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MACKAY NEWS:

Inmarsat Announces 10k Fleet Xpress Ka-Band Satellite Terminal Installation – in Parallel to Demands for Maritime Digitization

Inmarsat passes 10,000-Vessel Fleet Xpress installation milestone as data demand accelerates Maritime Digitalisation

With ship data consumption doubling during 2020, Inmarsat launches new 'Fleet Data Academy' with partners and shipowners to understand full benefits of digitalisation provided by a fast-growing ecosystem of applications

Inmarsat, the world leader in global, mobile satellite communications, has completed its 10,000th [Fleet Xpress](#) ship installation. Simultaneously the company has launched a new 'Fleet Data Academy' with existing partners, shipowners and operators support the full understanding and adoption of digital applications that are making the maritime industry safer, greener and more efficient.

Fleet Xpress clients now include the world's leading container ship and tanker owners, such as MOL, K-Line and Hapag-Lloyd, offshore support giants like Bourbon, Tidewater and Maersk Supply, as well as growing numbers of yachts, passenger ships and fishing boats. Strong customer growth has seen Inmarsat report average daily download rates per vessel of around 8GB as of December 2020. This compares to less than 4 GB at the mid-year point of 2020.

"The Fleet Xpress service continues to provide shipping's gold standard for seamless, mobile broadband. We are now entering a 'Fleet Xpress 2.0' era as it moves way beyond a connectivity pipe, and becomes a true digital platform with our [Fleet Data](#) service now integrated as part of Fleet Xpress with the basic level of Fleet Data free of charge. This makes access to an ecosystem of applications and value-added services available on demand," says Ronald Spithout, President, Inmarsat Maritime.

"With 10,000 vessels worldwide now depending on Fleet Xpress 24/7, this is a moment to express our thanks to our end-users and our technology, installation, manufacturing and channel partners, and to reflect on 2020 as the tipping point for maritime digitalisation. That is why we have launched our new 'Fleet Data Academy' in order to work together with partners and end-users to realise the full benefits of digitalisation," says Spithout.

Inmarsat will also launch a series of incentives over the coming weeks to celebrate the significant milestone.

The installation landmark was reached during the same month as Inmarsat's most powerful satellite to date entered service, with [GX5](#) joining the only globally available high-speed mobile broadband network delivered by a single operator. GX5 provides additional capability to maritime customers of Fleet Xpress in Europe and the Middle East, and delivers approximately double the combined capacity of the entire existing GX fleet (GX1-GX4).

"Covid-19 has brought a major spike in data demand for crew connectivity and our Fleet Hotspot wi-fi solution has gained exceptional traction, but the arrival of Fleet Data as maritime's first secure and scalable Internet of Things platform has also been pivotal" adds Spithout. "Using cloud-based data storage and interfacing easily with decision-making software, this has moved Fleet Xpress to a '2.0' solution. This also delivers fully on the promise of smart shipping, fully-scalable for vessel operators, making maritime accessible for start-up application providers just as it is for established corporates."

A '[Digitalisation Uncovered](#)' survey of 370 ship owners commissioned by Inmarsat at the end of 2020 saw 71% of respondents citing cost reduction and operational efficiencies as a top three driver for digitalisation, while compliance featured as a top three concern for 60%. The move from Class Societies to support remote surveys, wider adoption of telemedicine and shipyards building in smart capability to newbuildings are also transformative.

"Maritime digitalisation is now unstoppable" says Spithout. "The market is becoming mature enough to support its own digital ecosystem with separate bandwidth channels for crew, applications and operations. Our recent experience in offering Fleet Data as integral to Fleet Xpress at no additional cost suggests that, once owners get a taste of what is on offer, they quickly recognise its value and the benefits of using our ecosystem of partners. In the coming months we will continue this in partnership with our wholesale and retail partners."

Inmarsat's '[Trade 2.0](#)' research, released in 2019, suggested that start-ups could account for around 40% of the market for new applications developed to support ship safety, efficiency, security and environmental performance in the years ahead. This groundswell of solution providers is verified by the fact that 44% of the 35 companies currently signed up with Inmarsat's Certified Application Provider (CAP) programme are either qualified start-ups or scale up companies with strong product expertise.

Spithout comments "We continue to help innovators, through our support for the [Rainmaking and Bluetech start-up initiatives](#), by establishing this 'Fleet Data Academy' for our CAP partners, and also through the recent Open Innovation Challenge for start-ups ran in conjunction with Shell Shipping and Maritime and Thetius." In the last case, Fleet Xpress is providing the connectivity so that the winner - Canary Sentinel-Workrest – can complete proof of concept on a working tanker in the weeks ahead.

Inmarsat's fully-funded technology roadmap sees a further seven satellite launches over the next four years, with two in highly elliptical orbit to deliver the world's only commercial Arctic mobile broadband service.

"We believe that reliable, seamless connectivity with a platform such as Fleet Xpress is now more vital than ever and will play a crucial role in the accelerated adoption of digital technology as the world emerges from Covid-19," adds Spithout.

"Our partners and customers can confidently invest in long-term, transformational global digitalisation," Spithout concluded.