Schlumberger Information Solutions Forum
Paris, September 2004

Oil company and NOC CIO's reflect on the future of IT

Highlights & themes

Study the picture above[1] – there have probably been very few occasions when Chief Information Officers from quite so many members of OPEC producers and major oil and gas companies have been present at the same time. Probably around 80% of the world's oil and gas production is represented. Schlumberger has to be congratulated on assembling such an influential group[2]. The 270 client attendees (and maybe as many SIS personnel) heard two excellent keynotes by Shell's Peter Kapteijn and ChevronTexaco's Mike Hauser addressing the i-field[3] – the theme of the show which was subtitled '*i-enabling your operational processes*'. Speakers concurred that the potential of the i-field is likely greater than the CERA[4] estimates. Strangely though, there was not a huge amount of collateral in the software area to back up the i-field theme. As the new SIS[5] president Kjell Erik Ostdahl remarked, the company has had a G&G focus for too long. Progress is being made – on i-enabled drilling and facilities design. But production i-enablement, while ongoing, is not all 'owned' by the Information Solutions unit[6]. 'Peer Exchange' client presentations reported on real world SIS product deployment from ConocoPhillips, Saudi Aramco, Norsk Hydro, Pemex, ADNOC and Kuwait Oil Co.

On the software front the highlights are the new '**Ocean'** Microsoft .NET-based development environment, a new data model '**Seabed'** (to replace Finder) and the expansion of the **Open Spirit** middleware environment to encompass – well just about everything! Seabed is variously presented as a new database application and as a new 'logical' data model. The intent is to better leverage Oracle 9/10 functionality. On the application front **Petrel** has moved center stage – but is surrounded by a constellation of interpretation tools and technologies – both legacy (GeoFrame, Charisma, IESX…)

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[1] From the left – IEA, Sonatrach, NNPC, Oxy, Saudi Aramco, ChevronTexaco, Shell, ExxonMobil, Pemex and Total.

[2] *In some ways it is a shame that this CERA-week like gathering was not better focused on the IT aspects of the business. In an effort to offer its clients a 'hands-off' debate, the speakers were given just a bit too much free rein. This resulted in rather overly broad ranging discourse on the future, not so much of IT, but also of the oil price, supply and demand and geopolitics. Not that these considerations are not of interest, it is just that they have come to predominate over the vertical, domain-focused discussion which it would be nice to have from time to time.*

[3] The i-field (or field of the future, e-field or even x-field) in so far as it can be defined is the same thing as CERA's 'digital oilfield' – a nebulous concept of computerized oilfield operations and real time production optimization.

[4] Cambridge Energy Research Associates.

[5] Schlumberger Information Solutions.

[6] The i-field crosses many silo boundaries - one of which is the SIS/Oilfield Services cultural divide.

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and new (Gigaviz, Inside Reality…). Some rationalization is planned – notably with the availability of Gigaviz cluster-based visualization from Petrel and elsewhere. An emerging paradigm seems to be Ocean/.NET for new client applications and Linux for servers, compute-intense apps and visualization. While much is made of Linux and 'open' API's, there is a distinct move away from open standards with SIS hanging its hat on Microsoft's .NET and Oracle's 9/10 extended architecture.

Developments with oil company clients and consortia add to the already rich software meal. A new reservoir simulator – project **Intersect** – has been developed for ChevronTexaco, drilling technology from the old MoBPTeCh consortium has been rolled into the new **Osprey** application. Inevitably there is overlap between many tools. The answer to this is to 'wrap' applications into 'workflows' – The Living Model, Smart Prospect Generation etc. This makes for a degree of confusion – but no doubt helps SIS market 'solutions' as opposed to selling software licenses[7]. The joint IronMountain/SIS **eSearch** marriage of OpenRSO and AssetDB is now ready for prime time. Collaboration with other software houses – notably **Avocet**[8] – developed with Aspen Technology – adds more functionality (and rebranding) to existing packages. Although again, this is limited to concomitant design of surface and subsurface rather than operations. IBM made a big deal of a return to Oil and Gas after its absence.

Highlights

CERA – gathering clouds

Shell's Smart Field

.Net Ocean products

New Seabed database

Technical Roadmap

IM at Saudi Aramco

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[7] We understand that the 'solutions' business is now a better earner than license sales.

[8] Nothing to do with AVO!

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