

# CHNT 31 – Conference on Cultural Heritage and New Technologies

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Call for papers: <https://chnt.at/call-for-papers-chnt31/#toggle-id-14>

## Session 9: Community Engagement in Archaeology: Balancing Participation and Data Quality

In archaeological research and museum practice, public participation has long played an important role. In recent years, however, Citizen Science—the active involvement of interested citizens in scientific processes—has gained significant momentum. Digital technologies increasingly enable large-scale data collection in collaboration with Citizen Scientists, opening up new research opportunities while also introducing new methodological challenges.

A central tension emerges between two key objectives: on the one hand, participation formats should be as accessible, intuitive, and low-threshold as possible; on the other hand, the collected data must meet high standards of quality, transparency, and long-term usability. Developing robust strategies for data acquisition, validation, and management therefore becomes a crucial factor for the success of community engagement projects.

This challenge is particularly evident in projects that work with large volumes of data and receive numerous contributions from the public. In such cases, providing continuous individual guidance and feedback to Citizen Scientists can quickly exceed available organizational and personnel resources. This session invites contributions that critically engage with these processes through concrete case studies.

We seek presentations of archaeological or museum-based community participation projects that employ digital tools for data collection, management, or analysis. Contributions are encouraged to address not only successful approaches but also obstacles, complications, and lessons learned during project development and implementation.

A further focus of the session is the practical application of the ten principles of Citizen Science defined by the European Citizen Science Association. To what extent can these principles be implemented in real-world projects? Where do they reach their limits, and which adaptations prove necessary in everyday practice?

The session aims to foster an open exchange of practical experiences, highlight shared challenges, and discuss concrete solution strategies for working with Citizen Scientists in archaeological data collection.

**Keywords:** citizen science, community engagement, digital heritage, data quality and validation, data acquisition

## **Session board**

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### **Motivation:**

The questions addressed in this session and the topics proposed for discussion emerge directly from our own project work and practical experience in collaborating with citizen scientists. In line with the motto of CHNT31, we aim to “get our hands dirty” by openly addressing not only successful approaches, but also the challenges, limitations, and structural problems that arise in community engagement projects.

Rather than focusing solely on best-practice examples, this session explicitly encourages critical reflection on obstacles, unintended effects, and missed opportunities, as well as on strategies that proved ineffective or required revision. By sharing these experiences, we seek to contribute to a more realistic and practice-oriented discourse on community participation in archaeological and heritage contexts.

### **Target Audience:**

This session is aimed at practitioners and researchers who have experience working with citizen scientists in the context of data collection, documentation, and database development. It addresses individuals involved in the design, implementation, or evaluation of participatory projects that rely on public contributions to archaeological or heritage-related datasets.

We particularly welcome submissions from a broad range of fields, including digital archaeology and heritage projects, museums, monument preservation, and academic research. The session is intended for those interested in critically reflecting on participatory data workflows, quality assurance strategies, and the practical implications of scaling Citizen Science initiatives.