



JALC User Needs: External Evaluation Report – Version 2

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 is the updated version of an earlier report covering the external evaluations of the implementations of enhanced publications in JALC.² For the original report 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). Since the responses were few, after the report had been written and submitted to the JALC steering Committee, it was decided to use the survey again to find some more respondents and in this way gather some additional data. First of all, a list of contacts set-up by the steering committee, was approached. Of these 32 people, 12 actually filled out the survey. On the 15th of March 2010, an invitation to take part in the survey was send to the *Archweb* mailing list³, which led to an additional 7 responses. In total 26 people filled out the survey. Where the original report was thus based on 7 responses, this report is based on all 26 (including the original 7). Although this is significantly more than in the first try, still we feel the data presented in this report should be seen as mere suggestive and not as normative.

¹This report can be accessed at:

<http://www.surffoundation.nl/wiki/download/attachments/3473924/JALC+User+Needs+Report.pdf>

² The original report can be accessed at:

<https://www.surfgroepen.nl/sites/JALCproject/Project%20results/WP8%20External%20evaluation%20report.pdf>

³ <http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL2=1229&R=1835&N=ARCHWEB-L@NIC.SURFNET.NL>

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 2.⁴ 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)	8.0% (2)	28.0% (7)	48.0% (12)	16.0% (4)	25
The possibility to add an image database (with searchable photo's and artifact drawings/pictures)	4.0% (1)	12.0% (3)	20.0% (5)	40.0% (10)	24.0% (6)	25
The possibility to add tables/graphs/supplements	0.0% (0)	8.0% (2)	36.0% (9)	32.0% (8)	24.0% (6)	25
The possibility to add color to the publication	0.0% (0)	4.0% (1)	36.0% (9)	36.0% (9)	24.0% (6)	25
The possibility to add dynamic tables /the possibility to perform database/table queries or add a filter	0.0% (0)	8.3% (2)	33.3% (8)	41.7% (10)	16.7% (4)	24

⁴ 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 Eryvynck et. al.
- *The Niensen Beaker burial: A renewed study of a century-old excavation* by Quentin Bourgeois, Luc Amkreutz, Raphaël Panhuysen.

The possibility of GIS maps : interactive spatial environments	0.0% (0)	4.3% (1)	21.7% (5)	52.2% (12)	21.7% (5)	23
The possibility to add hyperlinks: www.grafheuveld.nl	0.0% (0)	24.0% (6)	32.0% (8)	28.0% (7)	16.0% (4)	25
Boolean search	0.0% (0)	17.6% (3)	35.3% (6)	17.6% (3)	29.4% (5)	17
Proximity search	0.0% (0)	38.9% (7)	38.9% (7)	22.2% (4)	0.0% (0)	18
Multiple collection search	4.8% (1)	14.3% (3)	33.3% (7)	42.9% (9)	4.8% (1)	21

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, the possibility to add graphs 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 the comments added underneath mention a flaw in the survey and since the multiple collection search was not yet working, this might have influenced the score.

“If feasible, please include the possibility of searching with wild cards”

“With the last question it is only possible to grade every function a different score (error in the survey). Furthermore, the GIS environment takes long to load and is 'heavy' to work with...”

“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)

