

Technology Update

As I write this, summer is drawing very slowly to a close. Some of our clients have already finished their Med summer activities, and are starting on their work lists to close the yacht down over the winter, or preparing to head off for the Caribbean or Indian Ocean.

We are in full swing starting on autumn jobs and preparing for the Monaco Show, the first of the yachting autumn shows. This last week, we have attended SMM in Hamburg, which is a huge bi-annual commercial shipping event. There were a couple of launches that were relevant to yachts, which I will tell you about later.

However, the big technology news this month is the launch of the new iPhone 6, its big brother iPhone 6 Plus, Apple Watch and Apple Pay.

Apple unveils new iPhone 6, iPhone 6 Plus, Apple Watch and Apple Pay

iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus

As one would expect, Apple described the new iPhones as “the biggest advancements in iPhone history”! See what you think...

The devices feature a new design over their predecessors, with a “continuous, seamless” format that sees the glass curving around the sides to meet the anodised aluminium enclosure. They are also slimmer than the predecessor, with the iPhone 6 measuring 6.9mm, compared with 7.6mm for the iPhone 5s.

The iPhone 6 has the mooted 4.7-inch screen, at a resolution of 1334 x 750 pixels and 336 pixels per inch. This gives it what the vendor describes a “more than 720p Retina HD display”.

The iPhone 6 Plus has a standard full HD screen – 1920x1080 pixels – at 401 pixels per inch. This device also benefits from a new landscape interface designed to exploit the increased screen real-estate.





The new A8 processor powers the devices. This is said to offer 25 per cent faster processing power and up to 50 per cent faster graphics than the A7, and is 50 times faster than that used in the original iPhone.

The increased speed is also accompanied by a massive 50 per cent improvement in energy efficiency.

I think what is really interesting is that the new iPhones have also seen an increase in their 4G LTE connection capabilities. They can now support speeds of up to 150Mb/s and 20 different LTE bands – compared with 100Mb/s and 13 bands in the iPhone 5s.

What this means in simple terms is that you can now roam in the Americas, Europe and Japan on 4G with the iPhone 6.

With every release of the iPhone, Apple dramatically improves the wireless radio capabilities in ways that no other device maker has ever matched. With the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus, Apple continues that trend, setting the bar even higher than ever before.

The camera has also been improved, although as usual Apple has steered away from a megapixel jump. The new devices have 8MP iSight cameras with an f2.2 aperture and an “all new sensor”.

With features like seamless WiFi calling with HD Voice on T-Mobile US and EE as well as VoLTE (Voice over Long Term Evolution) on a number of operators, the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus are unquestionably better than any of Apple’s previous smartphones, and probably the best smartphones in the world for cellular connectivity.

Apple always aims to please and exceed, and in many ways they have over-delivered with the new iPhones. Aside from the lack of Band 12 LTE, Apple has truly delivered a best-in-class smartphone for the well-connected traveler, in fact the greatest world phone that any traveler could want.

So how much does it cost? With a two-year contract, it starts at \$199 for the 16GB version, increasing to \$299 for the 64GB, and \$399 for 128GB. The iPhone 6 Plus is \$100 more at each price point. We understand an unlocked iPhone 6 is currently retailing at \$900.

Now to the most important question – colour! Gold, silver or space grey?

So, do you want one? I know I do!

HEAD OFFICE

Palma de Mallorca, Spain

TEL +34 971 404 208

www.e3s.com

FAX +34 971 404 431

info@e3s.com



Apple Watch

Evidently the Apple Watch is “the next chapter in Apple’s story”. Apple says, ignore other manufacturers’ product launches; they are now defining the standard for watch tech.

To me, the best feature from Apple is the user interface which, typically, is really cool.

In this case it is the side adjuster already present on watches – called the crown. In Apple’s case, the “digital crown” turns rotary movement into digital data. For example, you use it to zoom into a map or scroll through messages, without the hand obscuring the screen.

And pressing the crown also launches the homescreen, and provides access to Siri voice recognition.

What else does it do? It is a “comprehensive health and fitness device”. Infrared and visible-light LEDs, along with photosensors, detect pulse rates.

And now to looks. It will be available with stainless steel, anodised aluminium, or 18-carat gold detailing, and in two different sizes. Different straps will also be available, from a fitness-band style plastic, to leather or stainless steel.

Unlike some alternative smart watches, the device “requires” an iPhone as its features have been designed to work alongside the smartphone. It supports devices from the iPhone 5 onward.

Being Apple, the product is not cheap, with prices starting from “only \$349” and it’s not available till next year.

Telenor Thor 7 satellite nearing launch

Telenor, a well known and respected Tier 1 satellite operator provided an update at SMM of the launch date and payload of their next satellite Thor 7, which will provide high bandwidth services, from an orbital position of 1 degree West, which will be perfect for yachts in the whole of the Med and the Gulf.

They are expecting the launch to take place in the first quarter of 2015 and to go into commercial operation in the second half of 2015. Fortunately, the launch vehicle will be Ariane 5 which, being European, will not be affected by the sanctions on Russia.

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The service is Ka and will require a Ka band antenna, such as the Cobham Sailor 900. The bandwidth available will be much larger than the current Ku band satellites and it will use an iDirect X7 modem.

All new Cobham Sea Tel TV antennas launched at SMM

Cobham launched a new range of Sea Tel satellite TV antennas at SMM. Designed from the ground up using the now combined experience of Sea Tel, Sailor & Cobham.

The Sea Tel 80 TV, Sea Tel 100 TV and Sea Tel 120 TV are advanced 3-axis Ku-band antennas all featuring an innovative programmable worldwide LNB and multi-polarisation, making them truly global. For vessels operating in US waters, Cobham SATCOM offers the Sea Tel 100 TVHD and Sea Tel 120 TVHD. These 3-axis Ku/Ka dual band antennas are capable of receiving Ku- and Ka-band signals from three satellites simultaneously, giving full access to DIRECTV HD programming.

Meet Cobham SATCOM at FLIBS (Fort Lauderdale) and METS (Amsterdam) at our Seminars

We are delighted to announce Cobham SATCOM as our Cocktail Hour Official Sponsor immediately following our '*Connecting You to Your Future*' Seminars at FLIBS, and they will also be providing one of the keynote presentations at our next "*Connecting You to Your Future*" seminar at METS on 20th November.

Roger Horner of e3 Systems

For further information on any of the above, please contact us.

email on info@e3s.com and website www.e3s.com

Tel: +34 971 404 208

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Palma de Mallorca, Spain

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FAX +34 971 404 431

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