JALC User Needs: External Evaluation Report

Work Package 8

SURFshare project 2009 – Enriched publications in Dutch Archaeology

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Introduction

During the first four months of 2009 a study on user needs concerning enhanced publications in Archaeology has been conducted as part of the SURFshare project *Enriched publications in Dutch Archaeology*. This study culminated in a report which has been used as a guiding document for the implementations of enhanced publications in the Open Access e-journal *Journal of Archaeology in the Low Countries* (JALC).[1] Using, amongst others, the recommendations of this report (which was based on a literature study on enhanced publications in general and enhanced publications in archaeology more in specific and on several interviews with archaeologists working at universities and at private companies in the Netherlands and Belgium) various enhancements have been introduced into articles in the first two volumes of JALC.

Part of the SURFshare project is an evaluation of the results of these implementations, both internally and externally. This report serves as the final document for the external evaluations of the implementations of enhanced publications in JALC. For this evaluation both the people interviewed for the user needs report have been contacted as well as representatives of the JALC steering committee, to gather feedback concerning the enhancements and to find out whether the enhancements have fulfilled their expectations. We also collected suggestions on where future improvements could be made. To collect the necessary data we set up a short online survey (see attachment 1) to measure the responses. We contacted 23 people (see attachment 2), of which 7 filled out the survey (4 archaeologists previously interviewed and 3 members of the steering committee). Although the responses were few (even after a second reminder) the ones that did respond did so in an elaborate manner and some very fruitful comments were made. The data presented in this report should thus be seen as mere suggestive and not as normative.

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[1] This report can be accessed at:
http://www.surffoundation.nl/wiki/pages/viewpageattachments.action?pageId=3473924&highlight=JALC+
User+Needs+Report.pdf#Results+from+the+Tender+Projects-attachment-JALC+User+Needs+Report.pdf

Set up of the report

This report will follow the set up of the online survey. First we will take a look at the responses of the survey participants concerning various enhancements or services offered in JALC volume 1 and 2. Next we will take a look at their responses concerning the enhancements in general. The survey consisted of both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The answers to the open ended questions will be fully inserted in this report. Finally in the conclusion an analysis will be made of the feedback and a summary of the main recommendations will be given.

The specific services offered in JALC

In the first section of the survey (consisting of questions 1 to 5) we asked the participants to take an in-depth look at various enhanced publications in JALC volume 1 and 2.[2] Afterwards we asked them to take an in-depth look and give their opinion on some of the enhancements used in these two volumes. Underneath a table has been added showing the amount of usefulness according to the survey participants

	1. Not Very useful	2. Somewhat Useful	3. Useful	4. Very Useful	5. Essential	Response Count
The possibility to add a map database: (The possibility to zoom in, click on details or change the resolution on images and (Google) maps)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	71.4% (5)	14.3% (1)	7
The possibility to add an image database (with searchable photo's and artifact drawings/pictures)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	71.4% (5)	14.3% (1)	7
The possibility to add tables/graphs/supplements	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	42.9% (3)	28.6% (2)	14.3% (1)	7
The possibility to add color to the publication	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (2)	42.9% (3)	28.6% (2)	7

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[2] We asked the participants to take a look at the following articles:
- *Mesolithic and Neolithic human remains in the Netherlands: physical anthropological and stable isotope investigations* by E. Smits and J. van der Plicht.
- *Consumption patterns and living conditions inside Het Steen, the late medieval prison of Malines (Mechelen, Belgium)* by Liesbeth Troubleyn, Frank Kinnaer, Anton Ervynck et. al.
- *The Niersen Beaker burial: A renewed study of a century-old excavation* by Quentin Bourgeois, Luc Amkreutz, Raphaël Panhuysen.

