

# Digital Ship

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## News

### **Iridium makes jump to 128k**

(Feb 29 2008)

Iridium has unveiled its new Iridium OpenPort enhanced-bandwidth marine communication system, offering vastly improved speeds compared with its existing services.

"This breakthrough product will bring a fresh element of competition to the marine satcom market," said Matt Desch, chairman and CEO of Iridium Satellite.

"Iridium OpenPort offers multiple phone lines, IP connectivity and flexible data speeds up to 128 kbps, with equipment and airtime costs substantially lower than any competitor."

"Packaged with our unique 100 per cent global coverage and service quality, we'll be positioned as the service offering to beat. We expect to quickly capture significant market-share gains in the estimated \$400 million annual marine MSS market."

The new system, which Mr Desch says he expects to hit the market "mid-year", has successfully completed sea trials, and has a backlog of more than 2,500 units on order from service providers.

Iridium says it will target the new service toward the deep-sea shipping and commercial fishing segments.

"Iridium OpenPort provides a complete integrated solution for ship-to-shore crew calling, e-mail and IP-based data communications," said Greg Ewert, executive vice president of Iridium.

"Our pricing strategy replaces expensive pay-per-minute billing schemes with a straightforward, cost-effective, pay-per-megabyte plan for data transfer. Hardware upgrades from bandwidth packages associated with competing products will be a thing of the past."

The OpenPort terminal provides dynamic allocation of three independent telephone lines and a high-speed data port configurable from 9.6 kbps to 128 kbps. All voice and data circuits can be used at the same time.

The unstabilised, omni-directional antenna array measures 23cm high and 57cm in diameter, and contains no moving parts. Iridium says that the lightweight antenna, approximately 10kg, can be easily installed during a brief port visit.

"The installed cost of an Iridium OpenPort ship terminal is 50 to 90 per cent lower than other marine satcom systems, and our per-megabyte prices for data throughput are at least 30 per cent lower than any other marine satcom system on the market today," said Mr Ewert.

"This means a return on investment measured in months rather than years."

Globe Wireless has been appointed by Iridium as the only Charter Distribution Partner for the OpenPort service. The company says that it is now accepting pre-orders for OpenPort equipment, which it expects to be available in Q3 2008.