

Temporal vagueness within historical datasets

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey for my master thesis at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. It concerns temporal vagueness within historical datasets.

If you choose to participate in this survey, all of your responses will be treated anonymously, i.e., none of the responses will be connected to identifying information. If you have any doubts or questions, feel free to contact me: Fabian Witeczek, f.m.witeczek@student.vu.nl

In the next sections, you will find an introduction to the topic, followed by 3 blocks of questions. This survey takes around 10 minutes to complete.

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This entry is taken from the Europeana dataset and is about a pocketwatch created in "ca. 1690" by the British watchmaker Francis Stamper, where the media URL leads to an image of the watch.

Vague date values like the above "ca. 1690" are problematic because they are not precise. "ca." indicates that the watch was most likely created in 1690 but it could have been another year as well. Furthermore, the degree of deviation is unknown since different historians may have different definitions of "ca.": some may interpret it as a deviation of +/- 5 years, others as a deviation of +/- 15 years.

With my research, I want to solve this problem and enable historians to be on the same page when creating or analyzing such vague statements in the context of dates. I will extend the existing Linked Open Data ontology "LODE" which represents historical time(see:

https://vocabs.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/date_entities/en/). I will create a new data model that is capable of representing different types of temporal vagueness or rather vague dates.

With this survey I want to find out how domain experts typically deal with dates and occurrences of vagueness within them in everyday work and where the main difficulties and problems lie when doing so. Based on this feedback I will prioritize the functionalities that should be implemented.

Thank you for the feedback in advance!

Q1: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event(which is a point in time) lies between two dates(in other words: within a timespan).

An event/thing may be virtually anything that a data record has been created for. This applies to all subsequent questions as well. In the introductory example this would be the creation of the watch.

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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☒ inefficient
- ☐ time-consuming
- ☐ prone to error
- ☒ resulting in inaccurate results
- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
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Q2: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event is completely vague(meaning it does not indicate a date) or is specifying a date(even if it is vague).

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Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

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Q10: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated after a specific year that I specify.
For example: After 1850

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Q11: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated around a specific year that I specify.

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For example: 1880/1881

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Last question: Beyond the questions asked(Q1-Q15), what are some other struggles/problems you encounter when dealing with vague dates in the context of historical data? Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!

Providing (sometimes very wide or very vague) date ranges for purposes of search/indexing/sorting/classification, but avoiding the appearance of spurious exactitude for the reader.

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In the next sections, you will find an introduction to the topic, followed by 3 blocks of questions. This survey takes around 10 minutes to complete.

When working with datasets that contain historical data, date values like "ca. 1820" or "1880?" are not uncommon. Here is an example that shows how such entries typically look like:

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This entry is taken from the Europeana dataset and is about a pocketwatch created in "ca. 1690" by the British watchmaker Francis Stamper, where the media URL leads to an image of the watch. Vague date values like the above "ca. 1690" are problematic because they are not precise. "ca." indicates that the watch was most likely created in 1690 but it could have been another year as well. Furthermore, the degree of deviation is unknown since different historians may have different definitions of "ca.": some may interpret it as a deviation of +/- 5 years, others as a deviation of +/- 15 years.

With my research, I want to solve this problem and enable historians to be on the same page when creating or analyzing such vague statements in the context of dates. I will extend the existing Linked Open Data ontology "LODE" which represents historical time(see: https://vocabs.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/date_entities/en/). I will create a new data model that is capable of representing different types of temporal vagueness or rather vague dates.

With this survey I want to find out how domain experts typically deal with dates and occurrences of vagueness within them in everyday work and where the main difficulties and problems lie when doing so. Based on this feedback I will prioritize the functionalities that should be implemented.

Thank you for the feedback in advance!

Q1: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event(which is a point in time) lies between two dates(in other words: within a timespan).

An event/thing may be virtually anything that a data record has been created for. This applies to all subsequent questions as well. In the introductory example this would be the creation of the watch.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
- ☐ time-consuming
- ☒ prone to error
- ☒ resulting in inaccurate results
- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q2: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event is completely vague(meaning it does not indicate a date) or is specifying a date(even if it is vague).

