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PDII Tech Issues and Solutions
WRR 6 Deepwater Horizon Explosion and Oil Spill

1)

Provide 1 technical and 1 non-technical explanation for the explosion of the oil rig.

One technical reason was that natural gas blasted through a concrete core seal and ignited on the surface. One non-technical reason was the simple lack of care for safety. There was little regulatory oversight and a mindset that since nothing had gone wrong in the industry, nothing will go wrong.

2)

The Popular Mechanics article discusses various concepts including “Success breeds complacency,” “hubris”, “Cowboy culture” and “Normalization of deviance.”

a)

Select one of these concepts. Define/describe the concept including how it applies to the Deepwater Horizon spill.

Success breeds complacency is the idea that since nothing ever goes wrong, you don’t need to follow all the proper safety measures. This applies to deepwater horizon because many many oil wells had worked fine for years, and they had no issues going into deeper and deeper waters, and even on the rig, nothing had gone wrong for years, so safety procedures weren’t always followed.

b)

Select one other disaster (from class or outside of class) that this concept applies to.

This came up with the Therac-25, where since the machine had always worked just fine, they didn’t care that the video and audio feeds weren’t working, since they were totally unnecessary in their eyes.

3)

Provide one example of the long-lasting impact of the oil spill on the environment.

It’s simply destroyed the entire ecosystem. Birds, fish, deep water microorganisms, and much much more was largely killed off by the spill.