The possibility to add dynamic tables/the possibility to perform database/table queries or add a filter	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (2)	57.1% (4)	14.3% (1)	7
The possibility of GIS maps: interactive spatial environments	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	71.4% (5)	28.6% (2)	7
The possibility to add hyperlinks: www.grafheuvels.nl	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	42.9% (3)	28.6% (2)	28.6% (2)	7
Boolean search	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (1)	25.0% (1)	50.0% (2)	4
Proximity search	0.0% (0)	40.0% (2)	20.0% (1)	40.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	5
Multiple collection search	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	40.0% (2)	60.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	5

As the questions concerning the search functions were not answered by all the participants, it is hard to compare which of the enhancements in total are deemed the most useful. However, most of the services score a 'very useful' on the usefulness scale, with the more elaborate enhancements (GIS maps, image and map databases) next to the possibility to add color, scoring highest. Of the search functions, Boolean search scores highest, followed by multiple collection search and proximity search. However, since one of the comments added underneath mentioned that the multiple collection search was not yet working, this might have influenced its score.

Some of the survey participants made extra comments concerning the specific enhancements examined in the survey. They are added underneath.

"*Bij vraag 4 kan je niet én proximity én multiple collection search invullen. Bij beide een 2 graag. Verder.... Google maps is fraai, maar de koppeling tussen legenda tekstkleur en pin-colour is niet intuïtief genoeg. Eigenlijk wil je die pins weer terug zien in de legenda. Voor de image-viewer; een split-screen (frames) is te overwegen. Nu moet je eerst naar beneden scrollen, iets aanklikken en weer naar boven om het te zien. Een links-rechts split screen met link permanent naar de actuele foto lijkt me nuttiger. Verder zou er best een 'save file as' link bij de bestanden mogen (nu moeten we ze weer uit flash rippen). Analoog hieraan zijn dynamische tabellen pas echt cool als we ze in iedere vorm (het origineel, én de manipulatie) op kunnen slaan...*"(Archaeologist)

"*1) Preferably all tables should be included as *data*. Not as an image (e.g. jpg). 2) Multiple collection search does not seem to work.*"
(Steering Group Member)

"*Je zou kunnen overwegen om ipv de google map kaart, de dynamische map-viewer van het niersen artikel te gebruiken (met de jalc-standaardkaart als default laag). Verder willen we natuurlijk een kml bestandje kunnen exporteren van de stippen in google maps.*" (Archaeologist)

General impression of the enhancements

In the second section of the online survey (question 1 to12) we asked the participants to reflect on their general impression of the enhancements in JALC. We also focused on questions concerning the benefits and drawbacks of the enhancements, the navigation between the text and the enhancements, the influence of the enhancements on the way the text was read, their influence on the quality of the publication, etc.
The responses to these questions have been added underneath in the form of graphs and tables.

**What is your general impression of the enhancements in JALC?**
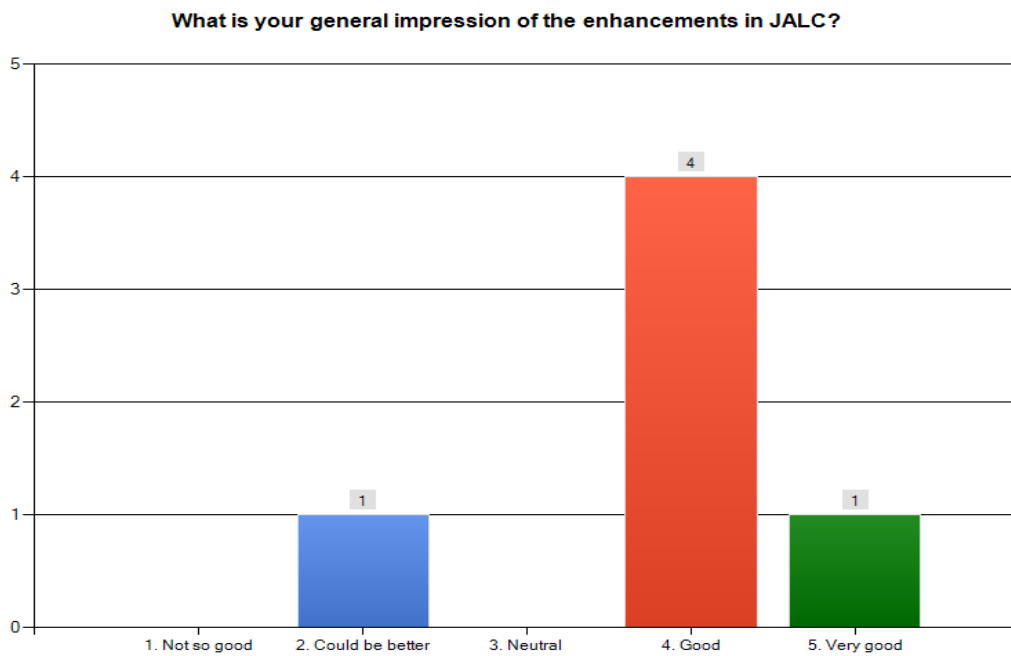
From this data we can conclude that the general impression of the enhancements according to the survey participants is good. As we can see in the table underneath however, the opinion of the participants on the navigation between the text and the enhancements is more mixed. This could mean some more attention could be given to the navigation between the text and the enhancements were it is at the moment not uniformly deemed positive. The next table however shows that the enhancements are not seen as distractive from the *narrative*, and some participants even state they make you concentrate more on the text.

