

## **Exercise 9: Using Databases Instructions**

Digital and online databases are becoming increasingly more popular in archaeological research. They allow researchers to study materials from a distance, compare their artifact assemblages to others in far-away places, and assess the utility of collections before visiting them to conduct research. They also open archaeology to being a better scientific field. Science is based on the testing and retesting of hypotheses. The more accessible results and data are, the more people that can conduct research on a topic. This provides the closest thing to complete objectivity and offers unlimited opportunities to improve our knowledge of the past.

In this lab you will be working with the Museum of Anthropology's online database (<http://cairo.deacnet.wfu.edu>) to answer several questions about North American archaeology. Answer the following questions in complete sentences (unless indicated otherwise) in a separate Word document and save it on your computer with your name in the file name. Then, upload your completed exercise to the Digital Dropbox on the Blackboard page when you are finished (Tools > Digital Dropbox > Add File). Just upload the file. **DO NOT SEND IT TO ME.**

1. We will start with some simple exercises to get you acquainted with the search tools on the website. Click on the "Search" link and then on the "Advanced Search" link on the upper right. You will see several categories with which you can conduct searches.
  - a. Type "American" into the culture box. How many artifacts are there that fit that description?
  - b. With what culture are these artifacts associated?
  - c. Return to the Advanced Search page. Search for artifacts from the Southeast. In what field would you search? How many artifacts fit that description?
  - d. If you wanted to search for Native American artifacts from the Southeast, what terms would you use and in what fields would you enter them? Conduct this search, how many artifacts fit your description? What types of artifacts are on the first page?
  - e. If you wanted to find arrow points from the Southeast, what terms would you use and in what fields would you enter them? Conduct this search, how many artifacts fit the description?

2. You have worked with North American projectile points already this semester. Let's look at them a little more and see what we can learn about the past from the artifacts at the Museum
  - a. Do a search for Paleo-indian artifacts. How many did you find?
  - b. Do a search for Archaic artifacts. How many did you find?
  - c. Which period is older? Explain how you came to this answer.
  - d. Now scroll through the Archaic artifacts. What types of artifacts are there?
  - e. What do the Archaic artifacts tell us about how people were living during this period?
  - f. Can we compare and contrast Archaic life to Paleo-indian life based on the artifacts found here?
3. Now let's focus on the Archaic period. In the advanced search, look for Archaic artifacts from different regions of North America
  - a. Where would you expect most of the artifacts in the museum to come from? Why?
  - b. Where do most of the artifacts come from?
  - c. Let's compare the Southwest and Southeast. What similarities and differences do you notice in the artifacts from these areas? Explain why you think these similarities and differences exist.
  - d. What can these similarities and differences tell us about the cultures in these two regions?
4. Search for Woodland artifacts now.
  - a. What is similar about these artifacts to the Paleo-indian and Archaic artifacts?
  - b. What accounts for the similarities?

- c. What is different?
  - d. What accounts for these differences?
5. Conduct a search for artifacts from the Yupik culture.
- a. Without looking at the artifact details, what type of environment do you think the Yupik people live in? Be specific. What artifacts did you use to determine this?
  - b. Based on their artifacts, what type of subsistence do you think the Yupik practice? Explain your answer.
  - c. Specifically, what types of foods do they eat? What artifacts helped you answer this?
  - d. Based on the Yupik artifacts in the museum, what type of social organization do you think the Yupik people have? Why?
6. Now we will branch out beyond North America. You are conducting a study of axe technology around the world.
- a. How many axes does the museum have?
  - b. What kind of materials are they made from?
  - c. What are some of the various functions of the axes?
  - d. Are there any regional patterns in the materials used (i.e. do certain areas of the world use particular materials)?
  - e. What are the causes of the patterns you found?