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Q6: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is one of two date options(e.g. 1880/1881).

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Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

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Q10: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated after a specific year that I specify.
For example: After 1850

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For example: ca. 1800

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Q12: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated as one of two years that I specify.
For example: 1880/1881

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Last question: Beyond the questions asked(Q1-Q15), what are some other struggles/problems you encounter when dealing with vague dates in the context of historical data? Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!

I have also found cases where it says "Published before 1700" or similar.

Google

Formulare

Temporal vagueness within historical datasets

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Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

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Vague date values like the above "ca. 1690" are problematic because they are not precise. "ca." indicates that the watch was most likely created in 1690 but it could have been another year as well. Furthermore, the degree of deviation is unknown since different historians may have different definitions of "ca.": some may interpret it as a deviation of +/- 5 years, others as a deviation of +/- 15 years.

With my research, I want to solve this problem and enable historians to be on the same page when creating or analyzing such vague statements in the context of dates. I will extend the existing Linked Open Data ontology "LODE" which represents historical time(see:

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Thank you for the feedback in advance!

Q1: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event(which is a point in time) lies between two dates(in other words: within a timespan).

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In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
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- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
- ☒ time-consuming
- ☐ prone to error
- ☐ resulting in inaccurate results
- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
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Q2: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event is completely vague(meaning it does not indicate a date) or is specifying a date(even if it is vague).

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- ☐ Strongly disagree
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In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q6: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is one of two date options(e.g. 1880/1881).

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q7: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely* but lie within a timespan that I specify.

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Q8: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely with complete vagueness(e.g. "?" as a date).

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Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

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Q10: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated after a specific year that I specify.
For example: After 1850

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q11: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated around a specific year that I specify.

For example: ca. 1800

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Q12: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated as one of two years that I specify.
For example: 1880/1881

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Q8: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely with complete vagueness(e.g. "?" as a date).

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Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q11: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated around a specific year that I specify.

For example: ca. 1800

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At least in the archaeology of Southern Pampean Hills (Córdoba, Argentina) there is not a consensus about periods that summarize the history of prehispanic populations. The result is a large list of different periods or/and temporal categories produced by many archaeologist, in consequence is confusing understand the local archaeological past, because two different periods can alude to the same event.

Dieser Inhalt wurde nicht von Google erstellt und wird von Google auch nicht unterstützt.

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Vague date values like the above "ca. 1690" are problematic because they are not precise. "ca." indicates that the watch was most likely created in 1690 but it could have been another year as well. Furthermore, the degree of deviation is unknown since different historians may have different definitions of "ca.": some may interpret it as a deviation of +/- 5 years, others as a deviation of +/- 15 years.

With my research, I want to solve this problem and enable historians to be on the same page when creating or analyzing such vague statements in the context of dates. I will extend the existing Linked Open Data ontology "LODE" which represents historical time(see:

https://vocabs.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/date_entities/en/). I will create a new data model that is capable of representing different types of temporal vagueness or rather vague dates.

With this survey I want to find out how domain experts typically deal with dates and occurrences of vagueness within them in everyday work and where the main difficulties and problems lie when doing so. Based on this feedback I will prioritize the functionalities that should be implemented.

Thank you for the feedback in advance!

Q1: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event(which is a point in time) lies between two dates(in other words: within a timespan).

An event/thing may be virtually anything that a data record has been created for. This applies to all subsequent questions as well. In the introductory example this would be the creation of the watch.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☒ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
- ☒ time-consuming
- ☐ prone to error
- ☐ resulting in inaccurate results
- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q2: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event is completely vague(meaning it does not indicate a date) or is specifying a date(even if it is vague).

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
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- ☐ Strongly agree

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Q3: I would like to know whether the date (typically a point in time) for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is before a certain date.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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- ☒ resulting in inaccurate results
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- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
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Q4: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is after a certain date.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
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- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
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Q5: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is provided with a "circa" statement.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q6: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is one of two date options(e.g. 1880/1881).

