

The FAIR Principles in Archaeology

Julian D. Richards 

(Interview conducted by Christian Sommer & Volker Hochschild)

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Prof. Dr. Julian Richards is the director of the [Archaeology Data Service \(ADS\)](#) and since 2013 has been involved in the [ARIADNE](#) network. Begun in 1996, ADS is the oldest ongoing public undertaking dedicated to the management of data from the arts and humanities in the UK, and therefore plays a global pioneering role. It constitutes an accredited go-to place for scientists as well as public and private users. It offers expertise in the fields of archaeology and heritage data management, with the added possibility of depositing data in its repository. Richards, who has been with the ADS from the beginning and has served as its director for some 20 years, attributes this success to three forward-thinking services. First, the ADS offers long-term digital preservation based on a structure following the [Open Archival Information System \(OAIS\)](#), which started as an [Open Standard](#), and is now an ISO-certified, highly compatible [Reference Model](#). Second, the data are made freely available through the internet; and third, the ADS provides free and high quality advice and best-practice guides on standards, data management, and the likes. This shows how the ADS anticipated developments at an early stage, which were later formalized within the framework of the [FAIR](#) principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable).

Richards emphasizes that FAIR-compliant data that are collected, shared, and reused help to improve science. He even advocates making research data FAIR by default. To further this development, Richards and representatives from repositories, data publishers, aggregators, and contractors came together in February 2020 in Tempe, Arizona to form the FAIR network. This group plans to organize workshops sponsored by the US National Science Foundation to address the implementation of FAIR principles in archaeology and their implications for all stakeholders, from funding bodies to field archaeologists.

For the future, Richards anticipates an increasing acceptance of FAIR principles, not only as a necessity, but also as a commitment made by researchers. Furthermore, a greater willingness on the part of funding bodies to routinely assume costs and an automated evaluation of data quality will be desirable, so that a global network of research data can eventually be established.

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