

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules)	
Regarding Maritime Automatic Identification)	
Systems)	WT Docket No. 04-344
)	
Petition for Rule Making Filed by National)	
Telecommunications and Information)	RM-10821
Administration)	
)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules)	PR Docket No. 92-257
Concerning Maritime Communications)	

**COMMENTS OF THE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION**

John M. R. Kneuer
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Communications and Information

Kathy Smith
Chief Counsel

Fredrick R. Wentland
Associate Administrator
Office of Spectrum Management

Edward Drocella
Gary Patrick
Electronics Engineers
Office of Spectrum Management

National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 4713
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20230
(202) 482-1816

December 1, 2006

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	ii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
II. DISCUSSION.....	2
A. AIS Channel 87B Should be Allocated on a Nationwide Basis.....	2
B. AIS Base Stations Should Be Authorized for Federal Government Use	9
C. The FCC Should Incorporate the IEC Standards For Class B AIS Equipment Certification Into Its Certification Rules and Should Ensure the Accuracy of AIS Information.....	11
III. CONCLUSION.....	16

Executive Summary

The Automatic Identification System (AIS) is an essential tool, in the national interest, to provide vessel information critical to maritime safety and homeland security. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) believes that to provide the coverage necessary for AIS, there must be a nationwide allocation of Channel 87B for exclusive AIS use. An exclusive nationwide allocation would allow the more efficient satellite detection of AIS signals, a method which is necessary to extend the coverage of AIS. In addition, an exclusive allocation will ensure that co-channel, non-AIS signals, will not interfere with the transmission or reception of AIS signals.

With respect to the authorization of AIS base stations, NTIA believes that because these stations perform an inherently governmental function, AIS base stations must only be authorized for Federal use.

Finally, NTIA believes that the Commission should expeditiously adopt certification standards for Class B AIS transmitters by incorporating by reference the applicable International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards. In addition to the IEC standards, the Commission should attempt to ensure the accuracy of user programmed information transmitted over Class B AIS devices by providing that the transmission of inaccurate information is a violation of Commission rules that will subject the offending party to appropriate fines and penalties.

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules)	
Regarding Maritime Automatic Identification)	
Systems)	WT Docket No. 04-344
)	
Petition for Rule Making Filed by National)	
Telecommunications and Information)	RM-10821
Administration)	
)	
)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules)	
Concerning Maritime Communications)	

**COMMENTS OF THE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION**

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), an Executive Branch agency within the Department of Commerce, is the President's principal adviser on domestic and international telecommunications policy, including policies relating to the nation's economic and technological advancement in telecommunications. NTIA is also responsible for managing the federal government use of the radio frequency spectrum. NTIA, in coordination with the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard), submits these comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's (Commission or FCC) Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the above-captioned proceeding.¹

¹ See Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Maritime Automatic Identification Systems, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Fourth Memorandum Opinion and Order, WT Docket No. 04-344, RM-10821, FCC 06-108 (released July 24, 2006).

I. INTRODUCTION

NTIA commends the Commission for designating very high frequency (VHF) maritime Channels 87B (161.975 MHz) and 88B (162.025 MHz) for the Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) in the United States. The designation of Channels 87B and 88B is, as the Commission has noted, an important tool for maritime safety and homeland security.² Having found that frequencies should be allocated for exclusive AIS use, the Commission seeks in the *Further NPRM* comment on whether Channel 87B should be allocated exclusively for AIS use throughout the country, or only in the nine designated “maritime” VHF Public Coast Service Areas (VPCSAs). In addition, the Commission requests comment on the authorization, operation and coordination of AIS base stations, and equipment certification standards for Class B AIS equipment. As explained more fully below, in response to the questions raised by the Commission, NTIA believes that: (1) there should be a nationwide allocation of Channel 87B for exclusive AIS use; (2) AIS base stations should only be authorized for federal government use; and (3) the Commission should expeditiously adopt certification standards for Class B AIS devices by incorporating by reference the applicable International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards.

II. DISCUSSION

A. AIS Channel 87B Should be Allocated on a Nationwide Basis.

The FCC’s Order in this proceeding provided that Channel 87B should be designated for

² *Further NPRM* at ¶ 2.

exclusive AIS use in the nine maritime VPCSAAs.³ The nine maritime VPCSAAs exclude an area in the United States roughly equivalent to the Mountain Time Zone. The Commission recognized that it may consider a nationwide AIS allocation (*i.e.*, the entire U.S.) for Channel 87B, but believed that it did not have sufficient record evidence to provide for such an allocation. Accordingly, the Commission issued the instant *Further NPRM* to elicit comments on, among other things, the requirements for a nationwide AIS allocation on Channel 87B.

There are compelling safety and national security reasons to designate Channel 87B for AIS on a nationwide basis. The Commission has already found that AIS is both an important tool for combating terrorism and a major enhancement in maritime navigation technology to support maritime safety.⁴ Based upon the importance of AIS to homeland security and maritime safety, the Commission believes that it “[s]hould adopt rules that will best ensure that AIS is deployed widely, quickly, reliably and cost-effectively, and in a manner that will maximize its capabilities.”⁵ Because of the potential for co-channel interference and/or the degradation of AIS signal reception from non-AIS transmissions, this goal cannot be fully attained unless the Commission designates AIS Channel 87B on a nationwide basis. NTIA notes that Channel 88B is a federal government frequency and is already available for AIS use throughout the nation.

The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) authorized the Coast Guard to implement a system to collect, integrate, and analyze information concerning vessels

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 23.

⁵ *Id.*

operating on or bound for waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.⁶ Following the MTSA, the *National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness* (MDA Plan), was created as one of eight plans developed in support of the National Strategy for Maritime Security, as directed by National Security Presidential Directive-41/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-13.⁷ The MDA Plan outlines the national priorities for achieving MDA as well as near-term and long-term objectives.⁸ The plan calls for a reorientation and integration of legacy systems and operational concepts with current and emerging sensor capabilities and applicable procedures. These capabilities will be fused in a common operating picture (COP) that is available to maritime operational commanders and accessible as appropriate throughout the federal government, and shared by federal, state and local agencies with maritime interests and responsibilities. Among other things, the MDA Plan recommends using the latest technology to improve capabilities, enhance information collection and maximize its use. The MDA Plan specifically calls for the strengthening of “open ocean surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to better verify AIS data.”⁹

Current land-based AIS facilities provide only limited, line-of-sight coverage and do not

⁶ Public Law 107-295, 116 Stat. 2109, 2082 (2002) (codified at 46 U.S.C. § 70114). A Coast Guard primary operational goal is persistent wide area surveillance of vessels and the ability to track vessels within 2000 nautical miles of the United States. *See* NTIA Comments in WT Docket 04-34, at p. 23, n. 57 (filed Dec. 29, 2004).

⁷ Maritime domain awareness is the effective understanding of anything associated with the global maritime domain that could affect security, safety, economy or environment of the United States.

⁸ The MDA Plan is available at www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/programs/editorial_0753.shtm.

⁹ MDA Plan at 16.

provide the long-range coverage.¹⁰ In an effort to carry out the MTSA's goal of obtaining information about vessels at a distance offshore, the long-range component of the Coast Guard's Nationwide AIS ("NAIS") acquisition project proposes to provide the capability, through usage of a low earth orbit (LEO) communications satellite system, to receive, process and relay AIS signal data to extend AIS system signal reception capability beyond the coastal waters of the United States. The development and implementation of the AIS satellite capability is critical for long-range tracking of vessels required by the MTSA, and is in accordance with the MDA Plan.

In order to evaluate actual satellite detection of AIS signals, the Coast Guard entered into a contract with a commercial entity, ORBCOMM, a global data satellite communications company that is authorized for a LEO satellite network in the Non-Voice Non-Geostationary Mobile Satellite Service (NVNG MSS).¹¹ This initiative will test the technical and operational feasibility of spaceborne AIS receivers. ORBCOMM will provide AIS monitoring services on a demonstration basis using a satellite that is scheduled to be launched within the next several months. The LEO satellite will receive and decode AIS messages, and relay the resulting information via satellite feeder (non-AIS) links to specified earth stations.

In order to analyze general technical issues relating to satellite detection of AIS signals, the Coast Guard engaged the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Spectrum Center (JSC) to study

¹⁰ The Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard Research and Development Center, in conjunction with a commercial contractor, are exploring various methods to extend the range of land-based AIS coverage. Preliminary reports demonstrate that, with specific configurations, it is possible for land-based stations reliably to receive AIS signals from approximately 350 nautical miles.

¹¹ U.S. Coast Guard Contract No. HSCG23-04-C-ADA001.

the issue, and to prepare a report for the International Telecommunication Union-Radiocommunications Sector (ITU-R), “Satellite Detection of Automatic Identification System Messages.”¹² This Report finds that several key technical factors distinguish satellite AIS detection from conventional ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore AIS detection, specifically receiver sensitivity, antenna gain pattern, and reliability requirements. Unlike conventional terrestrial AIS operations that may be able to co-exist with other co-channel transmitters through geographical separation, because the satellite antenna beam covers a very large geographical area, the satellite antenna receives not only AIS ship transmissions, but also non-AIS signals transmitted on the AIS frequency.¹³ The JSC study shows that, the reception of the non-AIS signal causes degradation in AIS signal detection.¹⁴ While satellite detection of AIS signals is still possible in the presence of co-channel non-AIS signals, blockage of the AIS satellite receiver for the transmission periods of the non-AIS transmitters will occur. This degradation in AIS receiver performance, is both unpredictable and unmanageable and will significantly decrease the effectiveness of the AIS system, and defeat the purpose, of using the satellite detection to obtain more information on ships at a distance from the United States in accordance with the MTSA and the MDA Plan.

In addition to unwanted VHF co-channel signals causing potential interference to the

¹² This Report was discussed and approved through the normal processes and is now an ITU-R approved Report, Report ITU-R M. 2084. While this Report has not yet been published by the ITU-R, the Draft New Report from Working Party Group 8B (Doc. 8/176E, 19 Sept. 2006), which was adopted as the Report (*Report*), is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

¹³ *Report* at 5, 29.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 29-35.

satellite detection of AIS signals, it must be considered that radio propagation characteristics in the VHF band frequently cause signals to travel far beyond the radio horizon predicted by standard conventional radio propagation models such as the model used in Part 80 of the Commission's Rules.¹⁵ On the one hand, this can have positive effects for AIS in that signals can be received at longer distances than originally anticipated. Tropospheric scatter propagation can cause VHF signals to travel hundreds of miles, which is much farther than the general "over the horizon" range normally associated with VHF transmissions. For example, while experimenting with various techniques for extending the range of AIS coverage, the Coast Guard received AIS reports at distances that often exceeded 350 nautical miles (nm), and sometimes exceeded 450 to 500 nm. More work and experimentation is necessary to determine whether receiving signals over these, or greater distances might be possible. On the other hand, however, this phenomenon can also have significant negative effects on AIS signals in that (non-AIS) interfering signals can also travel greater distances and cause harmful interference to AIS signals at great distances.¹⁶ This is another example of how non-AIS signals can cause harmful interference, even if the transmission source is hundreds of miles away. Obviously, extended propagation modes are beneficial to AIS reception only when there is no competing (non-AIS) use of the AIS frequencies.

