

For the last time it's Hello and Goodbye from me...



While the time has steamed by, and it seems like no time at all since I started, I will soon be finishing at ATLAS. It has been a great experience for me, both from working with the team at ATLAS and the interactions with all the industry people we deal with. The software aspect has been a big learning curve (and the developers will confirm that, despite having been issued with a "Becoming a Nerd for Dummies" manual on starting, I am still a technological non-starter).

There are a number of changes happening at ATLAS, and at Scion. Under the recent Scion reshape, ATLAS has moved into the "New Forests and Forest Science" group, led by group manager Dr Brian Richardson. The ATLAS team will be largely unchanged, now that we have Jeremy Snook in place as software support, however we will be recruiting for a new manager and a new developer to help with our increasing workload. We are very pleased to have Jeremy on board, and know he will be a real asset, with his combined knowledge of forestry and forestry systems.

There are a few exciting challenges coming up for the team. We are planning to hold a user group meeting in Australia in early November in recognition of our increasing Australian client base. Any Kiwis who would like to attend would be more than welcome although there will be the usual user meeting in Rotorua shortly afterwards. We will also be at the Australian Forest Owners Conference in Albury during October.

A new project that we have taken on is producing a forest-based computer game for FITEC, to illustrate to potential job

seekers and school leavers that there is more to the forest industry than just felling trees – and all in under three minutes! While we don't have the money or skills to create a "World of War craft" game (and much to everyone's horror I vetoed guns – the game player's staple), we plan to come up with something quirky and fun and we are having a lot of laughs in the process. Alongside that, the development of a web-based GeoMaster, and keeping pace with the new models coming through the Intensive Forest Systems bid, work is keeping everyone very busy.

In the near future, I will continue to work with Scion, mainly in the harvesting area, and doing some work for Biopolymer Network Limited, a research company associated with Scion.

Hopefully I will continue to see many of you round the forestry circuit, and I wish you all well.

Sarah Heine

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Australian User Group meetings

November 2008, and will be held at CSIRO in Clayton, Melbourne the meetings would run over three days covering the following:

- Day 1** GeoMaster Suite – recent developments, and planning forward.
- Day 2** GeoMaster Suite – refresher/tutorial on new and/or advanced features
- Day 3** Review of Forecaster, Yield Table Manager, Harvest Scheduler and Cruiser.

Please register your interest by contacting Bronwyn or Jeremy at software.support@atlastech.co.nz or filling in the registration form at www.atlastech.co.nz

We will also be holding user group meetings here in New Zealand, these will begin on Wednesday, 19 November and will run over two days, covering the following:

- Day 1** GeoMaster Suite – recent developments, new and advanced features and planning forward.
- Day 2** Review of Forecaster, Yield Table Manager, Harvest Scheduler and Cruiser.

Upcoming conferences

Australian Forest Growers (AFG) National Conference will be held at the Albury, Convention Centre from the 19th of October to the 22nd of October 2008. These conferences are held in regional Australia only every second year. AFG conferences are highly acclaimed for the fusion created between the latest science and practical experience. For further details of this conference visit www.afg.asn.au

ESRI User Group Conference will be at the Rotorua Convention Centre on the 21st to the 23rd of October 2008. Registrations are at www.gisuser.co.nz

Come and visit Luke and Christian at our stand!



Laura Nichol from Terralink (at left) and Joanna Drabsch, from Rayonier Asia Pacific at last year's ESRI dinner.

Yield Table Manager

The ATLAS team has been working hard on improvements to Yield Table Manager. One of the problems we encountered is scalability. For example, operations that work fine on 50 Yield Cubes may run out of memory when run on 5000 Yield Cubes.

One of the main benefits of Yield Table Manager is its ability to adjust and/or combine yield data in bulk. Examples of this are:

Scale TRV

The Scale TRV function is a simple operation that allows the Total Recoverable Volume (TRV) to be adjusted by a specific percentage. If an assigned yield is known to be biased by a certain percentage, the Scale TRV function can be used to correct this.

Aggregation

The actual log products (grades) the customer is supplied are often too specific for long term planning. Instead, more generic product types are used for long term planning. This is where the aggregation operation comes in. Aggregations are groupings of log products used to combine yield into broader categories. This is typically used to support different levels of planning and reporting.

Regrade

As we all know, many factors can reduce the quality, and hence suitability, of logs for various end-purposes and this can result in wood being "down-graded". Often this can be quantified, and so the yield cubes can be updated to reflect the movement between products. The Regrade operation in Yield Table Manager allow a percentage of one product to be moved into a lower grade across all or specific ages.

