IDENTIFYING RESEARCH METHODS FOR THE USE AND PRODUCTION OF LINKED ANCIENT WORLD DATA
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A recent survey of Ancient World researchers sought to identify research methods associated with the use and production of digital resources in general and with Linked Data in particular. Results are suggestive of a possible conflict between producer aims and user needs.

AIMS
This work forms part of an associated PhD project to investigate how Linked Data might best be integrated with existing research methods for studying the Ancient World. I aim to discover which methods Ancient World researchers already associate with their use of digital tools and resources and which might particularly relate to Linked Data. From my findings, I will produce recommendations for how Linked Data resources might be made more useful and usable for Ancient World researchers.

METHODOLOGY
I chose to use a survey as this would provide a breadth of views from a relatively large number of participants, along with more detailed responses to open-ended questions.

Rather than restrict it to researchers who had already knowingly used Linked Data tools or resources, I opened it out to all Ancient World researchers who use digital tools or resources more generally. In this way, I targeted both potential and actual Linked Data users, as well as researchers who may have used Linked Data without realising.

To ensure consistent classification of research methods identified during the survey, I incorporated the Taxonomy for Digital Research Activities in the Humanities (TaDiRAH, http://tadirah.dariah.eu/) - an ontology describing research methods, techniques and information resources.

The survey took place in spring 2018 and will be followed by interviews with a sample of participants to explore their responses in more depth.

DEMOGRAPHICS
When the survey closed in May 2018, it had received 212 responses from Ancient World researchers in 32 countries, with a broad spread of age ranges and good gender balance.

INITIAL FINDINGS
While there were some similarities, there were also clear differences between methods participants associated with general digital tool/resource use, Linked Data use, and Linked Data production.

• The above results potentially indicate a disconnect between the aims of Linked Data producers and the needs of their users
• However, this could also suggest that users and producers simply view the same resource in different ways; participants may be using resources in ways other than the producers originally intended
• Based on these findings, I have identified Annotating, Data Recognition, Discovering, Gathering and Visualization as research methods particularly amenable to Linked Data use

NEXT STEPS
Interviews with a sample of survey participants are currently ongoing and due to be completed by the end of January 2019. The eventual aim of this project is to produce a series of recommendations for how Linked Data resources can be made more useful and usable by Ancient World researchers with varying levels of technical skill and experience.