Finally, in accordance with the mandate in the MDA Plan to employ new technologies to improve MDA, especially with relation to long-range tracking, there must be flexibility to

¹⁵ 47 C.F.R. §§ 80.751 – 80.773.

¹⁶ In addition to tropospheric scatter, initial Coast Guard propagation studies involving ducting show that coverage over the Gulf of Mexico can be vastly expanded from anomalous propagation effects.

experiment with new methods and technologies to achieve the desired capabilities. If there is a potential for co-channel interference because there is not an exclusive, nationwide AIS allocation, this may have an unintended and undesirable effect on development and experimentation with new AIS technologies.

The Commission has recognized that AIS is a critical component of our Nation's homeland security, as well as an important tool for enhancing maritime safety.¹⁷ As such, the Commission must be very cautious to assure that AIS transmissions are as free from co-channel interference as possible. Obviously, harmful interference to AIS signals could conceivably have an impact on homeland security, and could conceivably endanger the safety of life and property while traveling on our Nation's waterways.¹⁸ Accordingly, because of the distinct possibility that non-AIS transmissions on AIS channels in the non-maritime VPCSA's could cause interference to AIS operations, such transmissions should not be authorized, and the AIS allocation should be Nationwide.

It may be some time before large-scale satellite detection of AIS signals and other technologies are implemented due to the need for because additional study, evaluation and regulatory approval is necessary. Therefore, rather than making the requisite exclusive nationwide allocation for AIS on Channel 87B immediately, a phased approach may be possible. NTIA therefore suggests that only those operations which are currently transmitting on Channel

¹⁷ *Further NPRM* at ¶ 1.

¹⁸ Another consideration is that there may be lakes and rivers in the areas not covered by the nine maritime VPCSA's that could benefit from AIS for safety of navigation and security purposes. Non-AIS transmissions in these areas could prevent the use of AIS.

87B in the non-maritime VPCSAAs should be allowed to continue operations until such time as a final determination is made that they must vacate the channel. Similarly, no new maritime or land mobile operations on Channel 87B in non-maritime VPCSAAs should be authorized under existing geographic licenses, by new authorizations, waivers, or otherwise. In addition, currently authorized operations on Channel 87B in non-maritime VPCSAAs should be required to provide, if they have not already done so, the site location information for their transmitters normally required for site-specific licenses. In this manner, existing users can be located and an analysis of the impact of their operations vis-à-vis AIS operations can be studied.

This suggested alternative approach in no way indicates that the exclusive AIS nationwide allocation is not necessary or desirable in the public interest. To the contrary, the exclusive allocation presents the only manner in which the MTSA and MDA Plan can be implemented. This alternative approach merely sets forth a plan whereby a smooth transition, in a timely manner, can be implemented.

B. AIS Base Stations Should Be Authorized for Federal Government Use Only.

As the Commission noted in its *Further NPRM*, the IEC is in the process of developing AIS base station equipment standards.¹⁹ The base station standard, IEC 62320-1 Ed.1, is currently in the Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) stage. Once this standard is finally adopted and published, the Commission need not take any further action. No action is necessary by the Commission because, as explained below, the base stations serve to control the AIS, an inherently federal government function. Only federal government entities should be authorized

¹⁹ *Further NPRM* at ¶ 4.

for base stations, and thus, there would be no need for FCC certification standards for AIS base stations.²⁰

Until such time as the AIS base station standard is developed, the Commission has requested comment on the licensing and use of AIS base stations. At the outset, it must be noted that AIS base stations are an integral part of the overall AIS. One of the primary purposes of AIS, as stated by IMO Resolution MSC.74 (69), Annex 3, is to improve the safety of navigation by assisting in the efficient navigation of ships, protection of the environment, and operation of Vessel Traffic Services (VTS). In order to serve these purposes, the following functional requirements must be satisfied: (i) ship-to-ship communications for collision avoidance; (ii) communications from littoral states to obtain information about a ship and its cargo; and, (iii) communications to facilitate VTS (traffic management). Requirement (i) is satisfied by shipborne AIS; requirements (ii) and (iii), however, require the use of AIS base stations by the competent authority, which in the instant case would be the federal government.

The AIS base stations function to control all of the aspects of the AIS network, and allow for overriding certain shipborne AIS functions. Base stations manage the AIS VHF Data Link by managing communications traffic on AIS through various means to provide for the safety of navigation, to obtain information necessary for VTS and national security purposes, to transmit safety related messages, and to serve as an aid to navigation. It is the control function that AIS base stations perform (*i.e.*, control of the AIS) that is at issue here. The control function is used

²⁰ Radio frequency equipment sold to the federal government is subject to spectrum certification through the NTIA and does not require FCC certification.

to protect the integrity of the AIS, and manage the navigation signals. Moreover, the IEC in its base station standard specifies that “it is the responsibility of the competent authority to ensure proper operation” of the base station.²¹ It is therefore clear that the AIS base stations serve an “inherently governmental” function and, as such, only federal government entities should be authorized for AIS base stations.²² Because the Commission does not issue authorizations for federal government stations, the Commission should not license any AIS base stations.²³ Accordingly, the Commission should not consider any issues relating to licensing such as eligibility, license terms, or permissible communications.

C. The FCC Should Incorporate the IEC Standards For Class B AIS Equipment Certification Into Its Certification Rules and Should Ensure the Accuracy of AIS Information.

Low-cost, Class B AIS devices designed to assure compatible operations (*i.e.*, interoperability) within all standards established for AIS are intended to provide a less expensive alternative to Class A AIS devices while still providing vessel information critical to navigation safety and maritime security. Class B AIS devices differ slightly in features and nature of design, which reduce their cost (on average half the cost of Class A AIS devices); however, Class B AIS device performance is somewhat limited. Class B AIS devices report at a fixed rate

²¹ IEC 62320-1 Ed.1, § 6.1.

²² The AIS base stations serve the function of an aid to navigation. Pursuant to 14 U.S.C. § 83, private aids to navigation are prohibited unless authorized by the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard could, therefore, allow the use of an AIS base station by a non-federal entity provided there is authorization by the Coast Guard providing that the operation of the AIS base station is, at all times, operated under the control of the federal entity.

²³ Another reason that only federal government entities should be licensed for base stations involves requisite frequency coordination for AIS base stations. The NTIA, through the Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee, has a coordination process in place for federal licensees. Any proposed AIS base stations will be

(every 30 seconds) as opposed to the Class A AIS devices which report at a variable rate (2-10 seconds dependent on speed and course change). Class B AIS devices consume less power, but also transmit at lower power (2 watts as compared to 12 watts of Class A AIS devices), thus affecting their broadcast range. Despite these design limitations, and after extensive testing by the Coast Guard Research and Development Center, the Coast Guard has determined that AIS Class B devices can operate properly and safely with Class A AIS devices and offer the same AIS benefits.²⁴ Class B AIS devices broadcast and receive virtually the same vessel identification and other information. Class B AIS devices have the same ability to see targets that a radar may not be able to detect (*e.g.*, around the bend, in sea clutter, foul weather). For these reasons, the Coast Guard has concluded that AIS Class B devices enhance navigation safety and assist in collision avoidance comparable to Class A AIS devices. The Coast Guard has indicated that it will consider Class B AIS device use in forthcoming regulatory actions regarding AIS carriage.²⁵

The IEC recently adopted and published an international standard, IEC 62287-1, that sets forth requirements and test procedures for Class B AIS device. NTIA fully supports the Commission's position that accommodating Class B AIS devices under the Commission's rules "will advance the Commission's goal of insuring that AIS is deployed widely, quickly, reliably,

carefully coordinated to assure that no harmful interference is caused.

²⁴ See ITU-R Study Group Report "Performance Assessment and Interoperability of Proposed Class B AIS With Existing Class A AIS System Using Simulation Software" (September 9, 2005).

²⁵ See *e.g.*, Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory, Department of Homeland Security USCG, 1222 Vessel Requirements for Notices of Arrival and Departure and Automatic Identification System (USCG-2005-21869), 71 Fed. Reg. 22676 (April 24, 2006).

cost-effectively, and in a manner that will maximize its capabilities.”²⁶ Accordingly, NTIA endorses the Commission’s proposal to amend Part 80 of the Commission’s Rules, as proposed in the new § 80.231, to incorporate by reference the IEC 62287-1 standard and provide for the certification of Class B AIS devices that comply with that standard.

NTIA urges the Commission to provide for the certification of Class B AIS devices on an expedited basis. To meet the Commission’s goal of attempting to ensure AIS is deployed “widely, quickly and cost-effectively, and in a manner that will maximize its capabilities”²⁷ certification of Class B AIS devices must commence as soon as possible. Any delay in certifying Class B AIS devices will delay the number of vessels employing AIS. Furthermore, until it is clear that the Commission has standards for the certification of Class B AIS devices, manufacturers will hesitate to design and build the equipment. This will lead to delay in the availability of Class B AIS devices, and the resultant delay in having Class B AIS devices available and operational. Therefore, in order to ensure that Class B AIS devices are available and operational, certification standards must be adopted as soon as possible.

The Commission has also requested comment on an issue critical to the operation of AIS -- ensuring the accuracy of AIS data transmitted via Class B devices. Experience with Class A AIS devices has demonstrated that problems occur when improper static information is being transmitted by the AIS device. The most obvious problem is an inability to identify the ship that is making the transmission because of an improper Maritime Mobile Service Identity (“MMSI”). Under the IEC Standard 62287-1 at 6.4, a Class B AIS device can only transmit once an MMSI

²⁶ *Further NPRM* at ¶¶ 23, 63.

is assigned. If an MMSI is not assigned, the device will not transmit. Moreover, 6.7.2 of the IEC Standard provides that “it shall not be possible for the user to alter the MMSI once programmed.” Accordingly, the MMSI and other static information must be properly entered for the unit to function, especially since the user will not have the ability to change the information once it is entered.

