estudis Avançats
3. Institut Català de Paleoecologia Humana i Evolució Social
4. Universitat Rovira i Virgili
5. Institut Català de Recerca en Patrimoni Cultural-Universitat de Girona
6. Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya

txellmonros@gmail.com

L'objectiu inicial del projecte era elaborar un pla pilot de socialització de la recerca on, a través de la utilització d'eines digitals com a canals de difusió, s'incidís en els continguts, preparació i presentació de materials com a elements clau per fer accessibles al públic el coneixement derivat de la recerca en arqueologia i patrimoni. L'objectiu és adaptar la difusió de la recerca, des del punt de vista del llenguatge i els continguts, a un públic ampli, posant l'èmfasi en els joves i alumnes de secundària, que actualment mostren un interès escàs en accedir a continguts de difusió de la recerca, sobretot en formats no digitals. La col·laboració amb el sector educatiu ha estat fonamental en la selecció dels continguts i el mitjà de difusió. Com a resultat, hem creat una sèrie d'audiovisuals que porta per títol: ArcheoClips. T'expliquem l'arqueologia. En el marc d'aquest projecte s'ha desenvolupat el primer episodi, un vídeo de curta durada, centrat en l'excavació i estudi de les necròpolis ibèriques com a exemple per mostrar el caràcter interdisciplinari de l'arqueologia.

Keywords: Socialisation, archaeology, education, science, ICT.

Paraules clau: Socialització, arqueologia, educació, ciència, TIC.

Objective

The DIGIBERS project was undertaken in 2017 by three Catalan institutions involved in the study of Archaeology and Heritage: the ICAC (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology), the ICRPC (Catalan Institute for Cultural Heritage Research) and the IPHES (Catalan Institute of Human Paleoecology and Social Evolution). The project was funded by the CERCA Institution (Research Centres of Catalonia), through the SUMA “Palaeoecology, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage” R3 Pilot Programme.

The aim of the project was to draw up a pilot plan for the socialisation of research. It incorporated two key dissemination and research concepts: Digital Humanities (DH) and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). Based on this approach, we proposed the preparation of a digital outreach product with a concept and content development taking into account the needs and opinions of its target audience. The users are mainly in the educational sphere, with particular focus on secondary school students.

In addition to specialist publications, the current research outreach mechanisms in Catalonia and, broadly speaking, in Spain, consist mainly of websites and blogs, with contents that are not always easily understood by the general public. Moreover, in the specific areas of History and Archaeology, some cultures and periods are well represented (prehistory, the Egyptian and Roman periods, etc.), whilst others, such as the Iberian culture, are almost completely absent. The Iberian culture is defined as a Second Iron Age urban civilisation that spread and developed throughout the Mediterranean territories of the Iberian Peninsula between ca. 550 BC and the Roman conquest (second-first centuries BC) (RUIZ and MOLINOS 1998; for the Catalan area see SANMARTÍ 2009; SANMARTÍ and SANTACANA 2005).

In the light of the above-mentioned deficiencies, our aim was to adapt the scientific dissemination, especially in terms of the language used and the content, to a wider audience, with special emphasis on the educational and youth sectors. The origin of the project lay in the need to make an effort to express the concepts of archaeological research in terms that are both understandable and attractive and to link that content to current issues that could be of interest to society. This was undertaken by carefully selecting subjects and keywords to guarantee the greatest possible number of visits.

Methodology

From the methodological perspective, we used as a basis prior research into public science engagement models in different European countries, followed by interviews with professional educators (including secondary school teachers), cultural educators and specialists in heritage education.

For the interviews, we first contacted two secondary schools in Tarragona province, the INS Berenguer d'Entença in L'Hospitalet de l'Infant and the INS Antoni de Martí i Franquès in Tarragona. The cooperation of teachers from these schools was essential for the preparation and orientation of the project, above all in preparing a suitable "product" with the necessary characteristics for use in the classroom (fig. 1).

Next, interviews with cultural educators and specialists in heritage education contributed information regarding the current state of the educational offer from the heritage sector.

ArcheoClips. We Explain Archaeology

Based on the information obtained from these interviews, we drew up a script for a video that explained the methodology of the archaeological discipline. This was divided into short chapters.

