

KISTERS Australia News

May 2006

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From The GM's Desk

The first quarter of 2006 has flown by but not without plenty of activity at Kisters. In January Paul Sheahan and I travelled to the annual Kisters Partners meeting held in Aachen Germany. The meeting boasted a distinct international flavour with Kisters employees and agents from Italy, Canada, Spain, France, USA, Germany, China, and Australia.

Similar to the Hydstra Users Group meeting the Partners week covers topics from what's new in the product range through to sales and marketing activities. It's a great week to catch up with colleagues from around the world and share work experiences.

On the technical front we have some exciting developments to show you at KUG, and we have been working closely with a number of Australian clients on significant projects to improve their data handling and presentation capabilities using Hydstra and SODA.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Australian Kisters Users Group meeting, to be held on Sep 1 at the Sky City Casino in Darwin in conjunction with the Australian Hydrographer's Association conference. Please register for the Kisters Users Group day using the form at www.aha.net.au.

Gotta rush - another plane to catch!

Bill Steen

General Manager

Kisters Pty Ltd



Enjoying a convivial lager in Aachen

Kisters News

A team from Hydro Tasmania recently spent a week in Aachen doing first a round of acceptance testing for Wiski 7. This is the version of Wiski that incorporates most additional requirements from TimeStudio. Results were most promising, and Wiski 7 is clearly on track to replace TimeStudio plus provide much more capability in many areas. The testing included running TimeStudio Modelling over Wiski, Excel spreadsheets accessing Wiski through the TimeStudio DLL, and report generation using the TimeStudio reporting module that has been incorporated into Wiski.

The next round of testing will occur later this year.



Wiski 7 acceptance testing in Aachen

International WISKI User Conference

The next International WISKI User Conference will be held in Aachen on 27 and 28 July 2006, with a special session on the topic "Floods - Data Management, Alarms and Information"

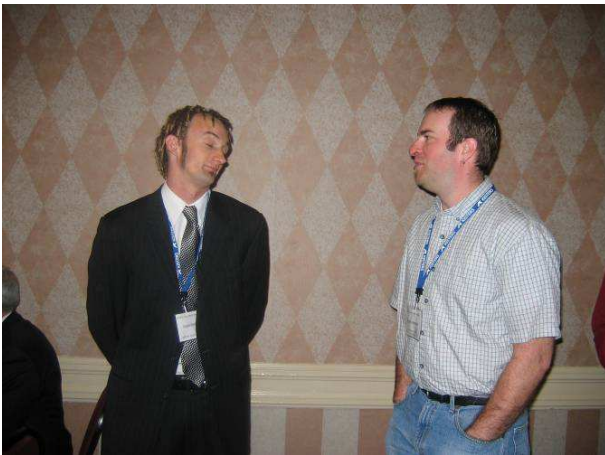
Please contact Roland.Funke@kisters.de for further information .

US User Group Meeting Sacramento

The US Kisters Users Group meeting was held in Sacramento on March 14 and 15, with 53 people in attendance. Peter Heweston, Peter Taylor and Dylan Evans kept the Aussie accents to the fore, with Holly Taylor (ex Hydro Tasmania and now BC Hydro) backing up the team.

The first day was a joint session to look at the Kisters product range and discuss plans for the future. On the second day the meeting divided into two streams based on Wiski and Hydstra. The Hydstra sessions included the usual talks by Peter Heweston and Dylan Evans, as well as a good assortment of user presentations.

Special thanks to Meghan O'Rourke from our Sacramento office for her planning and support of an excellent meeting.



Dylan Evans doesn't know the answer to Chuck Springer's question

Client Services News

On-Site Visits

Paul Sheahan has had a busy time providing on-site Hydstra training in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Lihir (Papua New Guinea). Peter Heweston has spent time on-site

with clients in New South Wales and Victoria. Dylan Evans has visited Florida several times to work with clients there.

Installation at TrustPower

Paul Sheahan installed Hydstra at TrustPower in Tauranga, New Zealand. The Hydstra manager there is Bruce Walpole, an old Hydstra hand with many years experience.

