## What Is The ArchWay?

**The ArchWay is, in essence, a wiki that has been refined with use of teaching methodology in order to alter it from an information resource to a learning resource.**

Wikis have been treated with suspicion by many lecturers and tutors for their lack of academically rigorous policing of content.

Students see them as an easy-find, easy-access tool for information.

However, regulating content is only one half of the inspiration behind ArchWay.

Although ironically, the content you will see in this demonstration has been drawn from Wikipedia due to time constraints!

One of the major complaints of students today is the lack of timely feedback before or between essays with which they can develop as learners.

This can be seen in The National Student Survey, where *Assessment & Feedback* continues to languish behind other aspects of university life, with 66% of students satisfied.

One of the methods students consider as a useful tool for the development of their learning is formative assessment- a checkpoint through which they can progress with feedback.

A study carried out by The Higher Education Academy, at Oxford University's School of Archaeology and Faculty of History, found that students often valued feedback from formative assessment as being essential in completing summative assessments.

The ArchWay represents a change in the concept of the wiki by implementing a tool for augmented learning, with the concepts of well-controlled electronic resources, formative assessment and feedback lying at the core of this learning.

Formative Assessment

Work that is marked, but does not count toward a qualification. The student can use the feedback to improve and prepare for summative assessment.

Summative Assessment

Quite simply, this is the work that counts toward a qualification such as essays and exams etc.

## So How Does The ArchWay Do This?

When you first access The ArchWay, you are presented with a search facility in order to find what you are looking for. As the website is not live, a working search bar could not be included in this demonstration.

The Wiki is site-orientated, as this provides more direct contact with specific examples of material culture that summative assessment in archaeology requires.

Each site is split up into five tabs:

**Search-** Navigate here to carry out a further search without the need to return to the home page.

**Satellite-** Use Google Earth™ to explore the geography and morphology of a site's landscape.

**Evidence-** This is where a the core of the information can be found; all kept within a neat Spry Accordion arrangement for ease of use.

**Discussion-** Tutors can arrange feedback sessions through the use of an Instant Messenger over which they have direct control.

Google Earth™

Specifically for The ArchWay, sites have been marked so that you cannot loose them if you stray too far and can't find your site-simply zoom out, find your marker and zoom back in!

In addition, Google Earth™ Has 3D models and linked photographs of certain sites should you zoom in far enough, allowing for a kind of 'virtual exploration' of sites.

**References-** A bibliography in which every source that is available online, will be linked; as well as a list of websites whose content can be trusted.

The Evidence section provides the framework within which formative assessment can be used.

Each student can be given a short formative essay, set by the tutor, to write in relation to one aspect of a given site; on which feedback will be given.

This then acts as an entry to the ArchWay wiki, giving a sense of incentive and achievement to the student. This provides them with the intrinsic motivation to carry out the work that formative assessments often lack.

The Discussion tab then acts as a system whereby a a tutor can provide feedback to students and answer any questions they may have; without the need to book rooms etc.

The the Meebo service was chosen as it allows the tutor full control over who has access to the conversation, allowing for one-to-one or group feedback.

## Navigation and Usablity

When constructing the website, one of the many considerations undertaken were with regards to usability.

With so much content for each archaeological site it would be counter-intuitive not to divide the content up in some way; hence the content is divided into tabs using Spry Tabbed Panels.

This also offers the additional perk of not having to wait for each tab of content to load, simply click a tab and its content will appear.

Also, wiki entries are often notoriously dense in continuous text with little white space, making them often overwhelming and confusing to read.

With this in mind The ArchWay utilises Spry Accordion to create a series of bars within the Evidence tab which act not only as a 'contents menu' but also allow the information that is visible to be dictated entirely by the user.

Finally, the text background is neutral in colour, and the text itself formatted to assist those with reading difficulties- including enhanced white space, larger font and shorter paragraphs.

Spry Tabbed Panels

This is a feature that allows for content to be divided neatly into a 'navigation bar' style. It also loads all content in one go, meaning there is no arduous waiting for each tab to load.

Spry Accordion

This feature allows content to be stored within expandable and collapsible bars, allowing the user to dictate what content they see while also acting as an informal list of contents.

## Demonstration

This leaflet for The Archway has hopefully given you some insight into rationale and inspiration behind the idea.

After you have explored the limited demonstration page in the zip file, titled 'index.htm', if you could complete the feedback questionnaire ('ArchWay Questionnaire') it would be much appreciated.

Thank you for your time.