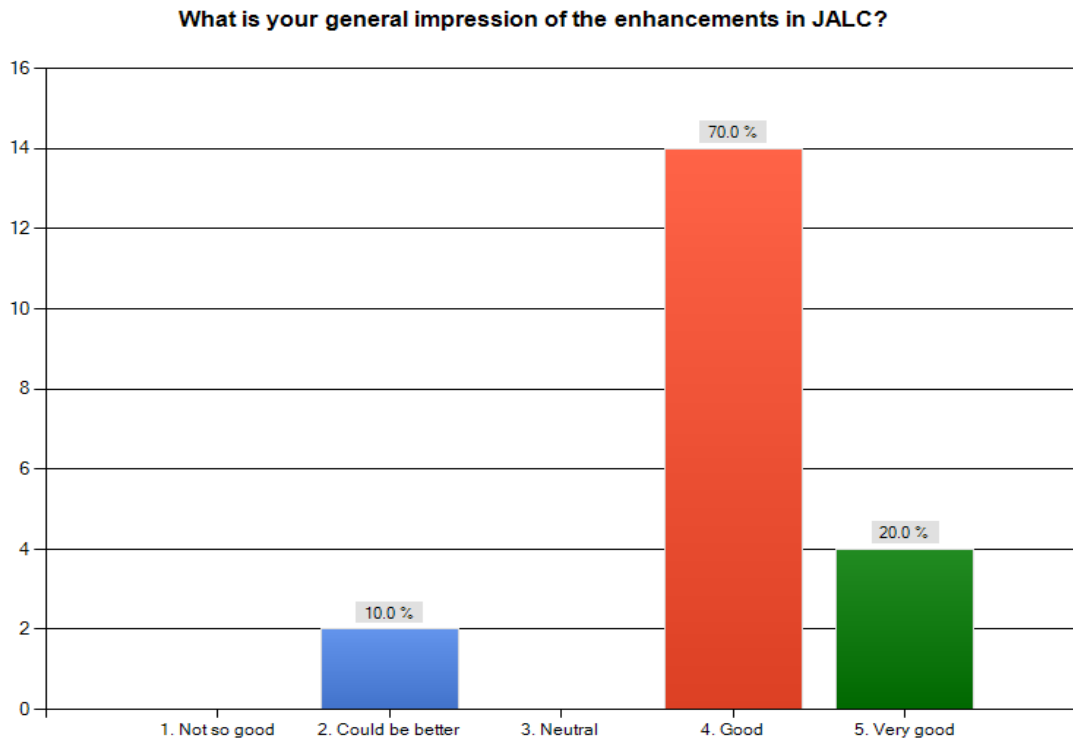
*“1) Preferably all tables should be included as *data*. Not as an image (e.g. jpg). 2) Multiple collection search does not seem to work.”*
(Steering Group Member)

“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

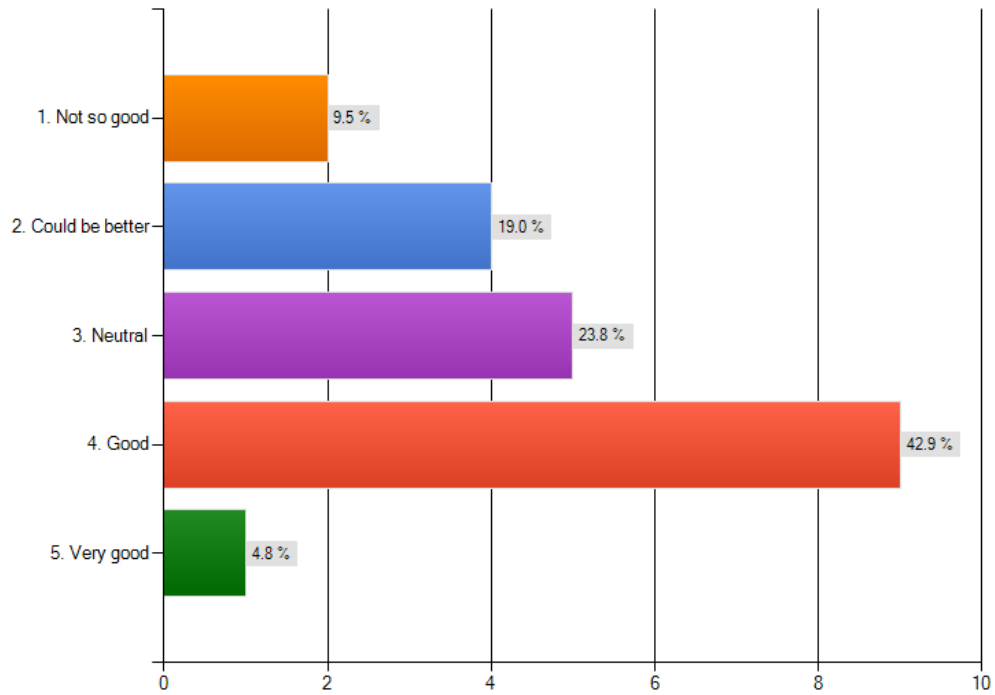
In the second section of the online survey (question 1 to 12) we asked the participants to reflect on their general impression of the enhancements in JALC. We also focused on questions concerning the benefits and drawbacks of the enhancements, the navigation between the text and the enhancements, the 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.