Current Releases

Hydstra Release

The current release version of Hydstra is 9.3.2. Version 9.4.0 is in beta testing now with a scheduled release date of June.

TimeStudio Release

The current release version of TimeStudio is 4.2.0.8. We have delivered a 4.2.0.8 CD to all registered TimeStudio users. Any further patches will be delivered via the Kisters FTP site. All registered TimeStudio users have been sent instructions on how to log in to the FTP site.

Patches may be found in
/hydstra/system_updates/TimeStudio/ and
/hydstra/system_updates/TimeStudio/Drivers

If you want to upgrade either product ask us for a CD via an email to support@hydstra.com.

WISKI Release

The current release version of WISKI is 6.2. Version 6.3 is in beta testing now with a scheduled release date of June 2006.

Hydstra Product News

Hydstra/SVR Under Development

We are currently beta testing Hydstra/SVR, a new task server module for Hydstra. Hydstra/SVR comprises a number of modules for automating routine Hydstra processes. The components of Hydstra/SVR include:

- SVRRUN is a program that runs constantly, checking a task list for things to do and executing tasks as required. It is possible to have several copies of SVRRUN running on different PCs, and each execution can be running multiple threads independently. This allows you to apply as much processing power to the server tasks as you require. The tasks are stored in a database table.
- On/Change actions allow you to register server

processes to be run when certain change conditions occur. On/Change actions can be registered against time-series files, database tables, and HYAUDIT jobs. For example you could register a job that ran every time an archive file was updated. The job would be run on the server, and it could do anything - update the period of record table, update plots on a web site, export the data to another organisation ... the possibilities are endless. You could run HYAUDIT on change of an archive file, and then trigger events if HYAUDIT failed (or passed) specified tests. You can even register local on-change actions which run locally on your PC as soon as the change has occurred.

- SVRSUB is a batch process for submitting tasks to the server. SVRSUB will probably be called mainly from user jobs and Perl scripts.
- SVRMON is a monitor program that allows system administrators to manage the server(s), start and stop them, delete tasks, promote tasks, etc.
- SVRIMP is a program that waits for data files to arrive in a specified directory, and processes the data immediately to time-series files. SVRIMP is an updated version of HYSODA, and HYSODA will be withdrawn from Hydstra/TS. Existing users of HYSODA will be licensed to use SVRIMP instead.

We believe that Hydstra/SVR will provide a powerful set of tools for larger agencies that wish to simplify their routine automated processing.


Pricing for Hydstra/SVR will be announced shortly. Hydstra/SVR is running in beta release already, and will have its first official release in Hydstra 9.4.

Site List Syntax Changes

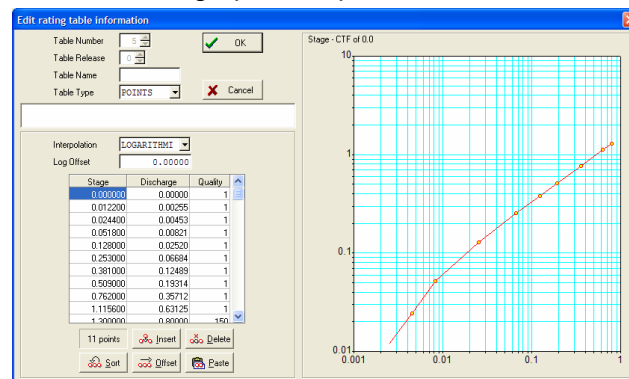
In Hydstra V9 we changed the syntax of site lists to a more functional form, so the old `$&hydropath*.A` became `dir(config(hydropath)*.a)`. During the life of version 9 we supported the old syntax for backward compatibility, but with warnings to let you know you were using the old syntax. However in V10 we will be withdrawing support for the old syntax. Please attend now to warnings in V9 about old syntax expressions, as they will fail completely in V10.

