

## Via satellite: staying in touch at sea

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Working on the high seas can be lonely separated from friends and family for weeks at a time. Communications via satellite close this gap by providing the means to stay in touch. Now, with ESA's support, contacting shore is easier.

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Now, ESA has helped to improve Inmarsat's FleetBroadband system: instead of a single call, the same terminal now offers up to nine simultaneous telephone calls.

This unique development separates the crew's personal use from operational communications while on the high seas. Crewmembers and passengers can now make personal voice calls away from the bridge, all at the same time.

The improved service also allows '505' emergency calling that connects a vessel immediately to a maritime rescue centre.

Thrane & Thrane includes the improvements as standard on new terminals but can also upgrade existing equipment. Vessels with other terminals can access the service using a special adaptor box designed by UK company Vocality Ltd.



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These upgrades to the original system were supported by ESA through its ARTES telecommunications programme.

Any vessel with the need to manage separate voice calls – particularly the merchant maritime market but also vessels such as super yachts or deep-sea fishing –boats – can benefit from the upgraded service.

“FleetBroadband Multi-Voice enlarges the range of services provided by Inmarsat to the maritime community,” says ESA’s Juan Rivera.

“The multi-voice service will improve crew working and leisure time conditions on vessels, making it easier for them to contact home.”

“The commercial launch of the multivoice service is a clear measure of the successful cooperation with the ESA ARTES programme," says Antonio Franchi, Vice President at Inmarsat.

“A number of new services have been developed under ARTES and have reached service introduction. Among these is the Voice Distress service which has just been given the 2012 Safety At Sea award.”

Provided by European Space Agency

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