Oil & Gas IQ (IQPC) Oilfield Automation[1]
Houston, February 2005

Introduction

A rather low turn out (20 max) for this, the first US edition IQPC's oilfield automation conference made for an intimate atmosphere. The program was something of a mixed bag – while there were good company and service-side presentations, there were also a few 'off-topic' talks!

Oilfield automation is helping Oxy increase and maintain its production – and gives it the edge in its acquisition and divestment arbitrations. For SAIC, automation is under the broad heading of the 'Next Generation Oilfield' program – where it is used to relieve the industry's 'talent shortage'. Pavillion is applying its factory-based techniques to production systems, leveraging its mathematical 'objective function' techniques to optimize a variety of key performance indicators. Pioneer is connecting its SCADA systems to the internet to 'democratize' data access and roll in data analysis tools from multiple vendors. Baker Hughes has added a twist to the onshore operations center – by removing the need for massive client-owned infrastructure thanks to a bandwidth-enabled virtual data center. Other presentations ranged from satellite communications to a worldwide LNG joint venture between ConocoPhillips and Bechtel.

The oilfield automation arena is indeed a crossroads of many technologies and players. It will likely take a while before a production facility is managed in the same way as refinery or factory. But few would argue that this is the way things are going.

Highlights

Oxy's oilfield automation
Baker Hughes' virtual data center
SAIC's next generation oilfield
The oilfield as a 'factory'
ConocoPhillips/Bechtel LNG collaboration

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[1] A CD-ROM of the proceedings of the IQPC Oilfield Automation Conference can be obtained from the IQPC website.

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