



I go to two or three conventions a year and catch a load of technical talks. I do a lot of planning and organizing to make sure that I catch the talks that suit my personal development objectives. Along the way, I have made some observations and formed a strong opinion as to how to organize technical sessions at a convention. The following is my view on how we should organize geophysical talks at a convention. I encourage the reader to consider my proposed organizing philosophy and pass on your opinions, counterarguments, and support for the brainstorm that follows.

I believe that sorting sessions based on geographical or geological setting is better than creating topical sessions. I have discussed this subject with a variety of interpreters and processors with sympathetic responses. I also think that, at a joint convention, geologists will likely attend more geophysics talks if they knew right off where the geophysics was applied. "Hey, these geophysics talks are all about monitoring heavy-oil reservoirs, maybe I should sit in."

Topical examples include anisotropy, migration, processing, interpretation, case histories, acquisition, etc. As a foothills guy, I am interested in talks on anisotropy that discuss imaging but not AVO, talks on migration in thrust-belts but never sub-salt, processing for statics and velocities with no discussion of multiple attenuation, acquisition issues with multi-component data in foothills as long as nobody mentions shear waves.

I believe interpreters are geared the same way. A heavy-oil interpreter will be interested in the anisotropy talks on AVAZ, processing passive seismic data, and acquisition of multi-component data for shear-wave time-lapse monitoring. Under a topical technical program, these talks sometimes all run concurrently, each in their respective topical session, so that our heavy-oil enthusiasts do not have the option of catching all of these talks that pertain to their geologic setting. If these talks all ran sequentially in a heavy-oil geophysics session, then interpreters, processors, and researchers involved in heavy oil will catch them all.

Geological settings might be foothills, deep basin, heavy oil, on-shore stratigraphy, extensional marine, salt-tectonics marine, etc. The EAGE has a healthy mix of settings sessions and topical sessions. Foothills, because it is relatively new to geoscientists in that part of the world, is broken out into a few settings sessions: extra groovy for a foothillsy guy like me.

My clients in Colombia are mostly geologists and they are looking for a course focussed on geophysics in the foothills. They expressed a frustration over topical courses, like Bancroft's migration course or Margrave's processing course, while both excellent, have a large percentage of the topical coverage on a geologic setting that is not where they currently work nor do they wish to work in the future. (Mostly they are choked about most education and technical stuff being oriented toward sub-salt Gulf of Mexico, and I can surely sympathize.) They have a good point and I told them that I feel the same way about convention talks—especially when many of the talks that I want to see are concurrent and then I have a day without talks to see (ok, so I really don't mind having a day off—especially at a convention in an interesting city—but the concurrentness really gets me).

At the 2005 CSEG convention, my ideal session would have included both John Behr's and Shuki Ronin's papers on multicomponent acquisition for better p-waves in the foothills, Yibin Liu's Seismic anisotropy in the overburden, my talk about interpreting velocity models for foothills depth migration, and the three case histories on imaging in different thrust belts. At the 2005 convention, no two of the above talks are in the same session and some ran concurrently. I suspect that I could do the same exercise for an AVAZ processor or an East Coast explorationist.

In my dreams: at a joint convention we would start the mornings with acquisition, move into processing issues and later into interpretation, with geologic talks and other case histories rounding out the afternoon. Each session would focus on these topics within its respective geologic setting, in my case: foothills. What talks would be in your dream session? *R*

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MARCH			
27-29	AAPG/EAGE/DGS/SEG GEO 2006	Bahrain	www.aapg.org/geo2006
APRIL			
9-12	AAPG Annual Convention	Houston	www.aapg.org
MAY			
1-4	Offshore Technology Conference	Houston	www.otcnet.org
15-18	CSPG/CSEG/CWLS National Convention	Calgary	www.geoconvention.org
JUNE			
12-15	EAGE Annual Conference and Exhibition	Vienna	www.eage.nl