

MANAGING THE MODERN-DAY LAND DEPARTMENT

Embracing technology in a
shifting landscape

 **drillinginfo**
better, faster decisions

Operating in a Shifting Landscape

Landmen and land management departments play a crucial role in oil & gas today – creating value for E&P companies through the acquisition of assets, preserving value by maintaining of such assets, and optimizing the use of assets to enhance profitability.

As more companies enter the market and compete over fewer resources, it is vital that landmen streamline the land acquisition process and secure the right leases efficiently and quickly. The more effective they are in carrying out their responsibilities, the more successful and profitable they are, as well as the E&P companies they work for. However, as the energy landscape evolves for modern land departments, the increased challenges force a change and a greater dependency on innovative technology.

Increased Complexity, More Data, and Multiple Parties

Landmen today are seeing ever-increasing complexity in permits and leaseholds, putting increased pressure on them to source accurate and up-to-date documentation.

They are also faced with highly complex commercial agreements between different stakeholders with interests often separated by depth, geological formation, and geography, as well as large numbers of people owning small percentages of land. In such cases, the creation of lease polygons, for example, can be a highly data intensive process. Landmen must also deal with legal differences between states, and as if this wasn't enough, they need to know every facet (and sometimes anomaly) within each state's legal framework (see Did You Know, below).

DID YOU KNOW?

- The mineral estate supersedes the surface estate.
- Louisiana is the only state in the union that doesn't use common law.
- Most Bureau of Land Management leases actually expire at midnight the day before the anniversary date.
- Minerals aren't owned until they are captured at the surface.

Source: Silas Martin, Drillinginfo

In short, landmen need to know a lot about many different things and need to use innovative and intelligent data analyses to achieve this.

Another challenge is that of multiple parties. Land departments and landmen today often work as large teams. As well as growing personnel in land operations and land administration, other parties include finance, legal, and other relevant business functions as well as sometimes a sprawling external supply chain.

With many people required in putting together error-free chains of title and evaluating multiple deals, it's vital to have uniformity and consistency as well as a holistic view of what all parties are doing. Technology is crucial to achieving this.

Landmen and land management departments need to be ever more agile to adapt to changing conditions. They need to access information that can be readily viewed, mapped out, and analyzed, and they need to make better, more informed decisions than their competition – and quickly.

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Yet, too much time is still spent by landmen researching and collecting data, with not enough time spent on actually analyzing and gathering insights from it. This is where modern land departments are the most valuable. How can this be rectified?

"Nowhere has the impact of U.S. onshore resource play development been felt more strongly than among land organizations. The volume and pace of development within resource plays requires faster, more "nimble", and more capable land organizations than in the past."

– PWC, Organizing for Success, Designing and Enabling a Successful Land Organization, June 2014

Continue reading for a list of five key areas where Drillinginfo is improving the role of the landman and responding to the changing landscape.

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5 Key Areas Where Drillinginfo is Improving the Role of the Landman and Responding to the Changing Landscape

1.

Smart Data Collection and Analysis

Innovative data analysis tools play a crucial role in helping landmen collect and capture data quickly, which allows more time for analysis.

With leases and titles trading between owners frequently, accurate assignment information is critical to targeting opportunities. To this end, with the DI Courthouse tool landmen can access digital property records, tract locations, and real estate documents for more than 149 counties. DI Courthouse also enables the searching of attributes not always available through a courthouse index.

In addition, Drillinginfo includes the ability to add users, personalize accounts according to county, share run sheets to eliminate redundant title work, gain valuable insight into different projects, and flip the research and analysis ratio in favor of analysis.

Such tools are also crucial in customizing the workflow, managing a wide variety of personnel, and ensuring faster and accurate decision-making. DI Courthouse also frees the landmen to do what they do best – using their critical thinking to extract and analyze the pertinent data to ensure more effective and profitable land management decisions.

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– Drillinginfo Customer

Learn more at drillinginfo.com

2.

Customizing Searches

One of the key challenges for landmen and land management departments today is dealing with different state requirements, such as the requirement to reference source deeds in the state of Texas.

To this end, the DI Courthouse tool provides a powerful new way to run title searches that enables landmen to capture the prior references and source references not only in the tract descriptions but when syndicate records are processed. The new Prior Reference tool enables the searching of all relevant documents that reference the source deed.

As other specific requirements evolve, DI Courthouse and other data analysis tools will ensure that they meet users' very specific requirements.

3.

Coordinating Multiple Parties

IT and data analysis advances have also been made in the ability to coordinate multiple parties within the land management supply chain and also ensure that all land tract, lease, and permit data can be controlled and accessed by different stakeholders.

With Drillinginfo, administrators can control who has access to what information and also track different people's search activities. Such workflows are designed to ensure coordination and communications between parties and better ultimate decision-making.

4.

Sourcing Greater Detail – Closing the Gap on Polygons

Another area where landmen and land management departments are seeing data analysis advances is in the area of lease polygons – previously a highly data intensive process.

Drillinginfo has upgraded its basemaps to more spatially accurate ones for better concordance to various aerial photo layers, while simultaneously normalizing all the various tract layers to one another and the basemap. Drillinginfo's GIS experts have also created LandTrac™ polygons using actual metes and bounds, or quarter call descriptions, related to subject property within specific counties.

As other specific requirements evolve, DI Courthouse and other data analysis tools will ensure they meet users' very specific requirements.

5.

Finding Relevant Acreage Faster, Defining Areas of Interest & Optimizing Leaseholds

Finally, there have also been new IT developments that have armed landmen and land management departments with the ability to find relevant acreage faster.

With LandTrac™, landmen can learn more about leases and properties in 95% of all U.S. oil & gas-producing states. By enabling the user to access up-to-date leasing and producing unit information via intuitive map layers, LandTrac™ makes it easy to locate relevant acreage in areas of interest, including land that is open or expiring as well as top lease opportunities. Data is integrated with production, permitting, and completion information to help the landman easily determine acreage held by production (HBP) or undergoing exploration activity.

The Drillinginfo VirtualScout™ feature also enables users to create email alerts to track permits, completions, and other activity, filtering out the less relevant information and enabling landmen to focus on the key areas which influence decision-making. The types of activities that can be monitored include permits, completions, pre-permits, leases, well events, pluggings, regulatory applications, mineral for ease, prospects for sale, and many others.

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Smarter and More Profitable Decision-Making

From multiple parties to multiple data to the need to focus not just on data collection but also analysis, the role of the landman is changing beyond recognition.

It's only through embracing new technologies within today's ever-shifting landscape that landmen and land departments can fulfill their true potential.

Get it right and land businesses and operators can look forward to smart and profitable operations and decision-making now and well into the future.

By monitoring the market, Drillinginfo continuously delivers innovative energy solutions that enable our customers to sustain a competitive advantage in any environment. Drillinginfo customers constantly perform above their competitors because they are more efficient and more proactive than the competition.

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