

CONFERENCE REPORT SOFTWARE

SOFTWARE

Our most interesting observations from the conference were that by and large, Scandinavian IT managers are happy with how their software is working, and their biggest concerns are keeping the computers and e-mail working reliably. They can't wait for better satcoms.

Probably the largest nightmare, and most time consuming problem shipping company IT manager's face, is the shipboard computers breaking and software crashing. Maybe the second biggest problem is trying to standardise everything so it easier to support.

One of the star software systems of the show was Palantir. Shipping company Wilson proudly demonstrated in front of a full conference hall, how by simply inserting a CD into a computer running Palantir's software, it would reliably uninstall one version of antivirus software on the shipboard computer and install another. .

The electronic purchasing debate is moving on very quickly – we can expect a lot more intelligence in electronic purchasing tools, including systems which automatically convert descriptions of required items into catalogue numbers, and tools which tell vendors and suppliers how well they are doing.

The software challenges shipping companies face are fairly fundamental – getting reliable IT infrastructure, secure and dependable.

There was little talk from IT managers about sophisticated applications for purchasing, maintenance or document management.

The new software applications where there was most interest were programs such as Palantir, to automatically fix software glitches and upgrade software on ships, just by inserting a CD.

Many shipping companies are putting a lot of thought into their corporate systems – how to get systems which work well for the whole company, connecting people together in the right way so they can share the right information.

SUBHEAD

Tor Jurgensen, Odfjell

Tor Jurgensen, ICT Manager of chemical shipping and storage giant Odfjell ASA, said that Odfjell's IT objectives were improved quality of work / productivity, achieve good asset utilisation, having good report and control systems. The IT products must be secure, stable and reliable.

Odfjell has an ICT steering committee, to generate a company wide IT strategy and co-ordinate it with the Odfjell business units. The senior vice president of each of the business unit sits on the steering committee.

“It is important we have a good communication between different business units and the ICT organisation,” he said.

The ICT section helps Odfjell maintain, manage and continually develop ICT solutions. “ICT is responsible for the technical specification and the application management,” he said.

The intranet has 700 users including vessels and mobile users.

Odfjell has standardised its hardware and software across the company as much as possible. There is a centralised computer centre where distributed solutions can be installed remotely on all PCs.

“24/7/365 – availability of all business critical applications is very important,” he said. “We have a high focus on security.”

“We want to introduce new versions of the system in a stable way without disrupting the existing environment.”

The company uses software applications for voyage management, financial control, support system, customer web, decision support, sales management, for shipmanagement.

It uses the Star software for purchasing; it uses the Agresso software for cost control. It uses the DNV Nauticus tools to manage class.

“It is important to have long term partnership with external partners – like software houses,” he said. “We have a philosophy to follow proven technology.”

The company is looking for an internet service provider which can guarantee how fast pages take to deliver.

“No-one is responsible for the internet, it’s very slow,” he said. “We are moving to MPLS (multi-protocol label switching) technology from AT+T – we get a service level agreement, covering capacity and response time.”

Odfjell has a back-up IT centre inside a mountain in Bergen. “We could be operational at this site within 2 hours,” he said. “We test this twice a year.”

What we really want to achieve is improved customer service; business rules – so we are not dependent on individuals and increased productivity,” he said.

SUBHEAD

Lars Sverre Gjolme, Western Bulk

Lars Sverre Gjolme, chief technology officer of Western Bulk Carriers said that Western Bulk believes it is a leader in the ongoing modernisation of shipping.

The company claims to be one of the world’s largest operators of handymax bulk carriers, and one of the biggest players in the futures trading (FFA) market.

“I have been working for 15 years in the grey zone between ICT and various business development in finance, banking, asset management, new media, technology,” he said.

Age Korsvold, chairman of Western Bulk, has stated that his ambition is that Western Bulk “should play a leading role in the ongoing process to modernise the shipping industry, becoming more integrated with its stakeholders.”