What do you think about the navigation back and forward between the enhancements and the text?
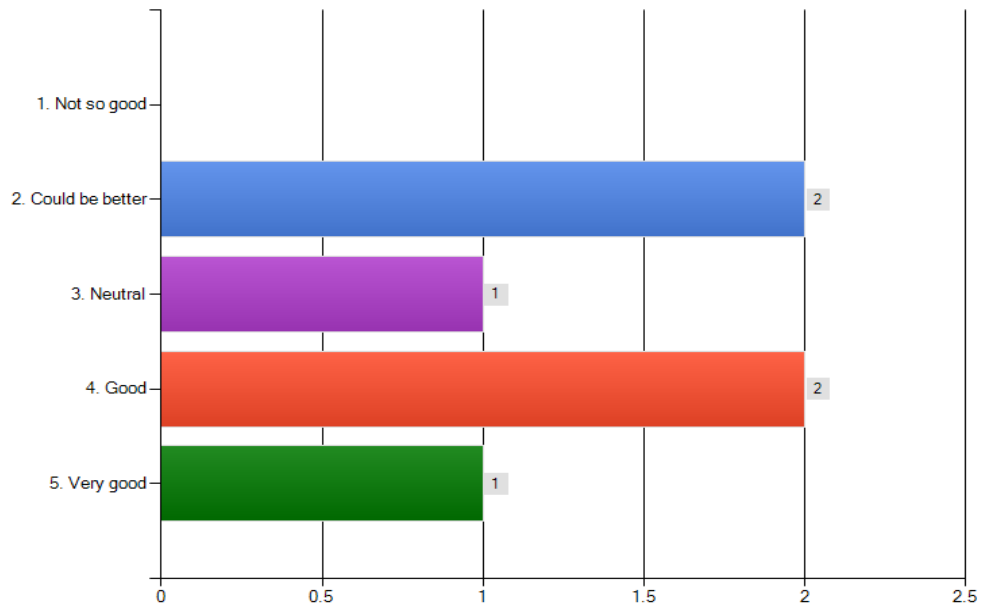

