

General Information about the PODS Association, 2006

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The information contained in this document is subject to change without notice.

The PODS Association is an international standards organization created by industry leaders. PODS stands for Pipeline Open Data Standard. The PODS Association members volunteer their time and efforts to develop data model and data exchange standards that benefit the entire pipeline industry.

The first PODS technical working committee met in August, 1998, as a part of the Gas Research Institute (GRI). The main objective of this initial effort was called the Pipeline Open Data Standard or PODS (ISAT 2.0). The first working committee was a small volunteer group of application developers who were asked by the GRI to accelerate the development of an expanded ISAT data model. The main goals were:

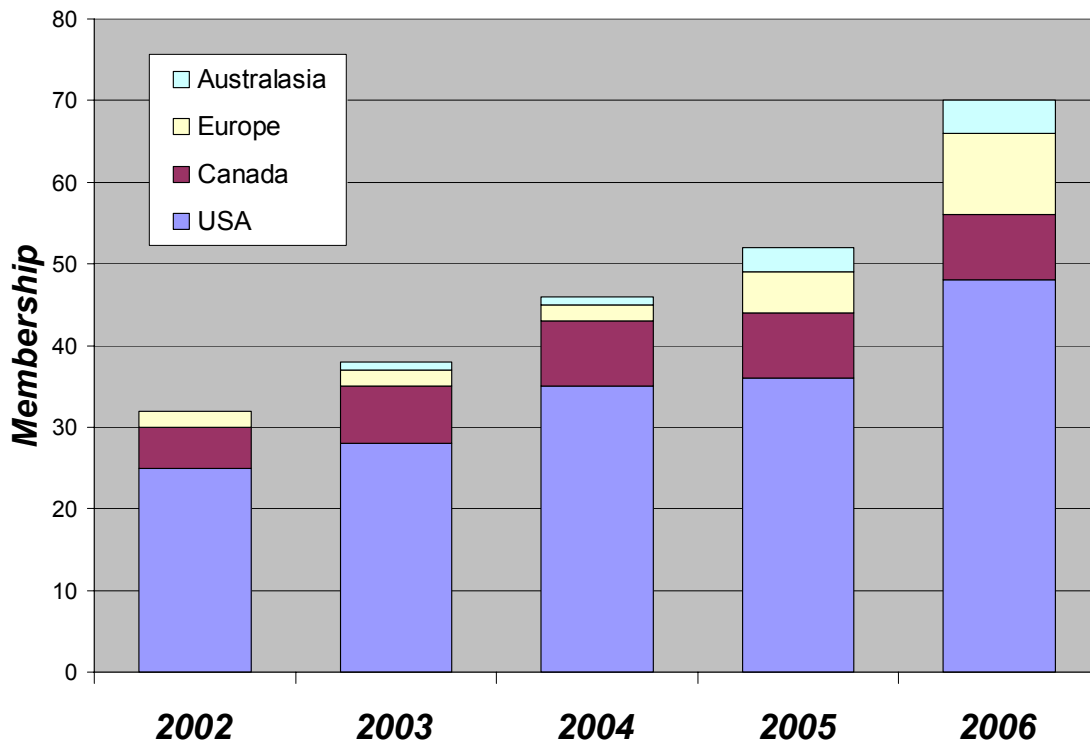
- to support the need to form a self funding organization, consisting of both pipelines and all the various applications developers, data vendors and service providers representing more than just GIS platforms,
- to suggest the adoption of a formal not-for-profit trade association with bylaws, various types of memberships, and membership fees supported by an annual budget,
- to suggest an initial slate of officers as interim Board members,
- to publish a timetable to promote discussion towards initiating the Association
- to publish a "White Paper" report to present new ideas and accelerate any technical discussions.

The group extended the original ISAT data model by adding important functionality and significantly expanding the original scope of ISAT.

In August, 2000, the PODS Association was formally incorporated in the United States as a for profit organization to minimize incorporation costs. It was re-incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)(6) corporation in 2004. The first member was CenterPoint Energy and, during the first year (2001), PODS had approximately 10 members. By 2002, the PODS Association had grown to more than 30, with 71 members (see graph) by November 2006. Of those 71 members, 23 are pipeline operators, 45 are service providers or vendors, two are government agencies, and one is an association. The 23 pipeline operators have more than 305,000 miles (491,000 kilometers) of pipe on every continent except Antarctica.