“We have developed an untraditional shipping organisation with mixed competence and skill base,” said Mr Gjolme.

As far as IT strategy, Western Bulk wanted to make a close link between its use of IT and company strategy. “We had to focus on what we are going to do now,” he said.

The company decided to buy completely new hardware, software and servers for the whole company. “New servers are heaven for the computer guys,” he said.

The company has replaced its ShipNet software with Datalog and Agresso, “due to our growth in the financial trading area,” he said. “There is no [software] solution for financial trading in shipping.”

“We believe in working with small companies,” he said. “They are faster and easier to deliver, and always tend to do the best for the company.”

The company has built its own intranet / content management system. “I think the intranet is a crucial part for us – it’s the corporate glue,” he said. “We try to use the intranet to get a concept of bringing people together. Everyone is using it constantly.”

The company is developing blogging tools, where people can write about what they think is going on in the market – this is a more effective way of sharing information than having everybody sending each other e-mail.

The intranet has a company event calendar, including relevant conferences, events and company visits. There are also spot indices and a news feed from TradeWinds. There is a weekly message from the company CEO.

The company is starting to make heavy use of instant messaging in the company, and use of SKYPE voice over IP (VOIP) tools is starting to grow.

Western Bulk is trying to change its e-mail strategy from push to pull, where staff go out and get the information they want, rather than have endless e-mails sent to them.

The entire company receives 110,000 e-mails per month, including 4,500 viruses and 8,300 spams, he said.

Mr Gjolme said that sometimes older people find it easier to adapt to newer ways of working than younger employees. “Young people can have very conservative attitudes,” he said. “Often young people don’t want to change. A lot of local kings have built their position around knowing something they don’t want to share.”

The success of the company’s financial activity comes down to its ability to create good statistical information and reports. “I think we have made a good approach for that,” he said. “I’m a believer in the collaborative approach – the intellectual hub.”

SUBHEAD
Bergesen / DNV

Jon Harald Eide IT, superintendent with Bergesen, made a joint presentation with Bjorn Berger, key account manager, DNV IT solutions, about how the two companies are working together to develop a specification for a standard IT infrastructure, which other shipping companies can follow.

Altogether Wilh. Wilhelmsen, Høegh Fleet Services, Bergesen D.Y ASA, IUM, Broström / Iver Ships, Klaveness, Teekay and DNV were involved in the project.

Ultimately having a standard specification should enable Bergesen to do IT support for many more vessels, without any more IT staff, the company believes.

“We thought there was a need for a more simple and cost efficient IT infrastructure for service orientated applications,” said Mr Berger.

“We don’t have much IT expertise on ships – the software has to be very stable. It should be cost effective to implement and maintain and more flexible than current solutions in use today.”

“We have a continuous dialogue with Bergesen on this - we didn’t develop Bergesen specific IT infrastructure,” he said. “We wanted something for shipping.”

The specification uses the minimum amount of different options for hardware, to make things easier to support. “We thought, the fewer hardware platforms we deliver on, the easier it is to maintain the hardware,” he said. “We thought, we could just go for one vendor, eg HP. We did not want to buy boxes from all over the world.”

“We thought – could we package up licenses in one package – we found that talking to Microsoft about licenses is a nightmare.”

Future development plans will be systems to send automatic e-mails to shore, for example if the fan on a shipboard server fails.

DNV is willing to develop a standard infrastructure specification for shipboard servers if a shipping company is willing to develop it together, he said.

Mr Eide said that Bergesen only has three members of IT staff for the whole company. “We decided we didn’t want to be our little kingdom any more,” he said. “We had to either develop ourselves or find some partners.”

The new infrastructure specification will be fully tested and monitored, then rolled out on 10 vessels during this year, with a view to using it on the whole fleet.

One particular problem Bergesen was keen to find a solution for was people on ship losing their passwords and phoning up the office.

“We have an application to make it easy for a master to reset a password,” he said. “That will save us 40 calls a month.”

