# Addressing on-shore challenges: A method to remove the need to know, estimate or determine near surface properties for seismic preprocessing and processing methods: Part I, basic concept and initial examples

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# ABSTRACT

The current inability to provide adequate information about the overburden above a target has been and remains an open and very serious issue for seismic preprocessing and processing. There are current methods for preprocessing based on Green's theorem, and for processing that derive from the inverse scattering series (ISS), that do not need or require subsurface information. That is, they do not require any information starting at some depth below where sources and receivers reside (that is, beneath the measurement surfaces). However, they do require information at, and immediately beneath, the measurement surface (MS) (and the latter defines the "near surface"). For on-shore and OBS applications, the need for near-surface information (often hard to define, let alone to determine) is a major hurdle, a largely unsolved problem, open issue and challenge. In this paper, we introduce a new concept and method for seismic processing that removes the need to know, estimate or to determine both subsurface and near surface properties. We illustrate the idea with an example where there is both a localized heterogeneous change in velocity at the earth's surface, and a separate heterogeneity in velocity at depth in the subsurface, and both start out and remain unknown while providing a successful processing result. The localized velocity heterogeneity at the earth's surface represents the ultimate near surface property change. The localized heterogeneity in velocity at depth represents a change in velocity in the subsurface.

# **INTRODUCTION:**

There is an extensive literature on the evolution and development of direct processing methods that do not need to know, estimate or to determine subsurface information. [please see, e.g., Weglein, 2019b]

As an introduction, we suggest the reference below of a recent key-note address presented at the 2019 SEG/KOC workshop on Multiples in Kuwait "A New Perspective on Removing and Using Multiples" [please see Weglein, 2019a]

In addition, Weglein et al. (2020) provides an invited presentation for the 2020 EAGE Workshop on Multiples with a succinct perspective on the topic of removing free surface and internal multiples.

The Green's theorem methods for preprocessing — and the ISS methods for multiple removal, Q compensation, depth imaging and amplitude analysis are each able to perform their specific task directly and without subsurface information to be known, estimated or determined. The ISS methods for removing free surface and internal multiples represent the high water

mark of current multiple removal capability. They remove all multiples, and can automatically accommodate specular and non-specular reflectors, including curved reflectors and pinchouts without subsurface information or any knowledge of the generators of the multiples. They are the only methods with that set of capabilities (Weglein et al., 2020). The key word here (for the purposes of this paper) is <u>subsurface</u>, and by subsurface is meant starting at some depth <u>beneath</u> the surface(s) where the sources and receivers reside (that is, the measurement surface(s)). The latter implies (and assumes) that medium properties are known at and to some small depth beneath the measurement surface.

That near-surface information requirement is not a problem for towed streamer marine acquisition and processing. However, it is a major issue and challenge for on-shore and OBS plays.

# CHALLENGES FOR ON-SHORE SURVEYS

Weglein (2013) proposed a three-pronged strategy for addressing on-shore challenges. One of those three relates to finding a way to (either determine or) avoid the need for near surface information.

All current methods for predicting ground roll and reflection data are filtering techniques that can remove ground roll while damaging reflection data. There is recent significant progress in predicting the reference wave (that includes the ground roll) and reflection data (without filtering or damaging either), e.g., without needing or determining subsurface properties, but requiring near surface information [Wu and Weglein, 2015b]. Similarly, Zhang and Weglein (2006) and Matson and Weglein (1996) provide methods for onshore and OBC deghosting and demultiple, respectively, and did not require subsurface information but (once again) required near-surface information.

This paper is the first step in a new research initiative to extend the original Green's theorem preprocessing and ISS processing methods to allow them to be applied to on-shore and OBS plays, without needing to know, estimate or determine <u>both</u> subsurface and *near surface* properties.

