

Avoiding the storms ahead

> **Modern technology and the information** it provides are only as good as the user's ability to interpret and deploy them to best effect. Failing to get the most from a smart phone is hardly a cardinal sin, but missing vital insight into storms ahead could be catastrophic. Moreover, warns Adm (Retd) Sir Ian Forbes in his foreword to *Numerical Weather Predictions – a practical guide for mariners*, not all commercially available weather services are as reliable as they claim to be. And until training authorities and professional bodies are able to teach the full capabilities of the technology on offer, help is required.

To put this manual into context, 45% of all ship losses between 2006 and 2010 were attributed to the weather, in spite of the advanced forecasting technology now available, according to the International Union of Marine Insurance.

“Insurers, mariners, and shipping companies have not responded to the improvements in weather forecast accuracy or adjusted their procedures and expectations,” explains author Huw Davies. This is partly because the jargon and complexity work against seafarers using modern technology to best effect. However,

efforts to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of a numerical weather forecasting model and make informed judgements on suitability and use would be rewarded with improved safety and commercial efficiency.

This Nautical Institute guide is in line with the organisation's strategic plan that identified the needs of the seafarer as key to the development of eNavigation. The project was initiated to harmonise the exchange of information between ship and shore to support decision-making.

“Information should be reliable,” emphasises the Institute's project director David Patraiko, adding that this guide aims to ensure that seafarers make the best use of the technology in a “practical and professional” way.

The guide explains how numerical weather predictions are created and examines the accuracy and characteristics of the main meteorological and wave models. Subsequent

chapters demonstrate how seafarers can evaluate the added value of the many digital weather products and services on offer, and help them to set up their own forecasts using freely available sources and viewers.

Speaking at the launch, Andrew Paul from Carnival Corporation's maritime policy team, stressed the importance to the shipowner of the continued evolution of numerical weather predictions. Accurate forecasting enables seafarers “to use their judgement on the most appropriate route to optimise safety and efficiency,” he said. He

believes improvements to forecasting “mean improved support for the master”. 

Richard Clayton



> **Numerical Weather Predictions**

– a practical guide for mariners is available from **The Nautical Institute**, price **£30**

Best practice made easy

> **The International Chamber of Shipping**, a trade association for shipowners representing more than four-fifths of the world's merchant fleet, is to make its publications on best practices for shipping companies available as eBooks. ICS will use the eReader technology developed by Witherby Seamanship Group, which is now used by many other bodies that produce maritime publications, including the IMO.

Publications to be made available as eBooks from April will still be published on behalf of ICS by Marisec Publications and will only be available from maritime booksellers.

The first eBooks will be the *ICS Bridge Procedures Guide* (4th edition), the *ICS Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations* (4th edition), and the *ICS/ISF Guidelines on the Application of the ISM Code* (4th edition). Other ICS publications will be made available as eBooks when new or

revised editions of print versions are published.

They will be available as single-user versions (with the same recommended retail price as the existing print editions) or as network versions, giving access to five copies of the eBook for only twice the cost of the single-user version. Full details of prices can be obtained from maritime booksellers.

Guides to best practices are an essential complement to international maritime regulations adopted by the IMO, and are required reading by companies and seafarers involved in maritime operations. 



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