

RESIDUAL PRESTACK MIGRATION
AND INTERVAL-VELOCITY ESTIMATION

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Residual prestack migration and interval-velocity estimation

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ABSTRACT

Migration uses a model of wave-propagation velocities in the Earth (also called interval velocities) to convert seismic reflection data to an image of subsurface reflecting horizons. When geological structure is complex and interval velocities vary laterally, prestack depth migration with an accurate interval-velocity model is needed to form an accurate image of the subsurface. The interval velocities of the subsurface are usually not known in advance; separate processing steps are required to find the interval-velocity model to use for prestack depth migration. As long as lateral velocity variation is mild, conventional velocity-analysis techniques based on simplified models of wave propagation work well; but when lateral velocity variation is significant, when prestack depth migration is needed, conventional methods do not give adequate interval-velocity estimates.

Fortunately, the output of prestack depth migration can be used for velocity analysis. When the correct velocity model is used to depth-migrate a data set before stack, the images of a reflector on the output migrated constant-offset sections are located at identical positions. If the velocity model is inaccurate, the images of a reflector will have residual moveout over offset. Residual prestack migration measures residual moveout and hence velocity errors by applying kinematic corrections to the migrated constant-offset sections and measuring the coherence of their stack. Applying only the residual-NMO and residual-DMO parts of residual prestack migration performs residual-velocity analysis for fixed reflection events from the migrated constant-offset sections. Thus, velocity analysis is not confused by reflector movement caused by the zero-offset residual-migration component of residual prestack migration.

Residual velocity, the measure of residual moveout, like prestack time-migration velocity or stacking velocity is not an interval velocity itself, but is a function of the interval-velocity model. The residual velocity that best stacks the image of a reflector is related

to an interval-velocity model by a filtered travelttime-tomography operator. The operator is similar to conventional travelttime tomography, but in addition the operator has terms that convert changes in travelttime into changes in residual velocity and terms that account for the movement of reflector images as the velocity model changes.

The velocity-analysis method of this thesis begins by depth-migrating the constant-offset sections of the data and applying residual NMO+DMO to perform residual-velocity analysis. To convert the residual-velocity information to an updated interval-velocity model, I invert the filtered travelttime-tomography operator. To verify the new interval-velocity model's correctness, I remigrate the constant-offset sections with it. Any remaining residual moveout will appear in a new residual-velocity analysis; the entire process iterates until an accurate image is obtained.

Results from field data and synthetic data indicate that the velocity-analysis method successfully estimates interval-velocity models that lead to depth-migrated images with no residual moveout. However, if the reflectors are sparse, or data quality is poor, this interval-velocity model is non-unique. Then, additional information about the interval-velocity model or the positions of reflectors must be supplied to obtain the correct interval-velocity model and structural image of the data.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Imaging seismic reflection data	1
1.1.1 Migration	1
1.1.2 Velocity analysis	8
1.2 Handling lateral velocity variation	10
1.2.1 Imaging	10
1.2.2 Velocity analysis	11
1.3 Tenets of velocity analysis	12
1.3.1 Common-reflection-point gathering	12
1.3.2 Velocity space	13
1.3.3 Fixed events versus fixed positions	14
1.3.4 Model-driven velocity analysis	15
1.4 Velocity analysis for prestack depth migration	15
1.4.1 Residual prestack migration	17
1.4.2 Relating residual velocity to interval velocity	18
1.4.3 Velocity analysis as an optimization problem	18
1.5 Assumptions and terminology	19
2 Residual prestack migration and velocity analysis	21
2.1 Introduction and overview	21
2.1.1 Historical background	21

2.1.2	Residual prestack migration for velocity analysis	22
2.2	Residual constant-offset migration	24
2.2.1	Definition	24
2.2.2	Asymptotic residual constant-offset migration	25
2.2.3	Geometrical derivation of residual constant-offset migration	26
2.3	Residual NMO+DMO	31
2.3.1	Definition	31
2.3.2	Asymptotic residual NMO+DMO	34
2.3.3	Geometrical derivation of residual NMO+DMO	35
2.3.4	Velocity analysis	37
2.4	Examples	38
3	Relating changes in interval slowness to residual slowness	55
3.1	Introduction and overview	55
3.2	Reflector tomography for fixed depth points	56
3.2.1	Relating changes in interval slowness to changes in migrated position	57
3.2.2	Relating changes in migrated position to changes in residual slow- ness for a fixed depth point	59
3.2.3	Building the filtered travelttime-tomography operator \mathbf{G}	64
3.3	Reflector tomography for a fixed event	72
3.3.1	Nonlinear forward modeling with \mathbf{G}	73
3.3.2	Linear forward modeling with \mathbf{G}	75
3.4	Forward modeling example	78
4	Interval-velocity estimation for 2-D prestack depth migration	83
4.1	Velocity analysis: an optimization problem	83
4.1.1	Objective function	84
4.1.2	Model parameterization	87
4.2	Updating the interval-slowness model	88
4.2.1	Gradient of the objective function	88
4.2.2	Iterative velocity-analysis algorithm	90
4.3	Synthetic example	91