**Do you feel the enhancements influence the way you read the text?**
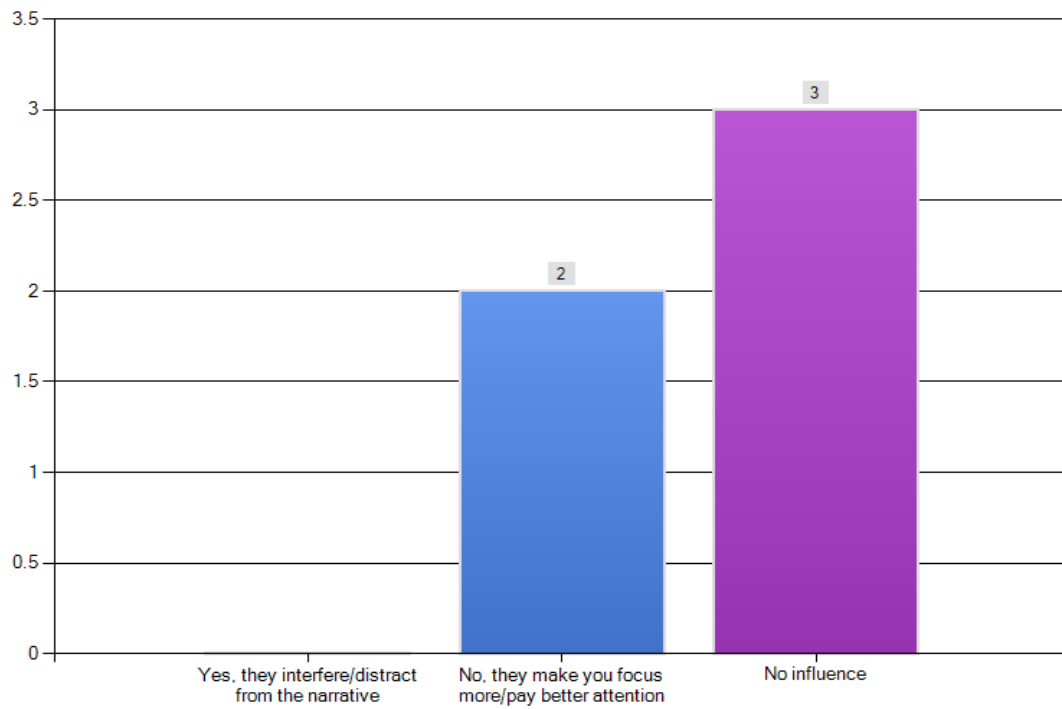
A large majority of the survey participants state they feel the enhancements improve the quality of the publication, where the rest state they do not influence the quality of the publication. None of the participants feel the enhancements are bad for the publication's quality.

Do you feel the enhancements improve the quality of the publication?
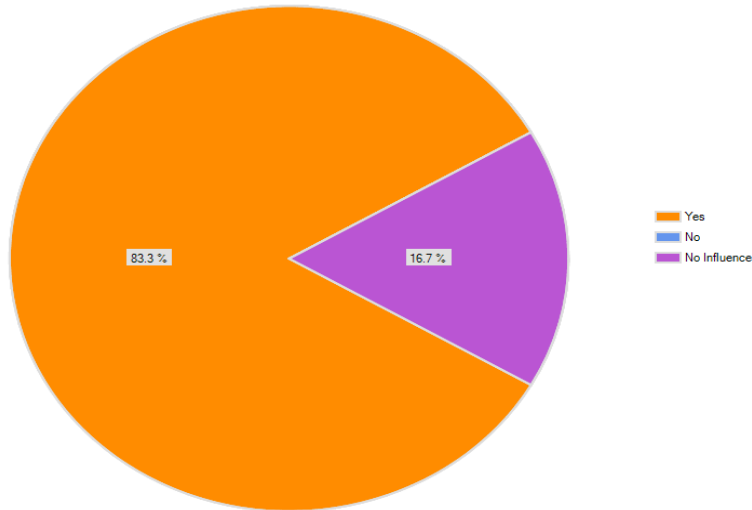
We also asked the participants whether they would be more willing to deliver enhanced publications themselves, now that they took a more in depth look at some of the possibilities. To this question 50% answered yes and another 50% perhaps. However, as the table underneath shows, 2/3th of the respondents stated they would like to receive more information from the publisher on how to deliver an enhanced publication

