

Real-time posting of fieldwork information through social media: a case of a geoarchaeological survey in Oman

Yasuhisa Kondo^{1*}, Atsushi Noguchi², MIKI, Takehiro³, Takashi Oguchi⁴

¹Dept. Comp. Sci., Tokyo Institute of Technology, ²Archaeological Research Unit, Meiji Univ., ³Dept. Archaeology, Univ. Tokyo, ⁴CSIS, Univ. Tokyo

Fieldwork is a research activity carried out in a place away from researcher's office. It is also a travel with an extraordinary experience. In fieldwork, all objects and events—those related to not only data collection, but also meals, accommodation, landscape and people—are potentially subjects of documentation. It is an advantage of social media that a reporter can effectively send information to those whom are interested in it. Recent global popularization of the Internet has made it possible to post entries in real-time or semi-real-time (within a day) from anywhere in the world, including secluded areas. Social media are now the best way to broadcast everyday fieldwork experiences.

This paper reports a case of news posting using social media for a geoarchaeological survey project in Oman in the Arabian Peninsula from December 2012 to March 2013. All project members were users of Twitter and/or Facebook and were able to access the Internet unlimitedly in the guesthouse they stayed at. The members posted their experiences freely but in consideration of the conscience among scientists. The entries are classified into three categories: The most frequently posted topics were associated with living experiences such as foods, scenes, animals, and interaction with people. The second came the news related to logistics, including shopping and arrival/departure of team members. The third was the information on the study area and scientific discoveries, although those were less frequently posted because of the confidentiality required for research and some security reasons. The amount of information included in these entries is comparable to that in the official field diaries. Social media will be all the more effective means of outreach if they are combined with official news releases.

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