

Maritime Case Study

Leisure mariners capitalise on SSAS technology



The satellite tracking technology which allows maritime regulations, such as the ISPC Code and SOLAS, to be adhered to - is now well established and understood. So much so, that it is being readily adopted by the leisure-marine market. Very effective security and tracking functions can be added to private yachts and other small vessels not normally fitted with accurate tracking equipment. Because hardware is discrete and easy to install and the network highly dependable, applications which once required months of development and huge financial investment can be set-up in a matter of hours.

The concept of SSAS (ship security alert systems) has migrated to a simpler format, for example a self contained EMS Global Tracking SAT-201 satellite modem connected to a panic-button, combine this with private secure access to EMS Global Tracking's web-based application and it allows vessel owners to set up their own 'response' messages to email or SMS defined contacts when a security alert is triggered. The subject matter of the message is totally under the owner's control and the authorities need not be involved at any stage. Because of the accuracy of the tracking devices simple marina alarm systems can be configured to send the owner an SMS should his vessel move beyond a certain range of a location 'fixed' by a simple key-switch on mooring at the marina. Theft of leisure vessels is an on-going issue and this solution allows the act to be identified immediately and the owner or operator can track it and arrange recovery while the trail is very warm.

Less unpleasant uses include secure on-line access to real-time tracking information on private vessels on long voyages or races - by friends and family. Somerset-based Ocean Race Track offers boat owners the chance to fit a satellite modem and take a service subscription which

allows the movement of their vessel to be constantly tracked, and made publicly available on a competition web site when entered for a race. Some race organisers specify installation as a condition of the race entry both for safety and to build the prestige of their events.

The on-going costs of tracking are small, rather like a mobile phone subscription, and controllable. If the boat is laid-up the monitoring can be easily suspended by remote control and, because the technology at the heart of these applications was developed for more demanding commercial shipping security applications, it is extremely reliable and robust. The insurance industry is therefore watching the growth of leisure installations of satellite-tracking with interest.