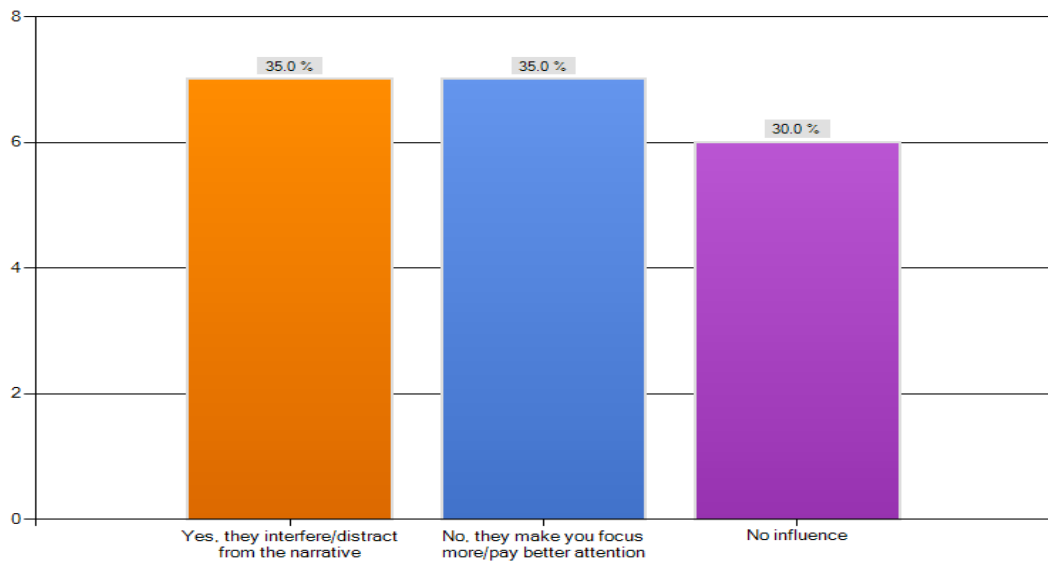


From the data above we can conclude that the general impression of the enhancements according to the survey participants is good. As we can see in the table underneath however, the opinion of the participants on the navigation between the text and the enhancements is more mixed. This could mean JALC should give more attention to the navigation between the text and the enhancements were it is at the moment not uniformly deemed positive. One third of the respondents also feel the enhancements distract you from the main narrative. However, another third state they feel the enhancements make you concentrate more on the text, where the remainder of the respondents is neutral in this respect. Although the reactions are thus mixed, JALC might want to look closer at making the enhancements more integral to or part of the main narrative, to ensure minimal distraction from the text and argumentation.

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

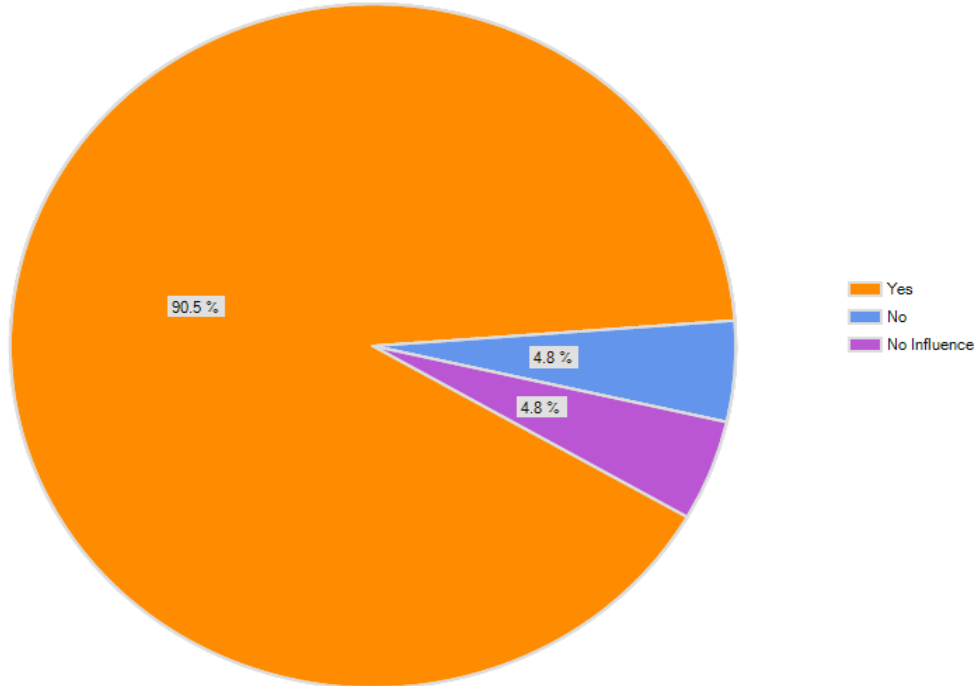


Do you feel the enhancements influence the way you read the text?