Because improper static information transmitted by a Class B AIS device will degrade the usefulness of the AIS, the Commission must assure, to the fullest extent possible, that static information entered into the Class B AIS device is accurate. Pursuant to § 80.102 of the rules, all maritime stations are required to identify themselves, and an MMSI is an acceptable means of identification. If an improper MMSI is given, then the station is not being properly identified. Under § 19.2 of the International Telecommunications Union Radio Regulations, all transmissions with false or misleading identification are prohibited. Similarly, in the case of a licensed station, under § 303(m)(1)(d)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, it is prohibited to transmit a call sign which has not been assigned by a proper authority. Under these circumstances, the Commission should provide for strict penalties if a Class B AIS device transmits improper static information. Therefore, the Commission should provide in its rules that entering an improper MMSI or other improper static information in a Class B AIS device is prohibited and will subject the violating party to the penalty and forfeiture provisions of Part 1, Subpart A of the Commission’s Rules.

In order to attempt to ensure that proper MMSIs and other static information are entered

into Class B AIS devices, in addition to the IEC 62287-1 standard, the Commission should add a requirement to the certification standards for Class B AIS device: This requirement would consist of a statement in the user manual, and a conspicuous label on the device, that provides clear and concise information on how to enter and confirm static data, notification that once data is entered it may not be changed by the user, and a warning that it is a violation of the Commission's rules to input an MMSI that has not been properly assigned, or to enter any improper static information. NTIA recommends that the MMSI be entered into the Class B AIS device prior to the time that the user takes possession of the device.

Finally, consistent with the provisions for certification of Class A AIS devices, NTIA believes that the Commission should require the Class B AIS devices to receive Coast Guard certification prior to filing for certification with the Commission. The Coast Guard certification should be a prerequisite for the FCC certification. In this manner, the integrity of the VHF data link will be maintained, and the Coast Guard will have the flexibility to ensure that the Class B AIS devices meet future security regulation.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, NTIA believes that there must a nationwide allocation of Channel 87B for exclusive AIS use; AIS base stations must only be authorized for federal use; and the Commission should expeditiously adopt certification standards for Class B AIS devices by incorporating by reference the applicable IEC standards

NTIA hereby submits the foregoing comments and requests the Commission to take

²⁷ *Id.*

action consistent with the views expressed herein.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. R. Kneuer
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Communications and Information

Kathy Smith
Chief Counsel

Fredrick R. Wentland
Associate Administrator
Office of Spectrum Management

Edward Drocella
Gary Patrick
Electronics Engineers
Office of Spectrum Management

National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 4713
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20230
(202) 482-1816

December 1, 2006



Source: Documents 8B/TEMP/214(Rev.1)

Working Party 8B

DRAFT NEW REPORT ITU-R M.[SAT_DET_AIS]¹

SATELLITE DETECTION OF AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM MESSAGES

1 Introduction

In the early 1990s, the International Association of Maritime Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) first proposed the development of a universal shipborne system to improve the maritime safety and efficiency of navigation, and to help protect the marine environment. Subsequent to that proposal, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the ITU, and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) adopted a new navigation system now known as the Automatic Identification System (AIS) to help achieve these goals. The primary purpose of the AIS is to facilitate the efficient exchange of navigational data between ships and between ships and shore stations to significantly improve safety of navigation and promote improved control and monitoring of maritime events. The technical characteristics of the current AIS system using time division multiple access (TDMA) techniques in the VHF maritime mobile band are described in detail in Recommendation ITU-R M.1371.

As described in that recommendation, the AIS is designed to operate autonomously and automatically to exchange short messages among ships, coast stations, and navigational aids within a 20 to 30 NM range primarily using a self-organizing form of TDMA. Messages include data such as ship identification, location, course and speed.

Under requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the installation and use of AIS is mandatory on all ships of 300 gross tons or more engaged in international voyages. In 2008, this requirement expands to include all ships of 500 gross tons or more engaged in national voyages. AIS equipments designed for this mandatory carriage requirement are designated as Class A units. A lower power version intended for voluntary carriage, called Class B, is under development. Since its introduction, the AIS has proven very successful in meeting the original goals set by the IALA.

¹ This Report should be brought to the attention of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), and the Comité International Radio Maritime (CIRM).

Recently, a need has evolved for the capability to detect and track ships at distances from coastlines that are larger than can be accomplished by normal terrestrial VHF communications. Requirements of these long-range applications such as better handling of hazardous cargo, improved security, and countering illegal operations suggest a need to detect approaching ships at distances of 200 NM from shore and beyond.

This report introduces satellite detection of AIS as one means of accomplishing long range ship detection. The report addresses its technical feasibility, examines satellite capacity under various conditions and examines possible methods for improving satellite capacity. The remaining portions of this document are organized into eight subsections as follows: operational and technical characteristics of AIS, overview of satellite detection of AIS, link budget analysis, intra-system interference analysis (Class A only, Mixed class A and Class B, and non-uniform ship distribution), compatibility with incumbent mobile systems, techniques for improving performance and sharing, and summary.

2 Operational and technical characteristics of shipborne AIS

To assist in functionally describing and understanding the nature of satellite AIS detection, the basic characteristics of conventional terrestrial AIS as described in Recommendation. ITU-R M.1371 are summarized in the following paragraphs.

AIS functions as a ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication system in which AIS-equipped ships periodically transmit short fixed-length TDMA messages including data such as identification, location, course, speed, and other status information. The associated AIS receivers aboard ships and shore stations detect this information from all nearby ships, thus providing a comprehensive picture of the local environment to supplement radar and other navigation aids.

The TDMA signal structure is based on a one minute frame divided into 2 250 time slots with each message nominally occupying one time slot. In the normal mode, these identification messages are periodically transmitted alternately on two VHF maritime channels that have been designated for this purpose. Ship location is obtained from an on-board electronic position-fixing device. TDMA timing is obtained from the GNSS receiver built in the AIS station. With the two channels, the total capacity of AIS is 4 500 one-slot messages per minute.

AIS is designed around an access scheme called self-organizing TDMA. Through this technique, the system functions without a central TDMA controller, as is typical in fixed-assignment TDMA schemes. By continuously sensing the AIS signals in the local environment and “announcing” its next intended transmission slot, coordination is achieved by all participating ships in the local environment and conflicts in use of a given time slot are minimized. Other TDMA access schemes are also used for certain message types.

The RF and data technical parameters of AIS are summarized in Table 1. As described in the table, the basic message length is 256 bits with the last 24 bits serving as a buffer to accommodate propagation and repeater delays, timing jitter and extra bits due to bit stuffing. Typically, the last 20 bit positions are empty. The characteristics of antenna and associated transmission line parameters to be installed on AIS equipped ships are not defined in the basic ITU recommendation but are added herein to more fully define the AIS characteristics. In practice, two types of antennas are in common use, a $1/2 \lambda$ dipole and a $5/8 \lambda$ end-fed monopole with gains ranging from 2 to 4.5 dBi. In order to be conservative for this study, the $1/2 \lambda$ dipole is assumed having a maximum gain of approximately 2 dBi with a simple cosine-squared elevation gain pattern. The transmission line type and length varies with the installation. For purposes of this paper, a 3 dB loss is assumed to account for cable and other miscellaneous losses associated with the AIS ship transmitter. The default data packet bit structure is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 1
Overview of Shipboard AIS Technical Parameters

AIS parameters	Values
Frequencies	161.975 and 162.025 MHz
Channel bandwidth	25 kHz
Platforms	Class A Ships, Class B Ships, Coast Stations, Navigation Aids
Power	12.5 W (Class A); 2 W (Class B)
Antenna type*	1/2 λ dipole
Antenna gain*	2 dBi with cosine-squared vertical elevation pattern; Minimum gain = -10 dBi
Cable loss*	3 dB (estimated)
Receiver sensitivity	-107 dBm for 20% Packet Error Rate (PER) (minimum) -109 dBm for \leq 20% PER (typical)
Modulation	9 600 b/s GMSK
Multiple access mode	TDMA (Self-organizing, random, fixed and incremental)
TDMA frame length	1 Minute; 2 250 time Slots
TDMA slot length	26.7 ms; 256 bits (see Table 2)
Message types	22 Types
Message length	1 to 5 slots with 1 slot being the dominate type
Periodic message interval	2 sec to 6 min transmit intervals (see Table 3)
Required D/U protection ratio	10 dB at PER = 20% **

* Typical parameters not defined in Rec. ITU-R M.1371.

** Parameter specified in IEC 61993-2.

TABLE 2
Default Data Packet Bit Structure

Power ramp up	8 bits	
Training sSequence	24 bits	Necessary for synchronization
Start flag	8 bits	
Data	168 bits	Default length
Cyclic redundancy code	16 bits	Necessary for error detection
End flag	8 bits	
Buffer	24 bits (typically, the last 20 bit positions are empty)	Necessary to accommodate bit stuffing, propagation and repeater delays, and jitter
Total	256 bits	

To accommodate the various functions performed by AIS, 22 message types are defined in the standard, which can be grouped into four categories: dynamic, static and voyage, safety and administrative, and data. The dynamic messages, transmitted periodically, comprise the largest

volume of traffic in the AIS environment. One key variable is the rate at which the different platforms transmit these periodic messages. For several platform types a range of reporting intervals are defined in the standard depending on the ship dynamics such as speed and course. Table 3 summarizes the message reporting intervals for the various platforms.

TABLE 3
AIS message reporting intervals

AIS platform	Reporting interval
Dynamic information	
Coast station	3 1/3 to 10 sec interval (10 sec nominal)
Class A ship	2 sec to 3 min interval (approx. 7 sec average) (see Table 4)
Class B ship	5 sec to 3 min interval (30 sec nominal)
Search and rescue aircraft	10 sec interval
Aid to Navigation	3 min interval
Static and voyage information	6 min interval
Safety & administrative messages	As required
Data message	As required

As will be shown later, the message reporting interval plays an important role in the performance of satellite detection of AIS. As shown in Table 3, the reporting interval for Class A ships varies over a wide range from every 2 seconds to every three minutes depending on the dynamic status of the ship. In order to determine a long term average transmission interval for Class A ships, it is necessary to have an estimate of the distribution of the ships among the various dynamic status situations. Table 4 lists the status categories, their respective reporting interval and an estimate of the percentage of ships in each category at any given time. From this data, an overall estimate for the reporting interval was determined.