As the PODS Association has grown, the PODS model has also grown. The data model began as PODS 2.0, released in 2001 as a modest set of less than 70 tables. PODS 4.0 was released in September of 2006 with hundreds of tables on the diagram and hundreds more not shown in the diagram. A few highlights of what the current model covers includes location, pipe facilities, geographic features, inline inspections, cathodic protection, close interval surveys, physical inspections, risk, offline events, and many more. The goal of the PODS Association is to develop standards for the storage and exchange of pipeline data to meet key business drivers such as regulatory compliance, integrity

management, facilities and operations management, data collection, land and many others.



The PODS Association encourages members and non-members to form working groups to develop needed tables that do not currently exist. One example is the need for tables that address regulatory compliance specific to individual countries as well as international regulatory compliance. The PODS model includes tables that address United States Regulatory Compliance because members have volunteered their time to develop these tables. Any tables developed may be submitted to the Technical Committee for consideration and review. The Technical Committee will first determine if the submitted tables are in agreement with existing logic, submit the tables for member review, and establish the best way to integrate the tables into the data model.

One of the primary principles of the PODS Association is that all data models and data exchange standards are “open.” Open refers to several key mandates of the Association:

- that the technologies used for model development strive to be open and independent of platform or vendor,
- that membership be open to any company, association, agency or individual,
- that membership directs the activities and priorities of the Association,

- that data model standards developed are non-proprietary,
- that members vote to approve the all proposed data standards,
- that funding is raised through membership fee, compliance fees, and sponsorship by members.

All data models and data exchange standards are considered the Intellectual Property (IP) of the PODS model and are owned by the PODS Association, Inc. While the model is open, the PODS model is not a public domain data model and is only available to members. In 2006, the PODS Association filed for formal copyright protection of PODS 4.0 under United States law. This formally recognizes copyright protection that already applied to the PODS model.

The PODS Association follows other guidelines to best serve the interests of the pipeline industry. Whenever possible, the President and Technical Committee Chairman should be a pipeline operator rather than a service provider or vendor. The Board of Directors, Technical Committee, and Executive Director work continually together to foster an open atmosphere with vendor neutrality and vendor equality. Operators and vendors alike work together on the various committees to help develop and improve important pipeline data standards that benefit members and the industry as a whole.

The PODS Association strongly encourages operators and vendors to implement the PODS model and other data exchange standards in their entirety, although only some of the tables may be populated. Companies desiring to implement a subset of the PODS standards should refrain from referring to their implementations as PODS. In order to better define PODS implementations, the PODS Association has initially defined one level of PODS Compliance. A PODS Level 1 Compliant Database is defined as follows:

- The published version of the PODS model is implemented as-published from the PODS Association, and
- No database objects (e.g. tables, columns, relationships, etc.) are dropped.
- New tables and columns may be added to the PODS model as long as they are in keeping with the general design and philosophy of the model
- Triggers, stored procedures, sequences, and other database objects and schemas may be created and added to the model as necessary

To summarize, a PODS Compliant model is one where no objects are dropped, but new tables and/or columns may be added.

The PODS Association highly recommends that users document any modifications that are made to the model within their organization. This should allow the user organization to simply run scripts to upgrade when new versions of the model are released.

PODS Compliant Software is defined as follows:

- The software will run against a published version of the PODS model implemented as-published from the PODS Association
- The software does not need to support all of the PODS tables
- The software does not require that any database objects (tables, columns, relationships) be dropped in order to run
- The software may require additional tables/columns, triggers, stored procedures, sequences, etc.

Additional levels of PODS Database and software compliance will be defined in the future, including interoperability.

The PODS Association offers technical workshops and annual user group meetings. Technical workshops are offered periodically, generally after a major release of the data model. During a workshop, technical committee members present information regarding the most recent release including an in-depth discussion and best use of the tables. The annual user group meetings are in September, following the GITA sponsored GIS for Oil and Gas Conference. Members and non-members are invited to give a short presentation in which they share information about the PODS model. The topics include implementation, regulatory requirements, and technical sessions among others. In addition to member presentations, the Executive Director and Board Members provide PODS Association updates. The Board of Directors also speaks with members about their data model wants, needs, and concerns. Technical Committee Members provide technical updates about new or upcoming releases.

The PODS Association is a dynamic, growing organization that is meeting the needs of its members internationally as well as the needs of the industry as a whole. We are dedicated to providing the industry standard with all its benefits and advantages.