Do you feel you need more information or advise from the publisher to be able to deliver an enhanced publication yourself?
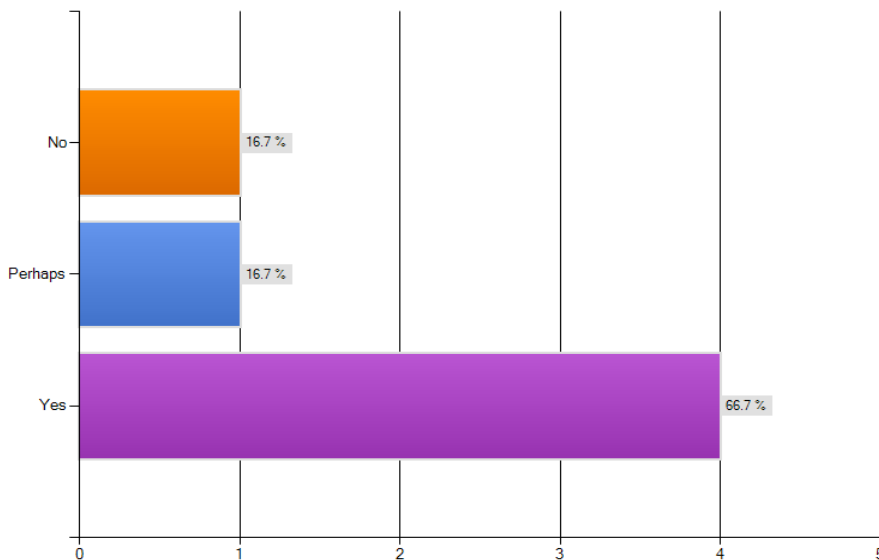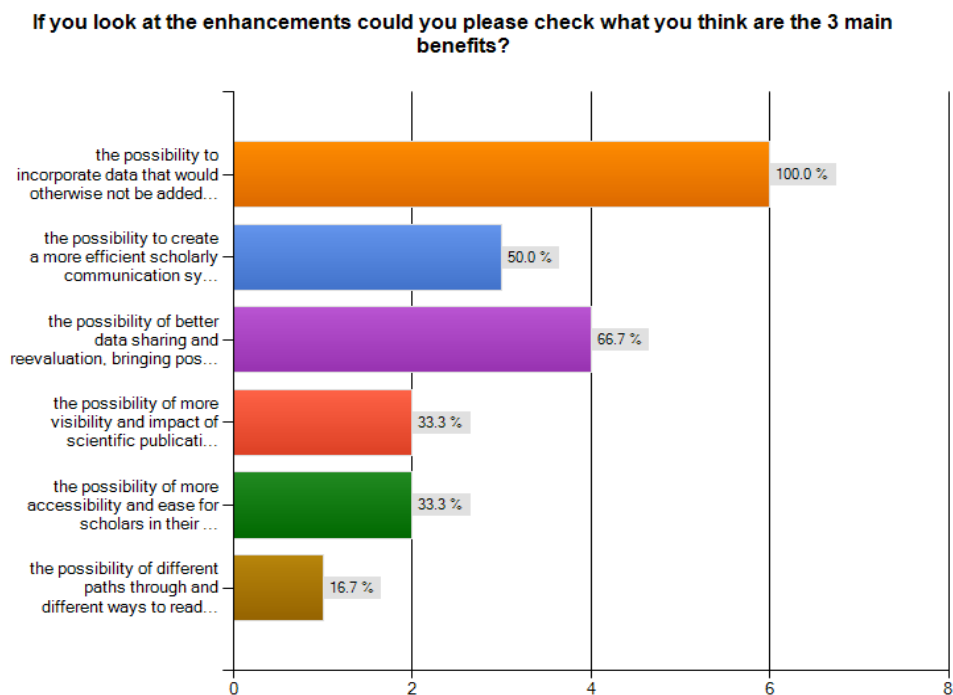
We also asked the participants what they felt were the 3 main benefits and the 3 main drawbacks of the enhancements. The 3 main benefits they mentioned where:

1. The possibility to incorporate data that would otherwise not be added to a publication because of place and money constraints
2. The possibility of better data sharing and reevaluation, bringing possibly more transparency and openness to scientific research
3. The possibility to create a more efficient scholarly communication system in which related objects can easily be retrieved

As the 3 main drawbacks they mentioned:

1. Issues concerning who pays for the enhancements, when it comes to maintaining and editing
2. They take a lot of extra time for the scholar to produce
3. A lack of incentive to enhance a publication (no real rewarding structure yet)

These main drawbacks and benefits concur with the data gathered in the JALC user needs report, where we asked the same question. However, the issue concerning who pays for the enhancements seems to stand out in the online survey responses.