A large majority of the survey participants state they feel the enhancements improve the quality of the publication, where only one respondent states they do not influence the quality of the publication and again only one participant feels the enhancements are bad for the publication's quality.

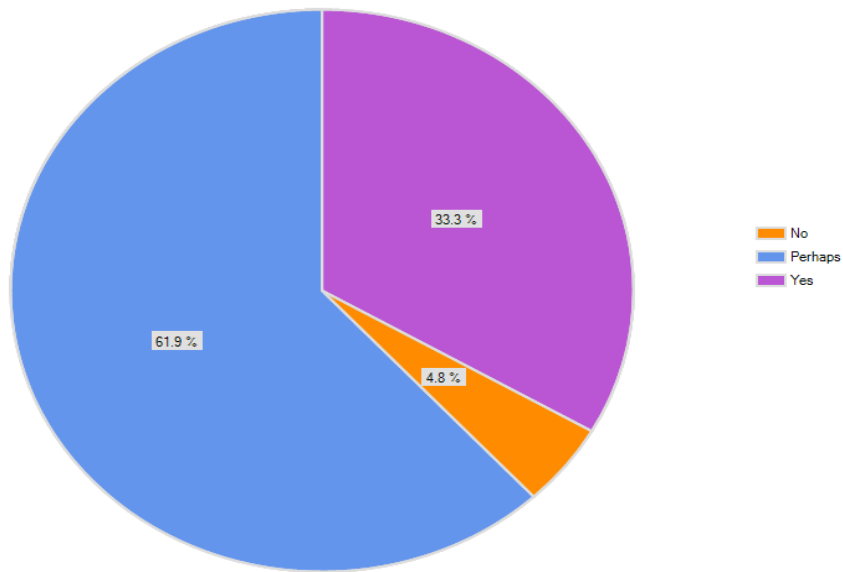
Do you feel the enhancements improve the quality of the publication?



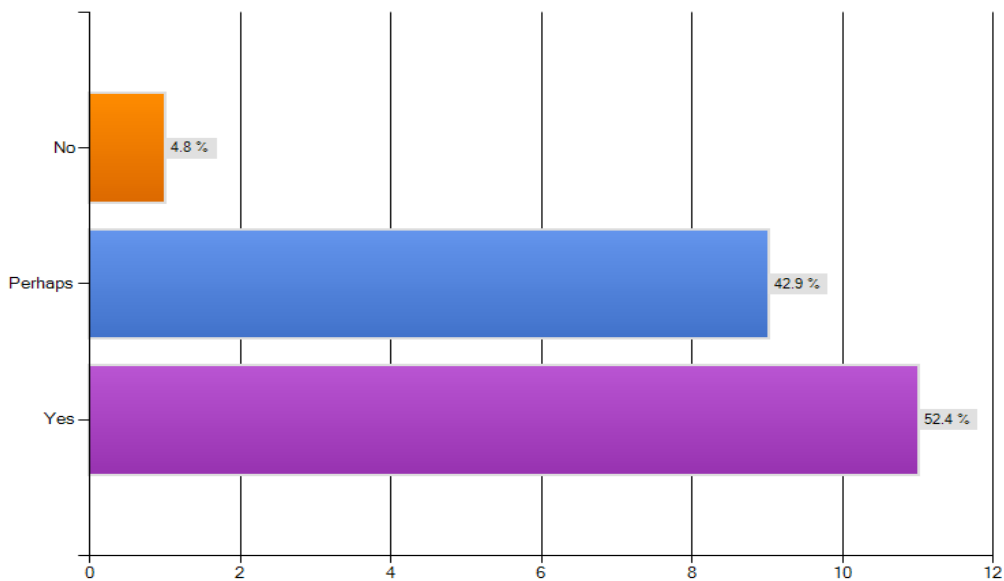
We also asked the participants whether they would be more willing to deliver enhanced publications themselves, now that they took a more in depth look at some of the possibilities. To this question, one third answered with a clear yes, where another two third answered perhaps. From this we can conclude that the enhancements in JALC have at least triggered people's enthusiasm to start thinking about adding enhancements to their articles (themselves). As the graph underneath shows, only one respondent would not be more willing to experiment with enhancements.

However, information, guidance and advice from the publisher where it comes to creating and delivering an enhanced publication, at least for the time being, seems to be essential. As our data shows more than half of the respondents would need more information in order to deliver an enhanced publication, and almost the same amount of people feel this might perhaps be helpful. Only one respondent stated he would not need any assistance from the publisher to deliver an enhanced publication.