TABLE 4
Class A shipborne mobile equipment reporting intervals

Ship's dynamic conditions	Nominal reporting interval	Percent of total
Ship at anchor or moored and not moving faster than 3 knots	3 min	28
Ship at anchor or moored and moving faster than 3 knots	10 s	
Ship 0-14 knots	10 s	30
Ship 0-14 knots and changing course	3 1/3 s	12
Ship 14-23 knots	6 s	30
Ship 14-23 knots and changing course	2 s	
Ship - 23 knots	2 s	
Ship - 23 knots and changing course	2 s	
Average for all ships	~7 s interval	

3 Satellite detection of AIS

In concept, satellite detection of AIS would involve use of one or more satellites in low earth orbit (LEO) to receive and decode AIS messages, and relay the resulting information via satellite feeder links to appropriately located earth stations. Satellite altitudes in the range of 600 to 1 000 km are typical for LEO satellites. A functioning satellite AIS detection system is not currently in place and the operational and technical parameters for such a system have not been defined. Consequently, it is necessary for purposes herein to assume reasonable and technically achievable parameters.

An initial demonstration system will consist of a single (LEO) satellite in polar orbit at an altitude of 950 km. For later operational systems, it is envisioned that a relatively small constellation of LEO satellites would be used; consequently satellite coverage of a given ship location will not be continuous. Full global coverage and the use of a modest number of earth stations necessitate the need to use store and forward techniques for the received AIS data. However, for detection and monitoring of ships up to several thousand nautical miles from a coast, the large satellite footprint on the Earth allows real time download of data during the visibility period of the satellite.

Several key technical factors distinguish satellite AIS detection from conventional ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore AIS detection, specifically receiver sensitivity, antenna gain pattern, and reliability requirements. Measured data reported for AIS shipborne receivers show that off-the-shelf receivers are typically more sensitive than the receiver sensitivity required in the AIS specifications. Using low noise amplifiers and optimum detection schemes, further improvement in AIS satellite receiver sensitivity is possible. Countering these improvements, however, is the need for larger than optimum receiver bandwidths to accommodate Doppler shifts of up to about ± 3.5 kHz. Taking these factors into account, a baseline sensitivity of -118 dBm for a 1% packet error rate (PER) and -120 dBm for a 20% PER are used herein for the AIS satellite receiver.

The initial satellite system will use a wide beam satellite antenna. Broadbeam antennas used on LEO satellites can generally be categorized into two groups. One commonly used type is one in which the peak gain is directed omni-directionally towards the horizon with lower gain towards the sub-satellite point. With this type of antenna, the change in antenna gain with off axis angle partially compensates for the changes in propagation loss resulting in a lower variation in signal level as off-axis angles vary. The other antenna category is of a more conventional type with peak gain directed towards the sub-satellite point. For purposes of this study the latter type is assumed having a peak gain of 6 dBi and a -3 dB beamwidth of 100 degrees. For the gain pattern of the main lobe, a model often used in ITU-R studies is used herein as follows:

$$G(\theta) = G_{MB} - 12 \cdot (\theta/\theta_{3dB})^2$$

where

$G(\theta)$ = Satellite antenna gain (dBi) at off axis angle θ (Deg)

G_{MB} = Satellite antenna main beam gain (dBi)

θ_{3dB} = Satellite antenna -3 dB beamwidth (Deg)

The performance requirements of AIS satellite detection are also significantly different than the terrestrial counterpart. Conventional AIS, like most communications systems, aims to successfully receive and decode most of the associated transmitted messages with moderate to high reliability. For purposes of monitoring ships using satellite detection of AIS, high communications reliability is not required. For ships within a few hundred nautical miles of a coast, updates of the ship locations every hour may be sufficient and for ships further at sea, location updates every four hours or even every twelve hours may be sufficient. As will be shown later, intra-system interference results in the loss of a very large percentage of received AIS ship messages. For example, for a single satellite overpass, up to 99% or more of the AIS ship messages can be lost and the goal of updating ship

locations on a regular basis can still be achieved. To achieve ship location updates every 12 hours, it is necessary to successfully decode only one of the more than 360 messages received (~0.3%) from a given ship during this period. This is explained in more detail later.

The two frequencies that have been designated as channels within the maritime mobile service for the terrestrial AIS function are not allocated on an exclusive basis. Rather, these channels and adjacent channels are allocated and used throughout various regions of the world for other mobile service applications including VHF public correspondence stations (VPCS) in the maritime mobile service and land mobile radio systems. Unlike conventional terrestrial AIS systems that can co-exist with other co-frequency transmitters through geographical separation, the satellite antenna beam covers a large geographical area, thereby receiving transmissions by multiple AIS ship transmitters simultaneously, as well as mobile systems operating inland. Satellite AIS must be able to successfully operate in the interference environment resulting from existing services. The performance of satellite AIS operating with existing services is examined in Section 9.

Table 5 takes into account the above discussion to summarize the characteristics of the AIS satellite used for this study.

TABLE 5
Assumed Characteristic of AIS Satellite Link

AIS satellite parameters	Values
Satellite	
Constellation	1 to 6 satellites
Altitude	950 km
Inclination	82.5 Deg
Period	104 Min
Earth Footprint	3 281 km radius (at the horizon)
Antenna	
Gain (G_{MB})	6 dBi
Beamwidth (θ_{3dB})	100 Deg
Pattern	$G_{MB} - 12 (\theta / \theta_{3dB})^2$
Polarization	Near circular
Circular to Linear Polarization Conversion Loss	3 dB
Receiver	
Noise Figure at LNA input	3 dB
Required E_b/N_o for BER = 10^{-5}	13 dB including implementation loss
Line/filter losses prior to LNA	2.5 dB
Sensitivity at LNA	-118 dBm for 1% packet error rate (PER) -120 dBm for 20% PER
D/U Protection Ratio (for co-channel, coincident-in-time signals)	15 dB for 1% PER 10 dB for 20% PER
Desired ship location update period	Single satellite overpass, 4 hours, and 12 hours

4 Link budget analysis

One of the most basic performance measures of any satellite communication system is a link budget. For the case under study, it consists of a calculation of the received power at the satellite from one ship and a comparison with the satellite sensitivity. If the received power exceeds the sensitivity, i.e. has a positive margin, successful communication can be achieved. Using the parameters previously defined herein for AIS ship transmitters and AIS satellite receivers, a link budget was developed for the AIS ship-to-satellite path. Table 6 describes the applicable geometry and power calculations for detection of AIS messages from Class A ships.

TABLE 6
Ship-To-Satellite Link Budget at Maximum Range

Parameters	Values
Geometry	
Satellite Altitude (km)	950
Minimum transmit elevation angle (Deg)	0
Satellite antenna off-axis angle (Deg)	60.5
Maximum Slant range (km)	3 606
Maximum Surface range (km)	3 281
Power	
Transmit Power (dBm)	41.0
Transmit Gain (dBi)	2.0
Transmit Cable & Miscellaneous Losses (dB)	3.0
Free Space Propagation Loss at maximum range (dB)	147.8
Polarization Mismatch Loss (dB)	3.0
Satellite antenna gain at the horizon (dBi)	1.6
Satellite RF Line/Filter losses (dB)	2.5
Received power at satellite (dBm)	-111.7
Satellite sensitivity (dBm) for 20% PER	-120.0
Net Margin (dB)	8.3

One factor that was explored in more detail was the propagation loss at very low take-off angles from the ship antennas. For most satellite communications systems, it is normal to design the system for some minimum elevation angle above the horizon at the earth terminal, such as 3 or 5 degrees, to account for technical factors such as fading and/or regulatory limitations. For the present study, it was found that these factors are not applicable for VHF earth-to-satellite propagation over sea water. Using a radio propagation model designed for earth-to-satellite propagation loss predictions, a curve, given in Fig. 1, was developed showing the estimated median propagation for a satellite at 950 km altitude.² The curve was developed based on average maritime temperate meteorological and sea state conditions. The resulting bobbing structure in the data results from the periodic enhancement and fading of the signal due to in-phase and out-of-phase

² See <http://flattop.its.bldrdoc.gov/if77.html>.

addition of the reflected path from the water's surface. As seen in the data, nominal free space propagation conditions apply within a couple of dB all the way to the optical horizon with propagation losses rapidly increasing beyond that distance.

FIGURE 1
**Earth-to-Satellite Propagation Loss over Sea Water at 162 MHz
(Satellite at 950 km Altitude)**

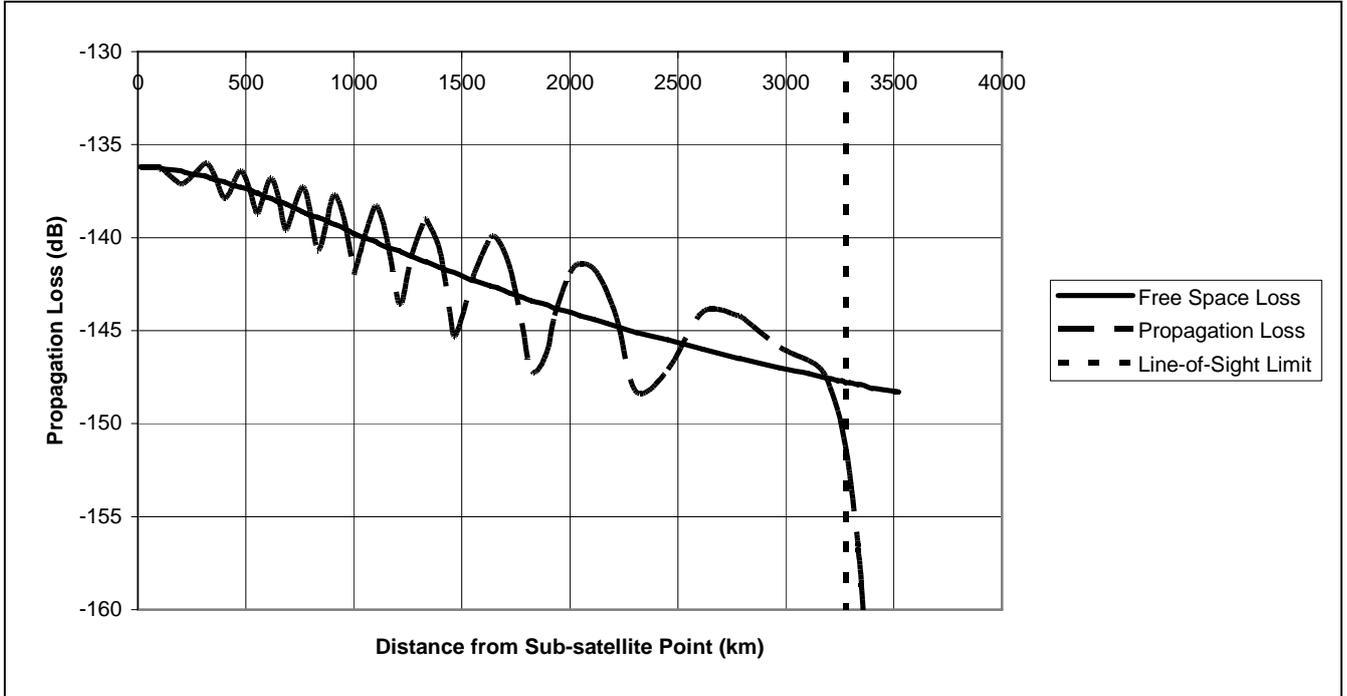
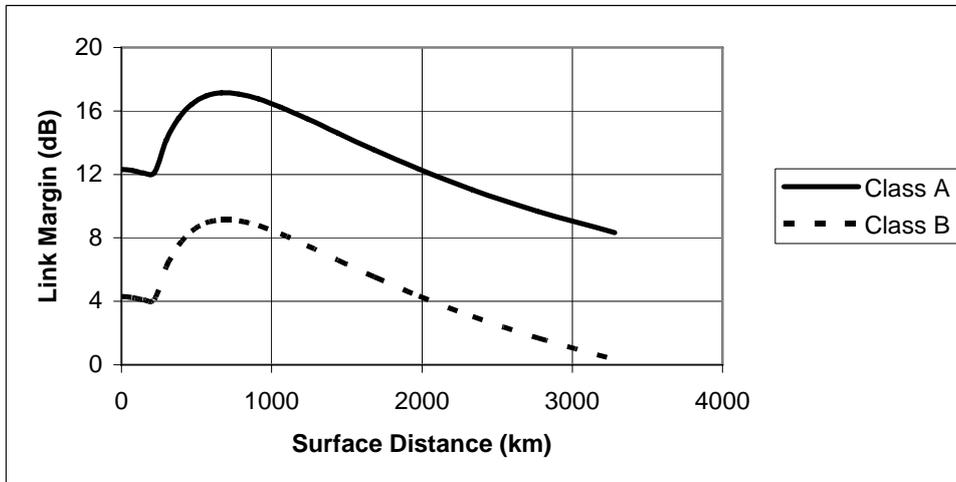