If you look at the enhancements could you please check what you think are the 3 main benefits?

If you look at the enhancements could you please check what you think are the 3 main drawbacks?

They take a lot of extra time for the scholar to produce	3
A lack of incentive to enhance a publication(no real rewarding struct…	3
There is a lack of infrastructure and the creation of meaningful rela…	2
The data archiving and interoperability form a concern	2
Quality control and peer review form a concern when it comes to the e…	1
The moral and commercial ownership of data and datasets is an issue d…	1
There will not be enough enahncements because of fear of opening up o…	1
Issues concerning who pays for the enhancements, when it comes to mai…	5

We also asked the participants what they felt about the print availability of the journal. Interestingly enough 2/3th of the respondents stated they do not feel the print journal is necessary, where they either read the article online only (1/3th) or print it out if they deem it interesting enough (1/3th). Only 1/3th of the respondents stated they read the articles online first and turn to the print edition for thorough reading.

We also asked the participants whether their views concerning enhanced publications changed now that they have taken an in depth look at some of the enhancements. To this question 50% of the respondents stated they were more positive, were the views of the other 50% remain the same.

We also asked the participants about what kind of enhancements they would like to see more or they felt are missing. Where would they like to see improvements? Their responses are added underneath:

"*The enhancements now are more of a gimmick than that they really alter the way you read the articles. The enhancements should really add something to the article, and data-tables which can be left out for the construction of the argument not necessarily enhance the publication. A good selection of proper "enhancement" which alter the way the article is read would benefit the "enhancement" concept, not just "extra data".*"(Archaeologist)

"*Annotations*" (Steering Group Member)

"*Do you feel the enhancements influence the way you read the text?: Yes they give you more insight in the way the authors did their research, and that triggers additional*

questions/thoughts! Reading an article does take a bit longer now but in my view it's worth the time investment." (Steering Group Member)

Finally we asked the respondents whether they had any additional comments or suggestions for JALC. Their suggestions are added underneath.

"*Denk dat we wat energie moeten steken in 'zendingswerk' dus auteurs overtuigen (als dat zo is???) dat ze enkel een excel tabel hoeven aanleveren en dat de technische reactie dit omzet naar dynamische content. Mensen willen wel, maar bezitten geen know-how en geen tijd (en zin) om die persoonlijk te verwerven."Maar al met al ben ik uitermate blij met de huidige mogelijkheden!*" (Archaeologist)

"*The presentation of the enhancements now is not very good. You would not have noticed them/clicked on them in the article if it wasn't mentioned before. The dynamic content should be made more visible in the lay-out of the article. Now you have to find them underneath small meaningless thumbnails instead of a feature in its own right. I think a further re-editing of the website to make it more modern in lay-out would also significantly change the perception of the enhancements. Specifically the browser-version of the articles is appaling and very archaic. I would suggest to improve the lay-out of the web-page to make it more in line with the printed form and then give the enhanced capabilities a more prominent place*." (Archaeologist)

"*I wonder where I can find the RDF/XML in which the relations are expressed. This is important for future uses of Enhanced Publications.*" (Steering Group Member)

Conclusion

If we look at the results of the survey, we could conclude that in general the respondents are quite positive about the enhancements in JALC. However, as the comments also show, there is still room for improvements. The general impression regarding the enhancements is good. A large majority of the participants believe the enhancements improve the quality of the publications. Some of them even feel they make you focus more on the text. And after taking an in-depth look at some of the enhancements, the respondents' views towards enhancements are either more positive or have remained the same. A majority of the participants is now also more willing to provide an enhanced publication themselves.