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



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



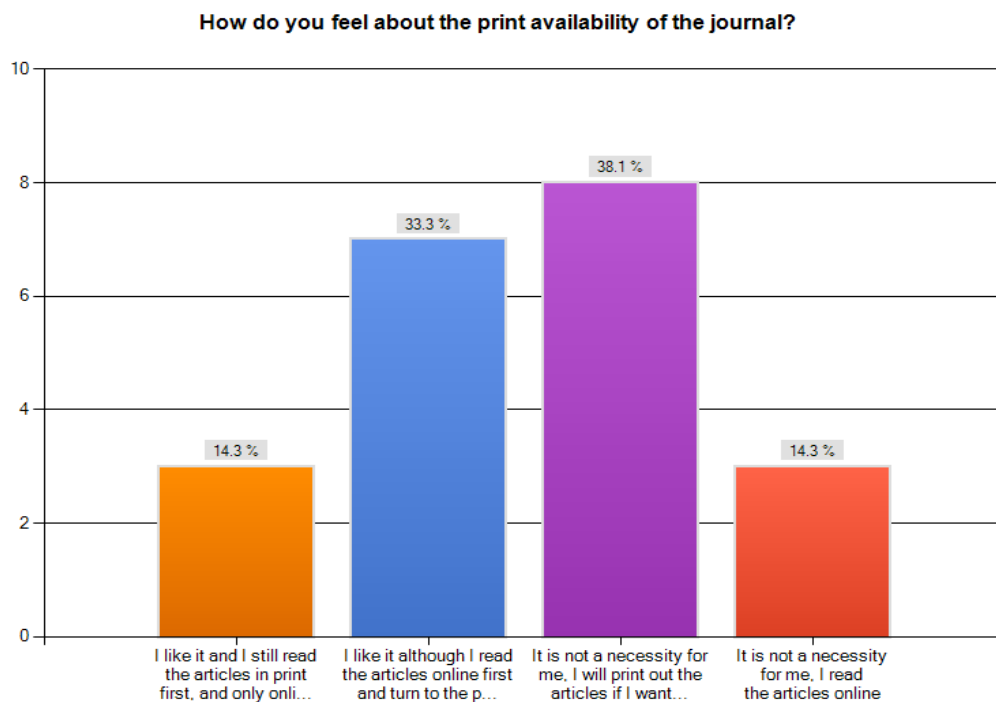
We also asked the participants what they felt were the 3 main benefits and the 3 main drawbacks of the enhancements. The 3 main benefits they mentioned where:

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

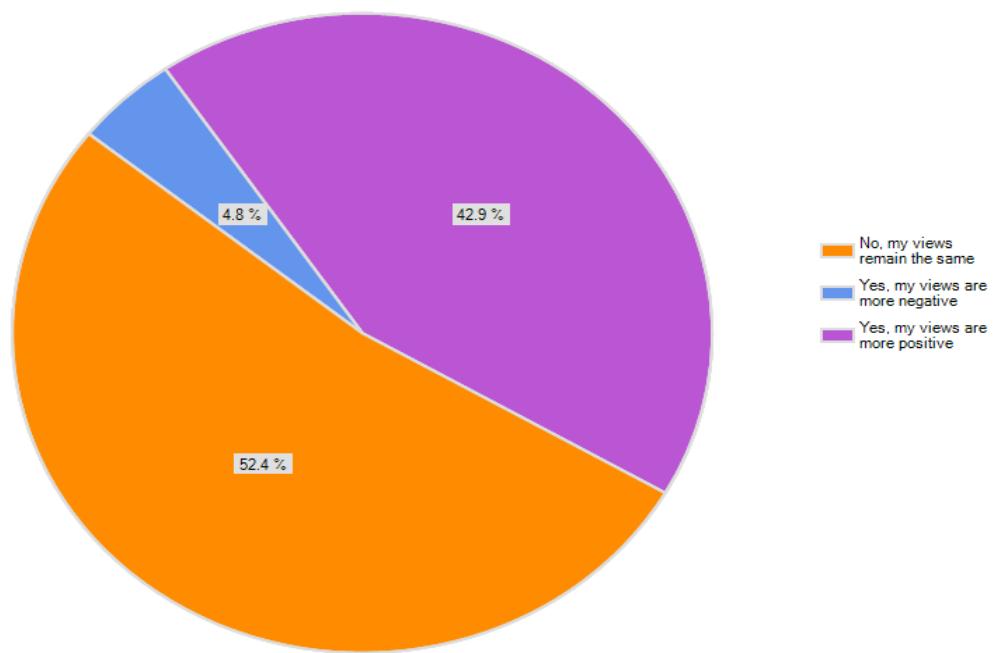
These main drawbacks and benefits concur with the data gathered in the JALC user needs report, where we asked the same question. However, the issue concerning who pays for the enhancements seems to stand out in the online survey responses.



