

# **A Model for Transferring Legacy Datasets to Living Documents: A Case Study Using a GIS Geodatabase for Archiving**

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**Abstract:** Archaeology is faced with the inherent problem of managing legacy datasets, partly due to the high expense of maintaining and archiving. Often these datasets are in a state of disrepair, thus rendering them underutilized, and difficult to properly archive or to integrate into the current archaeological dialogue. Unfortunately, this problem is a common issue and there is not an abundance of current literature on the subject. To address this dilemma, an examination of the condition of the records and artifacts of legacy datasets is needed. In this research, I will use the Anasazi Origins Project (AOP) as a case study and review the condition of the paper documents of this legacy dataset. The AOP is a perfect example of an investigation that produced an invaluable dataset that was never published, analyzed or properly archived. I will begin with the preservation methods of the AOP paper documents as a first step to archiving. Then, a GIS geodatabase will be used to convert the data from the paper documents of this legacy dataset to an electronic database for archival purposes. The advantage of an electronic database in archiving archaeological research is the ability to easily exchange, store, update, reorganize and adapt data for various types of analysis in a cost effective manner. Geodatabases add a visual geographic context that is intuitive, offering archivists and data producers ease in organizing, inputting and extracting data. The process described above is a model that produces a living document. This approach offers transparency, context and provides accessibility for multiple disciplines. Lastly, I will present the AOP case study using this model to give a conceptual framework that is cost effective to transfer legacy datasets to living documents for duplication or adaptation to other similar legacy datasets.

## **About the author:**

*David M. Plaza* is a graduate teaching assistant of GIS in the Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology and an assistant librarian in Special Collections of Golden Library at Eastern New Mexico University. He also serves on the Golden Library committee for improving user friendly interfaces and access. Prior, David has worked as an archaeological technician in the Southwest United States for several years for federal agencies, universities and cultural resource management firms.

David's current research focuses on digital archiving of archaeological datasets, ethics in archiving and preservation, creating models for archiving, preserving and reinterpreting legacy datasets, implementing living documents approach to archiving, and using GIS as an

electronic form of archiving and preservation. His current research implements a living documents approach to archiving and preserving paper documents into electronic databases, such as geodatabases. The documents used for this research are the site records and maps from the Anasazi Origins Project.

David received a BA in Anthropology from the University of New Mexico. He is currently working on his MA in Anthropology from Eastern New Mexico University.