

### **VIDEOTEX UNDER SAIL**

Videotex colour graphics showing up-to-the-minute weather forecasts are helping the Canadian Coast Guard, shipping companies and off-shore oil exploration firms to better plan their day-to-day operations.

This visual information, which can be received aboard ship or on a drilling rig, vividly depicts such vital marine information as wind speed and direction, frontal systems, wave height, swells, localized storms, and temperature ranges for a specific location or over an entire trans-ocean route. Icebergs can even be pinpointed.

The system eliminates the guess-work in routing a ship around a storm or delaying drilling operations because of heavy seas. It also shows the current position of the ship by a flashing dot.

Previously, these decisions had to be made from information received via telex. This made the task difficult, especially for long-range forecasts.

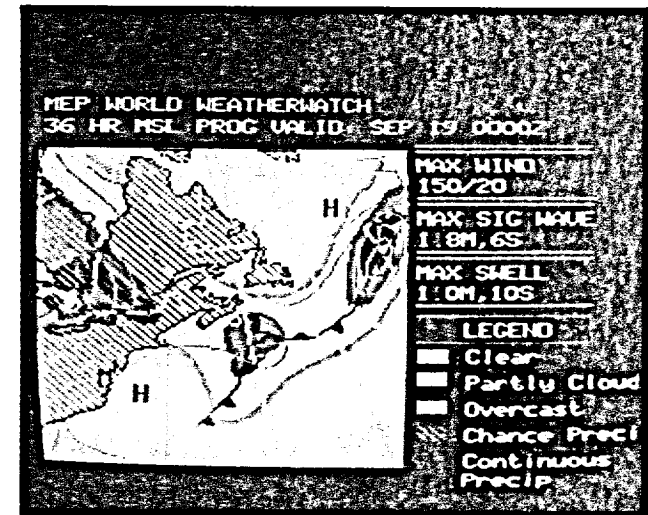
The system was developed by World Weatherwatch, a division of Meteorological Environmental Planning Ltd. (MEP) of Toronto, Canada. Not only is it providing greater safety for marine operations, it also saves time and money.

MEP, which has been instrumental in the development of world weather graphics for teletext and videotex display systems, receives data on its computers from both geostationary and orbiting weather satellites. A staff of meteorologists analyse, interpret and present this information through videotex.

The information is then made available through communications links such as the International Marine Satellite Communications System (INMARSAT).

The two-way communications capability of videotex offers inexpensive access to a continuously updated climatological database. And the user can choose the precise type of information required.

This can include current weather conditions for a specific area and forecasts for up to five days. Wave forecasts, including information on maximum and minimum seas, are available for up to 36 hours.



MEP, which also provides weather information to the aviation industry, plans to include various types of training packages for the marine industry.

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