



Islander October 2012 Technology Update

Monaco Yacht Show 2012

Just back from the Monaco Show, and still recovering from 8 days of excess! Too much good food and wine, not enough sleep and loads of conversation. As usual, it's difficult to take a step back and decide objectively how this year's Show compared with last year's, or indeed any of the previous 15 years which I have attended.

Whilst you are at the Show, everything seems as clear as a bell, but back at base it disappears into a haze. As a team, we always carry out an immediate debriefing session on the last night of the Show to get everyone's feedback while it's fresh in the mind and before everyone heads off in different directions. It's difficult to explain the whole Monaco Show experience to those back at base – a bit like the Monaco Grand Prix or the Olympic Games, you have to have been there to appreciate it.

Here are some of the more interesting new ideas and developments on the technological front which caught my eye this year.

Plugging the Data Drain

The most immediate plug for the data drain is the Monaco Telecom 4G service. We had a **Monaco Telecom 4G** dongle working on our booth. 4G is now available in Monaco, but no-one seemed to know 4G was available in Monaco. 4G is about 200 times faster than 3G and makes video streaming very easy. However, beware the data maxima, as they are reached pretty quickly.

Looking across the Pond, there was a great deal of interest in the new **Digicel 4G LTE** service which is due to be launched in Antigua this 2012/13 winter. In true Caribbean style, we are still unable to provide any firm details, rates or dates on this, but we will let it be known as soon as it becomes available.

Next up is **eXSTREAM**. This is a fascinating new concept using existing technology. A single box contains multiple 3G or 4G devices which are bound together to form one large data pipe. Effectiveness depends upon distance to antenna, but just imagine having 4 x 3G data pipes working in parallel, or even 4 x 4G data pipes. This will provide serious competition for VSAT for those yachts cruising inshore, which most yachts do in the Med summer. This device also promises to have a virtual IP address built in which will allow access to country specific web addresses such as iPlayer or Netflix. **eXStream** should be available in 2013, and I can see a huge potential market for this ashore as well as afloat.

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When these 3G and 4G services are used on a yacht in conjunction with the **eXTEND** 3G & 4G booster, which was launched at the Show, the range and use of data services can be extended further offshore and into remote locations where previously the signal was very weak.

We were representing **Inmarsat** on our booth at the Show, although they felt it was too early to launch or even provide too much detail about their new **Global Express** Ka band satellite broadband constellation. At the recent SMM show in Hamburg, Inmarsat announced that they had conducted a significant number of tests on their technology, as a result of which they should be able to guarantee very high percentage reliability against rain fade, which is the main criticism that has been levelled at their new Ka band service over the last year. The first satellite is due to be launched and operational in 2014 and will cover the Indian Ocean and most of the Med.

Linkscope, who have established a reputation for providing a very easy to use complete VSAT service, were showing their new 1u combined modem and DAC. This 19" rack mount unit is capable of driving their own antenna and powering it through the signal cables. It will also drive any other standard antenna. The unique selling points are clear: space saving, simple and flexible contract with a point and click control system. As the manager of another VSAT company once said to me, "Linkscope provides what the client wants".

International Ocean Networks (ION) were offering some extraordinary deals on VSAT bandwidth with immense flexibility, just like Linkscope. They are offering twice the bandwidth for half the price, and you don't have to be tied into a long term contract of twenty four months or more.

Global IP are relatively new in the yacht market but have a considerable amount of experience in the commercial markets of offshore, bulk and coastal. One of our Partners has been using Global IP exclusively for his extensive offshore client portfolio and he has been very impressed, so we decided to evaluate them in the yacht market. We have now tested their system on a number of yachts during 2012. Our clients were pleased, so we now have a large number of happy clients with dedicated services with built in flexibility and very competitive prices.

At Monaco, Global IP announced a VSAT service on a 1m antenna for the Seychelles. This is unique in the market and means that IP TV can only be run on a 1m antenna in the Seychelles using Global IP.

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The guys from **Intelsat** were also at the Show explaining their recently announced **EpicNG** service, which is their addition to their C, Ku and Ka services, due in 2015.

Presentation Tools

As a technology company, we are always trying to improve the efficiency of our activities on show booths. Being environmentally aware (isn't everyone these days?) we try to take as little paperwork to shows as possible. The last thing that attendees want is to carry bags of brochures around with them all day. So, a few years ago, we started taking a minimum number of paper copies of each brochure, and then loaded USB sticks containing everything. We used the actual brochures to show to potential clients, then gave them a USB stick to take away. Most clients are happy with this, but you can never be sure that the information doesn't remain unread, then get erased, leaving the stick free for storage of family photos – oh well, that's the risk you take!

This year our whole team was kitted out with iPads, which were pre-loaded with all our relevant pdfs and power point presentations. These could be used both as a sales tool and also as an efficient method of collecting potential clients' contact details.

The tools we use are all simple Apps. We use **iBooks** for filing, displaying and emailing pdf documents and **SlideShark** to run Power Point presentations on an iPad. We use iPhones as a remote control for our MacBook which is hidden behind the stand running the Power Point presentations on the large TV, and we use **i-Clickr** on the MacBook and iPhone to select the presentation, to stop and start and to point. All great stuff!

If there are any regular readers out there, you will know that I have had my reservations about Macs, having hitherto been a confirmed PC man. However, I am now the proud owner and user of a MacBook Air, iPhone and iPad and, although it pains me to admit it, I am completely converted! Yes, I'm a happy member of the Apple family.

Finally, all you golfers out there, please give generously to the Deckers and LM drinks buggy at the Rolling Pin Golf, and see if you can help them make "loadsamoney" for the kids. Maybe see you at the 19th hole?

Roger Horner of e3 Systems

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