

A large yellow and white cargo ship is shown from an aerial perspective, sailing on a dark blue sea. The ship is moving towards the bottom left of the frame, leaving a white wake.

Keeping international shipping safe.



Company: Regs4Ships

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Maritime Information Systems

Profile: Specialists in provision of digital regulations, technical information and IMO material to ships.

Key Drivers: Minimize satellite transmission costs between shore based headquarters and ships at sea.

Regs4ships Ltd specialises in the provision of digital regulations, technical information and IMO material to ships and shore infrastructure. With the only database of its kind in the world, Regs4Ships' customers include Shell, BP, P&O, Cunard, Stolt, Stena and many ports, lawyers, insurers, suppliers, colleges and consultants.

Regs4ships offer a new Safety Management System based on Microsoft SharePoint 2007. The system links to all the regulatory and statutory publications including all IMO Codes and Resolutions (e.g. SOLAS, MARPOL, STCW) and Flag State regulations. Updates to the SMS content are sent to remote users onboard ship by either Internet, or via the email system.

Notifications are also sent from the ships back to shore containing operational audits. These are entered into the ships' SharePoint system, and the updated records are sent back to headquarters automatically when the ship is in satellite range.

The challenge of running SharePoint over Satellite

SharePoint is, by nature, a network intensive software system. Deploying the SharePoint based Safety Management System thus presents a problem for fleets of ships at sea with limited access to communications. Satellite bandwidth is expensive and intermittent. The Regs4Ships team sought a technology that would overcome this challenge and allow every user onboard to have immediate but controlled access to all the manuals and forms they need without having to experience long delays over a satellite link.

Choosing Infonic Geo-Replicator™

The Regs4Ships team identified Infonic Geo-Replicator™ as the best available technology to address the challenge of providing users on remote ships with uninterrupted access to the SharePoint based Safety Management System. Infonic's unique technology was shown to be able to handle all the updates between shore and ship and back again despite the highly unreliable and expensive bandwidth available at sea. Infonic Geo-Replicator™ has powerful data compression algorithms which were shown to be able to compress updates by 90% so that they could be efficiently sent over low bandwidth satellite networks to and from ships all over the world.

CASE STUDY - Geo-Replicator™ - Regs4Ships



“Infonic Geo-Replicator™ allows shore managers and ships’ crews to refer to integrated data within the Regs4Ships SMS in near real time”

said **Richard Eastham**,
Technical Director of Regs4ships

Benefits of Geo-Replicator™

- 90% compression of Safety Management System updates
- Uninterrupted access to up-to-date regulatory, safety and technical information at sea
- Reduction in expensive satellite usage
- No user training required for proprietary SMS interface
- Simple integration with Microsoft SharePoint

Geo-Replicator™ in action with APL Maritime

An early customer of Regs4ships new system was APL Maritime. APL were investigating proprietary SMS systems to deliver health and safety compliance but were concerned about the need to train users on a proprietary interface and concerned they would become locked into a proprietary SMS system that it was difficult to migrate away from in the future. The Regs4ships SharePoint based system addressed all these concerns and with Infonic Geo-Replicator™ it also offered control of satellite costs.

In addition to the provision of shipboard implementation of their new system, Regs4ships also offer a hosting service based at a secure data centre on the south coast of the UK. This facility has SharePoint and Infonic Geo-Replicator™ servers dedicated to sending and receiving updates to and from the customers’ ships at sea.

Richard Eastham, Technical Director of Regs4ships, says “Shipping companies no longer have to operate in a legislative vacuum. For the first time ever personnel can refer to company procedures which are directly related to the latest Flag State and International regulations. The Regs4Ships system with Infonic Geo-Replicator™ allows shore managers and ships’ crews to refer to integrated data in near real time. Auditing of the integrated system is simplified and as a consequence the vessel vastly reduces the risks of non-conformities at ISM and ISPS audit compared to a standard paper based system”.