Figure 2 expands upon the result derived in Table 5 to describe the net margin as a function of distance from the sub-satellite point on the Earth to the horizon. For this calculation, free space propagation is used to the Earth horizon without including the in-phase/out-of-phase fading structure shown earlier. The partial null directly under the satellite is a result of the null in the antenna gain of the dipole antenna used for the AIS ship antenna. Since the link budget technical parameters for Class B ships are basically identical to Class A, except for the reduced power, a parallel curve representing Class B reception at the satellite is also shown.

FIGURE 2

Ship-To-Satellite Link Margin vs. Surface Distance from Sub-satellite Point



It can be concluded from these results that adequate link margin exists to detect and decode both Class A and Class B AIS signals by satellite at most ship locations within the satellite footprint.

5 Intra-system interference analysis (class A only)

Although the link budget shows that adequate link margins for detection of a Class A ship AIS message anywhere within the satellite footprint, a significant limitation on system detection performance occurs because of intra-system interference. In the discussion that follows, three methodologies are described that quantify the limitations on system performance due to intra-system interference.

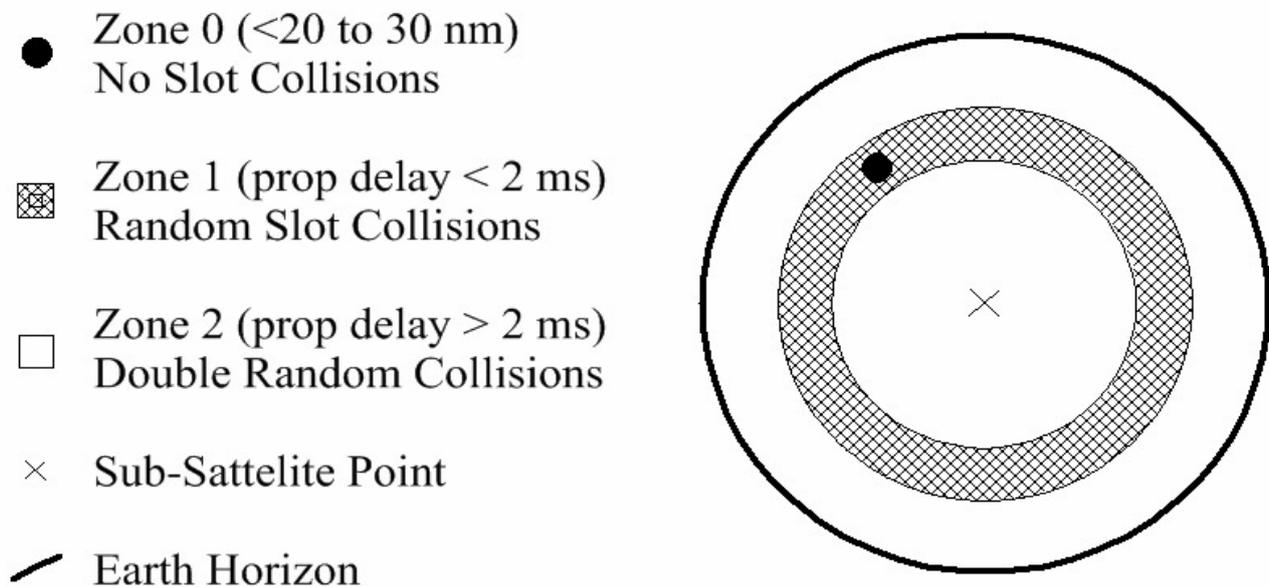
Analytic Approach. As previously described, the self-organizing TDMA (SOTDMA) scheme used for AIS assures the coordination of timeslot usage so that minimal timeslot conflicts result among ship and shore units in a given local geographic area. Such is not the case for AIS satellite detection. The satellite sees many such local areas within the antenna beam. Since there is, in general, no coordination between local areas, timeslot collisions will occur between many signals received at the satellite. When a time slot collision occurs, depending on their respective power levels, both messages could be lost. As the rate of occurrence of these time slot collisions increases, the probability of successfully detecting and decoding a given ship AIS message decreases.

These time slot collisions can be viewed in terms of a single desired AIS message (D), and one or more undesired AIS messages (U). Whenever a timeslot collision occurs and the aggregate D/U power ratio is less than the required 10 dB, loss of that message will result. Initially considering only Class A ships, Fig. 2 showed that the ratio of the maximum AIS signal received to minimum AIS signal received to be about 9 dB. Consequently, for any timeslot collision that occurs, the D/U will fail to achieve the required 10 dB value resulting in the loss of most packets. Potential receiver processing techniques are described later that may reduce the loss of packets.

Under certain conditions, the loss of two packets will occur during slot collisions. Figure 3 illustrates this point. In the figure, the outer circle represents the footprint on the Earth's surface and the centre of the circle is the point directly below the satellite. The much smaller black area represents a local AIS coordination area. Consider the reception of a message from a ship located in that local area. AIS messages from other ships located in that same local area will be coordinated in time due to the SOTDMA architecture; consequently no time slot collisions will occur either locally

or at the AIS satellite receiver. However, ship messages located outside that local area in the larger shaded area will not be coordinated and will result in random occurrence of timeslot collisions and loss of a percentage of the desired messages. As long as the difference in propagation delay to the satellite from the various ship locations in this zone is less than about 2 ms, the GPS time synchronization assures that time slots will effectively align and only one time slot is impacted. The 2 ms delay corresponds to the 20 empty bit positions at the end of an AIS message. In areas outside of the shaded zone, represented by the enclosed white areas, larger differences in propagation delay to the satellite will result in overlapping of timeslots and the resultant loss of two slots.

FIGURE 3
Illustration of Time Slot Collision zones



If one considers only Class A ships and assumes the idealized situation where the geographic distribution of ships is uniform within the satellite field of view, a simple analytic methodology can be used to calculate the statistics associated with this form of intra-system interference.

First, consider the trivial case of a single message being received at the satellite from a given ship and there exists only one other ship in the environment. The probability of packet collision and probability of successful detection are given by

$$Q_{1,1} = k * D_C / 2$$

$$P_{1,1} = 1 - (k * D_C) / 2$$

$$P_{1,1} = 1 - (k * (\tau / \Delta T) / 2)$$

where

- $Q_{1,1}$ = Probability of timeslot collision (Desired message from 1 ship; periodic undesired messages from 1 other ship)
 $P_{1,1}$ = Probability of at least one successful detection without collision (1 desired message; periodic undesired messages from 1 other ship)
 D_C = Transmit duty cycle of the undesired ship messages
 k = 0, 1, or 2 for interfering messages from ships located in zones 0, 1, or 2
 ΔT = Average message transmission interval (seconds)
 τ = Message length (0.0267 seconds).

The factor of 2 included in the above equation accounts for the fact that AIS ship messages are alternated between the two AIS frequencies.

As an example, using a ΔT of 7 seconds and a competing ship message from zone 2 yields

$$P_{1,1} = 99.6\%.$$

Expanding this example to the case of a single message being received at the satellite from a given ship with N total ships in the environment, the probability of successful detection of the signal without time slot collisions is given by

$$P_{1,N} = (P_{1,1})^{N-1}.$$

For the general case where M messages are transmitted by a given ship during a period of satellite visibility, the probability of successful detection of at least one of the transmitted messages during the period of visibility is given by

$$P_{M,N} = 1 - [1 - (P_{1,1})^{N-1}]^M$$

where

$$M = T_{\text{vis}} / \Delta T$$
$$T_{\text{vis}} = \text{Time period of satellite visibility}$$

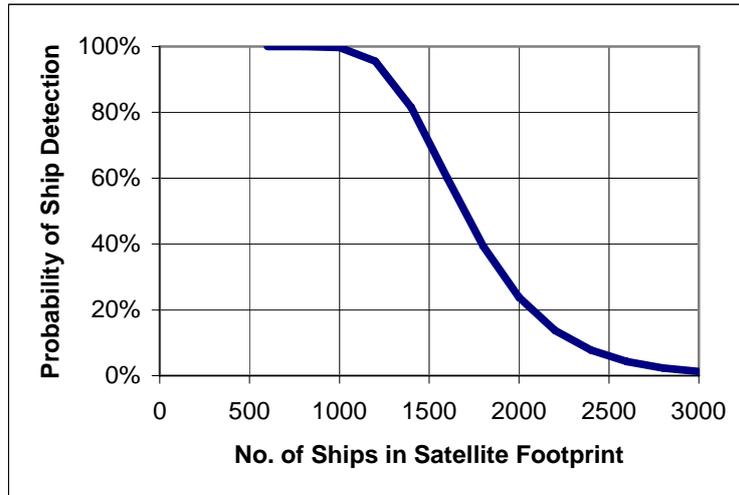
Under the assumption that the ships are uniformly distributed within the satellite antenna footprint, it is clear that that some ships may be located in each of zones 0, 1, and 2. The relative location and size of these zones varies with each received message. Given the very small size for zone 0, undesired messages from this zone have minimal impact on overall satellite detection performance and can be ignored. Consequently, an average value for k would be between 1 and 2. For the case of a uniform ship distribution within the satellite footprint, it was found that an average value for k of about 1.6 accurately describes the intra-system interference. Continuing with the above example using $k = 1.6$ yields the following two results.

$$P_{1,1000} = 4.8\%$$
$$P_{100,1000} = 99.3\%$$

The analysis methodology described above is consistent with other studies completed on this subject.³ Figure 4 gives an example curve for the simple case of a single satellite and single overhead pass of the satellite.