“It cut the support calls in half. We thought, the phone system isn’t working,” he said.

Bergesen has a manual for seafarers, telling them exactly when and how to do data backups, in case the hard disk breaks.

“We would like to see shipping partners take this thing onboard,” Mr Berger said. “We don’t have ships ourselves – so it’s hard to know what you want on a ship. The idea is that everybody puts a little bit in, and you get something back.”

Mr Berger called on other shipping companies to participate in the venture. “Leave your company specific world,” he said. “There’s so much synergy. Convincing everybody this is the way to go is another story.”

SUBHEAD

Wilson

Asbjørn (quality assurance manager) and Torunn Aamoth (IT manager), Wilson Euro Carriers / Wilson Ship management, made a joint presentation about the software they are using to manage their ISPS documents and procedures, and a new tool they are using, developed by Palantir, which enables them to do software updates remotely.

“ISPS code caused a heartache for a lot of shipowners,” said Mr Asbjørnsen. “Our cargo is characterised by a lot of small shipments and many port calls.”

“We were starting to implement commercial procedures [for ISPS],” he said. “We decided to make all ISPS / ISM procedures electronic. Implementing of new documents took time.”

“There was no standards on hardware and software onboard. We had 386s to Pentium 4, Win 3.11 to Windows 2000. It was very resource demanding. There were as many systems onboard as we had vessels. It was really costly to run this onboard IT – there were a lot of quick fixes.”

“We decided on standards only, hardware and software,” he said.

“We have GSM, Sat –C, will have Iridium on all the vessels.”

“We wanted all procedures in electronic format,” he said. “We thought – we could prepare everything in the office and send it on shore. Then instead of sending 50 people to vessels, you maybe send 5.”

“On 90 per cent of the vessels it was possible,” he said. We ended up with a standard PC desktop.”

The vessels use the Palantir Keepup@Sea as standard software, which automatically repairs problems and enables new software applications to be installed just by putting in a CD.

The company uses Lotus Notes e-mail system, and Dialog ship-shore communication software. Onboard the ships, it installs Microsoft Office, Antivirus software, Adobe reader / pdf maker, picture viewer software and Power Zip.

The picture software is so that seafarers can send the office electronic photographs, for example of any cargo damage. The Power Zip software reduces the file sizes to reduce the communication costs. The company’s philosophy is to use standard products whenever it can.

Most of the hardware in the project was supplied by Palantir, apart from the Inmarsat –C terminal.

Palantir supplies all the software required on a vessel on 4 CDs, with 3 identical for all ships and 1 specific for the ship. Installing and testing each PC takes about 2 hours.

The CDs can be used to install the software in the first place and fix any problems.

“Even after a breakdown and backup you can use this – you’re back to where you were before the breakdown,” says Mr Asbjørnsen. “Support visits to the ship are virtually nil.”

Wilson has tested the system twice, when computer power supplies failed.

The software can automatically repair damaged or deleted operating system files. If necessary, the remote support can be provided to the computer over satellite.

In a recent upgrade, Palantir wanted to change the printer driver, upgrade the version of Dialog Communicator, and change the antivirus software being used (uninstalling Symantec and installing Norman Antivirus).

This task was also demonstrated to conference delegates in a live 7-minute demonstration, with the PC connected to the conference screen.

“We would never have managed to implement a system for 50 vessels without a solution like this,” said Mr Asbjørnsen.

One particular problem Wilson encountered was computers crashing onboard, due to a problem with the USB cable to the printer.

“We changed to ordinary parallel cabling,” said Torunn Aamo, IT manager of Wilson. We replaced printers on 50 vessels.

Mr Asbjørnsen said that Wilson experienced a few problems with synchronising databases between shore and ship, mainly because the updates were being implemented in the wrong order. “We made procedures of which documents should overrule the other one,” he said.

Mr Asbjørnsen echoed thoughts of Lars Sverre Gjølme from Western Bulk, that sometimes it is harder to convince younger employees to adopt new working methods than older ones.

