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Report on Open ECDIS Forum (OEF) Activities

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1. Background

The Open ECDIS Forum (OEF) was established in 1997 to facilitate the international development and implementation of ECDIS. The objectives of the OEF are to:

- encourage and support the development of ECDIS and its extensions
- provide lines of communication between IMO/IHO/IEC standards users and developers
- promote the S-57 data model in the marine environment, and monitor its use
- examine new development proposals, and advise on their validity
- promote world-wide ENC production

Specific OEF activities include:

- a. establish discussion forums on issues related to ECDIS
- b. review and register "user-defined" S-57 objects
- c. register private producer agency codes
- d. distribute ECDIS-related freeware/shareware software and S-57 datasets
- e. organize workshops on ECDIS-related matters
- f. provide a link with the IHO website, and to other organizations involved in ECDIS

2. Year in Review

Discussion Forums

Now in its fifth year of operation, the OEF is increasingly recognized and used by industry and HO members. While the number of active discussion forums has remained relatively constant, the level of activity has increased. For many participants in IHO and IEC standards development working groups, e-mail discussions are being widely used as means to exchange ideas, as well as to prepare for meetings.

Registration Service

a. ENC Producer Codes

An increasing number of ENC manufacturers have requested ENC Producer Codes. The New companies and organizations registered on the OEF during 2002 include:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>Code</u>
5 April 2002	Tresco Navigation Systems (Belgium)	3T
5 April 2002	Science Applications International Corp. - SAIC (USA)	3S
11 April 2002	Norderzon Software (The Netherlands)	1X
12 April 2002	Azienda Regionale Navigazione Interna - ARNI (Italy)	2A
12 April 2002	Sarawak Marine Department (Malaysia)	5M
29 April 2002	Volga-Baltic State Territorial Department for Waterways Management and Navigation (Russia)	1V
30 May 2002	Force Technology, Danish Maritime Institute	1F
2 June 2002	Kingway Technology Co. Ltd. (Taiwan)	1K
2 Jun 2002	Channel of Moscow (Russia)	1M
16 June 2002	Terra Corp. (Japan)	7I

b. New Object Classes/Attributes

Several new object classes and attributes compatible with S-57 have been registered on the OEF. These primarily involve additional objects and attributes that are included as part of the S-57 Object Catalogue of the European Inland ECDIS Standard (Edition 1.01, 29 Nov 01) that has been produced for the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR). There is also the expectation that additional objects and attributes will be registered related to Additional Military Layers (AMLs).

c. Alternative ENC Product Specifications

Consideration is being given to establishing a registration service for “alternative” ENC Product Specifications (i.e., in addition to the current ENC Product Specification contained in IHO S-57, Edition 3.1.). In the near term, these would pertain to ENC Product Specifications for European Inland ECDIS and the North American Inland ENC Product Specification developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In the longer term, it could pertain to the “next generation” ENC Product Specifications dealing with vertical and time dimensions (Y & Z), or ENCs produced from high-density bathymetry and remote sensing data.

Other events of note during the last 11 months include:

- a. The OEF server that hosts the OEF website and the e-mail forums has been maintained at the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping – Joint Hydrographic Center, University of New Hampshire (USA) under the supervision of Dr. Lee Alexander. However, the management of the OEF is primarily performed by SevenCs. Over the next few months, further enhancements and modernization of the OEF is planned.
- b. Gert Büttgenbach continues to chair the Board Of Patrons Forum that supervises all OEF activities. Some of the current BOP members have been inactive. During the next few months, some changes in the membership of the BOP are anticipated.
- c. The Colours & Symbols Maintenance Working Group (C&SMWG) and IEC TC80/WG 13 (Navigation Display) used the OEF quite successfully in preparing for their most recent meetings. Both Working Groups plan to continue using the OEF for future activities.

Looking Ahead

The OEF continues to evolve. More than being primarily a discussion and information site, it is a means for consensus building and facilitation a range of topics related to ECDIS development and implementation. OEF has also become a site to register and list such ECDIS-related matters as ENC Producer Codes and new S-57 Objects/attributes. Further enhancements to the OEF should include more powerful search functions to browse discussion archives, and topics of broader scope/content to attract new talents to the field. All of this depends on the continued operation and maintenance of the web site. In the near future, organizations and companies interested in ensuring the continued operation of the OEF will be asked to provide a modest level of support to OEF.

For further information, please go to the OEF website: www.openecdis.org