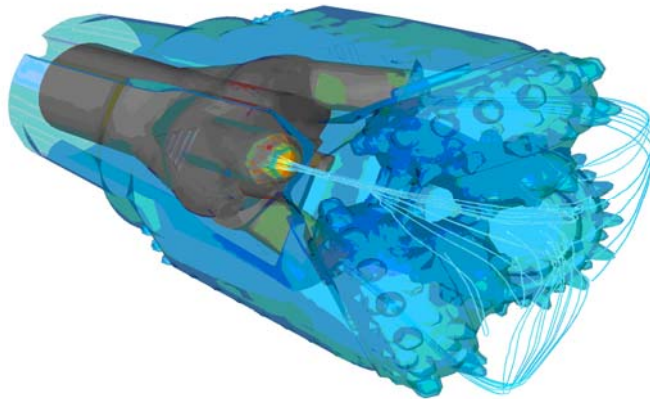


Society of Petroleum Engineers
Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition, September 2008
Denver Colorado



CFdesign model of mud flow in drilling bit¹.

The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) 2008 Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition (ATCE) had 9,800 attendees and a record 450 exhibiting companies. At the ‘unconventional resources’ session, Questar’s Chuck Stanley noted that ‘unconventionals are fast becoming conventional.’ This is at least true for tight gas, which, in the past decade, has come from nowhere to satisfy about half of the US’ consumers – an opportunity that was missed by the majors. The picture for shale oil is less exciting – Glen Vawter of the National Shale Oil Association was forecasting, for the USA, ‘a few hundred thousand barrels per day’ and this in 20 years time! Moreover, unconventionals are particularly price sensitive; Marshall Adkins of the Raymond James Energy Group noted ‘if the oil price doesn’t stay high, the situation will be a return to the 1980s.’ It should be noted that, at the time of the SPE, the oil price was around \$105/barrel, down from its \$145 July peak.

Three events at the ATCE underlined the growing interest in IT and information management from the engineering community. The SPE **IT Technical Section** meeting was an altogether more substantial affair than in past years – with two panels of industry luminaries debating IT integration and the ‘digital’ petroleum engineer. A session on ‘**data to decisions**’ included a compelling Baker Hughes presentation on the extension of measurement while drilling data acquisition techniques to high-end workovers. Intervera suggested that data quality profiling should be viewed as a kind of anti virus software – running continuously in the background and gate keeping new data as it arrives. Actenum’s presentation showed how scheduling software was used to optimize Saudi Aramco’s drilling program. USC’s Milad Ershagi provided a GIS *tour de force*, blending data from US public sources into a competition analysis system for the Gulf of Mexico. The ‘**digital collaboration**’ session included an illuminating update on Chevron’s Nigerian Agbami ‘I-Field.’ BP is extending the concept of the drilling ‘advanced collaboration environment’ at the Tangguh LNG project into the realm of ‘performance enhancement’, as opposed to previous work that focused on reducing the offshore headcount. Another Chevron presentation focused on ‘under rig floor logging,’ a critical-path approach to optimized development drilling.

Amongst the record number of exhibitors, we heard from Baker Hughes on ‘fast loop’ production optimization with Production Quest and Schlumberger, which is busy integrating ISS’ BabelFish SCADA data viewer with its new ‘Avocet’ production operations center. Finally, incoming 2009 SPE President, Shell’s Leo Roodhart offered his own IM/collaboration suggestion – an SPE ‘island’ in Second Life!

¹ Image courtesy Blue Ridge Numerics – www.cfdesign.com.

Highlights

[Unconventional Session](#)

[Data to Decisions Session](#)

[SPE IT Technical Section Meeting](#)

[Digital Collaboration Session](#)

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