

## PERSONALITY PROFILE

# Standard bearer

Energistics President and CEO Jerry Hubbard talked to *InnovOil* about the universal benefits of open industry standards and how he has doubled the consortium's membership since 2006

**E**NERGISTICS began life in 1990 as the Petrotechnical Open Software Consortium (POSC), as a way to facilitate the development and use of open standards for efficiently exchanging data in the oil industry. POSC then began to focus on petrotechnical data exchange standards using XML technology, which eventually led to the development of the drilling data exchange standard, WITSML.

WITSML provides the mechanism for exchanging information in a standardised data structure, meaning that oilfield service companies and vendors can collect and present real-time drilling and well data in their proprietary dashboards any way they want while the operators can easily aggregate data from multiple vendors without additional data reconfiguration.

In 2006, POSC was rebranded as Energistics as it moved to become less academic and more responsive to the business requirements of the industry. Taking on Jerry Hubbard and launching a recruitment drive, it has since grown from 62 to 125 organisational members. In 2011, Hubbard took over as president and CEO, and since then where he has continued to strive for new membership and has increased co-operation between industry players. He talked to *InnovOil* about why his vision of a global standards user community encourages participation to improve integrated operations in the oilfield.

What makes Energistics different is the way in which Hubbard sees it as a community of standards users – rather than customers – deploying a software package. He praises the enormous work done by volunteers within each member organisation, whose feedback and practices are the main driving force behind keeping their standards current and their applications beneficial.

Energistics believes interoperability is the greatest asset to users, especially as more data are gathered and more types of data used. Without an efficient way to process and read these vast streams of information, barriers begin to emerge within projects and between companies.

The message he takes to prospective members is that of participation, sharing best practices and working with industry peers to benefit the industry as a whole. By enabling and promoting the ability to exchange information seamlessly, Energistics works successfully with operators across the spectrum of exploration, drilling and production.

Major oil companies are attracted by the ways in which efficiencies can be improved. Similarly, national oil companies, who often have many joint ventures and interests, need information exchanged between a range of providers and operators.

By extending support to service companies, it allows the latter to incorporate Energistics' data-sharing elements into their products and services. This not only makes them more attractive for collaborative projects, but also minimises their own development costs, which might have otherwise have been accrued had they built their own, proprietary exchange methods.

Hubbard views Energistics as a feedback loop. Every new member can help improve the standards and identify new business or new workflows to increase uptake.

Despite being an organisation of members, Energistics' work is not exclusive. Its standards are available for all at no charge, and Hubbard encourages all prospective members to look at the group's website, download the specifications and documentation and test the standards. Once becoming members, companies can contribute and participate in the ongoing development of the standards, and share information with other groups.

This approach means that WITSML's uptake is far higher than Energistics' membership alone. Hubbard believes WITSML has a presence in every oil province in the world. Its transparency, and the way in which it is often embedded into service company products, has made it a cornerstone of data exchange in the industry.

There is a perception that industry standards bodies often compete with versions of similar standards – a myth Hubbard is keen to dispel. In 2011, Energistics and the Professional Petroleum Data Management Association (PPDM) worked together to establish the Standards Leadership Council. This council of ten standards organisations works collaboratively to ensure that there are no competing standards between members. Furthermore, they seek to identify areas of intersection and to initiate joint projects to build connectors between the different standards.

Hubbard continues to work towards increasing participation in the Energistics Special Interest Groups. He is keen to persuade the industry against potential complacency, where an "if it ain't broke" attitude can lead to reluctance to adopt standards. However, as more data are used, the need for an integrated way to view and interpret the digital side of exploration and production often speaks for itself.

Energistics is also working in new markets in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia Pacific. Here, the task is often to introduce the concepts of industry standards, and persuade operators and national oil companies of the benefits of data sharing and exchange. Recent projects in Russia, Mexico and China have gained traction, and adopting the WITSML platform allows joint ventures and services to be monitored from across the world, increasing the ease of international co-operation.

As Hubbard looks to bring Energistics' community-orientated model further into the oil industry, he is also keen to demonstrate the future of WITSML – with Version 2.0 on track to be launched in 2015, in line with the company's 25-year anniversary.

This month, Saudi Aramco will be hosting Energistics' four-day WITSML SIG Working Meetings and Public Forum in Dubai, preceding the Intelligent Energy conference. ■

**Contact:**

Web: [www.energistics.org](http://www.energistics.org)

