

Archaeoinformatics review section in "Archäologische Informationen"

"Archäologische Informationen", the specialist journal of the Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte, has established a new review section titled "Archäoinformatik (Archaeoinformatics)" which will appear for the first time in Volume 43 (2020). The current digital revolution and the ever increasing significance of software in the humanities in general and archaeology in particular mean that digital publications and tools of relevance to archaeology should receive appropriate critical attention and acknowledgement. This section is published "online only", the reviews in English or German relate to software of topical archaeological relevance. Contributors should also observe the general editorial guidelines.



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In the fast-moving and increasingly important world of open-source software, such as R and QGIS including all their packages and extensions, in particular, it is important that experienced experts identify new tools as being valuable and assess them for the benefit of less experienced users. What precisely is the tool intended for, is it worth trying it out and familiarising yourself with it, or are there more useful alternatives. Even experienced users would find the approach of trying everything out for themselves somewhat time-consuming in the long term – which is why a review section for software of relevance to archaeology is useful.

The "Archäoinformatik" review section is intended to help people quickly obtain a comprehensive idea of current developments. The reviews will help them to decide whether a tool should be used on a personal level or in the whole company; all practitioners know that it is normally not the licensing costs which decide the issue, but the range of functions, the length of time it takes to familiarise oneself with the system, and the subsequent ease of use and stability of the products. And last but not least, the new section is intended to be a concrete, publicly visible expression of acknowledgement which is justly deserved by those program authors who provide valuable software tools for the community. The Archäoinformatik review section could become a space where people are made aware of previously lesser known "little minions" as well as the generally known tools.

What a software review should contain

- A brief abstract: What purpose does this program serve, what does it attempt to achieve?
- Description of the professional position and expertise of the reviewer: What experience do they have with the product reviewed and the field for which it provides solutions?
- Illustration of a concrete use case of relevance to archaeology: What is the intended purpose of the program and for which purposes has the reviewer – or have others – already used it?
- An assessment of the program according to quality, user-friendliness, familiarisation effort and supporting documentation. This also includes the concrete aspects:

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For which software platforms is the software available; under which licence is it published; (if appl.) what does it cost; which formats does the program read and write; how stable is it in practice; is there a manual, tutorial or set of instructions?

- How does the program fit into the current context: For whom is the program intended, which alternatives are available, do these alternatives solve tasks in a way which is better, different or more elegant?
- The reviewer's personal conclusion: What is good, what is not so good about the product presented?
- The reviews are therefore not an assessment platform with a simple verdict of thumbs up/thumbs down, but should present a comprehensive overview of the software. There is, of course, no need to "work through" the whole list in detail.

A review is not a software tutorial! The section presented here is intended exclusively for reviews.

What we expect from our reviewers

- Expertise in using the product described, which should also be briefly explained in the review;
- Independence, e. g. no professional and/or economic association with the author or producer/publisher of the software.

How do reviews come about, how does one become author?

- Authors can submit completed reviews to the editorial office of Archäologische Informationen of their own accord (email to editor@dguf.de; the general editorial rules of the journal apply: https://www.dguf.de/fileadmin/user_upload/publikationen/AI/DGUF-Dok_ArchInf_editorial-guidelines.pdf). You can also enquire in advance as to whether a brief review project you wish to undertake would be welcome.
- Experts, readers interested in a project or program authors, too, can – without wanting to write a review themselves – propose a program for review in Archäologische Informationen, giving brief reasons for their suggestion. Like a newly published book, it can then be entered into the publicly visible list of prospective reviews in Archäologische Informationen: http://www.dguf.de/fileadmin/user_upload/publikationen/AI/DGUF-Dok_Arch-Inf_Rezensionsangebote.pdf
- Anyone who is interested can then apply to undertake one of the reviews listed there, again by sending an email to: editor@dguf.de.

Quality assurance

Archäologische Informationen consider reviews in the Archäoinformatik section just like other reviews, they are subject to the same quality assurance. This includes an anonymous Peer Review incl. the possibility that submitted contributions may be rejected or a revision suggested to the author.

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Publication

"Archäologische Informationen" is published in Open Access with CC BY 4.0 licensing. Articles which have been accepted are published as soon as they have been completed, initially as a citable Early-View Version (<http://www.dguf.de/earlyview.html>), for reviews often approx. 2 to 4 weeks after submission. Each new contribution is announced in the free DGUF newsletter (Jan. 2020: >1,650 subscribers) and can be displayed and discussed via the DGUF accounts with Twitter (Jan. 2020: >950 followers) and Facebook (Jan. 2020: >3,500 subscribers).

Towards the end of the calendar year, a volume is completed and the contributions are given their final page numbers and a DOI and transferred into the Propylaeum archive for digital long-term preservation (university library Heidelberg) (<https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/arch-inf>). At the same time, the reviewers are entered into the recensio.antiquitatis review portal (<https://propylaeum.de/recensio-antiquitatis/front-page>), which will again afford a greater chance of the review being visible and found.

All further information on the journal can be found at
<https://www.dguf.de/368.html>

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