

Introduction:

Module 2 was an interesting middle-part of the course.

Module II built on Module 1's research collection and provided us, as the student, the opportunity to make sense of and dig deeper into the research collected! It was an interesting module to work on, considering that I had never truly analyzed **personal** research before. In comparison to Module I, Module II did not require the same outwardly 'collective' attitude. However, that is not to say that it was one that was *easier*. Module II brought its own set of challenges and opportunities to learn forth - and despite the times I wished to rip each follicle of hair out one by one, I have ended the Module with not **only** a full head of hair (thankfully), but also newfound comprehension into the systems digital archaeologists have in place for analyzing data... and how often times such systems are not utilized to the best of their degree.

Wins:

Unlike my previous Consolidation log, I have decided to divy the 'wins' of this log week-by-week. Despite being $\frac{3}{4}$ quarters done with the course, I still find it difficult to consider the 'fails' that I've encountered as 'wins'. Perhaps it is merely difficult for me to look at concepts and goals which I don't instantly understand or do well on... as a sort of 'win'.

Hence when reflecting on my previous Consolidation log, it was the academic aspect of the course which had connected well with me - such a notion **still holds true**. The weekly activities, as engaging and new as they were, did not fill me with the same sense of fulfillment as looking over the week's readings and attempting ascertain parallels to previous week's readings.

I would consider the deeper understanding of archaeological databases as a 'win' for me in the context of Week 5. Prior to that week's goals/activities I had little knowledge, nor interest, in the collective frameworks we use as archaeologists when both collecting, organizing, and analyzing data. There is *life* to these databases or, as Angela M. Labrador argues, "...archaeological databases have social lives that extend beyond assisting our report write-up. As [an] archive and methodological tool, the archaeological database has power that extends beyond our personal desktops.¹". Such a remark is initially confusing, however Prof. Graham explains deeply in response to a Hypothesis question by a fellow peer, 'tonyfournier'; explaining, "*It means that once something is created, it doesn't remain static or in place: it gets repurposed, and in the*

¹ Labrador, Angela. 2012. Ontologies of the Future and Interfaces for All: Archaeological Databases for the Twenty-First Century. *Archaeologies*, pp. 238

kinds of things that its existence now affords, it has its own kind of agency.". Now, that was a unique perspective to experience, as I had never been one to consider how **dynamic** values found in databases could be. Such an explanation also began to force me to draw parallels to one of the very first readings of the course (**sidenote:** there is an **unbeatable** kind of ecstasy whenever one is able to draw correspondence to previous readings or lessons... the gears truly begin to turn!). If Labrador believed that databases could be recycled and used for different mediums... could they also be utilised as a system in which different cultures, faiths, and sexualities integrate them for their **own** use. I recalled in a much earlier reading within the course, the author, Katherine Cook argued for the effects of digital archaeology in amplifying the voices of marginalized groups. She discusses the effects of having open archaeological databases available for minority groups - and the widening perspectives such a step towards inclusivity brings. For this particular topic, Cook builds on Ruth Tringham's work '*Dead Women Do Tell Tales: Ghosts*' - in which Tringham discusses a series of microdatabases of 'fragmentary history' - building on Tringham's works Cook argues that by "*Building on Tringham's earlier work on life histories and narratives of people in the past, using creative expression and embracing ambiguity...the project spotlights the all too often opaque process of archaeological interpretation by employing imagined narratives of the life histories of women at Çatalhöyük to demonstrate their connection with primary data.*"². Now the constant repurposing and changing interpretations of an archaeological narrative are widely recognized. Fellow peer, 'kateredner', explains this perfectly within a Hypothesis annotation, using an analogy based on gender differences in which they utilise information from a different class - stating, "... *most of archaeology's written record was solely explored from the 'male's perspective' on the world, while also focusing on 'rich societies'. By looking at the role of women and their roles in our past, this vastly changes the narrative, from it solely focusing on the views of a 'male's perspective', to instead, focusing on how 'humans' lived as a whole. male and female perspectives alike.*".

