

Newsletter



ATLAS

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www.atlastech.co.nz

April 2007

Providing integrated forest management and modelling software for the forestry industry

A word from our Manager...

What a start to 2007! With updates for existing products, new product releases, training courses for clients, and participation in the Forest Tech conference, the Atlas team has been busy.

The Forest Tech Conference was held in Rotorua during March, which presented a great opportunity for us to catch up with those of you who attended. The event covered new tools, technologies and recent developments which could be adopted by the forest industry.

The conference also provided an opportunity to meet people within our industry from around the world, and to gain a perspective on forestry management practices in different countries.

On the software development front, we are currently field testing a new release of FieldMan 2 which has significantly improved error checking capabilities. This activity is in response to feedback from clients using the tool, and as part of our ongoing improvement programme. Watch our website for the imminent release of this new version.

We are also working on a Harvest Scheduling tool which is a simulator designed to model volume output by grade over time, based on crew allocation, crew production and forest location.

In addition, we have a number of other projects in the wind which we will update you on in the coming newsletters.

Lastly don't forget the ANZIF conference in Coffs Harbour, early June. We look forward to seeing a number of you there.

Until next time
Sarah Heine



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ATLAS SilviQC

SilviQC is designed to assist the forest manager assess the quality of silvicultural operations. Operations currently supported are Site Preparation (Spot Mounding and Line rip & mound), Planting, Pre-assessment (Block check and Heighting), Pruning, Waste Thinning, and Production Thinning.

SilviQC and FieldMan

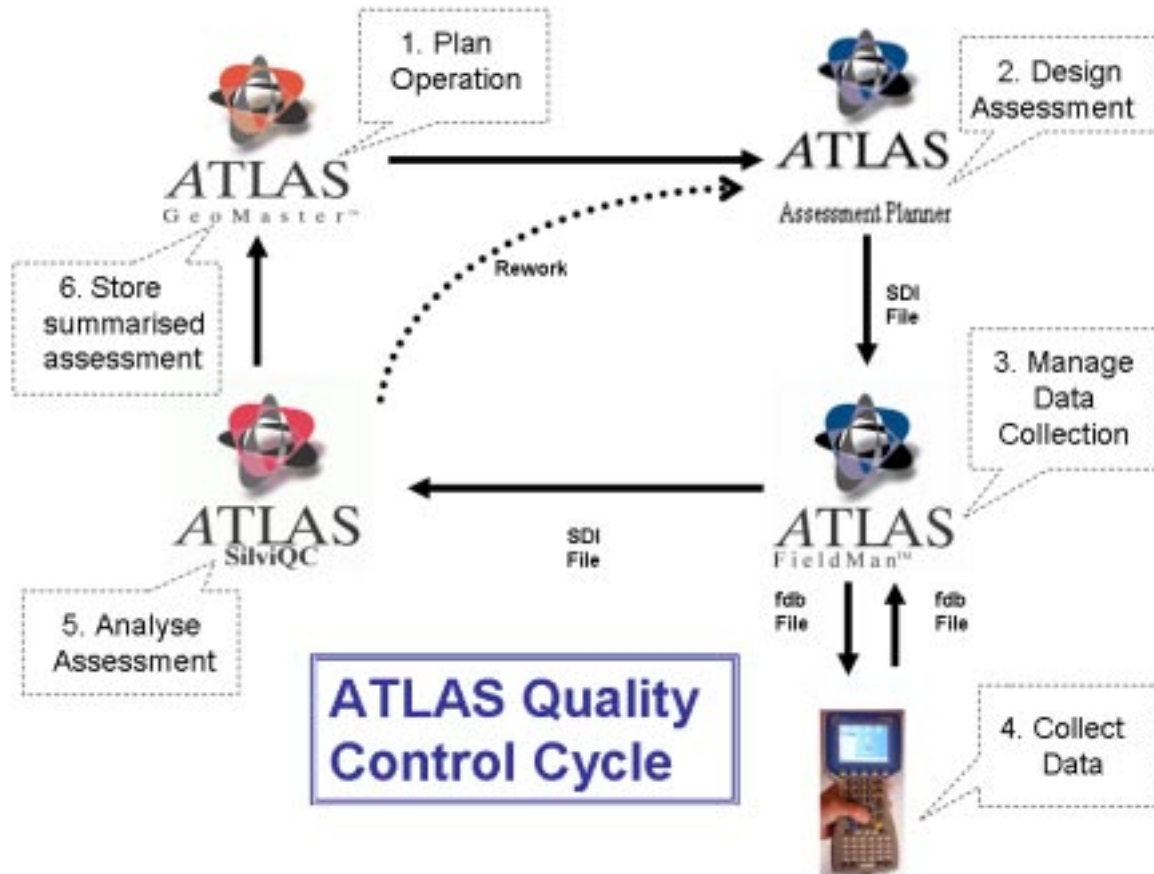
For data collection, ATLAS FieldMan has been extended to support SilviQC, so the same program can now be used to collect data for both Cruiser and SilviQC (SilviQC data entry via manual direct entry and Excel spreadsheets are still supported). All SilviQC modules except Site Preparation are supported by FieldMan.



FieldMan Advantages:

- Similar user-experience when making inventory (Cruiser) and quality control (SilviQC) assessments.
- No double entry of information.
- Built-in checks on data validity when in the field.

