

## Transforming the Archaeological Record Into a Digital Playground: a Methodological Analysis of The Living Hill Project

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Dr. Mariotti's paper, "Transforming the Archaeological Record Into a Digital Playground: a Methodological Analysis of The Living Hill Project," presents a new digital project that conveys the archaeological site of Poggio Imperiale in the form of a newly designed video game.

There are several important strengths that that should be noted.

- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration** - Rather than an attempt by archaeologists to develop a video game, or an attempt by a video game company to portray archaeology, this project offers valuable insights because it highlights true collaboration between academic archaeologists, cultural heritage professionals, and individuals in the video game industry.
- **Archaeologically-precise Reconstructions** – The virtual environment provided in the game is, more than most archaeologically-based video games, developed from photogrammetric models of actual archaeological remains. These are much closer to archaeological recreations than artists' interpretations, and that is commendable.
- **Detailed Description & Data** – I appreciate the level of detail the author provides for how the game was created, which has the potential to be useful for others wanting to attempt something similar. At the same time, the author also provides data-based feedback from users, which provides useful information for how the game was received.

Despite these merits, there are several things that Dr. Mariotti may want to address prior to final publication.

- **English Usage** – Overall the paper is clear and comprehensible; however, there are several small errors that could be addressed (e.g., "last decades" in line 17, "viewing commercial products as inferior knowledge" in lines 27-28). These aren't grammatically wrong, but they sound a little awkward in English (I think I'd go with something like "In recent decades..." or "viewing commercial products as providing unreliable information..."). Again, this doesn't hinder overall understanding, but it is worth getting a native English speaker to check the article for instances like this.
- **Highlight Your Question** – The Introduction offers a compelling overview of the site and the digital project, but it's not quite clear what question the author is going to answer in the remainder of the article. Is this about how to build video games based on archaeological excavations? Is it about understanding feedback from users of the video game? Is it a preliminary analysis that uses data from the open-air museum to provide guidelines for a video game? There are lots of interesting directions it could go, but by the end of the intro, it would be useful to have the main question presented clearly to the reader.
- **Literature Review (Contextualize within Similar Games)** – The author notes that "several video games dedicated to archaeological and cultural content have been developed in Italy recently" in lines 205-206. It would be great to hear a little bit about these and know how this game builds off those predecessors and how (and why) it moves in new directions as well.

- Discussion – How do the results from your survey compare to feedback that other games have received? Did the preliminary results of the survey for this game provide similar trends to other similar games? Or did it diverge from feedback gathered from other similar games?
- Future Directions – In the conclusion, it would be useful to add a couple sentences about the next steps for The Living Hill project. Now that you have round 1 of feedback, where do you go from here?

Overall, this article provides a valuable contribution to the disciplines of archaeology, cultural heritage, and education. It's particularly good at describing the development process and the game itself. The detail included regarding the development of the game and the preliminary results of the survey are both highly useful for scholars interested in conveying complex archaeological information to a broad and varied popular audience. The article, however, could use a little work on framing, especially with how the game and survey results compare to similar attempts to portray archaeology/archaeological sites through video games. As a result, I recommend that the author revise the article to further build this framework, and then resubmit the article for publication.