

Scandinavian Oil-Gas Magazine

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Shell: oilfield upgrades include “anti-virus”

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Oil companies must update their “integrated operations” systems for the remote management of oilfield plant as often as “we update our home PCs”, complete with virus checks, and the bevy of IT is making them completely reliant on “service providers” for secure project-related emails and system support.



“You can run all of Ormen Lange from ABB’s offices in Oslo”, Ragnar Heksem of Shell’s Norway operation told delegates at a remote operations conference in Stavanger, Norway.

All the company’s remote operations automation and computing for at least the Nyhamna gas plant’s processing of data from the Ormen Lange and Draugen fields in the North Sea is overseen via a contract ABB.

Shell’s dependence on information-technology suppliers began from “Day 1” at Ormen Lange and uptime has been “99.9 percent” despite a compute log counting 6,000 remote launches of software.

Aker Solutions qualifies all work programmes needed at Ormen Lange, and service is still required from the likes of Dell, Kongsberg Simrad and Microsoft.

Among the issues raised, Heksem said the ABB model ensures “an anti-virus back-up patch” and the management of “field alerts” produced by sensors and metering equipment on onshore and offshore equipment.

In defence of the oil company’s heavy dependence on IT suppliers, Heksem said “We still don’t outsource decision-making.”

He said having a five-year contract with ABB at Ormen Lange ensured access to ABB competence.

“We get hold of systems specialists now a lot easier than if we didn’t have the contract with ABB,” said Heksem.

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