³ Hoyer, Gudrun K., et al, *Space-Based AIS for Global Maritime Traffic Monitoring*, Kjeller, Norway: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), undated.

FIGURE 4
Satellite Detection Statistics



The calculations described above represent the probability of detecting a given ship during a specified satellite visibility period. An alternative and possibly more useful statistic would be the percentage of the ships detected. Since it is reasonable to assume that the detection probability is independent from one ship to another, then the average number of ships detected (S_{ave}) is given by

$$S_{ave} = N \cdot P_{M,N}$$

Expressing this in terms of the percent of the total ships detection results in a curve identical to the results shown in Fig. 4 with the ordinate scale labelled percent of ships detected .

A third statistic of interest is the probability that, during the given visibility period, all the ships in the satellite footprint will be detected. This much more stringent criterion is defined by the following:

$$P_{All} = (P_{M,N})^N$$

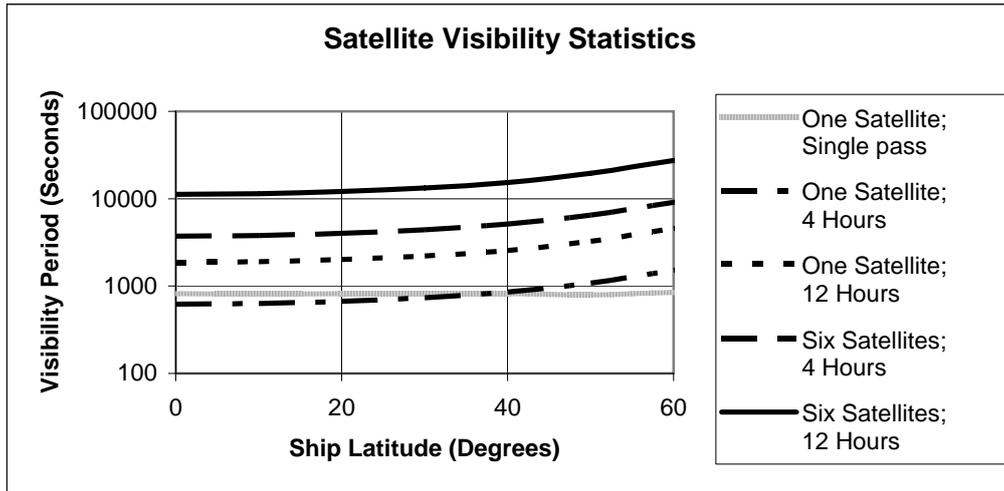
Because of the extremely high value of the exponent, this curve is effectively all or nothing. That is, with a probability of individual detection very close to 1.0 then 100% of the ships will be detected. But when the probability of individual detection drops below 1.0, then the probability of detecting 100% of the ships quickly drops to near zero.

In considering the above discussion, it becomes clear that many of the transmitted messages can be corrupted and lost by time slot collisions and still achieve the desired goal of updating ship locations during a given satellite visibility period.

The final factor to be defined is the satellite visibility time period. For the representative 950 km satellite altitude being considered herein, the period of visibility for a single directly overhead pass of a satellite is approximately 16.8 minutes. However, most satellite overpasses will not occur directly overhead but rather at some lower elevation angle, depending on the satellite orbit inclination and the latitude of the ship location. Through use of a commercially available satellite analysis model, average satellite visibility periods were derived as a function of ship latitude and

observation period as shown in Fig. 5.⁴ Values for a single overhead pass as well as average values over longer extended observation periods of time such as 4 and 12 hours are given. Multiple satellite coverage is also considered for a six-satellite constellation, where the satellites are adequately spaced to avoid overlapping of footprints on the earth.

FIGURE 5
Satellite Visibility Statistics
(Satellite in Polar Orbit at 950 km Altitude)



For simplicity, most of the examples presented herein are for a ship latitude of 40° North. Table 7 gives the specific visibility values for a ship located at 40° North.

TABLE 7
Satellite Visibility Statistics
(Satellite in Polar Orbit; Target Ship at 40° North Latitude)

Satellite Constellation	Single Overpass	4-Hour Observation	12-Hour Observation
1 Satellite	818 seconds	853 seconds*	2 560 seconds
6 Satellites	818 seconds	5 118 seconds	15 360 seconds

* For the single satellite constellation, the 4-hour observation period represents a long term average, noting that there can be periods of over 9 hours without satellite visibility.

The analytic methodology and satellite visibility statistics can now be combined to describe the percentage of ships detected and the probability of detecting all ships. Figure 6 shows the results for a typical satellite overpass. Throughout the remainder of this report, these curves will be used as the baseline for AIS satellite detection of Class A ships. Figure 7 compares the results for other observation periods and a multiple-satellite constellation with the baseline curve.

⁴ Throughout this report the term “observation period” is used interchangeably with “ship location update period”, both of which refer to a period of time in which it is desired to obtain at least one update of a given ship’s identification and location. The term “visibility period” refers to the total number of seconds within the observation period that a line-of-sight path exists between a given ship and the satellite.

FIGURE 6
AIS Satellite Detection
Baseline Curves for Single Satellite & Single Overpass

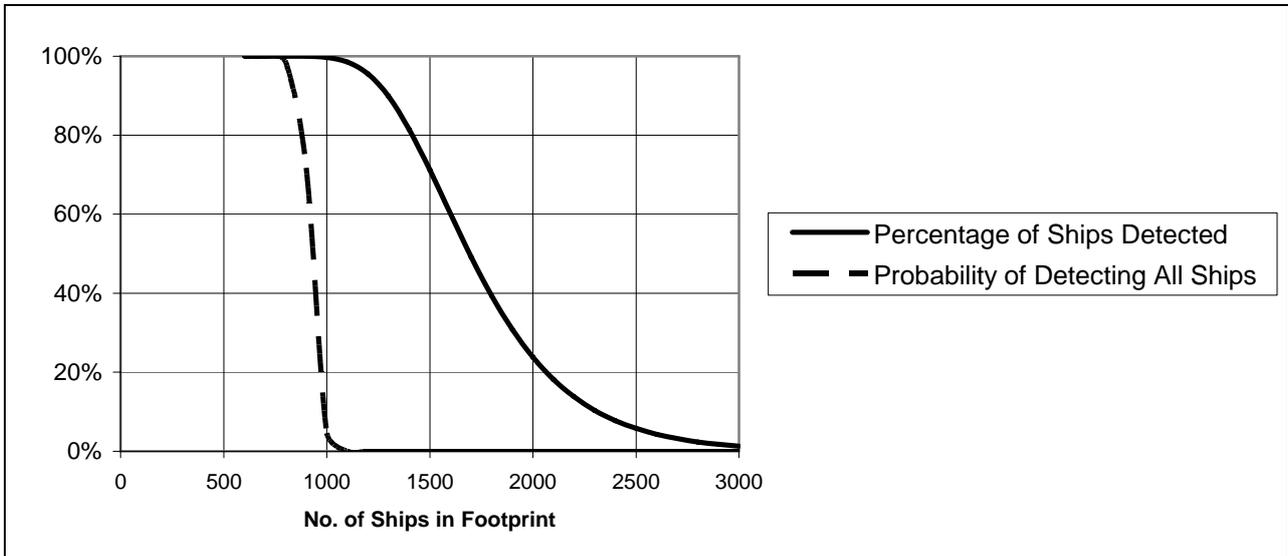
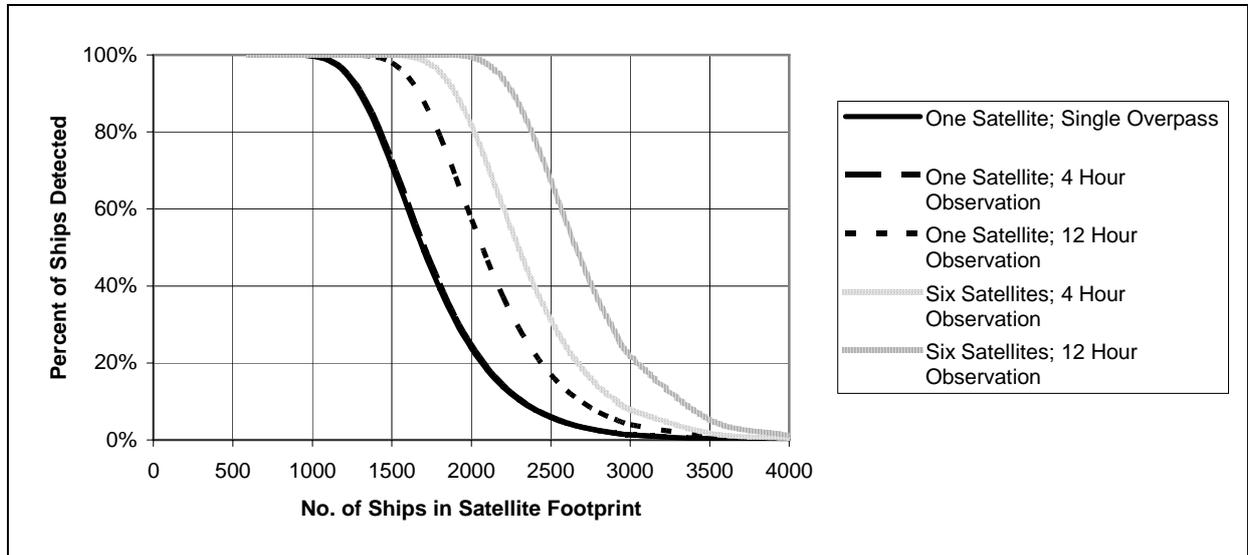


FIGURE 7
AIS Satellite Detection
(One and Six Satellite Scenarios)



For purposes of this study, the capacity of the satellite is defined at two points, the point at which 80% of the ships in the satellite antenna footprint are detected and where 100% are detected. Consequently, for the cases described above, Table 8 summarizes the satellite capacity for the various cases studied.

