A Reservoir of Definitions

In oilfield terms, and according to the Schlumberger *Oilfield Glossary*, a reservoir is a subsurface body of rock having sufficient porosity and permeability to store and transmit fluids. To draw an analogy, as geologists are wont to do, the *Oilfield Glossary* itself is a reservoir—a vast, rich reservoir of exploration and production terminology that is readily accessible online at www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com.

Several unique features set the *Oilfield Glossary* apart from standard reference works. More detailed than dictionary entries, but more concise than an encyclopedia article, the definitions span key exploration, development and production disciplines from A to Z. You find that “abnormal pressure” refers to reservoir pore-fluid pressure that differs from normal saltwater gradient pressure. Several thousand terms later, you encounter “zip collars,” defined as drill collars that have been machined with a reduced diameter at the box end. In between, the *Oilfield Glossary* provides a wealth of other definitions.

Other aids are included in the glossary, such as Web links to information about Schlumberger technology and relevant Web sites. Rather than promoting Schlumberger products and services, these links are kept separate to eliminate any potential for injecting corporate bias into the technical definitions. Numerous definitions contain references to significant technical publications to help you find additional information on a topic. High-quality, full-color photographs and illustrations clarify many of the definitions.

At first glance, the glossary is a relatively simple tool. You might surmise correctly that maturing the glossary has not been as arduous as finding and producing oil and gas, but the reservoir analogy is relevant. The *Oilfield Glossary* definition of reservoir adds that a reservoir is a critical component of a complete petroleum system—the geologic pieces and processes necessary to generate and store hydrocarbons. Like its subsurface counterparts, the Schlumberger *Oilfield Glossary* has these features. In 1995, Jim Kent, then an editor of the *Oilfield Review*, recognized the rich source material contained in the *Oilfield Review* and saw how time and energy could mature it into a glossary that would encompass the whole of oilfield technology. Development of definitions for the *Oilfield Glossary* began in 1997. An interactive database “reservoir” was created in 1998 and Web explorers began exploiting it, even as the volume continued to fill.

In contrast to the complex and time-consuming processes of generation and migration that bring about hydrocarbons in reservoirs, the effort to build the glossary began more simply, with specialists writing definitions of terms within specific disciplines. Next, Schlumberger experts reviewed these definitions to eliminate the ambiguity found in many other existing glossaries and to make the definitions suitable for nonspecialists. The migration of definitions to the database occurred on a human time scale rather than a geologic one: A little more than six years and more than 4500 definitions later, this virtual reservoir is a reality. Since its launch in 1998, several million “hits” demonstrate that a diverse and enthusiastic worldwide audience has accessed many pages of the glossary.

Just as you must drill into a hydrocarbon reservoir to exploit its contents, you must drill into the *Oilfield Glossary* to obtain its rewards. Drilling for definitions is much simpler because the glossary pipes its contents to your computer in less time than it would take to retrieve a dictionary and look up a definition. Unlike an oil or gas reservoir, this reservoir of definitions will never be depleted, but instead will be augmented whenever new material becomes available. Thanks to the hard work of an internationally distributed team of writers, reviewers, editors, graphic designers and information technologists, this online database offers unfettered access 24 hours a day.

As you recover definitions from this resource, we will continue to charge this reservoir from the constant flow of new information and exciting technological advances in the oil field.

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