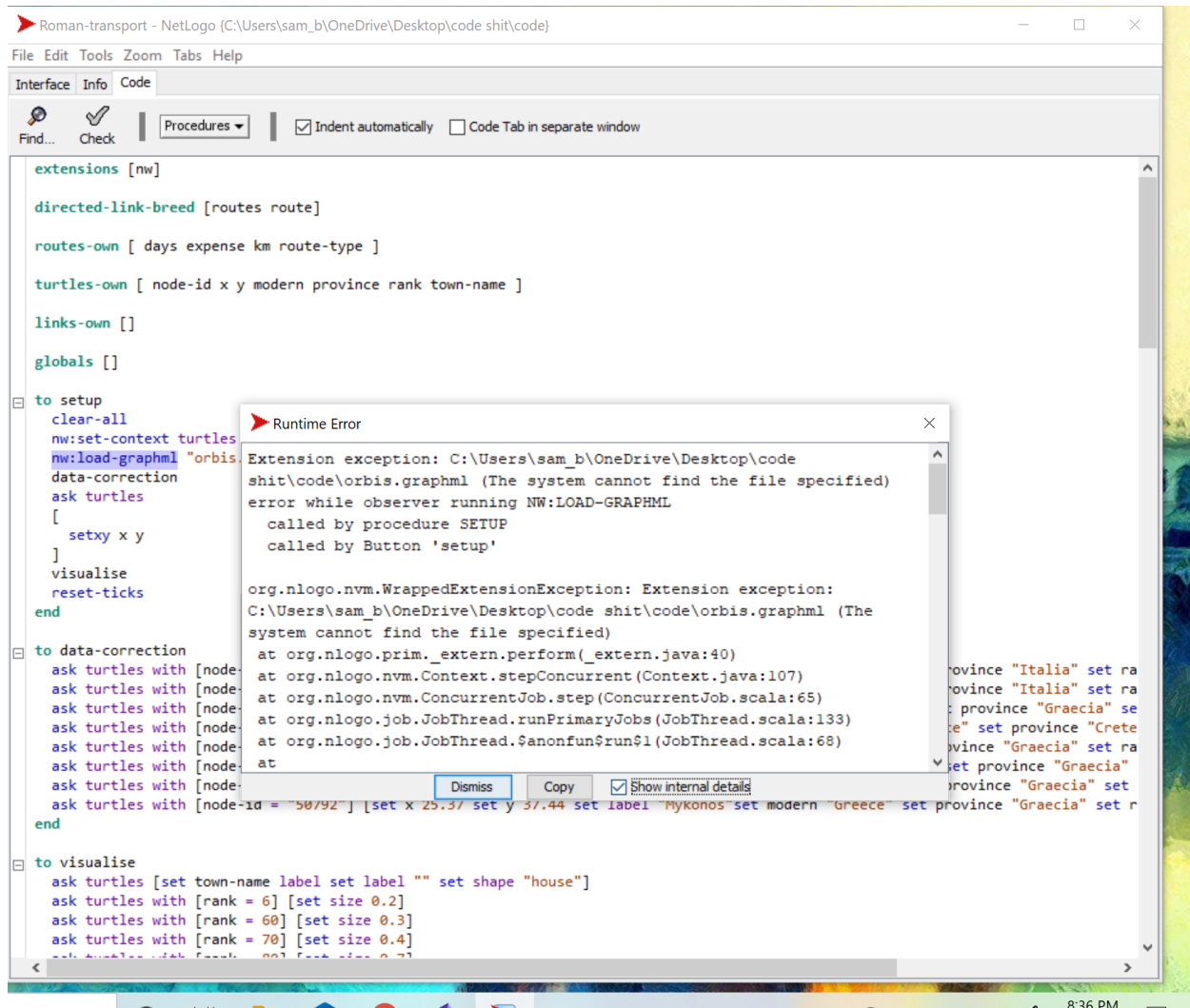
Fails:

As aforementioned, Module II was a much more difficult module to get through in comparison to the first Module. The most memorable fail for me came in the form of the Netlogo codes. I had used ORBIS in a previous course to calculate trade routes during the Roman Empire, and so it was quite exciting to be attempting to recreate an interface similar to the one created by a prestigious university!

... it went terribly! Yay!