However, some comments and suggestions concerning the specific enhancements were also made. These focus mainly on technical details, on formats and design, as well as on the general outlook of the enhancements. Some comments were made for instance about the presentation of the enhancements and the fact that for now they do not yet clearly stand out. The enhancements could be more clearly or noticeably presented to the readers. It is felt 'they should really add something' which also becomes clear from the enthusiasm of the respondents towards the more elaborate enhancements. This strongly connects to the suggestions concerning the promotion of the enhancements and of enhanced publications in general. More attention to promoting the possibility to add enhancements (for instance on the JALC website) could gather more interest from the archaeological community to deliver enhancements together with their publications. More support and information from the publisher's side (for instance by means of a 'how to manual') could be beneficial to inform readers and authors. To gather more advise and feedback from authors and readers, it might help to do further evaluations to gather comments and suggestions from the JALC community, also since the present evaluation leads to a more positive attitude, valuable advise and more willingness to deliver enhancements. Keeping close contact with authors and readers could be a large part of the missionary work JALC might need to conduct to experiment with further enhancements in the future. The help and feedback options, as now presented on the website, might perhaps also be presented more noticeable on the main webpage.

Another interesting outcome of the survey was that a majority of the survey respondents would not necessarily need or use the print edition. With the further experimentation with and development of the enhancements, JALC might want to monitor whether it would still be necessary to maintain a printed edition in the future or maybe to expand to more flexible and customized POD options.

One of the main concerns has to do with the financial sustainability of the enhancements. Some more information on who pays for what and how the costs for set up and maintenance are met might be beneficial. It is not clear whether the fact that JALC is an Open Access journal might have something to do with the insecurity towards the financial sustainability. However, some more information (or a link to more information) about Open Access could perhaps also be beneficial.

As there seems to be a positive outlook towards the enhanced publications and a willingness to deliver and experiment with enhancements from authors' side, there seem to be abundant opportunities for JALC to explore this format further, preferably in close cooperation with the archaeological community.

Attachment 1: the online survey

Survey On Enhanced Publications In JALC

1. Introduction

In this survey we will ask you to take an in-depth look at a few articles that have appeared in JALC volume 1 and 2 and to pay extra attention to the enhancements that have been added and the relationship between the enhancements and the text. We will be asking you to give your opinion on the different kinds of enhancements, what you like and dislike about them and whether you think they improve the publication. We will also ask your opinion on what you feel could be changed and what kind of enhancements you feel should be added in the future.

The survey will link you through to specific articles published in JALC. Please take a close look at these articles. Once you are finished you can return to the survey by clicking on the window and resume your answering.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and if you have any questions or feedback on this survey please contact: j.t.l.adema@hum.leidenuniv.nl

2. Section 1

We have made a list of the most important added services and enhancements to the digital articles published in JALC volume 1 and 2: Please first take a look at the specific article as a whole and then focus on the specific enhancement by clicking on the link provided. Please state on a scale of 1 to 5 what you think about the enhancement.
Any specific comments can be made at the end of this section.

1. Please take a look at the article *Mesolithic and Neolithic human remains in the Netherlands: physical anthropological and stable isotope investigations* by E. Smits and J. van der Plicht. You can find it here. What do you think about some of the enhancements added here? (please follow the link to the specific enhancement)

	1. Not Very useful	2. Somewhat Useful	3. Useful	4. Very Useful	5. Essential
The possibility to add a map database: (The possibility to zoom in, click on details or change the resolution on images and (Google) maps)	O	O	O	O	O
The possibility to add an image database (with searchable photo's and artifact drawings/pictures)	O	O	O	O	O
The possibility to add tables/graphs/supplements	O	O	O	O	O
The possibility to add color to the publication	O	O	O	O	O

2. Please take a look at the article *Consumption patterns and living conditions inside Het Steen, the late medieval prison of Malines (Mechelen, Belgium)* by Liesbeth Troubleyn, Frank Kinnaer, Anton Ervynck et. al. You can find it here. What do you think about some of the enhancements added here? (please follow the link to the specific enhancement)

	1. Not Very Useful	2. Somewhat Useful	3. Useful	4. Very Useful	5. Essential
The possibility to add dynamic tables/the possibility to perform database/table queries or add a filter	O	O	O	O	O

