

The Conception of Statnamic

Bengt H. Fellenius

Welcome Address

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Dear participants in the First STATNAMIC Seminar, colleagues, and friends.

Some ten years ago, I asked friends in the equipment manufacturing and contracting end of our profession if they would be interested in designing and building a device to impact a pile, which I would instrument with Pile Driving Analyzer gages. The idea was that pile dynamic testing would become independent of the piling contractor, his pile driving rig, and in many instances his unionized labor, as well as make me and others free to perform the dynamic test after a good and long set-up time. As I had no money behind me and I could not offer much of a market, it is understandable that no one was that interested. However, I kept asking.

Then, about eight years ago, Patrick Bermingham thought enough of my question to come to Ottawa to discuss the matter with me. I explained that I needed a weight that I could hoist above a pile and then drop it onto the pile while reading my gages and, if necessary, repeat the drop once or twice. Not difficult to explain or think through; the idea was not original, there are many such devices around.

A few weeks later, Patrick telephoned me and said that there was something he could not quite understand. My university training has taught me patience, but before I could start to explain the simple matter all over again, Patrick continued: "Why do you want to drop the weight? Can't you send it up in the air instead? After all, Newton stated that for every action . . . ?" Well, the rest is history. The idea of the process had been conceived. Within a year, the first prototype was tried out and the STATNAMIC loading test was born. I have no claim on the idea, it was all Patrick's, and I did not participate in the development of the prototype and later devices. But, I was there at the conception and, as in many other human endeavors, that was most exciting.

Of course, all through the work of Patrick Bermingham and his collaboration with Peter Middendorp, I have had the privilege of following the development. As a kind of a distant uncle, so to speak. Actually, I did contribute with one first in the work: I managed to be the first to photograph the weight flying in the air above a pile, and, as proof, I offer the photo. However, my trigger-happy finger soon became obsolete. Already at the next test, a rapid camera was used providing from then on many series of photos of the flying weight.



It is indeed exciting to be able to see a new process taking place, developing into a commercial fact, and attracting so many users from across the world. This seminar gives us all an opportunity to learn of where the process now stands, what issues still remain to study, to see where we will go from here, and how STATNAMIC can be made to impact our various professional activities. It is not just the technique that brings us together, it is also an occasion to share ideas and results and to get to know each other. I believe that the next three days will be very exciting. It is my privilege to wish you all very welcome.