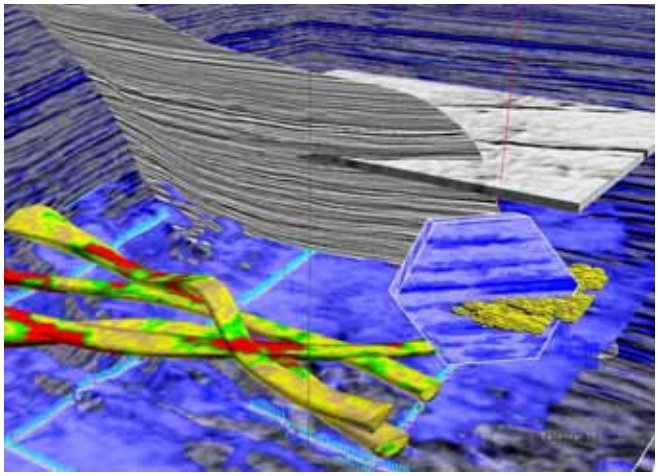
AAPG Annual Meeting and Exhibition
Dallas – April 2004



Earth Decision Science's GoCad[1]

The 2004 AAPG was moderately well attended (5000) but as ever, popular talks and the immense Dallas Convention Center meant that exhibit visitors seemed thin on the ground. A session on '**lessons learned** from failures' succeeded in providing entertaining accounts of past glories. But those who have truly failed are not ready to 'tell all'. The **big picture**, as determined by consultancies like Wood Mackenzie, Robertsons and IHS Energy is that we may really be seeing a move to **durably higher** oil prices. Industry has failed to replace consumption for some 20 years now and once profitable basins like the North Sea are now '**value destroyers**'. Hope and economic viability can still be found in the deep offshore.

Paradigm and CGG were noteworthy by their **absence** at the AAPG this year. But there were plenty of smaller software houses around to show their wares. Earth Decision Sciences appears to be turning GoCad into a fully featured interpretation and modeling environment and SMT is expanding its Windows-based Kingdom Suite to offer 'seismic to simulation' technology. The majors failed to generate much excitement. Landmark made heavy weather of selling its consultancy and outsourcing services while Schlumberger's cluster-based visualization lacked pizzazz.

We noted further developments from various universities in the field of laser mapping of **outcrop geology** – for integration within Virtual Reality environments. Applications for capturing awkward geo-data types like **cores and cuttings** from companies such as Core Laboratories, HRH Ltd., Cambrian and Pason show that these field-work derived applications have established themselves in their particular niches.

Looking forward we heard several companies describe emerging interpretation software that is developed, not with the ubiquitous OpenGL interface, but with Microsoft's **Direct-X**. Whatever the politics of this move, Direct-X may change the game in the near future as supercomputer graphics capability is available from PC-based graphics cards selling for a few hundred dollars.

There was some interesting research from the Kansas Geological Survey on the use of Semantic Web technologies to describe geological terms – notably formation names and chrono-stratigraphic units. Such '**ontologies**' are used to tie together maps from different areas.

[1] All images in this report are © and courtesy of the companies involved.

Highlights

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