The model we will employ (to illustrate the new concept and method) will have two localized heterogeneities in velocity, one located at depth, in the subsurface, and the second located at the earth's surface where the source and receiver will be made to reside. We will show that the original Green's theorem preprocessing method [for separately predicting the reference and the scattered wave,  $P_0$  and  $P_s$ , respectively] (Weglein and Secrest, 1990; Wu and Weglein, 2017) can be extended to allow for an unknown velocity at depth and an unknown velocity at the earth's surface.

As we noted above, for on-shore applications [Wu and We-

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glein, 2015b] the reference wavefield prediction of  $P_0$  will include the ground roll. Although we apply the idea of how to make this extension to the specific goal of separately predicting  $P_0$  and  $P_s$ , the concept is general, and can be applied to deghosting (Weglein et al., 2002; Zhang and Weglein, 2005, 2006; Zhang, 2007; Mayhan and Weglein, 2013; Zhang and Weglein, 2016, 2017; Wu and Weglein, 2014, 2015a,b, 2016, 2017) and to multiple removal (Carvalho et al., 1992; Araújo et al., 1994; Weglein et al., 1997, 2003, 2007; Matson and Weglein, 1996; Amundsen and Zhou, 2013; Sun and Innanen, 2019; Zou et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2019) and imaging (Weglein et al., 2016) and migration-inversion (e.g., Stolt and Weglein, 1985, 2012; Zhang, 2006; Liang, 2013; Li, 2011).

## THEORY/BACKGROUND

The first step in the seismic processing chain is predicting  $P_0$  and  $P_s$ . In this paper we apply the new method to that task.

We will keep the derivation as simple (and accessible) as possible. Let's consider a one dimensional heterogeneous acoustic medium that satisfies

$$\left[\frac{d^2}{dx^2} + \frac{\omega^2}{c^2(x)}\right] P(x, \omega) = A_s \delta(x - x_s)$$
(1)

where c(x) is the heterogeneous velocity configuration and the energy source is  $A_s \delta(x - x_s)$ .  $A_s$  is a constant, and  $\omega$  is the temporal frequency.

In equation (1) we now characterize the velocity configuration c(x) in terms of a constant reference velocity  $c_0$  and a perturbation  $\alpha(x)$  defined as follows

$$\frac{1}{c^2(x)} = \frac{1}{c_0^2} (1 - \alpha(x)).$$
(2)

Equation (1) becomes

$$\left[\frac{d^2}{dx^2} + \frac{\omega^2}{c_0^2}\right] P(x,\omega) = \frac{\omega^2}{c_0^2} \alpha(x) P(x,\omega) + A_s \delta(x-x_s) \quad (3)$$

and with  $\rho(x, \omega)$  defined as

$$\boldsymbol{\rho}(x,\boldsymbol{\omega}) \equiv k^2 \boldsymbol{\alpha}(x) \boldsymbol{P}(x,\boldsymbol{\omega}) + A_s \boldsymbol{\delta}(x-x_s) \tag{4}$$

and  $(k \equiv \omega/c_0)$ , equation (3) becomes

$$\left(\frac{d^2}{dx^2} + k^2\right) P(x, \omega) = \rho(x, \omega).$$
 (5)

The associated Green's function for equation 5 is

$$\left(\frac{d^2}{dx^2} + k^2\right)G_0(x, x', \boldsymbol{\omega}) = \boldsymbol{\delta}(x - x').$$
(6)

The subscript on G indicates that it relates to  $c_0$ . The causal solution of (6)  $G_0^+$  is

$$G_0^+(x, x', \omega) = \frac{e^{+ik|x-x'|}}{2ik}.$$
(7)

The  $P_0$ ,  $P_s$  prediction for the marine case (Figure 1) is detailed in Weglein and Secrest (1990) including the case of an airwater boundary [the free surface], and for an acoustic and elastic subsurface. That theory assumed (and required) that the energy source resided <u>above</u>, and the earth resided <u>beneath</u>, the measurement surface where the receivers were located. That required the passive source [e.g.,  $k^2 \alpha P$ ] of the scattered field to be beneath the (receiver) MS.

