

A 4-Step 'archaeological' process moving between breadth and depth

Step 1: Aerial survey

Overview of archived qualitative studies with digitised data. Attached meta data used to assess fit with researcher's aims.

Use meta data to identify relevant studies and select data for a new data assemblage on which next steps are performed.



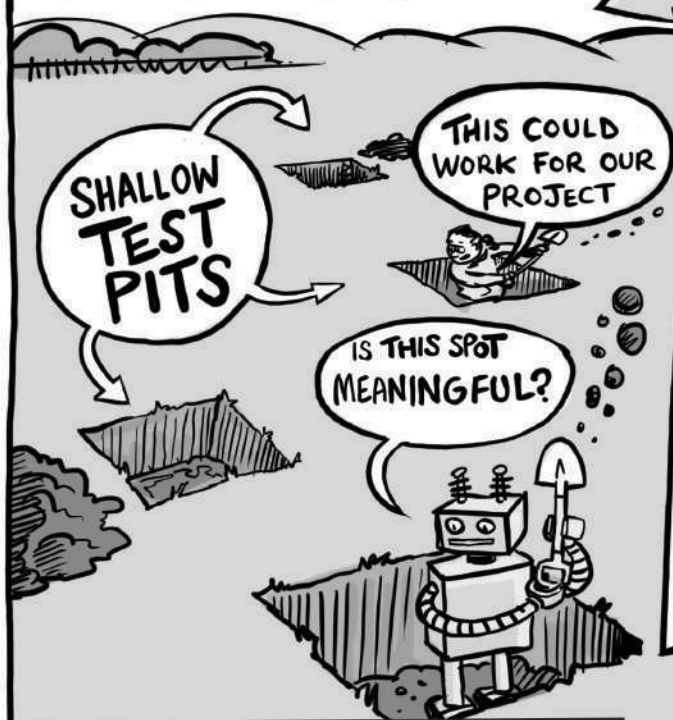
Step 2: Geophysical survey

Preliminary analysis of the merged data sets from step 1. Detailed surface mapping using so-called 'text-mining'.

Conduct recursive computer analysis of frequency, 'keyness' and co-locations of words, excluding 'stop words' and working towards a surface map suggesting potentially themes.



Step 3: Test pit sampling



Using keyword analysis of step 2, choose a basis for selecting a sample for further examination.

Read an appropriate sample of short extracts to see if they indicate anything worthy of further investigation. If not, return to step 2, add to excluded words, identify an alternative starting point.

Step 4: Deep excavation



Informed by stage 3, selection of appropriate sub-sample for in-depth analysis using conventional qualitative methods.

Detailed reading of all materials associated with selected case(s). Coding and analysis techniques appropriate to the favoured style of qualitative analysis. Findings may reveal other issues for exploration, inviting return to earlier steps, in an iterative process.