“The youngest ones are the worst – they are going to do it the way they did it for the last 10 years,” he said.

SUBHEAD

Terje Kristiansen, ShipNet

Terje Kristiansen of ShipNet talked about ShipNet’s software to tell shipping companies how well they are performing.

Forms are filled in onboard the ship, such as a form for non-conformities, and the information is all gathered into one central database.

“We feel it is important to bring it together to one system,” he said.

The information can then be shown to charterers as a marketing tool. Companies can use it to demonstrate their safety record to P+I Clubs.

SUBHEAD Problems

In the panel discussion, chairman Dr Panagiotis Nomikos, business development manager of Danaos, asked shipping companies what their biggest problems with shipboard software were, following a similar session in Digital Ship Athens when many shipping companies complained about hidden extra costs from software suppliers.

The Scandinavian IT managers did not admit to any problems apart from those mentioned already – Bergesen saying too many seafarers forgot their passwords, and Wilson saying that some shipboard computers crashed due to a problem with the cable.

Jon Harald Eide, IT superintendent with Bergesen said that problems would be reduced if more shipping companies would collaborate on its projects to develop standard computer infrastructure for vessels.

“There are always challenges,” said Tor Jungersen, ICT Manager of Odfjell. “The first challenge is to have top management supporting the activities.”

“You are dependent on key personnel – normally clever people with other important tasks to do. I think that is a key factor when you implement a system.”

“The problem is that we all like to think we are individuals,” said Audun Melhus, IT Engineer at Solvang.

Dr Nomikos also asked panel participants what software they wanted to see to help record and manage key performance indicator (KPI) data, since many shipping companies are moving in that direction.

Jan Kalland, marketing manager of Star Information Systems, said that Star has developed a KPI system, but shipping companies are not using it too much. “We don’t receive too many proposals from shipping companies about the way to organise the data,” he said.

“There’s a lot of software for KPIs,” said Tor Jungersen, ICT Manager of Odfjell. But the challenge is to collect the data and integrate it from all sources – it is one of the biggest challenges.

SUBHEAD Kari-Anne Larmerud, Barber

Kari-Anne Larmerud, business architect and chief information officer, Barber Ship Management, talked about the role of IT in Barber’s ongoing transformation to a maritime services company incorporating shipmanagement, agency and software development.

In future there will be one company, Wilhelmsen Maritime Services, incorporating current companies Barber Shipmanagement (vessel and crew management), Barwil (ship agency) and BASS (ship operating software).

“We have quite an ambitious vision – we want to be the shaper of the maritime service industry,” she said. “Our customers are requiring integrated services, with port services, crewing and shipmanagement.”

Ms Larmerud spoke of the problems of finding the best software. “We are not very good at communicating our needs. Neither are the IT department and software vendors,” she said.

Ms Larmerud described the big interest in knowledge management software a few years ago as hype, which never delivered what it promised. “We were to make a revolution – everyone would get the information they needed in the right amount,” she said. “What I think is an important part of the solution is co-operation and community.”

Barber has created a job function ‘business architect’ to work out how the different parts should come together, under a new company, “Wilhelmsen Management Services.”

As business architect, Ms Larmerud needs to work out how the communication between different sections should work, particularly between ship management and crewing departments, she said.

“The first phase is building the foundation, building the IT infrastructure,” she said.

“The next phase – working together and streamlining our organisation, integrating our systems to work better and more efficiently, breaking down the walls between software, IT infrastructure, business area.

“The major problem in all business areas is that we don’t know what we need,” she said. “We have documented our processes very clearly. This is very important. We need to visualise how we are working.”

Barber wants to have the best possible software solutions to support its business processes, she said. “When we install a system, I have to measure that we achieved our goals.”

The company has used the Verit4Net IT infrastructure specification from DNV as its IT standard.

The target is to build a “Global Integrated Management System” [GIMS] which everybody has access to, incorporating the IT infrastructure, software and the company’s activities.

