

Fleet management is all-encompassing

One of the better features of integrated graphics facilities such as ECDIS or chart radar is the ability to layer previously separate systems across one screen. Taking the concept further, there is now the ability to make use of more than just pure navigation systems by adding complementary services such as weather and tidal information along with more recent innovations.

With this in mind, Applied Weather Technology (AWT) has integrated Google Earth into its fleet management system. Its GlobalView product makes full use of Google's highly visual, easily interpreted functionality to enable fleet managers to access and analyse large amounts of data from dissimilar sources.

Using this tool, AWT employs its knowledge of weather routing to enhance safety and cut fuel consumption. This system, which makes use of colour-coded symbols, can also check that a vessel's heading and sailing time match the sailing plan – an important consideration, given that a vessel that is off course or behind or ahead of time could result in it failing to reach port on schedule. Systems such as this are an extension of traditional weather routing services with the advantage that the ship as well as charterers have direct access to the data

AWT's latest GlobalView features incorporate NATO data on war risk and embargo areas and the tracking of pirates, to help merchant ships identify pirate mother ships, areas of hijacking activity and attack group operating zones. Another aspect is the monitoring of alerts on rogue waves, which are defined as extreme or abnormal waves of more than twice the supposed significant wave height in a particular area.

For the second new enhancement, AWT has established how the vagaries of air pressure, wind, wave and currents of individual service routes interact with the various vessel types sailing these lines. The company's meteorologists, forecasters and route analysts have cross-referenced their knowledge with different ships' age, size, type, cargo, draught and so forth, to provide specialised services. Operators and owners of tankers, bulkers, break-bulk

carriers, liners and pure car and truck carriers receive information from AWT's Bon Voyage (BVS) optimisation software to help them operate in a cost-efficient, timely and environmentally aware fashion.

Denver, Colorado-based Jeppesen unveiled a new maritime fleet management information system called Fleet Manager at the SMM exhibition in September 2010. It is an interactive display of a ship's progress presented on professional navigational charts, with the potential for weather overlay.

The web-based system provides shoreside managers with up-to-date data according to planned and real-time conditions and provides analytic tools using data from each ship's passage to provide insights that help shipowners manage their fleets.

With so much emphasis on the requirements for ECDIS and electronic navigation charts, several chart management solutions and related products and services have been designed to interact with a number of fleet optimisation tools. For example, Fleet Manager interacts with Jeppesen's C-MAP charts and Vessel and Voyage Optimization Solution (VVOS), to provide shipowners and operators with a comparison of planned route and historical track, estimated time of arrival and variance figures, severe motion and weather warnings and slowdown alerts.

Jeppesen Fleet Manager was designed as a tool that would be used by office personnel, including service and trade, ship operations, technical, commercial/chartering, port and cargo operations and the charterer. The system is offered as an online service to subscribers, who use a login and secure browser connection in order to access the data on ships' performance.

Ship management software providers BASS and Star Information Systems (SIS), which had been trying to get a foothold in the fleet management market, ended their troubled relationship early this year. BASS decided to sell its stake in SIS when the latter asked shareholders for additional funding in June.

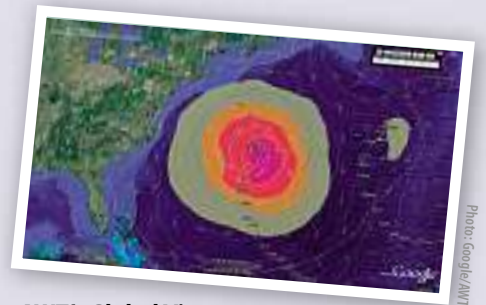


Photo: Google/AWT

AWT's Global View uses Google to display waves

The two companies joined forces in 1999, when Oslo-based BASS bought a 34% stake in fellow Norwegian maritime IT company SIS to extend its product range and geographical reach.

As part of its aim to use mainstream tools and development platforms, BASS modelled its toolbox for streamlining and automating ship operations – the BASNet fleet management system – on Microsoft.NET. Following the launch of its latest BASNet 2.7 software suite, BASS says it will invest the money from the SIS sale in the development of its existing products.

Later this year, SIS will release two new software systems: Star Fleet Supply Management (Star FSM) and Star Fleet Dashboard. Star FSM is described as a tool that will change the way maritime purchasers do business, while Star Fleet Dashboard is a device for monitoring key performance indicators and trends; it can then be integrated with business software to provide grounds for decision-making.

Star Information & Planning System (Star IPS) is designed to help shipowners and rig-owners to handle ship and rig maintenance, assets, drydock and repair projects and accidents and non-conformities. The user can also keep track of guarantees and claims for newbuildings and equipment, insurance policies and claims, documents, spreadsheets, images and videos. **S**