

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Archaeologists use mobiles to submit evidence gathered on digs for new NVQ

For a profession associated with ancient artefacts, the ability to record evidence of discoveries and techniques used via mobile phones is a very welcome if rather incongruous aspect of assessment for students of the UK's first ever vocational archaeology qualification which is being launched by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

Axia Interactive Media has been working closely alongside the IFA in the development of their NVQ in Archaeology and will provide the e-learning technology which enables NVQ candidates to submit evidence of their work and skills developed and have this assessed online as part of an e-portfolio, prior to their qualifications being awarded.

The system is unusual in that it allows student archaeologists to submit their evidence as photos or video taken from digs or audio recordings via dicta-phone submitted by their supervisors as well as more traditional written accounts. For a field based profession such as archaeology, having this flexibility means that evidence is captured immediately at the scene of discovery, making the assessment process much faster and more engaging for both students and assessors.

"We are very pleased to have been given the opportunity to work together with the IFA in launching what is a unique qualification. Interest in archaeology is growing very fast in the UK particularly and we very excited at the prospect of what has been a predominantly graduate entry profession becoming more accessible to people from all walks of life, whether they are young people looking for a vocational qualification or hobbyists looking to have their practical experience professionally accredited" says Chris Peat, Director of Business Strategy at Axia Interactive Media.

Axia Interactive Media have already been working with the IFA for a number of years as the provider of the organisation's on-line portfolio which enables members to capture evidence of their continuous professional development,

CPD. This system enables IFA members to demonstrate their competence to employers working within an extremely fast growing profession in the UK.

"Some of our members are carrying out archaeology in the field and the opportunity to immediately record the skills they are gaining or developing when actually working in the field is one of the great benefits of using Axia's technology. It means that people who are working in remote locations can record their discoveries on video camera or even using a mobile phone, and then present this as evidence for the new qualification and of their commitment to developing their own professional practice" says Kenneth Aitchison, Head of Professional Development at the IFA.

Commenting on behalf of the South Leeds Archaeology Group, Paul Boothroyd says *"Outside the professional, commercial archaeology units there has always been a large body of highly skilled and proficient amateurs who have often struggled to gain recognition for their work and skills. For these people the academic route to qualifications is often not the most appropriate, or even possible. The development of a vocational NVQ in archaeology will go a long way to addressing this problem. The ability to use modern multimedia technologies, such as the online system developed by Axia, to both easily record and submit evidence towards a recognized qualification will, I am certain, appeal to a large number of members of local archaeological societies and groups."* He concludes, *"It must be remembered that archaeology has often adopted the use of new, cutting edge technology to expand its boundaries – radiocarbon and other scientific methods of dating come to mind – so it is perhaps not surprising that this discipline, which looks at the past, should utilize multimedia techniques and the internet to validate such a meaningful and welcome qualification."*



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About Axia Interactive Media

Axia Interactive Media specialise in providing e-learning and online CPD assessment systems to enable both public and private sector organisations to achieve best practice. The company has developed a single technology platform, Now.Net, which can be used for the following applications: provision of e-learning (information and guidance services), online CPD administration with e-portfolio facilities and online assessment. Now.Net is the online assessment system supporting the administration and assessment of Care NVQs in the UK.

Axia was formed in 1997 and has customers around the world including Italy, Canada and South Africa. The company is committed to enabling both developed and developing countries to improve the standards of professionals working across all sectors of industry through the provision of cost effective yet highly rigorous skills and capability assessments. For more information on Axia please visit www.axiainteractive.net

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