



Creating eResearch tools for
Archaeologists

Project Overview

Commonly Asked Questions about FAIMS Development

1 What is the FAIMS Project?

The FAIMS project is assembling a modular, federated information system for archaeology, including:

- an Android mobile application for data collection that is GIS-aware and works offline;
- a browser-based application for data editing, analysis, visualisation and web publishing;
- an online data repository.

2 What is the Mobile Application?

Our principal activity in January–July 2013 is the development of an Android mobile application to facilitate digital creation of archaeological data. As of early February, we have an internal prototype that demonstrates our core functionality, which includes:

- Customisable data schemata and user interfaces
- Mapping / lightweight GIS
- File management for images, drawings, etc.
- Versioning
- Synchronisation and backup
- Automated export to other components
- Mapping of project vocabularies to core concepts, promoting compatible datasets
- Offline functionality

3 What provision is there for Data Editing?

In addition to our work on the mobile device application, we are working with Arts eResearch at the University of Sydney to enhance Heurist, a system that provides a data editing, analysis, visualisation and publishing space on the web.

4 What is the Repository?

We are building an implementation of tDAR to create an Australian digital data repository using NeCTAR cloud infrastructure. This repository will make it possible to securely archive data and exchange it online, meeting international best practices for data management. Data from the mobile applications can be exported automatically into Heurist or tDAR. Many grant agencies and journals are beginning to require data management and dissemination plans.



5 What are the technical requirements?

For the FAIMS mobile application you need an android device running Android 4+, an Access Point, and a computer capable of running (or virtualising) Linux. To access the FAIMS data editing web app and the repository you need a computer with an internet connection.

6 What is the FAIMS difference?

We are developing a flexible, free and open source applications, incorporating high-quality existing tools. Applications have been designed in consultation with a large and diverse group of archaeologists. As a result, they have a unique feature set, including GIS

The University of New South Wales is proud to be in partnership with the National eResearch Collaboration Tools and Resources (NeCTAR) project to develop a comprehensive information system for archaeology, creating a central online platform for the capture, exchange, analysis and storage of archaeological data.

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functionality, data integrity features like versioning, synchronisation, and backup, and full off-line functionality. While the applications accommodate existing project workflows and terminology, they also promote the production of technically and semantically compatible datasets.

7 Who can use these apps?

Anyone can use the FAIMS applications. Archaeologists, geologists, environmental scientist needing applications for offline digital data field collection are particularly welcome! We are developing open source and there is no cost to use and distribute the software.



8 How skilled do I have to be?

Anyone with a bit of enthusiasm and interest in technology can deploy and customise the FAIMS system. If you're happy with off-the-shelf templates (e.g., the "FAIMS Excavation Module"), you won't need any specialised computing skills to use the app, although familiarity with touchscreen devices will be an advantage. You may need some help setting up the server (you'll certainly want to have the instructions handy). If you want to produce your own custom recording interface,

you'll need to be confident writing and editing XML files.

9 Is technical support provided?

Yes, low level technical support is provided to all FAIMS users. Our developers will continue to maintain and debug all components of FAIMS during 2014. We are currently investigating organisational models which would guarantee the support and development of the FAIMS tools beyond the current development phase. An announcement of the direction we will pursue will be made well before the closure of the project in 2013. If you need specialised technical assistance for customisation of any FAIMS component, the cost will depend on the scale and scope of your project and dataset(s). At the moment, we have been quoting a ballpark figure of \$5,000-10,000 (AUD) for ARC projects who need a customised mobile application for data collection and assistance with automated ingest of final datasets into the repository. This number will vary largely depending on the nature, volume and complexity of your data.

10 What is the development schedule?

- Limited Alpha Release: available now
- Beta Release: early July 2013
- Production Release: 30 September 2013

11 Can I try the app?

Email us at info@fedarch.org!