

TECHMAN: CRUISING WITH SHAREPOINT REPLICATION

One wouldn't automatically connect private, luxury superyachts with high tech software, but yacht management companies are getting on board with web-based content management and replication solutions that can help them keep better track of their vessels.

THE NEED

The world of yachting is governed by a wide array of codes, requirements and procedures that must be met to ensure safety and legal compliance on the open water. In order to ensure compliance, people on shore need to be able to see what's happening on the vessel even if they don't have access to the vessel directly.

Traditionally, people on land have achieved access using a VSAT connection – mobile satellite internet – but VSAT is still slow in 2011. Coverage can be patchy and rates remain high. It's just not practical to use it to see what's happening onboard.

That is why a company called Techman provides customized software solutions to meet the data management needs of these large, private, luxury superyachts, which are typically greater than 60 meters in length.

THE SOLUTION

In 2010, Techman began offering its clients a unique solution for planned maintenance and International Safety Management (ISM) compliance that combines Microsoft's SharePoint® and the Synergy Replicator.

"Because yachts are out in the middle of the ocean, they don't always have an internet connection, but they still need to know what maintenance to perform on board," said Mark Wynn, Director, Techman. "So we put a SharePoint® server on board and we use the Synergy Replicator to synchronize data to a SharePoint® server on land."

The solution is entirely transparent to the yacht owner. It is the yacht management companies, captains and shipyards that require a land-based connection to each yacht, whether it is docked or at sea.

Maintenance and scheduling data is not all that Techman's solution streamlines, however. Through some very specific custom development work, Techman and Synergy have designed a solution that allows program updates to be replicated—by first of all transferring the code over to the other boats and then by running the application updates automatically. This cutting edge development work extends Replicator's standard application from content to code.

VITAL STATISTICS

Products:

- SharePoint™ Server
- Synergy Replicator® for SharePoint

Customer:

Techman

Industry:

High Tech

Website:

www.techmansoftware.com

Application:

Project Management and Planned Maintenance solutions for large yachts, shipyards, management companies and superyachts.

Benefits:

- Real-time task tracking ensures the ball doesn't get dropped
- Access to centralized documentation ensures everybody is working off the same, most up-to-date version
- Improved issue tracking avoids cost overruns and helps timely delivery





THE BENEFITS

The core of Techman's software solution is used to successfully track and manage planned maintenance. A yacht is essentially a floating hotel and it is critical to make sure that safety equipment is serviced and that other maintenance issues are taken care of.

Other types of replicated information concern things like equipment lists and certificate expiry dates. For both the crew and the yachts there are typically 100 or more certificates that need to be managed. For example, it is essential to know that the Class 4 engineer's license will expire in 2 years and will need to be renewed.

The solution tracks certificate information, expiry and renewal dates, and generates reminders so that the people ashore can see it. Syntergy's Replicator replicates that information. And, in order to conserve primetime bandwidth, Engineering Technical Officers are able to select what time of day data transfers or replicated packages will occur.

Diagnostic information can also be replicated from ship to shore. Custom solutions may include an interface to the machinery log on board—a bus with up to 600 independent channels—which streams diagnostic information from the equipment onboard. If that particular boat has one of these interfaces, the diagnostic data, such as fuel level, exhaust gas temperature, running hours, will also be replicated.

In addition to managing the content related to planned maintenance, certificate information and diagnostic data, the SharePoint+Replicator solution supports the International Safety Management (ISM) code requiring that each boat have safety procedures and reporting in place. That procedure outlines specific acts to be performed in specific circumstances. For example, if there were an accident on board, the yacht owner would have to keep track of what the accident was, how it happened, if there were any problems with the safety procedure itself and what was done to resolve it. Following the ISM manuals is very important and highly critical to the safe operation of all vessels.

By combining SharePoint's content management and collaboration features with the synchronization capabilities of the Syntergy Replicator, Techman has developed a solution that effectively allows interested parties on shore to be able to see what's going on aboard a vessel even if they don't have access to the vessel directly.



ABOUT TECHMAN

Techman was officially launched at Project 98, the annual Amsterdam project management seminar (now known as the Global SuperYacht Forum).

Its first software product was the result of several years of conceptual design and collaboration with professionals in all areas of the yachting industry.

Techman used its industry knowledge and business processes expertise to take the organization of paper documentation (technical manuals, drawings and binders) to the next level of sophistication: a software-based solution combining documentation and vessel management.

The company's product range has evolved over the years. Its current flagship product is The Hub, a comprehensive, industry-leading platform for building, operating, refitting and managing superyachts.

Techman is based in the port of Antibes, France, at the heart of the Mediterranean yachting capital, and within easy reach of the shipyards and refit facilities of Europe.