We also asked the participants what they felt about the print availability of the journal. Interestingly enough more than half of the respondents stated they do not feel the print journal is necessary, where they either read the article online only (almost 15%) or print it out if they deem it interesting enough (almost 40%). Only 1/3th of the respondents stated they read the articles online first and turn to the print edition for thorough reading. 15% of the respondents only look at the online edition to take a look at the enhancements. For this group of people reading from paper still seems to be essential. However, the existence of a paper edition does not seem essential for all respondents, although almost half still likes the print availability (at least for thorough reading).

We 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 almost 40% of the respondents stated they were more positive, were the views of more than 50% remain the same. Only one respondent stated his views concerning enhanced publications are more negative after taking a closer look at them.

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



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)

The enhancements could be very useful and pleasant but need to be presented in a more 2.0 manner. having a friendly interface will solve almost all of these problems and greatly improve the explanatory power of the articles and 'enhancements'.

“- Opening of image in same window is useless
- GIS map option looks very promising, but would probably need the possibility to allow the user to change the color schemes.”

“3D images, forum discussion (multivocality?), soundfragments, interviews, Filmfragments”

“ video; 3D;”

Finally we asked the respondents whether they had any additional comments or suggestions for JALC. Their suggestions are again 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 appalling and very archaic. I would suggest improving 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)

“The enhancements are part of the everyday working life of modern young archaeologists; a simple Google map or 3d simulation is just a few clicks of buttons away for most young researchers. It is very useful and necessary I think to incorporate these things in the articles, even if only as supplementary information, this of course IS the future of publication. It should however not be used because it is simply possible, the benefits from the extra digital products must be clear; the extra effort in clicking and going beyond the magazine/article should be instantly rewarded, otherwise it is only distracting. For acceptance of these digital 'funnies' (interactive maps, 3d models, etc) they need to be incorporated within the online interface and not hidden outside of the article. If they really do possess relevant information, they should be part of the article just as images usually are.”

“When reading a paper publication figures and tables are the first to capture my interest in the article/section. In the JALC publication one has to do extra work to make those readable and than click them away to say the text and back and fro. It means the moment has gone and my interest is lost.”

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. Making the enhancements really a part of the text (instead of a pop-out window) might be a suggestion to look at, both to keep the attention of the readers more on the main narrative and to make the effort to look at the enhancements 'effortless'.

Suggestions for other enhancements include 3D images, video, sound (interviews) and more web 2.0 functionalities like for instance a forum. It is also clearly felt the enhancements 'should really add something', in other words 'the benefits from the extra digital products must be clear' (and they must be 'meaningful relations'), which also becomes clear from the enthusiasm of the respondents towards the more elaborate enhancements. This 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 advice 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 advice 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 small majority of the survey respondents would not necessarily need or use the print edition, although for some respondents the availability of a printed version, especially for thorough reading, remains a benefit. 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



Survey On Enhanced Publications In JALC

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)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The possibility to add an image database (with searchable photo's and artifact drawings/pictures)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The possibility to add tables/graphs/supplements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The possibility to add color to the publication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Survey On Enhanced Publications In JALC

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The possibility to add hyperlinks: www.grafheuveld.nl	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proximity search	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple collection search	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

Survey On Enhanced Publications In JALC

3. Section 2

Now that you have taken a closer look at some of the enhancements used in JALC volume 1 and 2, we would like to ask you some additional questions.

1. What is your general impression of the enhancements in JALC?

- 1. Not so good
- 2. Could be better
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Good
- 5. Very good

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

- 1. Not so good
- 2. Could be better
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Good
- 5. Very good

3. Do you feel the enhancements influence the way you read the text?

- Yes, they interfere/distract from the narrative
- No, they make you focus more/pay better attention
- No influence

4. Do you feel the enhancements improve the quality of the publication?

- Yes
- No
- No Influence

**5. What kind of enhancements would you like to see more or do you feel are missing?
Where would you like to see improvements?**

Survey On Enhanced Publications In JALC

*** 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 enhancements 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.