3. Please take a look at the article *The Niersen Beaker burial: A renewed study of a century-old excavation* **by Quentin Bourgeois, Luc Amkreutz, Raphaël Panhuysen. You can find it here. What do you think about some of the enhancements added here? (please follow the link to the specific enhancement)**

	1. Not Very Useful	2. Somewhat Useful	3. Useful	4. Very Useful	5. Essential
The possibility of GIS maps: interactive spatial environments	○	○	○	○	○
The possibility to add hyperlinks: www.grafheuvels.nl	○	○	○	○	○

4. The search function.

Please take a look at the different search functions offered by JALC by following the link and state whether you find them useful:

	1. Not Very Useful	2. Somewhat Useful	3. Useful	4. Very Useful	5. Essential
Boolean search	○	○	○	○	○
Proximity search	○	○	○	○	○
Multiple collection search	○	○	○	○	○

5. If you have any comments regarding specific enhancements mentioned above please state them underneath.

6. Would you be more willing to deliver enhanced publications yourself, now you have taken a more in depth look at some of the possibilities?

◯ No

◯ Perhaps

◯ Yes

7. Do you feel you need more information or advise from the publisher to be able to deliver an enhanced publication yourself?

◯ No

◯ Perhaps

◯ Yes

✴ 8. If you look at the enhancements could you please check what you think are the 3 main benefits?

☐ the possibility to incorporate data that would otherwise not be added to a publication because of place and money constraints

☐ the possibility to create a more efficient scholarly communication system in which related objects can easily be retrieved

☐ the possibility of better data sharing and reevaluation, bringing possibly more transparency and openness to scientific research

☐ the possibility of more visibility and impact of scientific publications with the online availability of research in a connected web

☐ the possibility of more accessibility and ease for scholars in their function of readers

☐ the possibility of different paths through and different ways to read an article: more flexible and adaptable to the reader

✱ 9. If you look at the enhancements could you please check what you think are the 3 main drawbacks?

☐ They take a lot of extra time for the scholar to produce

☐ A lack of incentive to enhance a publication(no real rewarding structure yet)

☐ There is a lack of infrastructure and the creation of meaningful relationships is unclear

☐ The data archiving and interoperability form a concern

☐ Quality control and peer review form a concern when it comes to the enhancements

☐ The moral and commercial ownership of data and datasets is an issue due to unclear copyright policies

☐ There will not be enough enahncements because of fear of opening up one's data

☐ Issues concerning who pays for the enhancements, when it comes to maintaining and editing

10. How do you feel about the print availability of the journal?

◯ I like it and I still read the articles in print first, and only online afterwards to look at specific enhancements

◯ I like it although I read the articles online first and turn to the print edition for thorough reading

◯ It is not a necessity for me, I will print out the articles if I want to read them more thoroughly

◯ It is not a necessity for me, I read the articles online

11. Have your views concerning enhanced publications changed now you have taken and in depth look at some enhancements?

◯ No, my views remain the same

◯ Yes, my views are more negative

◯ Yes, my views are more positive

12. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for JALC? If so, please state them underneath.

[text box]

Attachment 2: List of people contacted for the online survey

Stijn Arnoldussen	Universiteit Groningen/RACM
Martijn van Leusen	Universiteit Groningen
Quentin Bourgeois	Universiteit Leiden
Hans Kamermans	Universiteit Leiden
Alexander Verpoorte	Universiteit Leiden
Philip van Peer	Universiteit Leuven
Veerle Rots	Universiteit Leuven
Marijn van Gils	Universiteit Leuven/VIOE
Cuno Koopstra	ARC
Tiziano Goossens	Archol
Adrie Tol	Archol
Laura Kooistra	BIAX
Marjolein van der Linden	BIAX
Marten Verbruggen	RAAP
Marc van den Berg	UVA
Laurents sesink	DANS
Eelco Ferwerda	AUP
Renze Brandsma	UVA
John Doove	SURF
Marjan Vernooy	SURF
Maurice Vanderfeesten	SURF
Gerard Vanwestrienen	SURF
Martin Feijen	SURF