

Drillers take to tech

Drillers are increasingly adopting new technology such as smart sensors and real time measuring and monitoring systems, according to suppliers and drilling contractors at the ADIA/Australian Institute of Geoscientists unlocking the benefits of better driller/geologist partnerships seminar in Brisbane.

In a session under the theme of innovation, chaired by ADIA CEO, Peter Hall, representatives from Imdex, Lucas Drilling, Mitchell Services and Inflatable Packers International said resistance in the drilling industry towards new technologies was rapidly falling, as drillers are realising how easy they are to use and the compelling benefits in time and cost savings. Nick Shaw of Mitchell Services, who delivered a presentation about technology that benefits drillers and geologists, highlighted video streaming and communication devices on rigs as tools to cost effectively train and orientate personnel about drilling operations.

Imdex Global Manager Integrated Solution, Michelle Carey, who delivered a presentation on transparency: the key to strong relationships between drilling and resource companies, added that the

take up of her company's solutions had not been as challenging as expected.

"We've put more complex sensors into the hands of drillers, and now work pretty hard to make sure the operating systems on those apps are really user friendly for operators," she said. "Nonetheless we go out there, we give these guys training on rigs and they pick it up really fast. Most of the time the feedback is 'wow, this is great! I'm picking up new skills. I'm learning something new'."

Michelle added that there was a shift in the industry to put communication infrastructure in place that will support sensors and tools that provide real time data on rigs and drilling activity. She said customers were driving the desire for communication to be ubiquitous

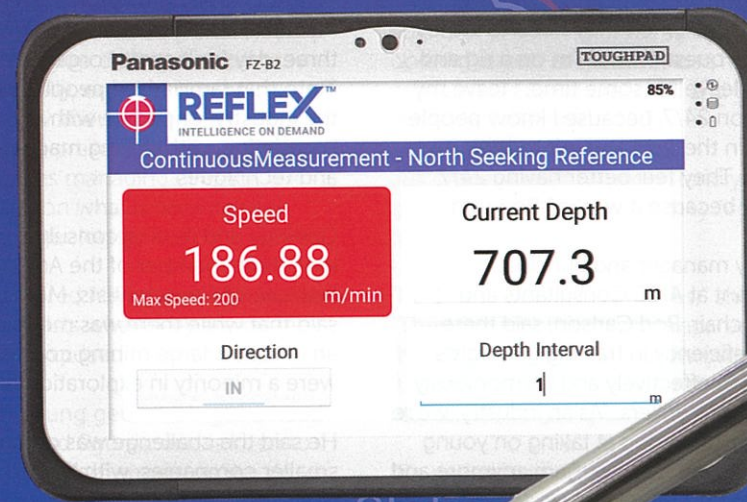
because of the significant benefits it provided.

Lucas Drilling project manager, Chris Wilcox, said that while his team found new technology intimidating at first, attitudes quickly changed as the ease of use and benefits were realised. "They're learning more about what they're doing. They have a better idea of what's going on down hole and drill a better hole for it," he said. "If you have a down hole issue, the more data you've got the better."

Colin Ingram of Inflatable Packers International, who delivered a presentation on advances in inflatable packer technology for geotechnical applications, said the uptake of technology was based on economics.

■ Jamie Wade

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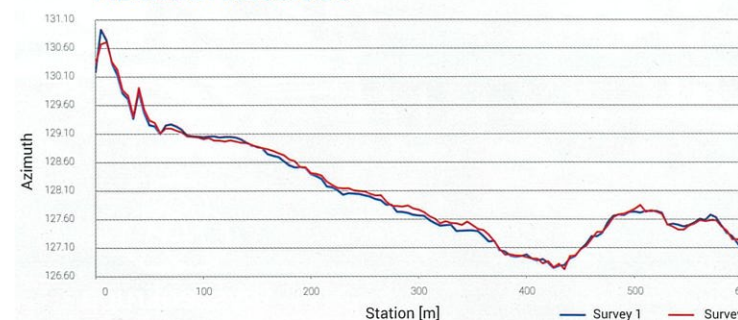


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