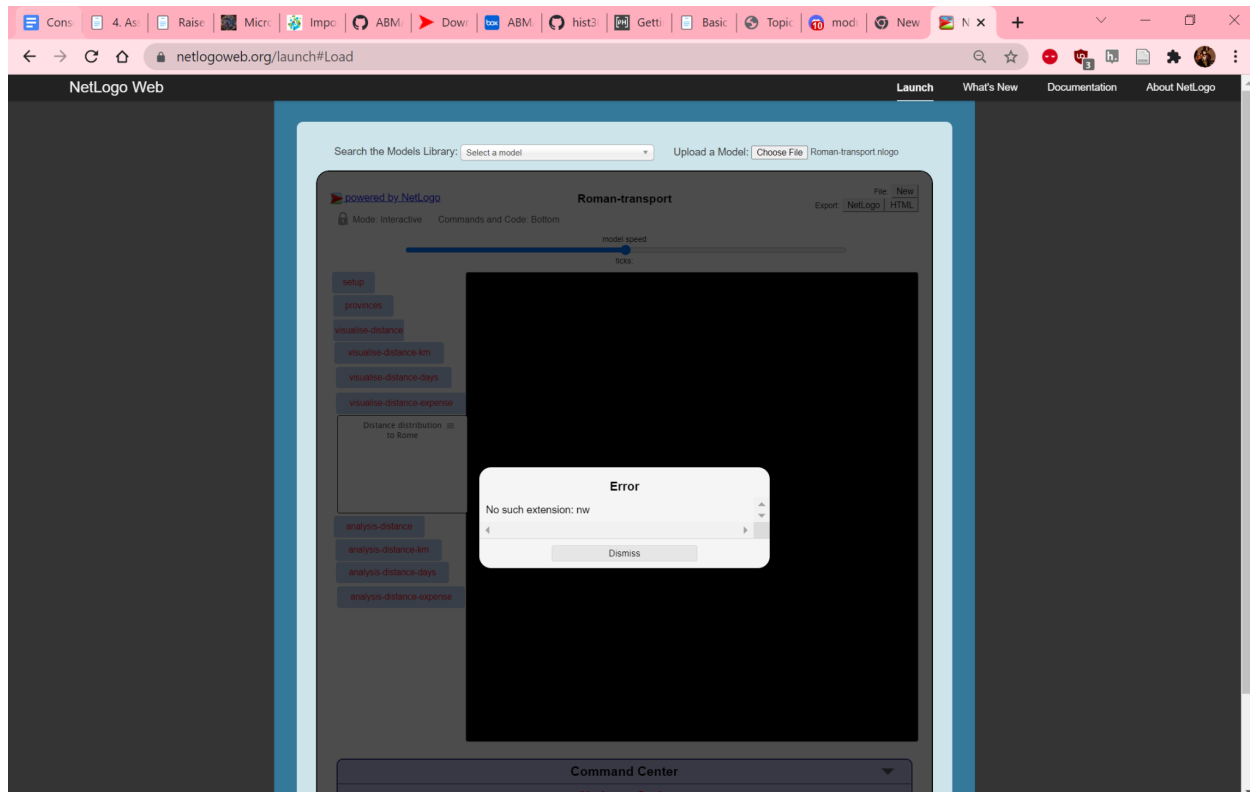
² Cook, Katherine. 2019. EmoboDIYing Disruption: Queer, Feminist & Inclusive Digital Archaeologies. European Journal of Archaeology 22 (Special Issue 3 Digital Archaeologies): 398-414

Below I have attached a screenshot of a common error message, I had kept receiving:



Now, unless I had missed a VITAL part of the Digiarch weekly work section... I didn't recall having to run anything setup procedure?

I tried this again in the web version of the program, hoping that perhaps the web version would have the correct plugins (is plugins the correct word? I don't know how abundantly clear I've made it that I'm basically a grandmother trapped in the body of a 20 year old), however it was all to no avail. The moment I uploaded the code to the website, I got another error - though I'm not too sure if it was similar or if the two were connected in any way.



After doing some more digging, it appeared very clear to me that 'nw' stood for Network extension - and it was up to me, to decide which extension the network was to work with. How I was to do that? I didn't know, and so I had been stumped... and still am stumped on that bit.

I tried searching for answers on the discord, but the closest I had gotten to a similar error was 'MaxTheBeast's .rmd extension needs. I'm not much of a tech person, but I assumed that was something completely different given the answer Graham had provided them.

<https://ccl.northwestern.edu/netlogo/6.0-BETA1/docs/nw.html> , provides a seemingly in-depth explanation into the workings of how such a feat will be accomplished. But as you will read on in the next section, one of the most challenging aspects of this Module was the dense readings - and especially for someone who does not have a STEM background, the words I read soon become nothing but alphabet soup in my brain.

Challenges

The most challenging aspect of this Module has certainly been digesting the academic material. Despite me considering the academic connections I had made within the readings as a 'win'... that is not to say that the papers were easily digestible. They were EXTREMELY dense. Especially readings found in later weeks, such as Week 7, were very dry and chalk full of information which ***I had no real interest in***, but had to get through nonetheless - Jeremy Hugget's The Apparatus of Digital Archaeology, it was a bit amusing to see the number of Hypothesis annotations dwindle down as I made my way through the table of contents.

