

Improvements in maritime communications

Satellite firm, message service provider team up to provide new, advanced and secure system

A shipping industry message service provider and a satellite communications firm said yesterday they are teaming up to provide a new ship-to-shore messaging system aimed at eliminating many problems found in existing services.

GN Comtext, a unit of Danish telecommunications group Great Nordic, said it was linking up with Canadian satellite network provider Stratos Mobile Networks to provide the new service, Ocean-Connect.

It said the system will ultimately allow direct satellite communications between all ship to shore messaging equipment via a dedicated

secure network. Both firms are participating at Poseidonia '98, the international maritime industry's biggest exhibition that is being held in Piraeus until Friday.

The system will eliminate the need to make connections between numerous telecoms providers which have in the past caused delays and connection problems, GN Comtext said.

The system will initially allow ship-based telexes, available on most vessels, to communicate with land-based telex, fax and computer-based messaging equipment. In later stages, to be introduced over the next year, it will also

allow use of the full range of equipment on board ships.

Stratos product development director Robert Katz said Ocean-Connect would be faster and, in the long run, cheaper for users as it would make quick connections to satellite services, compared with the expense which occurs during delayed connections.

GN Comtext has more than 3,000 shipping clients and a network of offices in 60 countries. Stratos is an Inmarsat member company with a range of satellite messaging services.

(Reuters)