

Century Systems automates QA/QC



By Norm Tollinsky

Sudbury Mining Solutions Journal

May 2009

Century Systems Technologies Inc., a Sudbury-based software company specializing in applications for the exploration industry, has released a new product to automate quality assurance and quality control reporting.

Report Manager, the newest product in the company's comprehensive suite of geological data capture and data management applications, allows users to assign multiple charts and reports to a single, repeatable activity, minimizing the amount of time spent producing QA/QC reports for financial institutions, stock exchanges and investors.

Users can also export charts and reports directly into Word or PDF documents, eliminating time spent cutting and pasting them into standard company documents.

"Report Manager brings a lot of efficiency to what would otherwise be a manual process, reducing the time spent producing reports from days to minutes," said Greg Wicklander, Century Systems' business development manager. "You can take a geologist who is spending days on reporting and assign him to work that is more valuable to the business."

The automated reporting application integrates with Fusion Server, Century Systems' geological data storage and management solution, which stores geological data collected by the company's flagship product, DHLogger.

The Sudbury company has grown by leaps and bounds and boasts clients in 43 countries. To serve its global clientele, its software is available in English, Spanish, Russian and French and features on-the-fly language selection. Plans are also in the works to add Portuguese to the list. Its products are distributed through both Datamine and Maptec, and branch offices are located in Buenos Aires and Hermosillo, Mexico.

Using ruggedized ultra mobile PCs loaded with DHLogger, geologists in the field are able to quickly and accurately log, view and manage drillhole data. Customized dropdown menus and pick lists ensure that the data is standardized and easy to report on.

Unlike Excel, which is still widely used for core logging, DH Logger validates data as it's entered.

"For example, we know that the dip direction should be between minus 90 and plus 90," said Wicklander. "If you're typing in an Excel database and you type 900 by mistake, Excel won't catch it. Using DHLogger, the error will be flagged right away."

The system also captures assay results from lab samples and alerts the user to QA/QC discrepancies in assay results for standards, blanks and duplicates.

"The user would otherwise have to go through the samples individually, compare them to the sample certificate for the standards and pass or fail them himself, a tedious process," said Wicklander.

Reporting

Using Century Systems' applications, exploration companies with global operations are able to manage and report on data by site, country or division.

"Nobody in the industry does what we do from a database management perspective," said Wicklander. "Ours very

seamlessly allows you to funnel data up to head office. If you make a configuration change and add a rock code, for example, you can add that at head office and have it funneled down to an infinite number of data collection tools, whether it's DHLogger, MineMapper or Sample Station. Our competitors' products have some communication capability, but not to the same extent, so there's a lot of manual work. If you have 100 data collection tools in the company, you may have to add that new rock code 100 times. That's an outright competitive advantage that we offer."

New functionality

According to Wicklander, the company is constantly upgrading and developing its applications in response to client requests for new functionality. Ideas from Century Systems' internal development team and industry experts such as noted QA/QC specialist Barry Smee are also used to enhance the company's software solutions.

A user conference in September 2008 attracted 63 attendees from 30 companies around the world, providing Century Systems with an opportunity to brief its user community on its development roadmap and solicit input for future refinements.

The current downturn in the mining industry has only marginally impacted on the company.

"We saw a slowdown in the fall, but it's starting to pick back up, which we're happy about," said Wicklander. "We were going flat out for a while and the slowdown allowed us to catch up on all of our housekeeping."

Opportunities for continued growth are far from exhausted

"It's surprising in this day and age that people are still logging on paper," said Wicklander. "Our biggest competitor is probably Excel. It's a great product, but if you look at the error rate, it's huge and very costly having to go through it manually [to correct them]."

"When I talk to clients, I tell them that the premise for everything we do at Century Systems is twofold: accuracy and efficiency. If we can allow you as a client to increase accuracy and improve efficiency, it's a win-win situation."

Century Systems also places a priority on giving back to the mining community at a grassroots level. From July 2 to 8, two Century Systems employees will climb Mount Kilimanjaro in support of the Geita Gold Mine Kilimanjaro Challenge Against HIV/AIDS. From 2002 to 2007, the annual event raised more than US \$950,000 for orphanages, widows and programs geared to fighting AIDS in Tanzania.

www.centurysystems.net