However, for on-shore plays (see e.g., Figure 2) those assumptions are violated: the source resides <u>on</u> the receiver measurement surface and the earth begins <u>at</u> the receiver measurement surface, as well.

In papers and theses that address either on-shore or OBS  $P_0$ ,  $P_s$  prediction (e.g. Wu and Weglein, 2014, 2015a,b, 2016, 2017) or multiple removal (Matson and Weglein, 1996) in order to keep the unknown earth [e.g. ' $\alpha$ '] to begin in the subsurface <u>beneath</u> the measurement surface, the near surface and on the receiver MS properties were assumed to be known. Those near-surface properties then had to be included in the reference medium. That's the problem; and that's exactly what this paper is addressing.

The key result (in 1D) for the  $P_0$ ,  $P_s$  prediction follows from Weglein and Secrest (1990). For the example of Figure 3 we have:

$$P_{0}(x, \omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{a} \rho(x', \omega) G_{0}^{+}(x, x', \omega) dx'$$
  
$$= |_{x'=a}^{\infty} \{ P(x', \omega) \frac{d}{dx'} G_{0}^{+}(x, x', \omega)$$
(8a)  
$$-G_{0}^{+}(x, x', \omega) \frac{d}{dx'} P(x', \omega) \}$$
  
valid for  $x > a$ , and

$$P_{s}(x,\omega) = \int_{a}^{\infty} \rho(x',\omega) G_{0}^{+}(x,x',\omega) dx'$$
$$= +|_{x'=\infty}^{a} [P(x',\omega) \frac{d}{dx'} G_{0}^{+}(x,x',\omega)$$
$$-G_{0}^{+}(x,x',\omega) \frac{d}{dx'} P(x',\omega)]$$
(8b)

for x < a.

In the example illustrated in Figure 3 we will show how to extend the above method so that the unknown earth can extend up to the receiver measurement surface, and the active source can reside on the receiver measurement surface, as well.

In this way we have removed the need for both the reference medium to agree with the actual medium at and beneath the receiver MS, and for the source to be above the receiver MS. Hence, the properties of both the active source on the earth's surface and the near-surface and subsurface properties need not be known, estimated or determined.

# EXAMPLE WITH TWO LOCALIZED HETEROGENEITIES

We consider the prediction of  $P_0$  and  $P_s$  for the case of two localized heterogeneous velocities at  $x_1$  and  $x_2$ . The mea-



Figure 1: Towed streamer (marine geometry)



Figure 2: On-shore geometry (Land and OBS)

surement surface is at x='a', and we first assume both heterogeneities are deeper than 'a', and the source is shallower than 'a'. The output point, x, (where  $P_0$  and  $P_s$  are predicted) is (at first) beneath the measurement surface where  $P_0$  is predicted. The prediction at the output point 'x', doesn't require any knowledge about the three sources above or below the measurement surface. We demonstrate that first. Then we arrange for  $x_s$ ,  $x_1$  and the output point x to all be on the measurement surface - and show that the wave prediction doesn't require knowledge of the energy source, the velocity heterogeneity on the earth's surface, and the velocity heterogeneity at depth.

For this example we choose

$$\alpha(x) = \lambda_1 \delta(x - x_1) + \lambda_2 \delta(x - x_2)$$

(please see Figure 3) and we find

$$P(x, \boldsymbol{\omega}) = A \frac{e^{ik|x-x_s|}}{2ik} + \frac{k^2 \lambda_1}{2ik} e^{ik|x-x_1|} P(x_1, \boldsymbol{\omega}) + \frac{k^2 \lambda_2}{2ik} e^{ik|x-x_2|} P(x_2, \boldsymbol{\omega})$$
(9)

using

 $-\infty < x < \infty$ .

$$P(x,\omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} G_0^+(x,x',\omega)\rho(x',\omega)\,dx'$$

As in Weglein and Secrest (1990) the right hand side of (8a), is the part of the field in  $a < x < \infty$  due to the sources outside that interval, i.e. due to sources at  $-\infty < x < a$ , that is,  $P_0$ .