Recent improvements have seen the Scale TRV, Aggregate and Regrade operations work with large numbers of yield cubes. This enhanced scalability is available in the latest version of Yield Table Manager.

Microsoft TechEd 08 Report

Last month Brian Clement and John Threadgill (along with over 2000 other delegates) attended Microsoft's TechEd held in Auckland at SkyCity. This 3-day action-packed, knowledge-stuffing event is where Microsoft gets to present its latest ideas and developments.

There were many very good technical sessions with lots of emphasis on Microsoft's "computing in a cloud" strategy. The newly released SQL Server 2008 was covered extensively in quite a few sessions with demonstrations of its enhanced reporting services and spatial capability. Some pretty compelling performance enhancements were also introduced in this version.

On the lighter side there was a myriad of competitions (so many opportunities to win Xbox systems, laptops etc). Of course even though "Brian" was called out four times in a row in one competition drawing round, none of them were our "Brian Clement". The lunches were of a very high standard. Far too easy to gorge and eat too much and then sleep in the early afternoon sessions. Obviously this is a problem with many other delegates because one of the sponsors provides a couple of fridges stacked high with V just to help solve this. Thanks Intergen! The other highlight was Opshop playing at the TechFest party night on Tuesday evening. These guys were amazing!

Once again, TechEd was an intense and tiring event but it proved to be a technical highlight of the year.



Jeremy's Jottings

I have the pleasure of introducing myself as the newest member of the Atlas team, replacing Marika on software support.

Originally from Christchurch, NZ, I graduated from the NZ School of Forestry at the University of Canterbury with a Bachelor of Forestry Science and started immediately in a Forest Resources graduate role with Fletcher Challenge Forests in Rotorua in late 2002. Following the sale of FCF's forests I worked for Hancock Forest Management in a Resource Analyst role for the past 3.5 years, responsible for forest inventory data collection and analysis, log scaling and conversion factors, yield reconciliations and much more!

While learning the ropes in my first week with ATLAS I have noticed that some of our client contact details are in need of an update, so will shortly begin a review of these to ensure that we have current contact details for all users of our products. Your assistance in providing updated information will streamline our contact with you when needed and will be most appreciated.

Finally, I hope that the skills and experience which I have gained in the forestry industry will be of benefit to all current and future ATLAS clients, and I look forward to getting to know most of you over the coming months.

Regards
Jeremy Snook

GeoMaster Update

Now that GeoMaster largely delivers much of what we set out to achieve, we are turning our attention to improved integration with other ATLAS products. In release 1.12 there will be support for licensing GeoMaster using Sheriff, which is the licence manager used by Cruiser, YTM, Forecaster etc. This will allow GeoMaster to link to the library of mensurational routines that these other products use and to support modelling features. In particular, modelling of current MTH (Mean Top Height) will be supported. There will be a new Height/Age report that lists the MTH of stands at a given date, or the dates at which stands reach a specified MTH. The existing licencing method will continue to be supported for those not requiring integration with .NET products.

Support for ArcGIS 9.3 was included in the recent v1.11.2 update, and will of course be available in v1.12. For users of Yield Table Manager there will be support for bulk loading Yield Table Ids against stands so that resource planners can efficiently update the yields that are reported in GeoMaster/Harvest Manager. In the meantime we are also working on the web based version of GeoMaster which is posing some interesting challenges in terms of GeoMaster's behaviour under a different operating environment.

We look forward to presenting these developments and catching up with many of you on both sides of the Tasman in November when we hold our next round of user meetings.



ATLAS Technology Continues Microsoft Certified Status

ATLAS has successfully renewed its status as a Microsoft Certified Partner. To achieve this, one of our applications has to pass a series of trials carried out by Microsoft. This year we submitted Fieldman, which successfully passed all the tests when run on Windows XP.. This, together with some customer references, enabled us to continue our Software Solutions/ISV competency. Being Microsoft Certified is very important to us since it provides us with the latest Microsoft developer tools and helps build stable and reliable applications based on Microsoft technologies. It also gives you, our customers, peace-of-mind knowing you are dealing with a company that uses best practices and the latest tools and techniques from Microsoft.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ATLAS PRODUCTS visit www.atlastech.co.nz

**Forestry information management and decision making support tools,
to maximise the value of your business:**

- 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 Harvest Scheduler / ATLAS Market Supply/ATLAS Yield Table Manager)
- Document management (ATLAS Document Manager)
- Map production (ATLAS GeoMapper)



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ATLAS Technology is part of Crown Research Institute, Scion

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