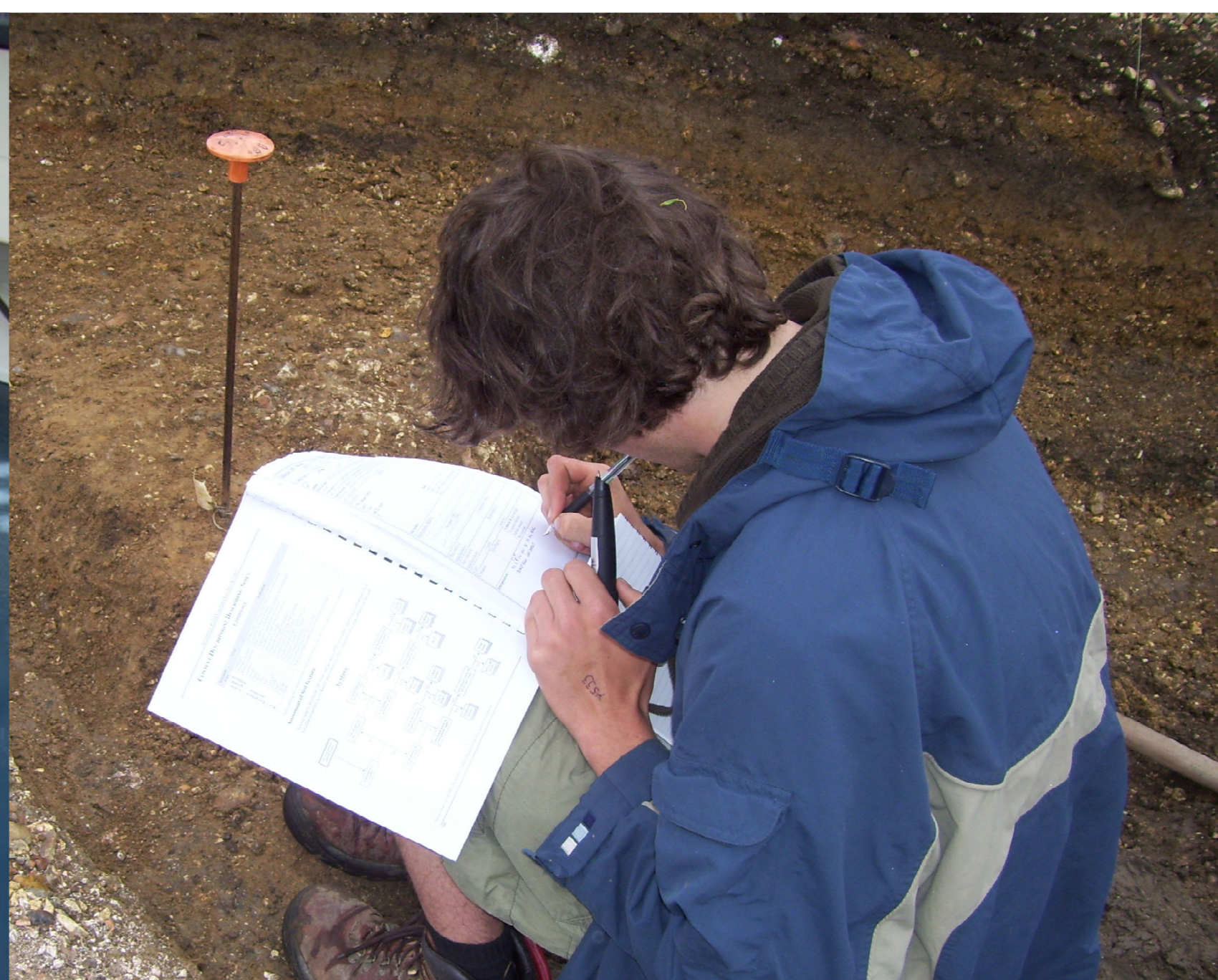




Virtual Research Environment for Archaeology (VERA)