When it comes down to the nitty gritty of digital archaeology, it is quite a lot in terms of density of information - and I suppose this is a personal issue to resolve, however it would be extremely disheartening to see the 4-5 journal articles that I would have to eat through that week.

Implications

Now, within the Week 8 Consolidation instructions there was a given prompt in which we are encouraged to examine the differences in the implications of digital archaeology; and how those implications may have either evolved (or stayed stagnant) from Module I.

The implications of digital archaeology in Module I were very much ethics based - touching on the ideas of mortuary archaeology which shaped the initial weeks of the course. However, in essence, the idea remained the same to its core - could it be argued that digital archaeology crossed boundaries of privacy and human liberty in pursuit of academic research? Moreover, there was much discourse on the lack of accessibility of information to marginalized communities within the sphere of archaeology.

In Module II, we are forced to look at a different impact of archaeological databases on greater academic discourse - and the impact such databases may have when interpreted differently by different people and cultures. Databases are often seen as stagnant and static entities - a 'binary' entity of you may. Such a concern is discussed greatly within the readings. Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein's work, *'What gets counted, counts'*. Now both the authors introduce compelling arguments of the overt binary present within academia - stating at one point, *"What is counted—like being a man or a woman—often becomes the basis for policymaking and resource allocation."*

By contrast, what is not counted—like being nonbinary—becomes invisible...³. And though their sentiment are extremely valid, Kavita posed an interesting counter-argument in the form of an annotation, stating, “*These are great points! How far do we go however? Do we do the simple "other" which I see in most options for gender choices, or do we be more specific?*”. It is an excellent question to ponder over... because, truly, is there a limit? How binary limitations poses a difficult system in collecting data. I recall during my time at Beechwood, it was difficult for me to choose either/or response in the given Kobotoolbox forum as many of my grave memorials would fall into a liminal state of sorts. In fact I had argued in one of my journal logs that the DEBS system seemingly valued efficiency over traditional ‘slow archaeology’ (a term which Graham has made it very clear he is not a fan of) methodology - forcing archaeologists to be pulled into a tug of war between the two.

There must be an increase in choice, there is no doubt about... however, Kavita’s words also ring true - *where does it stop?*

Previous Feedback

Now most of the work I have done for this Module, I have done at my own pace - as a result, I have utilized emails, the discord questions of my peers, and the Hypothesis annotations as a method of incorporating the ideas and ‘feedback’ of others. Now, the implications of such a choice have been dire, and it’s certainly something I would not do again in the next Module. Though I was presented with scheduling flexibility, and a ‘take-it-at-your-own-pace’ scenario... A lack of structure also provided a lack of **support** - something which is a huge disadvantage, especially in a course where everything is new. Overzealousness gets the better of all of us, and it is no different here. However, despite that... I do believe that working in such a manner allowed for a more organic approach to the course material - as aforementioned, there are ‘wins’ even in our ‘fails’. By engaging in the material in such a way, I was forced to knock around my own mind looking for answers and subsequently stay on the goal **until** I came to a breakthrough. The best example of this I can give is the Kobotoolbox forum. Though I had logged in the work of Week 5, it took me a while for it to be as polished as it was. The goal of the Kobotoolbox database was for us to create our own questions in an XLS forum on the Kobotoolbox site. Now, it was extremely difficult picking and choosing good questions - and perhaps such a process would’ve been much easier had I asked for help beforehand - however going through the discord and readings, I had attempted to come up with my own questions - based on annotations from peers,

³ Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren Klein, What Gets Counted Counts.” (2020). In Data Feminism

personal knowledge, and the readings/'podcasts' present. Below, I have linked my Kobotoolbox XLS sheet for you to view.

<https://kf.kobotoolbox.org/#/forms/aKAecgQaCjyiaCw4FUu5sJ>

However, despite that, the majority of my feedback has been in the form of questions via e-mails. The most significant piece of feedback was in regard to questions I had asked Kavita regarding ways to improve the work for Consolidation II. Some of the more prominent advice she had given me was to focus on 1-2 activities that were worked on throughout the Module II and I believe (*hopefully*) that such advice has been reflected thoroughly in this Consolidation.

Changes I'm making moving forward..

As always there is room to improve!!

The most important change would be reverting back to the fixed time-schedule. Though it was flexible in the terms of time, I would've much preferred weekly feedback, rather than I find the initiative to e-mail or chat on the discord page.