Pittsburgh Marine Technologies
Electronic Charting Solutions for the Inland Marine Industry

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Chart updates

For non-governmental vessels, electronic charts do not substitute for the requirement to carry current paper charts. Many inland chart books were last updated years ago. Electronic charts on the other hand are updated frequently. In the last year, for example, every chart on the Ohio and Monongahela has been updated at least once. Most changes are minor while others are more significant. An example of a significant change is the placing of buoys on some Ohio River charts, particularly in the vicinity of locks 52 and 53. Please consider a chart update if your charts have not been updated since purchase.

Electric chart book

All commercial users of Pittsburgh Marine Technologies navigation software use custom charts organized into chart libraries. The system operates very much in the same manner as a regular chart book but with many features being automated. Once a chart library is loaded, GPS connected, and Auto-Scroll ON, little operator intervention is needed. New charts will be loaded as the boat crosses a chart boundary; essentially the electronic page is turned automatically. On the Ohio and Monongahela, multiple charts exist at any location and these charts are selected by using the F6 and F7 keys. Larger scale charts like the Lockviews™ charts are selected by pressing the F7 key while smaller scale charts are selected by pressing the F6 key. When a chart boundary is crossed, the chart that opens is always the largest scale chart available at that point, namely the Lockviews™ chart if one is available. Pressing the F6 key once or twice in the vicinity of chart boundaries will in many cases call up an underlying smaller scale chart that eliminates the chart boundary. In addition, at some chart boundaries where the river curves sharply, the river may appear to slide to a corner of the chart. Again, the F6 and F7 keys can be used to select the optimum chart at this location.

Lastly, many charts are charts that have been electronically integrated or resized for optimum viewing. So the user has two choices: actively use the F6 and F7 keys for optimum chart presentation, or set it and forget it.

User tips

Once a chart is loaded, either automatically or with the F6/F7 keys, the Esc and Ctrl keys are used to pan in and out on that chart.

To display mile marks, select File, then Open Overlay File, then open Miles Marks.ovl. (Mile Marks UO.ovl on some older installations)

Auto-Scroll must be ON to be in the automatic navigation mode. Pressing the "A" key toggles Auto-Scroll ON/OFF.

To change to the proper chart library for an area of operation, select File, then Charts, then Open Chart Library. PMT urges that the FunctionKeysF6/F7 library be used for operations on the Ohio and Monongahela so that the Lockviews™ chart can be accessed using the F6 and F7 keys on the computer keyboard. Older chart sets integrate Allegheny River raster charts into this library. Newer installations require a chart library change for Allegheny River operations.

Chart set coverage

The standard commercial chart set covers the Allegheny, Ohio, Monongahela, Kanahwa, Cumberland, Green, and the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway to Mobile. The Lower Mississippi from Cairo to New Orleans is available as an add-on, and custom charts for ALL AREAS OF THE CONTINENTAL U.S. BOTH INLAND AND COASTAL ARE AVAILABLE BY CUSTOM ORDER.

New Stuff

Pittsburgh Marine Technologies provides its users with a complete information system that not only includes point and click object definition on electronic charts but computer folders including Safety Briefing, Bridges, and now Navigation Text Files. Users may have clicked on a chart location only to have a text box appear directing the users to a file with a name such as USECX68E.txt. This text file is now available in a desktop folder called Navigation Text Files. The files are arranged alphabetically. By the way, this text file says: *Designations left descending bank (LDB) and right descending bank (RDB) are as seen from a vessel going downstream. Mileage given indicates the number of Nautical miles above Head of Passes Junction Light.*

Pittsburgh Marine Technologies navigation software, NavPak-Pro is constantly undergoing improvement based on user feedback. An improved C-Map module was installed last year for users who desire chart-quilting technology, this year drawing capabilities and equipment interfacing improvements were made, and in 2009 NavPak-Pro will undergo more modifications to improve the user experience.

Training makes the difference

NavPak-Pro is one of the easiest to learn and use navigation software packages on the market. It can be used in a *set it and forget it mode,* or its many advanced features can be used as the user gains experience with the program. Truthfully, many installations of NavPak-Pro on the inland towing fleet entailed the installation on the boat, a briefing of the on-duty pilot, and the delivery of a custom users manual for crew use. For many pilots, this is just not sufficient and many are not using the system properly or may not be using the product at all. Pittsburgh Marine Technologies will begin offering free

seminars and workshops in the Pittsburgh area. Your employer will receive information shortly, or you may be advised through media outlets and organizations like the US Coast Guard Auxiliary.

A recent installation on a towboat in the Pittsburgh area is a good example of the way to achieve successful implementation of this new technology. The customer had Pittsburgh Marine Technologies provide a complete system including a computer with screen rotation capability, **all of the company's pilots who would likely use the system** attended a two and a half hour onboard hands-on training event, and the company had a demo version of the program installed on a land side computer for continuing training and orientation. In addition, copies of the users manual were made by the company and issued to each pilot for home study.