Evaluating a Data Repository

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Archaeology Data Repository, operated by the University of York, is a useful place for scholars to conduct research on archaeological sites in and around the United Kingdom. Its archives include material from ancient Roman society to today. Utilizing pre-established criteria in order to evaluate this repository proved useful in determining that it is a repository that scholars should consider for publishing their research. This evaluation was not without its challenges. First, the set of criteria was highly technical and could have benefited from a glossary that defined the terms within the criteria. This was overcome by conducting web searches on the terms in question. Additionally, evaluating the repository was not easy as it involved extensive searching throughout the entire repository, including clicking on all tabs and conducting extensive searches. Sometimes, the information was only ascertained by analyzing the types of works published in the repository.

Analyzing the criteria on cost and the data types accepted was the most important part of the entire evaluation. Unlike repositories, such as Figshare, there is a charge for publishing data. Scholars will want to be aware of this and consider any potential data sharing charges before they begin their research. The fact that Archaeological Data Repository has a data seal of approval is also reassuring as it signifies the quality of the material include in the repository. Like any set of criteria, there is always room for improvement, such as including criteria on how long the repository has been around. While there is no guarantee that a longstanding repository will continue to operate, its age highlights a degree of trust between scholars and the repository. Criteria should be established based upon the particular type of database being analyzed. For instance, natural science repositories offer more experimental information than social science repositories. Analyzing a repository, which was the subject of this assignment was useful, as it

provides an objective way to determine and judge repositories against one another and to

determine which one is most useful for research purposes and for disseminating information.

References

Archaeology Data Service (2016, February). Retrieved from http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/