KVH launches AgilePlans
and expands content services

KVH CELEBRATED THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS MINI-VSAT BROADBAND OFFERING FOR COMMERCIAL MARITIME BY LAUNCHING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE AGILEPLANS SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

KVH Industries has unveiled its AgilePlans subscriptions for its mini-VSAT Broadband service, which is 10 years old in July. KVH has also expanded the content it offers to shipping through its IP-MobileCast service, which sends information, entertainment content and training programmes to ships.

The first version of KVH's mini-VSAT Broadband service was launched in July 2007, along with the TracPhone V7 antenna. This became one of three V-series antennas that are available with version two of mini-VSAT Broadband.

KVH introduced AgilePlans to provide its range of services in one monthly subscription that includes the necessary hardware and additional value-added solutions. KVH chief executive Martin Kits van Heyningen said AgilePlans provides airtime and voice services, data management via the myKVH portal, vessel tracking, crew welfare, Videotel training content and delivery of third-party chart and weather data.

"Ship operators know they can drive efficiency when they bring fast and reliable broadband on board," he said. "With the AgilePlans service, they will be able to get the benefits from day one. The response has been impressive already."

The company is currently developing additional value-added services including an internet of things product designed to aid vessels in systems monitoring and preventative maintenance. KVH is also enhancing its mini-VSAT Broadband network with additional high-speed bandwidth capacity incorporating high throughput satellite coverage.

The IP-MobileCast content delivery service includes Videotel maritime training programs, NewsLink daily news, sports and entertainment channels, and

TracPhone V11-IP is a combined C-band and Ku-band antenna

ChartLink, which supplies the latest electronic navigational charts (ENCs) to shipping.

KVH announced a link-up with ENC provider ChartCo during the Nor-Shipping exhibition in Lillestrøm, Norway. ChartLink for ChartCo will deliver ENCs, digital publications, weather forecasts, notices to mariners for chart corrections and navigation warnings to ships through the multicasting service.

Ships using this service will have the latest ENCs

and e-navigation documents sent on board automatically, said KVH director of IP-MobileCast services Robert Hopkins. "Owners need confidence that ships have the latest ENCs and they are updated with notices to mariners," he said.

"Our service will also deliver flag and port authority regulations that ships require to sail in those waters for port state control compliance. And environmental regulation information can be displayed."

KVH also has

ForecastLink for weather forecasts from the MetManager service, StormGeo's Bon Voyage service and has added YourLink service for shipowners to send their corporate videos, such as safety notices, across a fleet of ships.

Mr Hopkins said one of the first ship operators to use YourLink is container ship manager Seaspan Corp. "The safety culture video motivates the crew at sea," he said, adding: "We multicast

to deliver the file and host the video on the ships in our entertainment unit."

KVH's modern TracPhone range includes the 39cm Ku-band TracPhone V3-IP model, the 60cm Ku-band TracPhone V7-IP, and the 1.1m dual C and Ku-band TracPhone V11-IP antenna. To date more than 7,000 mini-VSAT Broadband systems have been deployed which, according to industry analyst Northern Sky Research, represents 29 per cent of all vessels using Ku-band.

Ships need shore-based IT support

Ships require considerable support from IT teams ashore because there are no experts on board. Some seafarers have some knowledge of computers and bridge equipment, but there is no dedicated IT expert on a ship. This was highlighted by Ericsson business director Douglas Watson during a seminar, co-hosted by Riviera Maritime Media and Speedcast International, in Norway at the end of May.

He said that one of the biggest challenges ship operators face is managing onboard IT networks when there are no IT experts on ships. "The complexity of IT on vessels means crews need shore-based operating staff to support them, and tasks are pushed back to shore, to suppliers or company IT support," he explained.

Ericsson's biggest maritime customer is Maersk Line, which operates more than 400 container ships. Mr Watson said Maersk has 1,300 IT professionals, but no IT person on the vessels. Ericsson manages the infrastructure, IT networks and communications, using VSAT and L-band connectivity.

Maersk Line is collaborating with IBM to use blockchain technology to help transform the global, cross-border supply chain. This involves the digitalisation of supply chain processes to enhance transparency and security. Mr Watson welcomed the initiative, adding that blockchain technology could be used to prevent non-authorised people from making changes to online documents.

World-Link unveils ship cyber security

World-Link Communications has introduced the ShipSecure suite of cyber defence services for shipping. This is a comprehensive security package that mitigates the cyber threats that could be delivered to vessels over satellite communications.

ShipSecure has access to the latest global threat intelligence information. Therefore, it can maintain the integrity of information being transmitted between a vessel and the internet. World-Link said the service has protection against advanced malware and ransomware, web filtering and

Asad Salameh: "Shipping is vulnerable to cyber attacks and malware"

application awareness. It also has network firewalling and advanced identity and control functions.

World-Link president Asad Salameh said the shipping industry is vulnerable to cyber attacks and malware because of recent advances in broadband services, which is why the company developed a cyber security suite.

"ShipSecure delivers onboard vulnerability assessment, real-time protection and threat mitigation through a multi-layered approach addressing cyber threats at each level of a vessel's network

infrastructure," he explained. "ShipSecure features provide IT and network security managers complete visibility to the fleet security through a number of managed configurations and real-time reporting."

The service will operate over L-band and VSAT services, especially Fleet Xpress. Mr Salameh said ShipSecure will provide protection of the data stream before it arrives or leaves the vessel. World-Link delivers satellite communications to more than 1,600 vessels worldwide. *VSAT*