

Electronic Strip Charts, Following the trend

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Abstract

Early dynamic positioning (DP) systems were fitted with pen recorder strip charts, which were the best existing technology but were functionally limited and difficult to read.

As DP equipment became more sophisticated and the “pos plot” graphical display developed, the strip chart was judged to be obsolete and if fitted at all it appeared on a single “page” as an afterthought that was awkward to configure and limited in functionality.

More recently, a resurgence of the strip chart has occurred, as PC-based, digital versions became available to replace the old pen recorders and system operators and fleet superintendents convinced their employing companies of the advantages of observing a trend, rather than just a ship shape hopping around on a screen.

Then, system manufacturers seemed to notice the increased use of strip charts and started to supply integrated DP / logger / strip chart systems in a format that the system designers decided that operators needed.

This paper describes, with examples, some of the advantages to DP operators of a strip chart trend used in conjunction with a DP system to assist and improve safe operation, predicting and preventing potential problems, fault diagnosis and incident investigation.

The paper also sets forth the need for system suppliers to liaise with actual system users. Such dialogue can ensure that the supplied equipment is user friendly and consequently is actively used operationally to predict and prevent incidents or at least reduce their impact. In addition, it will provide a diagnostic tool for data recording and shore-based incident investigation, after the event.

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