

Report on e-Navigation

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of e-Navigation is certainly a familiar one to marine pilots.

We already use generic electronic marine navigation such as high-integrity electronic positioning systems, electronic navigational charts and related display information systems and vessel traffic tracking systems.

Of course, e-Navigation has a much wider application than just the specific applications we use for pilotage.

Ultimately, e-Navigation, as IMO conceives it, involves the integration, standardization and best management practices for ship- and shore-based systems and information, so as to foster the most effective use of electronic navigation equipment and know-how.

The objective is the safest and most efficient navigation system possible, and open to continual improvement and change.

IMO has developed a strategy for implementing e-Navigation, and we can expect substantial progress toward that goal over the next few years.

I speak from experience when I say that pilots are very much involved in this process. As the member of the IMPA executive with responsibility for this file, I have not only participated in a number of meetings convened by various international organizations on the subject, but I have had a first-hand opportunity to observe the input and contributions being made by a number of pilot groups.

I can tell you that pilots are playing a leading role and that takes me to the first point I want to discuss this afternoon.

EMBRACING CHANGE

Because the e-Navigation initiative is so much larger than just its pilotage dimension, and because it is well and truly launched on a path to implementation, pilots must not only accept it as a reality, but embrace it as a positive development that can lead to better and safer marine navigation. This constructive attitude toward e-Navigation is essential if pilots are to have the credibility required to be key participants in the process itself.

We have an excellent track record of taking the concept of e-Navigation and applying it with imagination and effectiveness to pilotage. I will leave it to my colleague and fellow panelist, Capt. Kevin Vail, to elaborate on this.

My point now is simply to underline the importance of strategically positioning ourselves as e-Navigation proponents that understand what it means and are able and eager to give it practical effect.

THERE ARE LIMITS

It may seem like a paradox, but the fact is that in positioning ourselves as e-Navigation advocates, pilots improve their ability to limit how it is implemented.

While recognizing the value of better electronic aids to navigation and shore-based support, IMPA has consistently maintained that the purpose of these improvements must always be to **assist** pilots as they discharge their duties, rather than to **replace** them.

This is especially important in light of some peoples' view that Vessel Traffic Management needs to be re-thought with the idea in mind of controlling and centralizing information at on-shore locations. It's only a small step – but a very dangerous one – to go from controlling and centralizing information on-shore to transferring **decision-making** from the bridge to the shore.

So, we have limits when it comes to e-Navigation. The decisive role of pilots on-board vessels must not be compromised or usurped by a shore-based decision-making model. This philosophy underlies IMPA's Position Statement to the IMO on the e-Navigation strategy and will guide our participation in the work that continues on its implementation.

The Position Statement sets out three principles that IMPA believes must guide any e-Navigation strategy.

1. Predominance of the Human Element

e-Navigation must reflect that mariners are the most critical factor in safe navigation. This means the expert human element on the bridge must be at the centre of decision-making.

2. Meeting the Needs of the Bridge Team and the Pilot

e-Navigation must give priority to responding to the needs of the bridge team and the pilot.

3. Looking Out the Window Remains Essential

e-Navigation must recognize the value of information obtained through **other** means. To ensure safe navigation, e-Navigation data must be complemented and validated through such traditional means as looking out the window.

The ability of marine pilots to ensure that these three principles prevail as the e-Navigation initiative is implemented depends, to a large extent, on us being seen as well-informed and reasonable partners with industry and regulators in this important endeavor.

It also depends on another important factor.

UNITED WE STAND

Pilots everywhere in the world need to speak with one voice on e-Navigation.

Both the IMPA and the European Pilots' Association have done good work in developing consensus among pilots as to what our message is when participating in the deliberations of such international organizations as the IMO and the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities – the IALA. It is also important that the representations made by pilot groups at the national level are consistent with what is said by pilots elsewhere.

In Canada, we are very much involved with the Canadian Coast Guard, industry and other stakeholders in activities related to the planning and implementation of e-Navigation initiatives. We are careful to ensure that our representations and contributions at these activities are aligned with what I like to think of as a global pilot vision on e-Navigation.

To the extent that pilots differ substantially on e-Navigation issues, those who seek to diminish the role of pilots in marine transportation will take advantage of the division. Proposals by pilot groups that promote shore-based pilotage at the expense of pilotage from the bridge of the vessel can be particularly damaging to safe navigation, which is in no one's interest.

CONCLUSION

So, to repeat, there are three things we must always keep in mind as the e-Nav initiative moves forward.

We love e-Navigation; it is the future and we welcome it.

Nothing can replace the human element in terms of navigational judgement and control from the bridge of a vessel.

Pilots will be successful in helping an e-Navigation framework that is both safe and cost-effective if we speak reasonably and with one voice.

Thank you.