Plant Tech

The Hague, Netherlands, November 2008

FPSO model (courtesy Emerson/BP Angola.)

Around 50 attended the 2008 Plant Tech conference and exhibition. Plant Tech covers data management across the lifecycle of facilities used in petroleum production, refinancing and in chemicals and other process industries. This is a broad church, but one that shares many problems such as data standards, data handover from design, through construction and on to operations. Plant Tech lies at the intersection between upstream/construction, supply chain/ecommerce and process and chemicals. Building a large complex structure that will be floated half way around the world before beginning a 30 year plus lifetime of production is a complex task involving many different stakeholders and crossing many domain 'silos.' A Plant Tech panel session discussed the possibility that the P&ID[1] could be considered as a 'source of truth' that would migrate across a plant's lifecycle. This led to an interesting debate – with many insisting that the P&ID should be seen more as a view onto properly databased information which would provide lifecycle support. Such considerations of course lead to the question of standardization of data formats. This community, after several years of hesitation appears to have accepted at least a substantial chunk of the standards suite that is ISO 15926. This has now regrouped the USPI-NL and POSC Caesar communities and also the US FIATECH standards body. But, as we are at an 'intersection,' this space is impacted by many standards as presentations from the European CEN supply chain organization and the German process industry standards body, Prolist demonstrated. Operators will likely have to satisfy multiple standards in the real world and mapping from one to the other is increasingly important.

Is it all worth the effort? One thing is for sure, there is plenty of room for improvement. According to PearsonHarper's Mike Moroney, a 'best in class' handover today makes only a 50% data handover, the typical employee spends 20% of his or her time looking for data and spare parts data is often thrown away, 'rationalized!' Clean up is always worth it, 'ask a lawyer!' 'There is never enough time and money to do it right, but there is always enough time and money to do it again!' Peter Zgorzelski (Bayer and Prolist International) noted that despite talk of digital engineering workflows, today's reality is, 'paper, paper, paper.' On the positive side Fluor Corp's Project of the Future has resulted in faster design, 'one time' data entry and 'tool independent' data. Aker Solutions also reports success from its implementation of COMOS project data hub. Eldar Misund's (Shell) talk on the Ormen Lange special case handover from StatoilHydro shows that it can be done. Shell's three data priorities – quality, quality and quality!

Even if the above makes it sound as though the data interoperability problems are still some way from being 'fixed,' there is a strong feeling that progress is being made. Is this a 'standards success?' In part perhaps but, in a reflection of what is happening in the upstream, it is also due to companies turning away from Excel 'hell' and returning to a big central database. Read on for some good talks and instructive Q&As, not the least for the exchange of views from practitioners in refining, upstream and other silos.

[1] *Piping and instrumentation diagram.*

Highlights

Ormen Lange handover from StatoilHydro to Shell
Engineering Karachaganak
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