Ratings and Sections Manage Tool

In Hydstra 9.3 HYMANAGE offers a special graphical tool for dealing with ratings, sections and

time tables. You will see the  icon appear on the toolbar when the tool is available, for example

when you are positioned on RATEHD or SECTHD. If you click the tool you will be able to edit your rating (section etc) in a tool that shows a text box and a graphical representation of the data:



The text box accepts paste from Excel, so you can prepare a table in Excel, copy the three columns of stage, discharge and quality and paste them straight into this object.

HYDIGI Problems with Circular Charts

HYDIGI has been enhanced in 9.4 to handle circular charts where the same-time lines do **not** go through the chart's centre. Previously it was designed to handle Bristol and Foxboro charts in which they do.

While investigating this new geometry, we discovered a bug in HYDIGI's calculation of the pen's radius and position. The effect of this bug would be a height-related displacement of the digitised point times.

We have determined that the error is likely to be quite small under the following conditions:

- Bristol/Foxboro-style charts were used (same-time lines go through chart centre)
- When asked to digitise three points on a time line, the user chose a time-line close to 12' o'clock

UNITCODE Conversion Problems

We recently added some additional checking fields to UNITCODE to help us better maintain UNITCODE correctly. There is now an EQUIVALENCE field that allows us to check a UNITCODE in terms of other UNITCODEs. As part of introducing this facility and checking existing codes we uncovered a few problems, some quite serious:

- Changed stored SI for PNDF (pound-force) from 4.44823000 to 4.4482216 (minor precision issue)
- Changed stored SI for GLD (gigalitres/day) from

11,570.4074 to 11.5740740740741 (major magnitude error)

- Changed stored SI for CKG (100,000 gallons) from 3.785411779999999E-8 to 378.541178 (major magnitude error)
- Changed stored SI for LH (litres/hour) from 2.7777E-7 to 2.7777777777778E-7 (minor precision issue)
- Changed stored SI for PSI (pounds/square in) from 6892 to 6894.75728 (serious precision issue)

These errors would have manifested themselves in incorrect data only if you were using a UNICODE conversion as part of the VARCON chain.

More worrying, we also discovered that variable conversions of type UNICODE only worked correctly if they were first in a chain in PASS1 or PASS2. In other positions in the chain the conversion took the RAW data as input, not the output from the previous VARCON link. This would have led to incorrect data.

We have a patched hydsys.bpl library for Hydstra V9.3, please contact us if you would like a copy.

Staff News

Peter Taylor in Boston

Peter Taylor has been working out of Boston for the last few months. He found the change in climate from midsummer in Hobart to midwinter storms in Boston somewhat of a shock, but has otherwise thoroughly enjoyed his sojourn. He will return to Hobart in June. Kisters' excellent world-wide network infrastructure based on Lotus Notes, VPN and Windows Terminal Server means that staff can work effectively from anywhere in the world.



Farewell to Ben Bildstein

Ben Bildstein has left Kisters to further his academic career. He is starting a PhD, and we wish him well for his studies. Ben has been responsible for supporting many Australian loggers in Soda.

Quentin Leseney Joins Kisters

Quentin Leseney has joined us in our Canberra office. He has a background in IT, and has worked for IT companies in France and Australia. Initially he is joining Dominik Turcic in working on Soda-related tasks.

As part of the handover from Ben to Quentin, Bernard Bramlage visited from Aachen for a week to provide hands-on training in Soda internals.



Bernard, Ben, Dom and Quentin

Employment Opportunities at Kisters Pty Ltd

Kisters Pty Ltd are always looking for staff with a mix of computing and hydrographic skills to join us in the Client Services group in Canberra. The work requires demonstrated programming experience, though we will provide specific Perl training if necessary. The group provides front-line client support, carries out Hydstra installations, provides Hydstra training, and works on consulting projects for clients. A considerable amount of local and overseas travel is involved. Please contact Paul Sheahan or Peter Heweston if you are interested.

Contact Information

This newsletter is published by Kisters Pty Ltd and edited by Peter Heweston.

Homepage: <http://www.kisters.com.au>

All support and accounts questions should be directed to support@hydstra.com.

All personal Hydstra email addresses are of the form firstname.lastname@kisters.com.au, but all general emails should be addressed to support@hydstra.com.

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