

2006 SIS Global Forum
Paris, September 2006
Highlights

The Schlumberger Information Solutions (SIS) 2006 Forum was subtitled ‘breakthrough team performance’ but perhaps a better title would have been ‘The Petrel Show’. The plenary session covered ground that is familiar to readers of these reports. Industry is on a roll, but constrained by lack of drilling rigs and other resources. The National Oil Companies are on the up, while the Internationals are constrained by **lack of personnel**. Everyone is planning to hire. Saudi Aramco is planning to double its head count (to 9,000) by 2020 and Petrobras is looking to hire ‘300-400 people per year’¹. But where these new hires are to come from is a moot point, the universities are not producing these kinds of numbers. The most plausible solution to the people shortage, rather conveniently for SIS, is IT-led productivity enhancements. Hence the enthusiasm around **Petrel** which has built great momentum as a tool for rapid integration and interpretation of pretty well all geoscience and engineering data. The ‘fly’ in the Petrel ointment it is integration with other interpretation tools and, in particular, the problems engendered by its ‘flat file’ approach to data. Petrel files proliferate like Excel spreadsheets – making the data manager’s job hard. End users have developed various ways of working around these issues – and SIS has a roadmap out to 2008 which envisages a ‘DBX’ database for Petrel built on the Seabed data model.

Presentations from Exxon and Shell described how Petrel is being integrated into the E&P workflow – and how their data managers are working around the issues above. Herb Yuan described **Shell**’s long standing R&D relationship with SIS; leveraging the .NET Ocean environment. **Microsoft**’s Charles Johnson acknowledged that those looking for a fully supported 64 bit version of Windows (with debuggers etc.) will have to wait on Vista. Stephen Whitley (SIS) described the ‘tough decision’ that shifting the SIS desktop to .NET involved for SIS – traditionally a UNIX company. **SIS** president Olivier Le Peuch intimated that Avocet was to do for asset management what Petrel has already done for interpretation.

Two other themes from the conference are ‘openness’ and web services. **Openness** to Schlumberger means the Ocean API and the Seabed data model. But don’t imagine that SIS is going open source. The Ocean API is for the development of plug-ins to Petrel (and in the future Osprey, Merak, and Avocet) and the Seabed data model has been published as a textual description of the database, rather than a DDL. These caveats apart, we have it on good authority that third party developers who are using Ocean are impressed with its functionality. Likewise, the exposure of the Seabed intellectual property has raised some approving eyebrows in the industry. On the web services front, the situation is less clear. SIS’ Petrel, Ocean and Seabed flagships do not appear to expose much in the way of web services that could be leveraged by third parties. Indeed there is a natural tension in an SOA which could for instance, move control of the workflow from Schlumberger’s infrastructure to a client’s script. But, as Joe Perino said in his talk on open technology in the digital oilfield, ‘*SIS has embarked on a move toward SOA and will offer, for instance, versioning and results management as a service. SIS’s solutions embrace openness via Microsoft .NET, J2EE, OpenSpirit, Ocean, SOA, WITSML and ProdML. But it is up to operators to push us to use open systems.*’

Highlights

[Ocean in Shell](#)

[Shell’s evaluation of Petrel seismics](#)

[Open technology in the digital oilfield](#)

[The Petrel Papers](#)

[Interview – Brice Bouffard and Lester Bayne](#)

¹ This is to be set against the 600,000 jobs that have been ‘saved’ in the last couple of decades through restructuring.

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