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Figure 3: allowing for two heterogeneities one at, and one beneath the earth's surface: (1) a source at  $x_s$  is at first above and then at the earth's surface  $x_s = a$ , (2) a heterogeneity in velocity at  $x_1$  located at first beneath and then at the earth's surface, (at  $x_1 = a$ ) and (3) a different heterogeneity in velocity located in the subsurface beneath the earth's surface at  $x = x_2$ .

[The  $x' = \pm \infty$  contribution in (8a) and (8b) will vanish with an entry (and then removal) of a small imaginary component of velocity.]

We compute  $P_0$  from 8a for the example in Figure 3

$$P_{0}(x, \omega) = -|_{x'=a} (PG'_{0} - G_{0}P')$$

$$= \left[\frac{Ae^{ik|a-x_{s}|}}{2ik} \frac{1}{2} sgn(a-x)e^{ik|x-a|} + \frac{k\lambda_{1}}{2i}e^{ik|a-x_{1}|}B\frac{1}{2}sgn(a-x)e^{ik|x-a|} + \frac{k\lambda_{2}}{2i}e^{ik|a-x_{2}|}C \cdot \frac{1}{2}sgn(a-x)e^{ik|x-a|}\right]$$

$$- \left[\frac{Ae^{ik|a-x_{s}|}}{2ik}iksgn(a-x_{s}) \cdot \frac{e^{ik|x-a|}}{2ik} + \frac{k\lambda_{1}}{2i}e^{ik|a-x_{1}|}iksgn(a-x_{1})B\frac{e^{ik|x-a|}}{2ik} + \frac{k\lambda_{2}}{2i}e^{ik|a-x_{2}|}iksgn(a-x_{2})C\frac{e^{ik|x-a|}}{2ik}\right]$$
(10)

for 
$$x > a$$
 where  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \end{bmatrix}_{1} = B$   
 $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}_{1} = C$  where  
 $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}_{1} = C$  where  
 $\begin{bmatrix} k\lambda_2 \\ 2i \\ -\frac{Ae^{ik|x_1-x_s|}}{2ik} + \frac{Ae^{ik|x_2-x_s|}}{2ik} \end{bmatrix} + \frac{A}{2ik}e^{ik|x_1-x_s|} \end{bmatrix} \Big\} / \Big\{ 1 - \frac{k(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)}{2i} \Big\}$   
 $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}_{1} = \Big\{ \begin{bmatrix} k\lambda_1 \\ 2i \\ -\frac{Ae^{ik|x_2-x_s|}}{2ik} + \frac{Ae^{ik|x_1-x_s|}}{2ik} \end{bmatrix} + \frac{A}{2ik}e^{ik|x_2-x_s|} \Big\} / \Big\{ 1 - \frac{k(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)}{2i} \Big\}$ 

The signs in (10) are determined by the relative locations of  $x_s$ ,  $a, x_1, and x_2$ .

In Figure (3) we have

x > a	sgn(a-x) = -
$x_1 > a$	$sgn(x_1 - a) = +$
$x_2 > a$	$sgn(x_2 - a) = +$
$x_s < a$	$sgn(a-x_s) = +$

That is with  $x_s < a$ ,  $x_1 > a$ ,  $x_2 > a$ , x > a the result is becomes

$$\frac{Ae^{ik(a-x_{s})}}{2ik}e^{ik(x-a)}\frac{1}{2}\overbrace{sgn(a-x)}^{-}$$

$$+\frac{k\lambda_{1}}{2i}e^{ik(x_{1}-a)}Be^{ik(x-a)}\frac{1}{2}\overbrace{sgn(a-x)}^{-}$$

$$+\frac{k\lambda_{2}}{2i}e^{ik(x_{2}-a)}Ce^{ik(x-a)}\cdot\frac{1}{2}\overbrace{sgn(a-x)}^{-}$$

$$-\frac{Ae^{ik(a-x_{s})}}{2ik}ik\overbrace{sgn(a-x_{s})}^{+}\frac{e^{ik(x-a)}}{2ik}$$