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☒ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
- ☒ time-consuming
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Q7: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely* but lie within a timespan that I specify.

* vaguely in this context means: the event/artifact is not dated clearly(e.g. "ca. 1880-1882" in this case). In all following questions it is assumed that the events/artifacts do not have a clear date.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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Q8: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely with complete vagueness(e.g. "?" as a date).

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
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- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
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- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q10: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated after a specific year that I specify.
For example: After 1850

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Agree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
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- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q11: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated around a specific year that I specify.

For example: ca. 1800

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☒ Agree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

- ☐ inefficient
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- ☒ resulting in inaccurate results
- ☒ requiring technical work-arounds
- ☐ requiring misuse of one or more systems
- ☐ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
- ☐ straightforward

Q12: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated as one of two years that I specify.
For example: 1880/1881

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☒ Neither agree or disagree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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Q13: Given a vague date like "ca. 1830" I am wondering: what deviation (from the year 1830) was known to the creator of the record?

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q14: Given a vague date like "ca. 1830" I am wondering: how high is the confidence that the specified year is correct(and does NOT deviate)?

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
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Q15: Given two date options like "1880/1881" I am wondering: which year is more probable to be the correct one and how high is this probability?

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Last question: Beyond the questions asked(Q1-Q15), what are some other struggles/problems you encounter when dealing with vague dates in the context of historical data? Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!

Different types of dates other than date ranges

Google

Formulare

Temporal vagueness within historical datasets

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey for my master thesis at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. It concerns temporal vagueness within historical datasets.

If you choose to participate in this survey, all of your responses will be treated anonymously, i.e., none of the responses will be connected to identifying information. If you have any doubts or questions, feel free to contact me: Fabian Witeczek, f.m.witeczek@student.vu.nl

In the next sections, you will find an introduction to the topic, followed by 3 blocks of questions. This survey takes around 10 minutes to complete.

When working with datasets that contain historical data, date values like "ca. 1820" or "1880?" are not uncommon. Here is an example that shows how such entries typically look like:

title: Watch and pair case
creator: Francis Stamper
mediaURL: <url to image>
date: ca. 1690

This entry is taken from the Europeana dataset and is about a pocketwatch created in "ca. 1690" by the British watchmaker Francis Stamper, where the media URL leads to an image of the watch.

Vague date values like the above "ca. 1690" are problematic because they are not precise. "ca." indicates that the watch was most likely created in 1690 but it could have been another year as well. Furthermore, the degree of deviation is unknown since different historians may have different definitions of "ca.": some may interpret it as a deviation of +/- 5 years, others as a deviation of +/- 15 years.

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Q1: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of a certain artifact/event(which is a point in time) lies between two dates(in other words: within a timespan).

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Q6: I would like to know whether the date for the creation/happening of an artifact/event is one of two date options(e.g. 1880/1881).

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
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Q7: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely* but lie within a timespan that I specify.

* vaguely in this context means: the event/artifact is not dated clearly(e.g. "ca. 1880-1882" in this case). In all following questions it is assumed that the events/artifacts do not have a clear date.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q8: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely with complete vagueness(e.g. "?" as a date).

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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- ☒ I am never/very rarely confronted with this question
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Q9: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated vaguely before a certain year that I specify.

For example: Before 1700.

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☒ Neither agree or disagree
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Q10: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated after a specific year that I specify.
For example: After 1850

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
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When confronted with this problem, finding a solution for it is ... (multiple answers are possible) *

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Q11: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated around a specific year that I specify.

For example: ca. 1800

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
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Q12: I would like to know which events/artifacts are dated as one of two years that I specify.
For example: 1880/1881

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Q13: Given a vague date like "ca. 1830" I am wondering: what deviation (from the year 1830) was known to the creator of the record?

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q14: Given a vague date like "ca. 1830" I am wondering: how high is the confidence that the specified year is correct(and does NOT deviate)?

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Q15: Given two date options like "1880/1881" I am wondering: which year is more probable to be the correct one and how high is this probability?

In my daily work, I am often confronted with this problem. *

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Google

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