

The Agile* interpreter's canon

There are only two kinds of interpretation: those that have been revised, and those that need to be

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The most important thing to remember is that you are trying to describe some aspects of the earth's subsurface, but you cannot ever know the answer. Always assume you are wrong, but perhaps approaching the right answer. If you ever think you know the truth, start working on a different project immediately. There is always another answer at least as plausible as yours.

Before doing anything else, make sure you know what the point of the project is, and what everyone in the team thinks it is. No one cares about the regional story in a development problem. No one cares about reservoir characterization in an exploration problem. Sure, be the one who does. But don't be the one who expects anyone to care. Be the one who proves to people why they must care.

Always double-check the location and orientation of newly-loaded data volumes against a map of the survey geometry; it's easy to get inlines and crosslines mixed up, or the coordinate system wrong

Understand your data: know the bit-depth of your data volumes, and if and how the amplitudes are clipped

... and know the polarity (what sort of impedance contrast in the earth is represented by a positive number, or peak, in your data?)

... and know the phase (no, it's not zero phase!)

Organize and name your seismic horizons sensibly from the start, you will not regret it. For example, pseudo-age is useful: give deep things large multiple of ten indices (1000, 1010, 1020,...), and shallow things small indices (100, 110, 120,...), so that everything sorts stratigraphically and you have plenty of room for adding things later.

Autotrack horizons whenever possible. If you can't autotrack them, know that you are truly 'interpreting'. Make multiple interpretations if you can. Instead of interpreting very difficult horizons, consider using attributes to probe the volume between 'safe' horizons.

Tie the most important wells first, but value the best ties most; do not leave out any important wells.

When you make a seismic display for someone else, show the colourbar complete with values...

... and show the horizontal and vertical scale, with units;

... and show an indication of the polarity of the data;

... and show the location of the line or view;

... and give the name of the data volumes you are showing, and the names of all major surfaces, geobodies, faults and wells shown. Use actual file or object names, not just real names;

... and show a histogram of the data, to show the range and clipping; a log scale for frequency is ideal.

