

Digital Ship

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conducted by launch services provider Arianespace using the Soyuz launch vehicle, with the 24 second-generation satellites to be integrated with eight first-generation satellites that were launched in 2007, to form a new 32-satellite constellation.

Globalstar says that, with each subsequent launch, customers can expect a progressive return to the quality of system access and data session performance metrics available before some of the satellite problems it reported in an SEC filing in early 2007.

At that time Globalstar had discovered from its analysis of the network that the degradation of the solid-state power amplifiers of the S-band communications antenna, used to provide the downlink from the satellite to a subscriber's phone or data terminal, was "occurring at a rate that is faster than previously experienced and faster than the Company had previously anticipated."

The statement continued: "Based on its most recent analysis, the Company now believes that, if the degradation of the S-band antenna amplifiers continues at the current rate or further accelerates, and if the Company is unsuccessful in developing additional technical solutions, the quality of two-way communications services will decline, and by some time in 2008 substantially all of the Company's

currently in-orbit satellites will cease to be able to support two-way communications services."

"As the number of in-orbit satellites with properly functioning S-band antenna decreases, despite a successful launch and optimised placement in orbit of the eight spare satellites in mid-2007, increasingly larger coverage gaps will recur over areas in which the Company currently provides two-way communication services."

"Subscriber service will continue to be available, but at certain times in any given location it will take substantially longer to establish calls and the average duration of calls may be impacted adversely."

Despite these significant problems Globalstar has managed to survive and, with the launch of these new satellites, is on its way to the restoration of a fully functioning network with even greater capacity than its existing technology.

The new constellation, combined with the company's next-generation ground network that is expected to be installed by 2012, will provide increased data speeds of up to 256 kbps in a flexible internet protocol multimedia subsystem (IMS) configuration.

Globalstar recently reported the completion of hardware and software updates to three ground monitoring control centres, the Globalstar data network and system planning centre in the months

leading up to the launch.

The company has installed satellite telemetry and command unit (TCU) upgrades at seven of its satellite gateway ground stations to operate with its new satellites.

TCU upgrades were installed at gateway ground stations in Argentina, Australia, Botswana, France, Korea, and the United States. The upgrades are designed to provide Globalstar with the capability to globally monitor and control the orbital deployment of the second-generation constellation.

"The updates to our ground monitoring control centres, data network and system planning centre and the TCU gateway upgrades complete the final ground network installation milestones required for the launch of our new satellites," said Peter Dalton, CEO, Globalstar.

"Once our new constellation is fully deployed next year, we expect to once again reliably provide the world's finest quality mobile satellite voice and fastest mobile satellite handset data services to commercial and government customers around the world."

The telemetry and command unit upgrades were also provided and installed by Thales Alenia Space, the manufacturer of Globalstar's new second-generation satellites.

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Comtech and Thuraya broadband ready for 2011

www.thuraya.com

Comtech and Thuraya have announced that their new maritime broadband satellite transceiver will be available to commercial fleets in early 2011.

The new broadband terminals, developed in partnership between Comtech and Thuraya, will offer simultaneous voice and data services to ships at sea within the coverage area of the Thuraya satellite network.

"Now, more than ever before, ship owners, builders and masters need to drive operational efficiencies and improve seafarer comfort. They are looking for assurances on quality, reliability and value," commented Dan Wood, president of Comtech Mobile Datacom Corporation.

"Equally, there is a real imperative for the market to respond to our offerings - much of the hardware in the larger mer-

chant fleets is due for review or upgrade over the next three years."

"Our best-of-breed partners and proven technical expertise put us in a great position to match the performance of the established players, and we're focused on delivering that superior quality at a competitive price."

Comtech has says it has now begun to sound out candidates to trial its first broadband terminal, designed for large merchant fleets and other vessels with high bandwidth requirements.

"We'll be staging product releases through 2011, beginning with a broadband terminal designed for large commercial vessels," said Mr Wood.

"We are confident that Comtech Marine's high performance features will offer a compelling value proposition to customers and we are excited about the industry response so far."



Comtech says that it is currently looking for trialists for its maritime satcom system

VSAT from Vizada

www.vizada.com

Vizada has launched a proprietary VSAT satellite communications service, the latest addition to its maritime broadband portfolio of services.

The new VSAT service is based on iDirect technology, and provides standard IP data speeds of more than 1 Mbps for multiple applications such as internet, e-mail and VoIP.

Vizada says that, like all of its broadband offerings, the VSAT service can be combined with one or a range of its Vizada Solutions value added services, to manage data transfers, increase security, and help control communications costs.

The company's maritime broadband portfolio also includes Inmarsat FleetBroadband and Iridium OpenPort, and Vizada says that the addition of VSAT to this list will improve customer choice in terms of data connectivity speeds, coverage, and terminal and antenna size.

Vizada also says that the introduction of the service will enable it to match the dual requirements of many of its shipping company users by bundling the maritime VSAT together with Inmarsat FleetBroadband.

"With this new VSAT service we aim to offer our service providers an exclusive competitive advantage by arming them with a high-performance broadband communications service supported by industry leading solutions and technical expertise," said Erik Ceuppens, CEO Vizada EMEA & Asia.