Major Projects and Digital Data

The Present and the Future

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Major infrastructure projects have the potential to create significant new knowledge in cultural heritage, especially in archaeological research. These projects are a real challenge for cultural heritage institutions that seek to document/preserve as much of the cultural heritage in the area considered. Ideally, cultural heritage institutions are involved in all phases of these projects including planning, implementing, and dissemination of the results in terms of new cultural heritage information. Due to their large scale and the often accompanying time pressure, the various tasks involving cultural heritage data management of large construction projects can drive innovation. In the planning phase, it is important to assess different alternatives based on known cultural heritage data. This assessment is often supplemented by commissioning prospection activities (e.g. geophysical survey) in areas where reliable data is not yet available. All cultural heritage sites destroyed in the course of a construction project must be adequately recorded before destruction. In this situation, cultural heritage institutions face new challenges such as excavations in tunnels, coordinating several excavation teams, dealing with sophisticated urban stratigraphy, large amounts of finds as well as large analogue and digital datasets. This session offered the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences of practitioners and researchers who used new technologies to record as much as possible of the cultural heritage affected by large construction projects, how they were able to address regional/national research questions and how the knowledge production was re-invested into the existing cultural heritage data. The session organisers especially welcomed contributions that dealt with new technologies and data management in the course of the several phases of large construction projects.