TABLE 8
**Calculated Satellite AIS Detection Capacity
(Polar Satellite at 950 km Altitude; Ship at 40° Latitude; 80% Detection)**

Satellite Constellation	Capacity Definition	Single Overpass	4-Hour Observation	12-Hour Observation
1 Satellite	80%	1 420 Ships	1 430 Ships*	1 790 Ships
6 Satellites	80%	1 420 Ships	2 018 Ships	2 381 Ships
1 Satellite	100%**	738 Ships	753 Ships	797 Ships
6 Satellites	100%**	738 Ships	1 052 Ships	1 382 Ships

* For the single satellite constellation, the 4-hour observation period represents a long term average, noting that there can be periods of over 9 hours without satellite visibility.

** Capacity calculated at 99.9%.

Simulation Method. An alternative approach was undertaken to investigate AIS satellite detection capacity limitations using Monte Carlo simulation methods. Using a Microsoft Excel[®] spreadsheet, a database was created where each record included technical parameters representing a ship located within the satellite footprint. By randomizing the key transmit parameters of each AIS unit and repeatedly calculating the resulting aggregate power received at the satellite in a given time slot, statistical results can be obtained in the same format as in the earlier analytic method. The key assumptions of the Monte Carlo simulation method developed for this study are as follows:

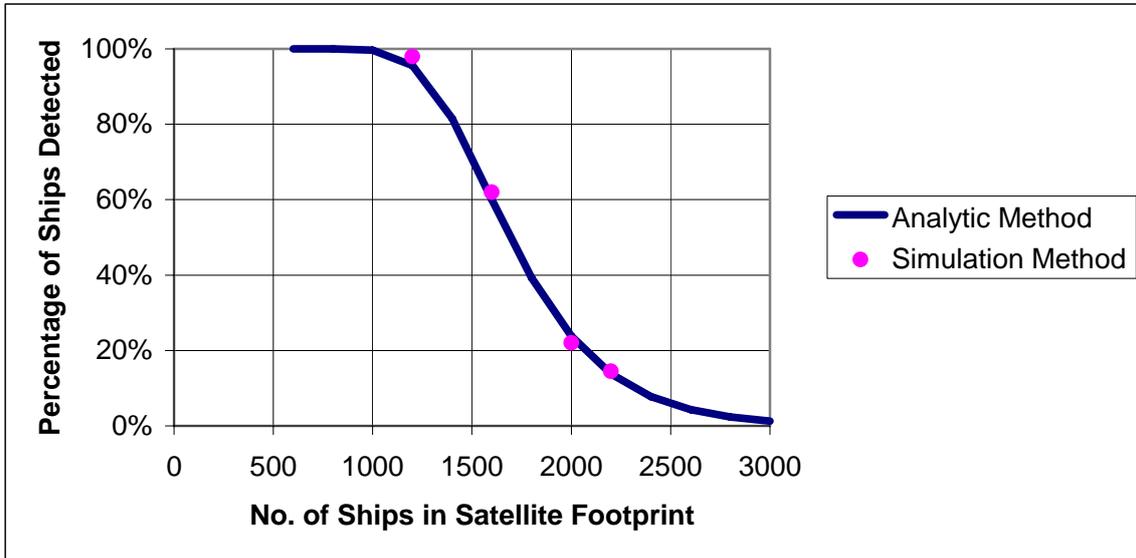
- Ships are uniformly distributed in a circular geographic area with a 3 281 km radius centred on the sub-satellite point
- Ships randomly transmit on AIS channel 1 or 2, and on one of the 2 250 time slots
- Each Class A ship transmits at the power and average time slot interval described earlier.

In addition to computing the aggregate power at the satellite, it is also necessary to compute the propagation time delay from each simulated ship in order to appropriately consider the time slot collision factor. In order to properly aggregate the interfering power received in a given desired-signal time slot under conditions of varying propagation time delays, the desired signal time slot was further subdivided into sub-time slots. For this study it was found that using ten sub-time slots provided sufficient accuracy, i.e. use of a larger number of sub-time slots did not significantly change the results. The first and last of the ten sub-time slots, twenty bits in length, represents overlapping time slots involving the 20 empty bits in the buffer. The other eight sub-time slots are 27 bits in length for a total of 256 bits. If the aggregate power in any of these middle eight sub-time slots results in a D/U of less than 10 dB, then a lost message is declared.

Figure 8 was developed through the use a Microsoft Excel[®] spreadsheet implementation of this methodology. The curve shows several data point calculations using the simulation method compared with the baseline values given in Fig. 5 showing close agreement.

FIGURE 8

**AIS Satellite Detection
Baseline Curve Using Simulation Method**



Stochastic Method. A third methodology to develop statistics for detection of Class A ships is described by Tunaley.⁵ In this method, the arrival time at the satellite of the AIS messages from the ships is considered as a random variable having a Poisson distribution. The expressions derived from this approach have the same general form as the earlier analytic method except the term $P_{1,N}$ is replaced with the following expression:

$$P_{1,N} \approx e^{(-\lambda \tau / 2)}$$

where

$$\lambda = k \cdot (N - 1) / \Delta T$$

k = Factor to account for the double slot collision factor as described earlier
(1.6)

τ = AIS Message Length (26.7 ms)

N = Number of Ships

ΔT = Message Transmit Interval.

For the case of Class A transmitters in a uniform ship environment, it is easily found that the results using this method are essentially identical with the analytic method described earlier in this subsection. This can be explained by noting the following approximation for the exponential function as follows:

$$e^{(-x)} \approx 1 - x \text{ for } x \ll 1$$

By appropriate substitution of this approximation and rearranging of terms, it is found that the analytic and stochastic methods result in identical equations for low transmission duty cycles.

⁵ Dr. J.K.E. Tunaley, *A Stochastic Model for Space-Borne AIS*, Undated.

The near identical results derived using three different analysis methodologies sufficiently validates the results derived herein. In the discussion that follows, analysis results for various scenarios will be compared with the baseline values derived above. Given the equivalence among the three analysis approaches, only one analysis method is used that is most convenient for describing any given scenario.

6 Intra-system interference analysis (mixed class A and class B)

Detecting a Class A ship in an environment consisting of both Class A and Class B ships can now be investigated. The stochastic method described above is convenient for examining this case. Because of the lower power of the Class B units, not every time slot collision results in the loss of a message. For example, it can be seen from Fig. 2 that an AIS message from a single Class B ship located far from the sub-satellite point colliding with an AIS message from a Class A ship located near to the sub-satellite point would result in a D/U approaching +17 dB. This well exceeds the interference criteria of 10 dB and consequently this Class A message would still be correctly received. However, multiple overlapping of such signals may occasionally aggregate to the point where loss of signal for this example would occur. Consequently, the simple analytic procedure described earlier cannot be used, since it assumes that every collision results in message loss.

In order to use the stochastic methodology, some modifications are necessary. Specifically, the λ factor is replaced by the following

$$\lambda = k_A (N_A - 1) / \Delta T_A + k_B (N_B) / \Delta T_B$$

where the subscripts refer to the appropriate parameters for Class A and B. The constant, k_A , is the same value as k in the earlier equation. The constant k_B , however, can initially be only roughly estimated. It accounts for the fact that only a portion of the Class B slot collisions cause message loss, depending on relative power levels at the satellite receiver. One technique to provide a more accurate estimate of constant k_B , is to exercise the simulation model described earlier for a single data point. These results were used to derive a value of 1.2 for k_B .

Figures 9 through 11 show the probability of detecting a Class A AIS message in a mixed Class A and Class B environment under various conditions.

FIGURE 9

**Detection Probability in a Mixed Class A & B Environment
(One Satellite; Single Satellite Overpass)⁶**

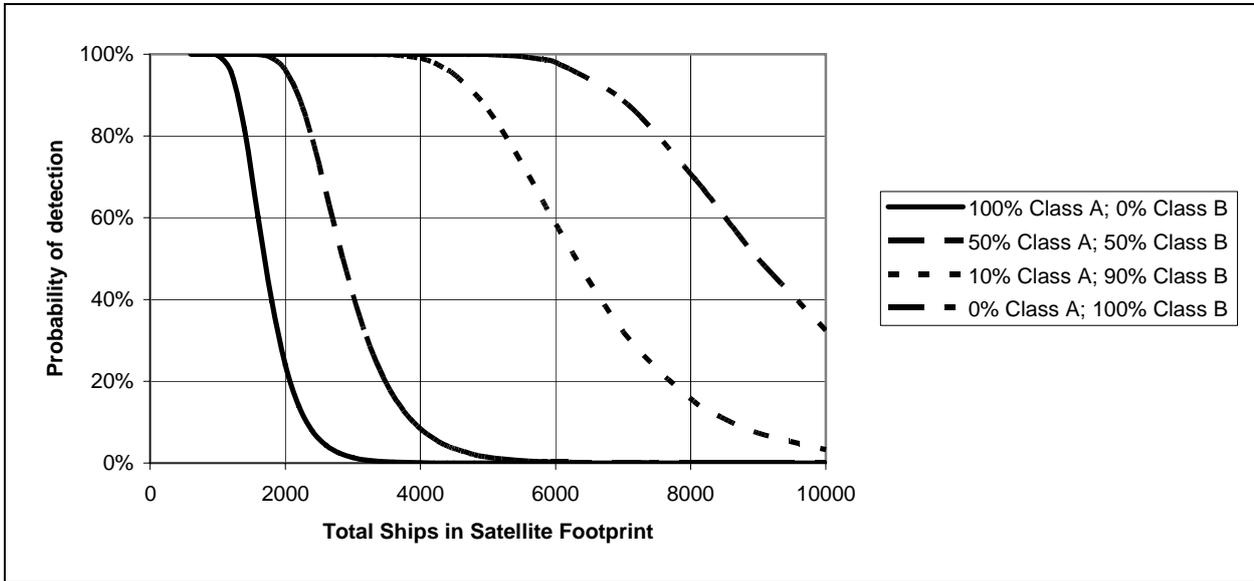
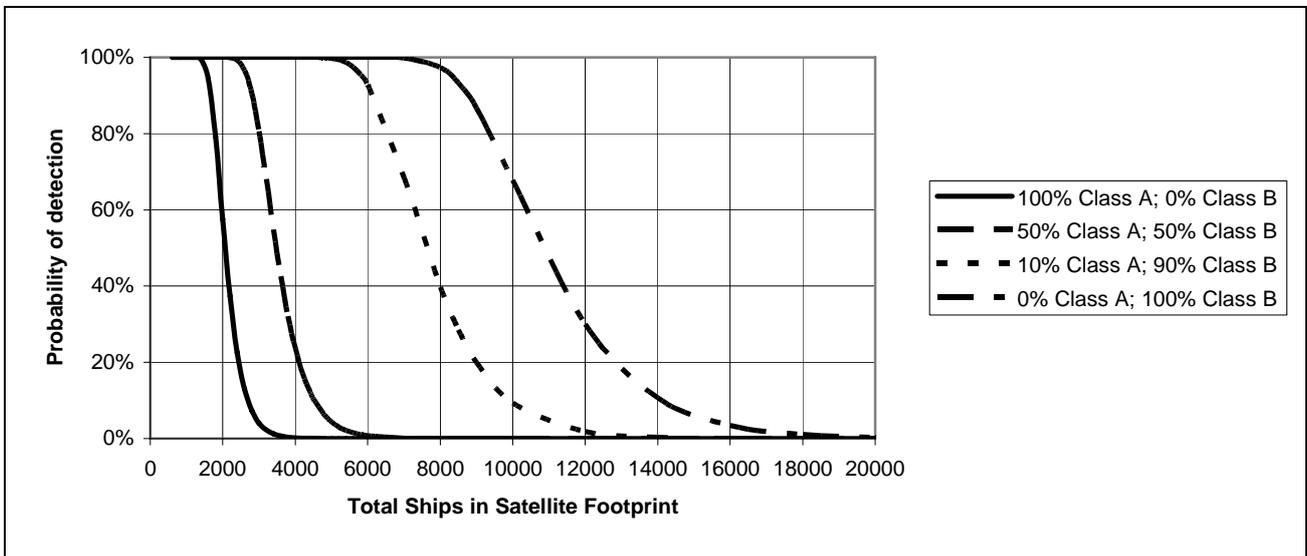


