

Dateline October 2008: Planning for the Year Ahead

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President's Forum: www.spe.org



I start my term as 2009 SPE President with the good fortune to follow in the footsteps of Bill Cobb and the long chain of Presidents who came before him who have provided strong leadership and clear vision to the Society. It is thanks to these people that SPE is what it is today: the largest and most internationally diverse professional society serving our industry.

Like Bill and other presidents, my primary goal will be to give direction to the Long Range Plan, a plan that has been made and is owned by the entire Board of Directors.

However, all presidents—and I am not different—also set out on their journey with personal aims, and have only 12 months to start to make them a reality. As I said in my *JPT* interview last month, one of my main objectives is to continue the drive for true globalization. We will be truly global when every member feels that SPE is not only the local section or a loosely connected group of national or regional organizations, but rather a single organization of professionals, united for a common purpose, that belongs to each and every one of us. “Your SPE” means it does not matter what job you do, where you are located, or what nationality you are—SPE is *yours*.

My priority will be to interact with our members by visiting as many regions and sections as possible to listen and report back to both all of you and the SPE Board of Directors. My monthly column will take the form of a “paper blog” in which I will describe my visits to sections around the world, share their good ideas, and seek solutions to local challenges. In support of this, I asked staff to set up a “debating forum” on SPE’s home page: the President’s Forum. Your feedback through this new forum will provide invaluable support to this effort. It is my vision that all members can debate and react to my column on this platform and I can join in to learn more about your needs and issues. I don’t know whether this will work, but we will give it a try!

With 170 local sections worldwide and regional offices in London, Kuala Lumpur, Dubai, and Moscow, I have a hectic schedule ahead of me. In the next few months I will be visiting Russia, Australia and New Zealand, the U.S., the Middle East, and Malaysia. My first blog will feature a recent trip to China, which offered many fascinating insights.

Over the last 5 years, SPE’s main growth in professional membership has been in Russia, the Middle East, India, Northern Asia, and South America, with total membership now split roughly 50/50 between U.S. and non-U.S. citizens. I am excited by how we can all help the newer, growing sections to build on the experience of their mature peers. And in return, how the mature sections can benefit from some of the new innovations being tested in places where there are no “traditional” SPE ways of doing things. Diversity can only strengthen SPE.

The idea for my blog was partly driven by another of my objectives, which is to encourage the adoption of new media for sharing information and transferring technical knowledge. This is increasingly important as SPE spreads its global footprint. I also believe that new media are essential to attract and retain our vital student and young-engineer members. Over 70% of SPE’s 18,000 student members are non-U.S. nationals and we must reach out to them and encourage them to choose our industry for a career.

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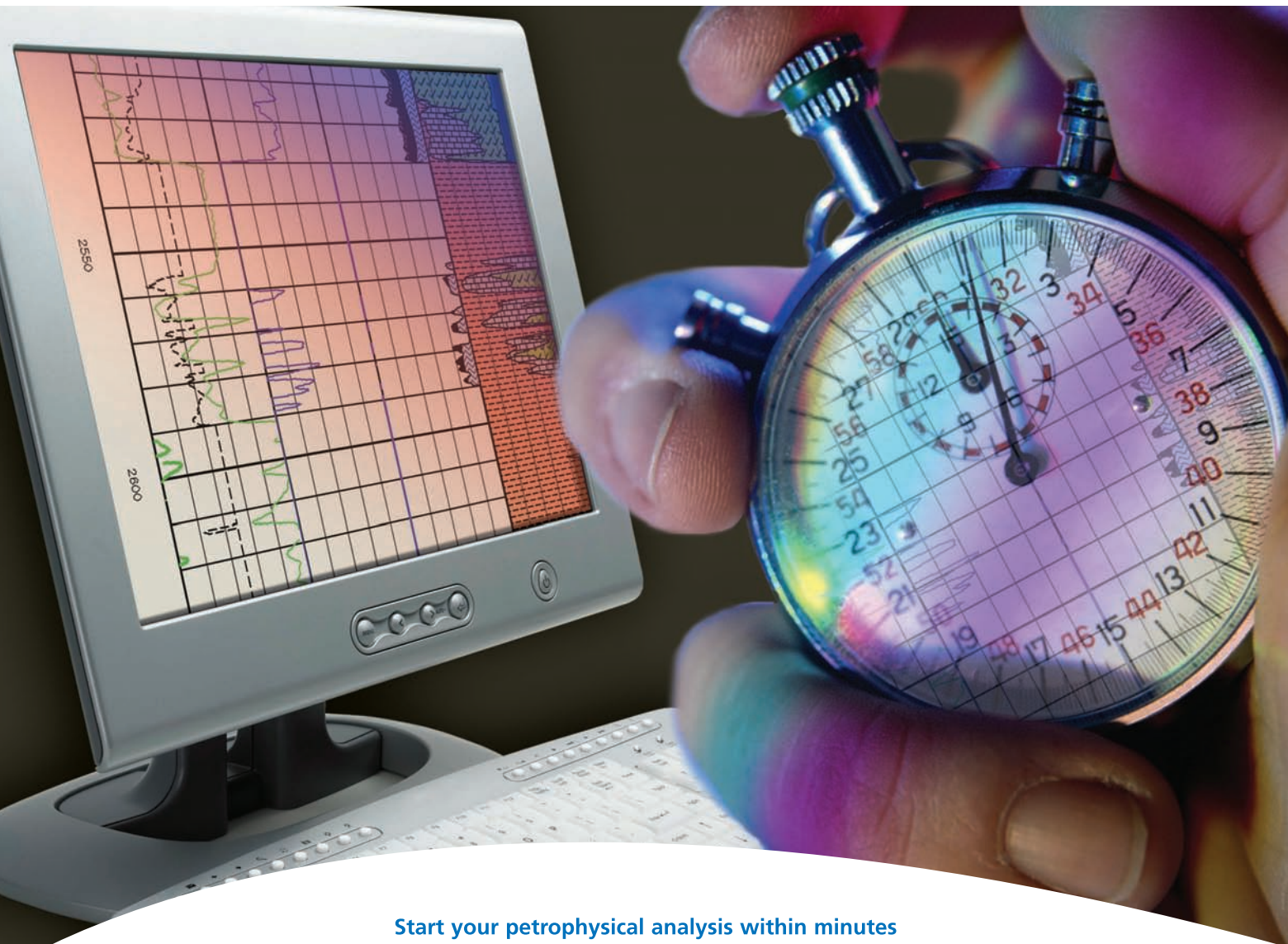
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