This should integrate all of the systems together. So for example, all shipboard maintenance, stock management, purchasing and shore supply networks can be integrated, so that using a spare part onboard will automatically lead to a new part being delivered at the next port.

“The challenge is working out which software systems should we keep on using – which should be scrap because we don’t get any benefit. We can we use the same system and where can we use a separate one,” she said.

“When evaluating our software we added a new dimension,” she said. “If you would like a long term relationship with a vendor – he must have high competence and be reliable.”

“Are they good at integration – can they do that?”

Barber is centralising its organisation as much as it can, with central databases and all areas using the same software.

One problem is maintaining common software onboard the ships, which are continually coming into and out of management; also the crew on ships are changing all the time, so there is no time to get them up to speed with new software.

“Training is somewhat complicated,” she said.

Barber’s own software company, BASS, is the company’s ‘primary’ software vendor. “They have developed the purchasing module on vessels,” she said.

“We want to install the same planned maintenance system on all of our vessels,” she said. “It’s tricky to convert from one planned maintenance system to another.”

“We are using BASS software wherever possible – but it’s difficult.”

ELECTRONIC PURCHASING

The electronic purchasing debate has moved on. Many shipping companies can see the benefits of electronic purchasing, but they aren’t persuaded to sign exclusive deals or subscription contracts with one provider.

The electronic purchasing companies are competing to offer better benefits, including analysis of your purchasing or supplying effectiveness (eg ratio of how many deals you get vs. how many you quote for), tools to convert vague requests into specific numbers, and tools to get more pictures onboard ship so seafarers can choose what they want.

There is still a long way to go until the ideal of complete automation – as soon as something is used onboard ship a replacement is automatically delivered to the next port. But we are clearly getting there.

SUBHEAD

Terry Kearney, SeaSupplier

Terry Kearney, managing director of SeaSupplier, said that electronic purchasing tools can provide business intelligence to the shipowner, helping them make better decisions.

The software automatically matches descriptions of products given by seafarers to product descriptions in supplier catalogues.

“Shipping companies want everything to be automated, apart from giving the approval,” he said.

E-commerce tools improve the competition in the market, by making it easier for shipping companies to talk to more suppliers, he said. The average request for quote to purchase order ratio in SeaSupplier is 2.86.

“This technology gives the supplier the opportunity to be in the office with their customers,” he said.

The technology is also designed to alert suppliers if something else happens, suppliers suddenly changing their prices and hoping the shipowner won't notice.

SeaSupplier can help vendors find out how their success ratio with quotes compares with other suppliers.

“Most vendors want to know, how good am I at quoting. That's a typical query from a supplier,” he said.

The company can also help shipowners benchmark their performance. “Buyers want to know how well they are competing against a certain standard,” he said. “They want to compare the order cycle time.”

The company is developing a shipboard electronic catalogue service, enabling seafarers to browse photographs.

Responding to questions from one ship supplier with 160 customers asking how e-commerce could add value, Mr Kearney said that e-commerce does not necessarily help with every transaction.

“If it doesn't save you time and money, customers don't want to do it, then there's no reason to do it,” he said.

SUBHEAD

Lars Rosenkrands, ShipServ

Lars Rosenkrands, VP sales and marketing, ShipServ, said the company currently handles purchasing for 1100 ships, linking to 3,000 suppliers. “We are seeing an explosion in interest from buyers and suppliers in these services,” he said.

ShipServ is 5 years old and its largest shareholder is Thomas Miller, which operates marine insurance and P+I Clubs.

ShipServ is proving to be able to reduce order cycle time by 30 per cent, he said. Suppliers can use it to improve their customer service and reach more customers; they can save as much as \$15 per order on reduced administration involved in order handling.

SUBHEAD

Torben Brammer, ShipCentric

Torben Brammer, CEO of ship supplier software company ShipCentric, produces software based on Microsoft products. It puts together a special package for

suppliers, using many different Microsoft solutions, supplied in a bundle at a special price, he said.