$$-\frac{k\lambda_{1}}{2i}e^{ik(x_{1}-a)}ik\overbrace{sgn(a-x_{1})}^{-}B\frac{e^{ik(x-a)}}{2ik}$$

$$-\frac{k\lambda_{2}}{2i}e^{ik(x_{2}-a)}ik\overbrace{sgn(a-x_{2})}^{-}C\frac{e^{ik(x-a)}}{2ik}$$

$$=-\frac{A}{2}\frac{e^{ik(x-x_{s})}}{2ik}$$

$$-\frac{A}{2}\frac{e^{ik(x-x_{s})}}{2ik}$$

$$\therefore PG' - GP = -\frac{Ae^{ik(x-x_s)}}{2ik}$$

for x > a and

$$-|_{x'=a}PG' - GP' = rac{Ae^{ik(x-x_s)}}{2ik}$$
  
=  $rac{Ae^{ik|x-x_s|}}{2ik}$ 

and is (as expected) the portion of the field inside x > a due to the source outside  $a < x < \infty$ , i.e., due to  $x_s$  which is located at x < a. The right hand side of [10] predicts  $P_0$ .

# $P_0$ AND $P_S$ PREDICTION FOR ON-SHORE AND OBS APPLICATION

 $P_0$  and  $P_s$  can be predicted at the receiver MS with the energy source at the receiver MS and with no known or determined <u>sub</u>surface and <u>near</u>-surface properties by an informed and purposeful choice of signs in 8a, 8b and 10. For example in [10] we now choose  $sgn(a - x_1)$  when  $x_1 = a$ , sgn(0), to be  $\bigcirc$ , the  $sgn(a - x_s)$  when  $x_s = a$  to be (+) and sgn(a - x) to be negative  $\bigcirc$  when x = a then we can predict  $P_0$  the portion of the field due to a source at the measurement surface  $x_s = a$  at x = a. Both the heterogeneity at  $x_1$  [when placed

at the receiver MS that is on the earth's surface,  $x_1 = a$ ] and the localized heterogeneity at  $x_2$  for  $x_2 > a$  do not need to be known, estimated or determined.

If we define the sign of zero for sign (x-a) to be positive, when x=a, the prediction from the right hand side of equation 8a, (10) will be  $P_0$ , the reference field, when the outpoint x is at the receiver measurement surface, a. And if we define sign (x-a) at x=a to be negative at x = a, then equation 8a will predict  $-P_s$ , the negative of the scattered field at x=a. Similarly if we define the sign of zero, for sign  $(x_s - a)$  to be negative, the  $x_s$  surface at  $x_s = a$  will be part of the region shallower than  $x_s = a$ . And in the same way if we define sign of zero when  $x_1 = a$ , that is the sign  $(x_1 - a)$  to be positive, then the heterogeneity at the earth's surface is part of the volume beneath the surface of the earth, which starts out and remains unknown. This allows the separate prediction of the reference wave (including the ground roll) and the reflection data  $(P_s)$  as in Wu and Weglein (2014, 2015a,b, 2016, 2017), for measurements on the surface of the earth to be achieved without any knowledge of the source and both subsurface and near surface properties.

All subsequent processing for deghosting, free surface and internal multiple removal, Q compensation, depth imaging and inversion, can be extended in a similar way.

While ISS processing methods have no need to know, estimate or to determine subsurface properties, they do require and assume that the earlier steps in the processing chain be carried out effectively. The development of new onshore preprocessing and processing methods that do not need near surface information would be an important advance towards satisfying that assumption and requirement.

# CONCLUSION

The new advance in this paper allows the energy source, the earth's surface and the output point, x, to all reside on the surface where receivers reside and to predict  $P_0$  and  $P_s$  at the receiver measurement surface without damaging either. That prediction is without needing to know, estimate or to determine the property of the energy source or the near surface or subsurface properties of the earth. The method illustrated here can be used for all preprocessing and processing objectives.

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