5	Interval-velocity estimation: field-data example	101
5.1	Data description and preprocessing	101
5.2	Iterative depth migration and velocity estimation	102
5.3	Discussion and conclusions	118
A	Constant-offset prestack migration	123
B	Asymptotic approximation to residual prestack migration	127
B.1	Residual constant-offset migration	127
B.1.1	Higher-order stationary points	130
B.2	Residual NMO+DMO	131
	Bibliography	135

List of Figures

1.1	CMP-stacked section of North Sea data set	4
1.2	Prestack time-migrated image of North Sea data set	5
1.3	Prestack depth-migrated image of North Sea data set	6
1.4	CMP gathers showing residual moveout after constant-offset migration	7
2.1	Migration impulse-response ellipse going through a reflector point	27
2.2	Migration impulse-response ellipses for 2 velocities	30
2.3	Changing variables to take-off angles of specular rays	31
2.4	Integration paths for residual constant-offset migration: $\gamma = 1.2$	32
2.5	Integration paths for residual constant-offset migration: $\gamma = .8$	33
2.6	Reflector movement for three constant-offset sections	35
2.7	Decomposing RCOM into RNMO+RDMO+RZOM	37
2.8	Integration paths for residual NMO+DMO	41
2.9	Point-diffractor data and correctly migrated image	42
2.10	Residual constant-offset migration applied to incorrectly migrated point-diffractor data	43
2.11	Residual NMO+DMO and residual zero-offset migration applied to incorrectly migrated point-diffractor data	44
2.12	Gulf of Mexico constant-offset section	45
2.13	Stack of 12 migrated nearby constant-offset sections	46
2.14	Residual-NMO+DMO stack: $\gamma = .745$	47
2.15	Residual-NMO+DMO stack: $\gamma = .835$	48
2.16	Residual-NMO+DMO stack: $\gamma = .94$	49
2.17	Residual zero-offset migration applied to the RNMODMO-corrected stack: $\gamma = .745$	50

2.18	Residual zero-offset migration applied to the RNMODMO-corrected stack: $\gamma = .835$	51
2.19	Residual zero-offset migration applied to the RNMODMO-corrected stack: $\gamma = .94$	52
2.20	Residual-slowness analyses for 3 midpoints	53
3.1	Specular rays for a dipping reflector	58
3.2	Residual NMO with residual depth conversion	61
3.3	Residual-NMO stacking curves	62
3.4	Impulse response of L_γ	64
3.5	Impulse response of L_r	65
3.6	Best fitting stacking trajectory for perturbed outer offset	66
3.7	Best fitting stacking trajectory for perturbed inner offset	67
3.8	Row of G for a point on a flat reflector	68
3.9	Row of G for a point on a dipping reflector	69
3.10	Column of G for flat reflectors	70
3.11	Column of G for dipping reflectors	71
3.12	Lateral-wavenumber spectrum of G_γ	72
3.13	Lateral-wavenumber spectrum of G_r	73
3.14	Depth locations of an event after different residual time migrations	74
3.15	Different events that map to (x, z) for different residual time migrations	75
3.16	Finding γ for a fixed event (nonlinear version)	76
3.17	Finding γ for a fixed event (linearized version)	77
3.18	Slowness model used to generate synthetic data	79
3.19	Migrated and stacked section using constant velocity	80
3.20	Horizon residual-slowness analyses and predicted γ 's	81
4.1	Evaluating the data component of the objective function	85
4.2	Initial prestack-migrated and stacked image of synthetic data	92
4.3	Horizon residual-slowness analyses after initial migration	93
4.4	Interval-slowness model after 1 iteration	94
4.5	Migrated and stacked synthetic data after 1 iteration	95
4.6	Horizon residual-slowness analyses after first iteration	96
4.7	Final interval-slowness model for synthetic data	97

4.8	Final migrated and stacked image of the synthetic data	98
4.9	Horizon residual-slowness analyses after final iteration	99
5.1	Shot profile from North Sea data set	102
5.2	Near-offset section from North Sea data set	103
5.3	Near-offset section after gapped deconvolution	104
5.4	Initial interval-slowness model	105
5.5	Initial migrated and stacked image of the North Sea data	106
5.6	CMP gathers after initial migration	107
5.7	Events chosen for horizon residual-slowness analysis	108
5.8	Horizon residual-slowness analyses after initial migration	110
5.9	Interval-slowness model after 1 iteration	111
5.10	Migrated and stacked image of the North Sea data set after 1 iteration	112
5.11	Events selected for horizon residual-slowness analysis	113
5.12	Horizon residual-slowness analyses after 1 iteration	114
5.13	Final interval-slowness model and cumulative change to the model for North Sea data set	116
5.14	Final migrated and stacked image of North Sea data set	117
5.15	Events selected for horizon residual-slowness analysis after final migration	118
5.16	Horizon residual-slowness analyses after final migration	119
5.17	Center of final migrated image plotted with no vertical exaggeration	120
B.1	Trajectories in \mathbf{x} sharing the same stationary point ξ_s	128