



Byte size

Requirement: Mobile communications solution to enable the exchange of large data files while at sea in order to enable a graphic designer to run his business from his yacht

Fleet 33

- Compact, lightweight, easy to install and reliable
- Mobile packet data service (MPDS) - 64kbps downstream and 28kbps upstream
- Global coverage - digital voice
- (4.8kbps) available everywhere except the polar regions
- Spot beam coverage - supporting fax (9.6kbps) and data (9.6kbps) - compression can offer data speeds up to 34kbps)

US businessman Neville Hockley is sailing round the world in his yacht, but using Fleet 33 to keep his business running smoothly, writes **David Murphy**

Designs on the sea

Neville Hockley has a passion for the sea. In 1994, he spent six months sailing from Australia to Italy on a Lidguard sloop named *Aphrodite*, and subsequently chronicled the experience in a book named *Dream Time*. But Neville has another passion too. At the end of 1997, the British-born, 37-year old designer founded a graphic design company in New York. The company, i&D Media Group, turns over US\$3m a year, producing branding campaigns, corporate identity designs, advertising packages, websites and video animations for a raft of blue-chip clients, including Panasonic, Cayman Airways and Discovery Networks.

Round-the-world trip

When you have spent 10 years building a business up and attracting clients of that calibre, clearly, you would not want to do anything that would jeopardise its future. But for some time now, Hockley has been dreaming of a round-the-world trip on his own yacht, a 12.5m cutter-rig sloop named *Dream Time*, after his book. With only eight full-time employees, however, the problem he faced was how to keep the business running smoothly while he's away at sea. The answer lies in an Inmarsat communications package that will enable the designer to oversee his business, while realising a lifetime's ambition to circumnavigate the world.

Hockley and his wife Catherine were due to set sail on their epic voyage on 11 June this year. Their journey will take them down the east coast of the United States to the Caribbean, across the north coast of South America to the Panama Canal, down to New Zealand



Photography: Neville and Catherine Hockley

and Australia, across the Indian Ocean to Africa, then via the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and then, on the final leg of the journey, back across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States.

Sharing designs

For the first seven months of the voyage, while the boat is in GSM coverage, Hockley plans to use a Blackberry mobile and wireless broadband network card, in conjunction with a Panasonic Y5 Toughbook notebook PC and wireless handheld tablet to create



designs and share them with work colleagues and clients. But once he heads out towards the Caribbean and leaves GSM coverage behind, he will be relying on an Inmarsat F33 terminal, supplied by Westbrook, Connecticut-based Custom Nav, to keep on top of his business. Hockley opted for Inmarsat after thoroughly researching the satcomms market, in conjunction with Custom Nav.

"Inmarsat has a good reputation in the maritime sector and all the research I did on the equipment came up positive" he says. "I'm confident it won't let me down."

The Fleet terminal, hooked up to the Panasonic PCs, will enable Hockley to keep in touch with work colleagues and clients via email, and share and exchange large graphics files from the calm, or otherwise, of the ocean. He'll work with a variety of software programs, including Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Dreamweaver and Flash, just as if he was in the office. And thanks to the Inmarsat communications solution, he'll be able to easily share and exchange the fruits of his labours with colleagues and clients, using compression software to reduce data costs. →



“I’m confident the technology will perform, it’s up to me now to make sure I keep my edge”

“Many of the files I upload to i&D’s server for my staff or clients to review are already in a compressed format” says Hockley. “I plan to further compress the files using Stuff-It or ZIP software to squeeze every last kilobyte out of the transfer.”

Supportive clients

In addition to the design packages, Hockley will use Skype for voice and videoconferencing calls over the internet, and the boat is equipped with an Ampair Pacific wind-powered generator and solar panels to provide power. i&D’s clients, says Hockley have largely been supportive of his venture.

“Many of my them already work remotely, utilising wireless communication technology,” he says. “They realise you don’t have to be behind your desk in order to perform your job.” He admits, however, that some are more pragmatic, offering general support for the idea, but reserving judgment until he can prove to them that he can continue to perform at the level they’re accustomed to.

Inmarsat technology is key

It’s perhaps no surprise then that Hockley believes the Inmarsat technology is key, not just to this adventure, but to subsequent ones he might embark on.

“It’s very difficult to create a precise schedule for a trip of this magnitude” he says. “We could be away for a year, or we could sail indefinitely. Much depends on how effectively I can work remotely. The Inmarsat technology will be one of the defining factors.”

For most people, perhaps, being hundreds of miles out to sea would seem like the ideal opportunity to get away from email, the internet and all the other trappings of modern business life. But Neville Hockley’s story shows that if you really need to stay in touch, and stay on top of your business, while you’re out at sea, with modern satcomms technology, almost anything is possible. ☺

Inmarsat www.inmarsat.com

i&D Media Group www.iandd.com



Neville’s office on the sea

- A** Fleet 33 satellite antenna
- B** Satellite transceiver – links phone, fax, computer etc.
- C** Wireless broadband network card
- D** PDA device (Blackberry)
- E** Primary workstation – Panasonic Toughbook Y5 with external 160 GB rugged Lacie hard drive
- F** Secondary, remote workstation – Panasonic wireless handheld tablet
- G** Bluetooth printer