Introduction

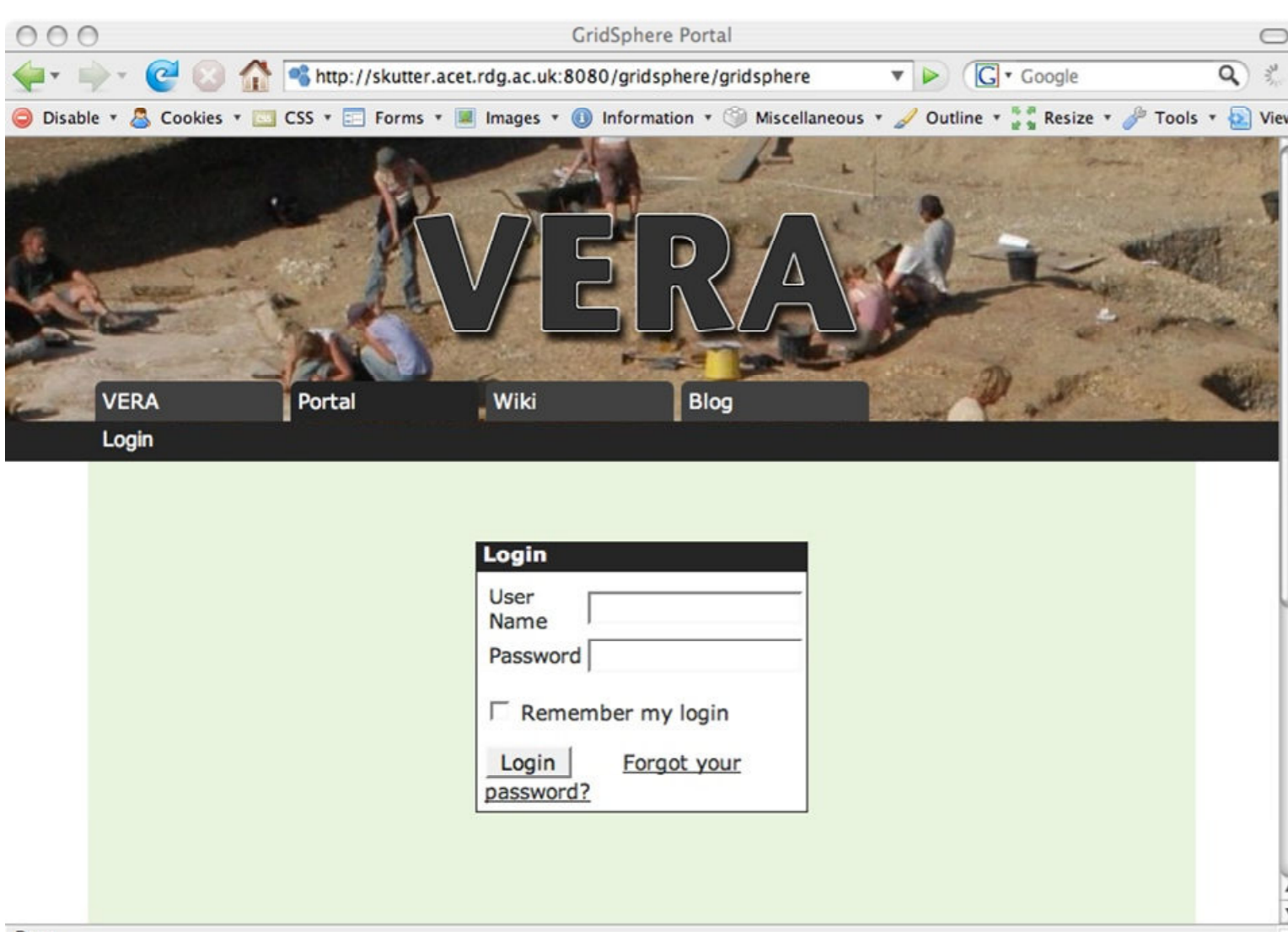
The VERA project aims to provide archaeologists with a means to share their research and results before, during and after an excavation. VERA will create advanced computer-based tools for data acquisition and management, as well as producing a standards-compliant Web portal with integrated tool for the user community. The ultimate aim of the project is to develop a system that uses cutting edge technologies and ideas that can be used by everyone - even archaeologists still working in the dark ages!



Digital Devices in the (very muddy) Field

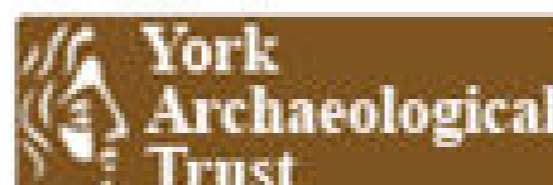
During the six-week excavation at Silchester over the summer of 2007, VERA successfully assessed the use of digital pens for data acquisition. The pens were used to fill out "context card", recording information about archaeological discoveries. Optical character recognition software converts the documents produced; these are checked for spelling and archaeological errors, before being imported VRE portal.

During the excavation VERA continued work testing wireless hand held computers for interacting with the VRE from within the actual dig itself. The latest devices to be assessed were Nokia N800 Internet Tablets, which are palm sized Linux-based wireless computers.



Portals

One of the first stages of the VERA project is porting the existing first-generation, JISC funded, PHP-based Virtual Research Environment (VRE) Portal to a standard portal framework using JSR 168 compliant portlets.



VERA is a collaborative project between the School of Systems Engineering and the Archaeology Department at the University of Reading, the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University College London and the York Archaeological Trust. The project is funded by JISC as part of phase 2 of the Virtual Research Environments programme.

Project Website: <http://vera.rdg.ac.uk/>