The company has offices in Denmark, US, Canada and Singapore.

ShipCentric does not actually do e-commerce transactions, but it helps suppliers connect with an e-commerce platform, such as ShipServ.

The software integrates with the LR Fairplay vessel database, so suppliers can have good information about ships at their fingertips, for example finding out how many ro-ro ships are in Scandinavia.

Suppliers can also input automatic rules, for example to reject any orders or requests for quotes that do not have specific part numbers.

SUBHEAD

Lars Erik Kristiansen, MTS

“E-commerce is about cost saving,” said Lars Erik Kristiansen, marketing manager, Maritime Transaction Services.

Mr Kristiansen said he thought it was time that the electronic purchasing services started talking to each other, because it was unlikely there was ever going to be one single winner. They will have to talk eventually, so why not start now.

Mr Kristiansen said that some portals are trying to make shipping companies sign exclusive deals to only deal with them. “Why should you do that?” he asked.

SUBHEAD

Per Anders Koien, Star

Per Anders Koien, managing director of Star Information Systems (SIS), talked about his systems for bringing contract management tools onto the vessel.

Star has systems for onboard maintenance, document management, and fleet supply / logistics, including e-commerce.

Shipping company IM Skaugen is currently pushing 70-80 per cent of its purchase orders through SIS Commerce he said, up from 20 per cent in Jan 2003. Wallenius Shipmanagement is another big client.

Mr Koien said that one obstacle to electronic purchasing is linking together the different catalogues. “There’s a lot of old vessels out there with strange catalogue spare part information,” he said. “Smooth e-commerce is very hard to get.”

Subhead

Jennefer Tobin, Datatrac

Jennefer Tobin, managing director of Datatrac, talked about software and hardware tools which can improve the quality of data gathering onboard ships, leading to more accurate purchasing.

Datatrak markets a solution for the maritime industry using computer pens – you write with them like a normal pen, but it automatically downloads an image of the handwriting into a computer, which can then convert the handwriting to text.

“You eliminate typing, at the same time, eliminate the need for paper, document storage, improve data accuracy, reduce the burden for sea staff,” she said. “You can try this without disrupting your system.”

SUBHEAD Ged Lunt, AMOS

Ged Lunt, international product manager with Xantic software AMOS, said that electronic purchasing is designed as a “plug-in” to its shipboard AMOS software. “When you want to start doing e-commerce we plug in the module,” he said.

AMOS software integrates with many different electronic purchasing systems.

“Some people use MTML some use proprietary standards,” he said.

Around 2,000 vessels operated by around 200 shipping companies are using AMOS e-commerce solutions, normally working with another service to connect with suppliers.

Around 3 million transactions were handled through AMOS software last year, with an average of 4 transactions per requisition.

Mr Lunt said that the standardisation between the different services is improving; there is also a growth in web services, for example websites which help you get the best airfare.

SUBHEAD MTML

There was interesting debate about what improvements might be necessary to the marine purchasing electronic communications standard MTML.

Ged Lunt, AMOS product manager, said in his view the electronic communication standard MTML still needs to be improved. “We need better standards, and the standards need to be strengthened and improved, he said.

“We need to make sure the standard is widely adopted. “We’d like to see shipmanagers taking a greater role in MTML.”

AMOS customers would like electronic notification from suppliers that something has arrived at the destination intact; it would also like additional description information for items, for example where there are different pricing levels for different things, with price or percentage discounts.

“We’d like to see a focus more on the business process,” he said.

Mr Lunt said that certain aspects of other supplier’s portals still used proprietary communication protocols. “We’d like to see it in MTML,” he said.

Per Anders Koien of Star Information Services said that MTML is not used enough. "It's a language no one can speak," he said. "The problem comes with agreeing what should be in the standard. I think for MTML to be a success we have to bring in a shipping company."