In 2017 we worked on the preparation of the first video. It focuses on the funerary customs of the Iberian culture, with the aim of highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of archaeology and the different scientific disciplines that contribute to obtaining its results. The topics were chosen in the light of the teachers' comments and suggestions. During the interviews they pointed out that, whilst the Iberian-period settlements in Catalonia are numerous and largely accessible to the population, other issues, such as religion and funerary practices, remain largely unknown to most students. They also noted an interest in showing the excavation methodology and its relationship to other disciplines. We thus chose to show the different steps in the investigation of a

cremation necropolis, including its discovery, fieldwork (geophysical surveys, excavation, archaeological record, etc.), laboratory studies (axial computerised tomography, micro-excavation of the urns, bioarchaeological studies, artifacts restoration, etc.), and the discussion and interpretation of the results. We also explain the work of the different scientists involved. This video can be seen on a specific project channel on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JH-g4DoUenLo&t=11s>

This video is designed to be the first chapter in a series known as “Archeo-Clips. We Explain Archaeology”, in which the different aspects of archaeology as a science and the Iberian culture can be explained. As it is mainly aimed at students in Catalan schools, the audio is in Catalan, and we are preparing Spanish and English versions with subtitles.

In parallel to the production of this video, a website has been set up to make the audiovisual resources freely accessible (<https://digibers.wordpress.com/>) (fig. 2). It will also contain links to other resources, information on archaeological sites, and related subjects to help teachers and students work in class on the subjects dealt with in the video.

Future prospects

The DIGIBERS project aims to be a tool for disseminating research in archaeology as a multidisciplinary science, in a language that secondary school students can understand. The outreach proposal is translated into short videos that show the tasks and processes undertaken in archaeology: from the discovery of the archaeological site to its excavation and the study of the finds.

In a further stage, we aim to disseminate the project through talks and discussion sessions with students and teachers in a selection of secondary schools. From these sessions we will select the subject of the next episode in the Archeo-Clips series. We have therefore presented a proposal to the final call of the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) for the dissemination of projects.

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Figure 1. Work session with high school teachers (DIGIBERS Team).

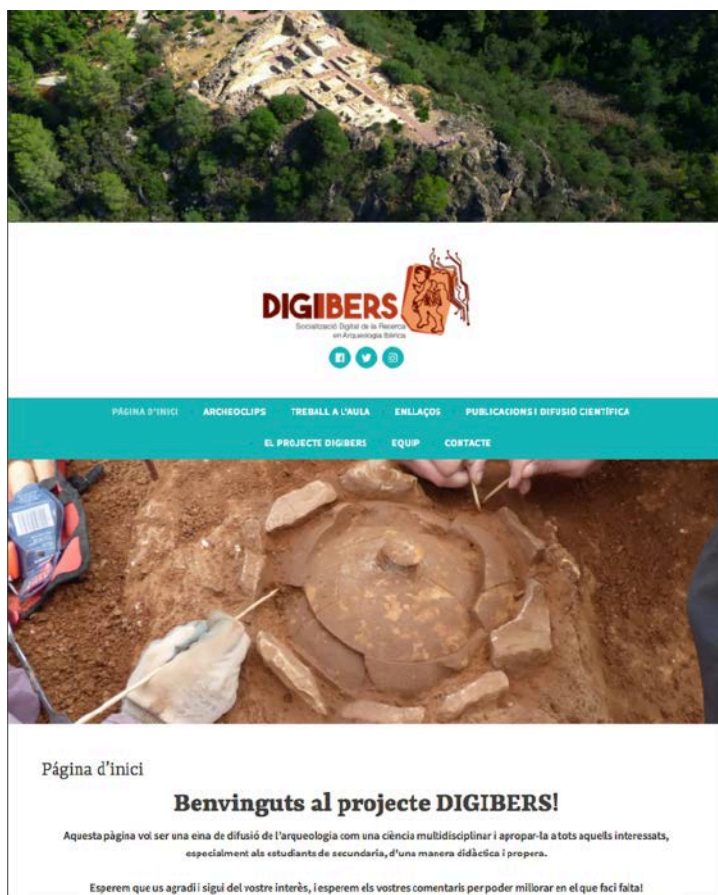


Figure 2. Website of the project (DIGIBERS Team).