StrataBugs newsletter May 2013

This is one of a series of occasional newsletters for users of the StrataBugs system. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, or if you have received this from a third party and want to be added to the list, let us know by reply.

We have recently (16 May) released a production update for v2, incorporating all the new features and bug fixes that have been under test since the last production update on the 16 Jan. Thanks to everybody who made suggestions for improvements or reported bugs. If you have not updated your system recently we urge you to make sure you are up to date.

Licence renewals

If you get a message that your temporary licence is about to expire, then please contact us immediately to ensure continuity. Don't wait until the licence has actually expired.

Export/Import file extension

The new default StrataBugs export/import file format for version 2.0 is XML based. This is then wrapped up inside a zip file to include any JPEG image data, and compacted. We have decided to rename this file from a ".ZIP" to a ".SBG" extension, which the Organiser import will recognise. This avoids confusion over whether to extract the internal files from zip archives when they are received from data providers. The format has not changed: if you rename the .sbg to a .zip file you can still see the contents in the zip archive, and StrataBugs will still be able to read the zip file or the xml file if it is extracted.

Note that the DEX export and import is still supported, where possible, in v2.

Printing charts to PDF files

We have made some changes to the process of creating PDF files directly from the "new" charts. You do not need to use a print PDF driver but can directly save the chart in "Vector" format which is either PDF or SVG. For all but the largest charts, the files can be opened without problems using the Adobe viewer. The PDF charts can be incorporated into Adobe Illustrator and other graphics packages. Previously we had some performance problems and memory issues when running this option; these have now been overcome.

Chart layout saving

One of the restrictions of the "new" charts is that you are unable to save the chart layout, but we have introduced some automated saving mechanisms which will save the panel layout and properties for the Depth/Age, TVD/Offset, and Age charts for each well. This feature will make it easier to revisit previous wells/charts without having to go through the panel setup again. We are

continuing to work on a comprehensive saving mechanism for the new charts which will replace the existing chart program in the future.

Automatic chart generator

We have introduced a tool to allow PDF charts to be produced by an automated batch process for each well in a project or the entire database. Currently the panel options are fixed to produce a general summary chart. Once the charts are generated, subsequent runs will only update the charts that contain updated data, and thus the process can be set to run daily to maintain a working directory of up to date charts. This can be a mechanism to publish your data within your organisation. Contact us for more details if you are interested in setting this up.

Browsing images while matching taxa

If you have an import file which contains off-microscope images connected with the occurrence data, you can now browse the images during the taxon matching step of the import process. This may aid and improve the taxon matching and import process.

Running SQL queries

You can run SQL queries against your database by using the menu option from the control panel. This can enable you to query the database data in ways that are not otherwise supported in the application interface. We provide a list of pre-prepared queries that you can run, or you can type your own or paste a query that we provide by email. For instance, we provide a query which will display the age and formation at the TD of every well in the database. You can save the results as a table in a text file or copy and paste the results into a spreadsheet.

Please note that the syntax of SQL varies between different databases. The platforms supported by the in-built queries is shown, and the correct syntax of the query will be displayed for the database platform you are currently using.

Unless you are a super-user you will not be able to run queries which modify any database data.

Core corrections/shifts

For v2 we introduced a modified system of entering core corrections which supported the entering of continuous core shift data, rather than a single or dual core shift for the top and/or base of a cored interval. This has caused a problem in some instances, where the traditional core shifts are provided for contiguous cored intervals. The problem is that a depth at the base of one core can, in some cases, have a different corrected depth to the identical depth at the top of the next core. We have provided a work-around for this in the latest release which allows you to enter the core shifts in the cored interval dialog instead of in the core shift table.

Renaming the Default Version

We now support the renaming of the "Default Version" so you can use a more meaningful term. We generally recommend using this version as your corporate "final" interpretation and use the other versions as temporary or intermediate or historical versions. If you rename the default version then it will still be identified by the suffix (default) to enable it to be easily selected from lists.

Windows 8

If you are the lucky (?) recipient of a computer running Microsoft's latest, then you will be able to run StrataBugs. We have found no issues on this platform over and above those for Windows 7 and Vista, for either version v1.8 or v2.0

Conversion to v2

If you have not yet planned your migration to v2, please contact us and we will be happy to help.