Lars Rosenkrands of ShipServ said that a release of version 2.0 of MTML should be available shortly. "MTML may not be a perfect standard but there's a new release on the way," he said.

SUBHEAD

Satcoms and e-purchasing

Ged Lunt said that "quite a lot" of AMOS customers manage their purchasing directly from the ship, to an approved budget given by shipmanagers.

Responding to questions about how important it is for ships to be always on to manage effective electronic purchasing, Mr Rosenkrands from ShipServ said that for ships to be always on was "lovely," although it may not specifically lead to more efficient business processes.

Terry Kearney from SeaSupplier said that the most costly aspect of electronic purchasing is the shipboard implementation cost.

"If you had a communication mechanism to access the system ashore, the implementation cost onboard would go away," he said.

SUBHEAD

Bergesen

Odd Jarle Holtekjolen, a purchasing manager for Bergesen, said that the subscription cost is still an obstacle to using electronic purchasing for him; after all, no-one has to pay for subscriptions to purchase books on Amazon.

"We don't need an electronic interface – because we don't want to pay subscriptions," he said.

TFDS

TFDS group, which part-operates the famous "Hurtigruten Express" along the Norwegian coast (cruise ship in summer, local lifeline in winter), is looking for ways to use information technology tools to improve its operation.

The company was voted second best cruise operator in the world by the UK Daily Telegraph newspaper.

The company has 2,200 employees, nearly all Norwegian, and operates 48 ships altogether, with annual revenues of NOK 2,470m. It was established in 1866.

The company also owns 50 per cent of Fjord Line, which runs from Newcastle (UK) to Bergen (Norway), and Bergen to Denmark. It runs 2 cruise vessels in the summer, to Spitzbergen, an island North of Norway.

The company is keep to make better use of IT to put together flexible bundles for customers, including hotel, air transfer and excursions. These must be as flexible as possible, to cater for different budgets.

Currently the shipping company has two separate booking systems, one on shore, and one on the ship. The shipboard system kicks in after the vessel leaves.

The company has fitted Sealink VSAT systems on its vessels for data communication with ships.

One problem with the VSAT system is that it is not working 100 per cent of the time, says Gunnar Bergland, CIO.

“There are several blind spots,” he says. “And when the ship turns, the thrusters are so powerful, the satellite cannot turn fast enough.”

The company is keen to develop booking functionality onboard the vessel, so passengers enjoying themselves can book their cruise for next year.

“We will build a customer relationship management system to take better care of repeat customers,” says Mr Bergland. “40 per cent of German tourists use the product because they were recommended by others.”

TFDS would also like better yield management tools, so it could move the prices up and down to keep even numbers of passengers on each cruise.

“We want to disperse the available capacity between various products,” he says.

The 4 main revenue streams are tourists, local people travelling from one place to another, shipboard conferences and freight of goods.

Each revenue stream has its own process department – Mr Bergland thinks that the communications between the different departments could be improved.

Subhead International Business Solutions

Greek ship security software and training company International Business Solutions (IBS) says it has put together ship security plans for 450 vessels and trained 400 personnel in ISPS.

Its maritime training services are certified by DNV; only 6 companies in the world have DNV-certified training, the company says.

“We were the 2nd company in the world to certify ISPS training with SeaSkills,” says Apostolos Belokas, managing director.

The company is 6.5 years old. It was originally started by Mr Be kolas, a ship superintendent at the time, together with Perikles Koukis, a naval architect.

The company specialises in making tailor made products for shipping companies; since every company has its own procedures and ideas about how training should be made, tailor made software is the only way forward, the company believes.

“We have a very flexible fee structure – it can be cheaper to have something done tailor made,” Mr Belokas says.

“People say – I want a bit more of this and more of that.”

BOX TEXT

Many of the original presentations from Digital Ship Scandinavia can be downloaded from the Digital Ship website free of charge. Go to www.thedigitalship.com/presentations.htm.

For further information about the companies covered, you can visit their websites

www.newslinkservices.com

www.brostrom.se

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