



**SOCIETY *for*
HISTORICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY**

June 2, 2005

Dr. John Yellen
Director for Archaeology, Archaeometry, and Systematic Collections
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Blvd, Rm 995
Arlington VA 22330

Re: The Promise and Challenge of Archaeological Data Integration

Dear Dr. Yellen,

On behalf of the Society for Historical Archaeology, I am writing in strong and enthusiastic support of the report, "The Promise and Challenge of Archaeological Data Integration," which was produced as part of an NSF-sponsored workshop focused on the development of a long range vision for a cyberinfrastructure for archaeology.

As I am sure you know, the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) is an international organization of nearly 2,500 members interested in the archaeology of the modern world (c. 1500 AD to the present). SHA is strongly committed to the preservation and sharing of archaeological data, and there can be no doubt that digital technology has an extraordinary but as yet unrealized potential for helping archaeologists achieve this goal. Indeed, vast amounts of irreplaceable archaeological data exist in universities, museums, and other institutions throughout the world, mostly in paper and film format. If archaeologists expect to use this evidence fully, digital technology will be essential. Since most if not all of these data were collected at public expense, archaeologists have an important obligation to insure its preservation, accessibility, and use. A cyberinfrastructure for archaeology offers that opportunity.

SHA recognizes that a cyberinfrastructure will not be developed overnight, and that it will require commitment and cooperation from a large number of parties. However, we believe it is time to begin that process in earnest, and we applaud Dr. Keith Kintigh and his colleagues for including SHA in their deliberations. The report outlines a vision that represents an excellent start, and SHA encourages the National Science Foundation to support this important and overdue initiative. Indeed, SHA has promised Dr. Kintigh and his colleagues our Society's ongoing support in this endeavor.

We further urge the National Science Foundation to fund initiatives that will make this vision a reality. SHA stands ready to participate in the process as we are convinced this project will have lasting and important effects for our membership and the interests they represent.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of this effort.

Sincerely,

Judith Bense, Ph.D.
President

cc: Mark Weiss, National Science Foundation
Keith Kintigh, Arizona State University
Dean Snow, Pennsylvania State University