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(Tradewinds Today)

New ship database tool to benefit shipowners

Heidenreich Marine has launched an internet website for automatic completion of vessel questionnaires required by charterers.

The website www.Q88.com links 60 of the currently required questionnaires by oil terminals and oil majors to the shipowner's OCIMF VPQ file, which contains about 1,043 questions.

This procedure allows automatic completion of the majority of the information required by questionnaires directly from the database.

Fritz Heidenreich, vice-president of Heidmar, said Wednesday: "This internet tool will match the shipowner's OCIMF VPQ file to the required questions, and fills up about 50-90% of the questionnaires."

Firstly, the shipowners can file their questionnaires electronically instead of by hand, he said.

In addition, the charterers will be able to receive the questionnaires much faster.

"This is a win-win situation...the website is useful to anyone that controls a ship as well as charterers," Heidenreich said.

"This system has been successfully used by Heidmar and the other participants of the Stars Tankers pool for over three years," he said.

The website has also been tested with several third party owners with great success.

Every page in the website is password-sensitive, and each shipowner will only have access to his own ship database.

However, a shipowner has the option to grant access of his database to charterers and brokers.

The website boasts a registered pool of 36 shipowners and 245 vessels.

The number of vessels registered to the website is expected to reach 1,000 by the end of this year.

New subscribers will be able to utilise this service for free until 31 December, 2001.

From next year, each subscriber will be charged a nominal annual fee per ship.

Heidenreich said: "We have not decided on the fee yet, but the fee for each ship will depend on the number of ships the shipowner registers."

"More ships the shipowners registers, the cheaper the fee would be for each ship," he added.