PRESS RELEASE

Put in place procedures to protect cyber systems, IEC Telecom urges maritime sector

Dubai, 23 September, 2019: Satellite communications specialist IEC Telecom has warned that cyber hygiene is as important for the shipping industry as cyber security.

Forget images of James Bond-style villains hijacking tankers or cruise ships – the biggest threat to cyber security for the majority of vessels at sea is the hapless downloading of a virus by staff members not following proper procedures.

"Too many companies treat digital security as an after-thought and do not have suitable policies and procedures in place," warned Nabil Ben Soussia, Vice President Maritime of IEC Telecom. "There is a lack of awareness of how one silly slip-up, like downloading a virus from the internet or a memory stick, can destroy your working environment."

Maritime sector firms need to adapt their methods of working to encompass cyber issues, he advised. "They need to redefine their rules to take account of cyber security. The tools are there to protect their data and equipment but they need to take responsibility and manage the risks," he said, explaining that tech companies like IEC Telecom have the solutions available. "We can do everything the company policy requires – but they have to define the policy first."

Mr Ben Soussia says 'upskilling' is needed across the maritime sector to enable everyone from senior management and ships' captains to crew members to fully understand cyber risk and correctly implement good cyber practices.

The shipping industry is currently debating whether to extend or limit the amount of access crew members have to online services such as the internet, social media or event third-party training tools. Mr Ben Soussia explained that it is easy to provide crew with access to online activities without risking the security of the vessel. "It's a case of managing the corporate environment," he said. "You need to secure critical systems in a closed network with limited and protected access from certain terminals only, strictly implement proper policies and properly train crew."

Accessing the internet in their personal time is a natural expectation from today's new recruits. "The new generation are hopeless without the internet," he said "they find everything via google or YouTube." A variety of solutions are available to enable ship operators to keep crew happy without risking critical networks, including data 'scratch cards' to access internet facilities, and even limits to switch off personal wifi access during official socialisation periods.

Speaking in Dubai ahead of this year's Seatrade ShipTech Middle East conference, where he will take part in a panel discussion considering cyber risk, Mr Ben Soussia said: "Vessel digitalisation is an essential part of tomorrow's shipping industry but we

need to be careful of putting all our information 'eggs' in one 'basket' without proper implementation of systems and policies to protect them."
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Nabil Ben Soussia will take part in the 12 noon debate: Cyber Risk and Data Theft, moderated by Craig Eason, on Tuesday September 24.

Notes To Editors:

IEC Telecom

IEC Telecom Group is one of the leading global providers of managed network communication solutions. Known for supplying high quality satellite-based technology to customers for more than 20 years, IEC Telecom delivers efficient end-to-end voice and data services, when and where it matters most.

Our portfolio includes a wide range of satellite products (from handset to VSAT services), solutions and value-added services. IEC Telecom's integrated approach of in-house design and engineering expertise allows us to develop truly unique solutions enabling full control over your satellite assets.

IEC Telecom is an experienced provider of services to the maritime sector, offering communications solutions for all vessel types from shipping to offshore, fishing to leisure boats. The company has 10 offices across 9 countries: Denmark, France (two offices), Kazakhstan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey, UAE (two offices), and UK. For more information see the website: www.iec-telecom.com

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