ATLAS Quality Control Cycle



Marika's Musings

GeoMaster

I asked myself lately: "Why should we always have to wait until a bug destroys some of our precious data, or causes GeoMaster to crash? Shouldn't there be a way to catch errors red-handed?"

Let me tell you, there is a way.

Christian calls it the "Diagnostics report", and when you run it (we recommend doing this at least once a month) it will help you to find data errors which can be fixed before they cause more errors.

To run a Diagnostics report, open GeoMaster and on the Menu bar select Utilities | Diagnostics...

A new window will pop up where you can tick whatever checks you want to run. In general it pays to run all checks, although the "Lookup tables" check is not really necessary unless you plan to correct what users have entered.

Now press the "Run Diagnostics" button and if there are any messages that concern you, simply email us the report and we'll try to fix it before it can become a serious issue.

In GeoMaster v1.9 there will be a lot of new diagnostic tests for checking Harvest Manager information.

FieldMan 2

Sharing the Allegro with our programmers makes it sometimes difficult to find my files on the handheld, as there are so many different fdb files floating around in utter confusion. This is where the new feature of FM2 comes in handy, which allows me to store my FieldMan files on the handheld wherever I want to, and Brian showed me how easily this can be done.

All I had to do was connect the device to the Computer, open FM2 on the PC, open "Supporting Entities | Devices" and select the desired device by double-clicking.

A "Select Folder..." window pops up which shows me all optional folders I can save my files in.

If I want to create a new folder, I need to do this on the handheld directly and then go through the process described above.

Happy computing,
Marika
(ATLAS Help desk)



What's new with GeoMaster

Activity in the GeoMaster camp never lets up. With new implementations in progress, the constant stream of support requests and the ever-growing list of 'desirable features' it appears unlikely that GeoMaster will ever get to cruise in maintenance mode.

We're aware that this high level of activity is as challenging for users to contend with as it is for developers. Each new release requires in-house testing and deployment, and the need to adjust to whatever new features or behaviours have been introduced. (Not to mention the occasional errors!)

However, it is our intent to be responsive to users' needs, and we believe that it is easier for users to assimilate fewer changes on a more frequent basis than to be faced with significant amounts of change in any one release. So we will continue to release frequent updates to GeoMaster and related applications, and hope that each will offer relevant enhancements to all users of these systems.

Preparation of GeoMaster/Harvest Manager v1.9 is well under way, and due out by mid April.

Some of the new features to be introduced include:

- A chemical usage report
- A log of edits/activities that change stand Area/NSA (to appease area auditors)
- Integration with ATLAS Yield Table Manager
- Support for ArcGIS v9.2

... and heaps of minor fixes and enhancements.

ANZIF Conference 3 June – 7 June 2007
Coffs Harbour, NSW Australia

The Institute of Foresters of Australia and the New Zealand Institute of Forestry offer this opportunity to look at enhancing forest management in both countries, and to foster networking among forest professionals.

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Looking back at Forest Tech

- a summary of the ATLAS presentation by Andrew Gordon

Integration of our systems has always been a focus at ATLAS, as we believe this allows more consistent and efficient management. No matter how tightly coupled components may be, they can still make systems fragile and inflexible.

Although our applications can be used independently, the ATLAS software suite is integrated to ensure the components can adapt to different business processes and be re-configured when implemented in different environments.

ATLAS GeoMaster manages information about the operations, events and status of forest stands. It is integrated with most ATLAS components and with GIS.

Assessment Planner is used to design forest assessments, and to provide maps and the templates for field data collection.

FieldMan runs on hand-held computers to support the entry, checking and management of field data.

Cruiser is used to generate yield estimates from this field data.

Harvest Manager builds on the services of other components to support operational harvest planning, including spatial extent and layout, and estimates of yield by log grade.

While integration confers obvious benefits such as avoiding double entry of data, and maintaining a single source of data, there are other benefits to such a system.

One useful connection that integrated applications provide is the ability to report on assessment results in a spatial context. This allows re-grouping of plots (post-stratification) by creating derived assessments which may be useful to better account for attribute variation if it is geographical. It can also enable the user to gain estimates of yield for combinations of stands, parts of stands or any other collection of plots that share a theme (such as a harvest area as oppose to a stand).

Existing data can therefore be analysed in different ways to provide more detailed information to planners, allowing better grade prediction and output manipulation.

ATLAS GeoMaster User Group

The proposed date of our next meeting is Thursday 17th of May. Please let us know if this date is suitable!

To learn more about ATLAS products

www.atlastech.co.nz

Our products apply to key areas of the forestry value chain, enhancing the management information available to provide value-added decision support:

- Forest and land information (ATLAS GeoMaster®)
- Forest resource assessment (ATLAS Cruiser®)
- Forest management DSS (ATLAS Forecaster®)
- Quality assurance (ATLAS SilviQC)
- Forest estate planning (FOLPI),
- Data collection (ATLAS FieldMan)
- Harvest planning (ATLAS Harvest Manager)
- Harvest scheduling and log allocation (ATLAS Market Supply/ATLAS Yield Table Manager).
- Document management (ATLAS Document Manager)
- Map production (ATLAS GeoMapper)



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ATLAS Technology is a unit within the Crown Research Institute, Scion.