FIGURE 10

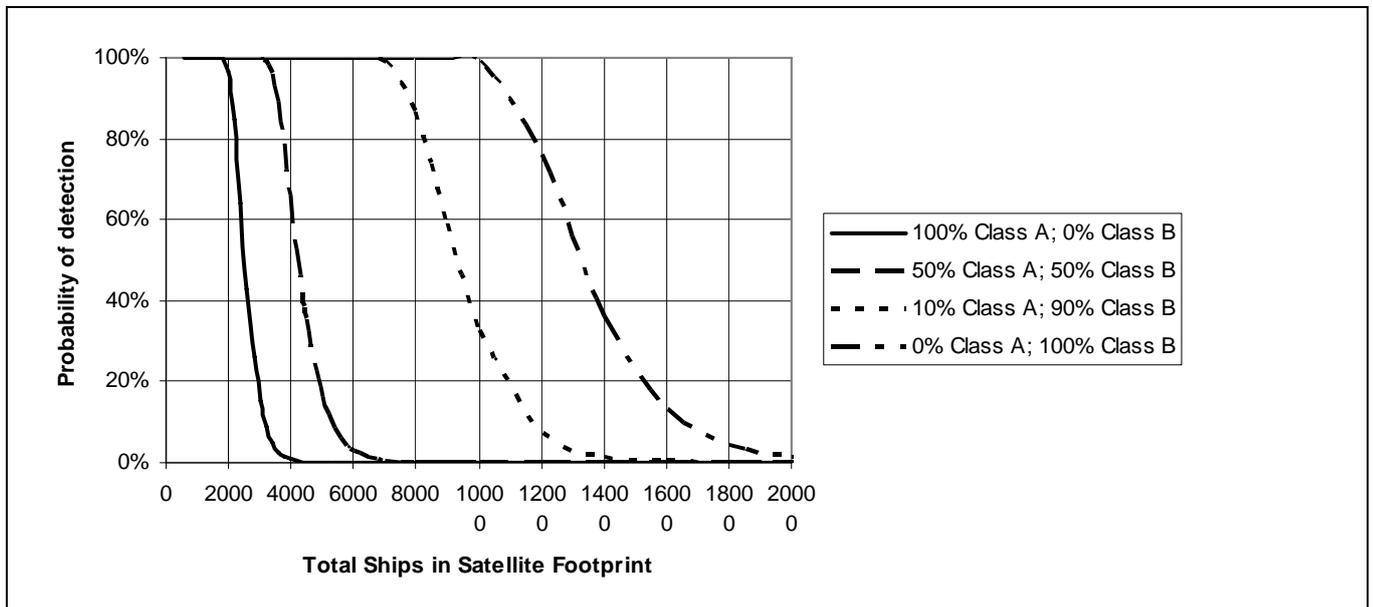
**Detection Probability in a Mixed Class A & B Environment
(One Satellite; 12 Hour Observation Period)**



⁶ In Figures 9, 10 and 11, the curve labelled "0% Class A; 100% Class B" refers to a hypothetical limiting case where the target is a single Class A ship and all remaining ships in the environment are Class B.

FIGURE 11

**Detection Probability in a Mixed Class A & B Environment
(Six Satellites; 12 Hour Observation Period)**



7 Intra-system interference analysis (non-uniform ship distribution)

The Class A only and the mixed Class A & B environments discussed above were both developed under the assumption of a constant, uniform geographic distribution of ships within the satellite antenna footprint. While this assumption simplified the calculation of the probability of detection, actual ship environments may not be adequately represented by this simplifying assumption. To examine this issue further, a modified simulation methodology was further developed for this study to consider non-uniform ship distributions, more typical of actual environments. However, doing so introduces a number of additional variables to be addressed, including:

- Total number of AIS-equipped ships in the world.
- Geographic location of the desired target ship (latitude and longitude).
- World-wide geographic distribution of AIS-equipped ships.
- Satellite ground track information.

It was not possible for this study to obtain an authoritative count of the number of AIS-equipped ships that are active in the world. In addition to the required carriage under the SOLAS treaty, a growing number of larger, privately owned yachts and working vessels are being implemented with AIS Class A units. From a variety of sources, estimates ranged from about 50 000 to over 80 000. For purposes of this study, an estimate of 70 000 Class A equipped ships in the world is used for the year 2005.

The location of the target ship, quite obviously, has a large influence on the probability of detection. For example, a ship located far from the heavily-used shipping routes may be detected with near 100% certainty. This would not be the case for a ship located near more densely used areas. For this study, a target ship located at four arbitrary locations was used: 1 000 km off the coast from the cities of New York and Los Angeles in the United States, one near the centre of the Gulf of Mexico, and one in the mid-Atlantic were chosen.

Describing the geographic ship distribution is somewhat more challenging. One useful representation of world-wide ship densities can be derived from voluntary weather observations reported by ships at sea. One available set of data for the month of October 2004 contained over 80 000 weather observation reports, including associated latitude/longitude data, from approximately 800 ships. This distribution is shown in Fig. 12. As can be seen from this data, the density of the locations is significantly higher in coastal areas and major shipping routes, and relatively lower over the broad ocean areas, as would be expected. The relative distribution of ship locations in this data is assumed to provide a reasonable worldwide representation of Class A ships. This distribution would not adequately represent future Class B distributions since these are expected to be largely confined to coastal areas.

FIGURE 12
Example Worldwide Distribution of Class A ships



Using this database, an initial step can be taken to study the detection of Class A ships using a more realistic worldwide distribution of ships.

Analysis of non-uniform ship distributions can be accomplished using this data and a Monte Carlo simulation process similar to that described above with the following additional changes:

- A random subset of the ship locations contained in the weather observation data is used rather than uniformly distributed locations within the satellite footprint.
- The satellite location is stepped along a representative satellite orbit passing over the target ship in accordance with the assumed satellite orbit parameters.

Figures 13 through 16 show the resulting probability of detection of a Class A ship as a function of the number of worldwide Class A equipped ships for the four test points identified earlier. Note the change in the abscissa to indicate the total number of Class A equipped ships in the world.

FIGURE 13

**Detection Statistics using Worldwide Ship Data
(Target Ship Located 1 000 km off Coast of Los Angeles CA, USA)**

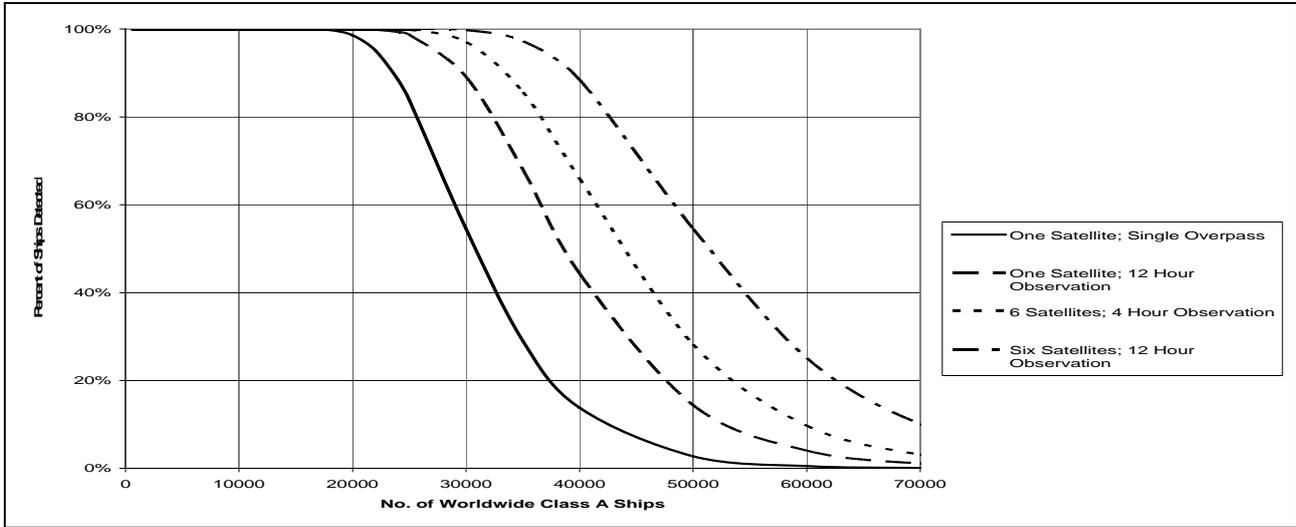


FIGURE 14

**Detection Statistics using Worldwide Ship Data
(Target Ship Located 1 000 km off Coast of New York, NY, USA)**

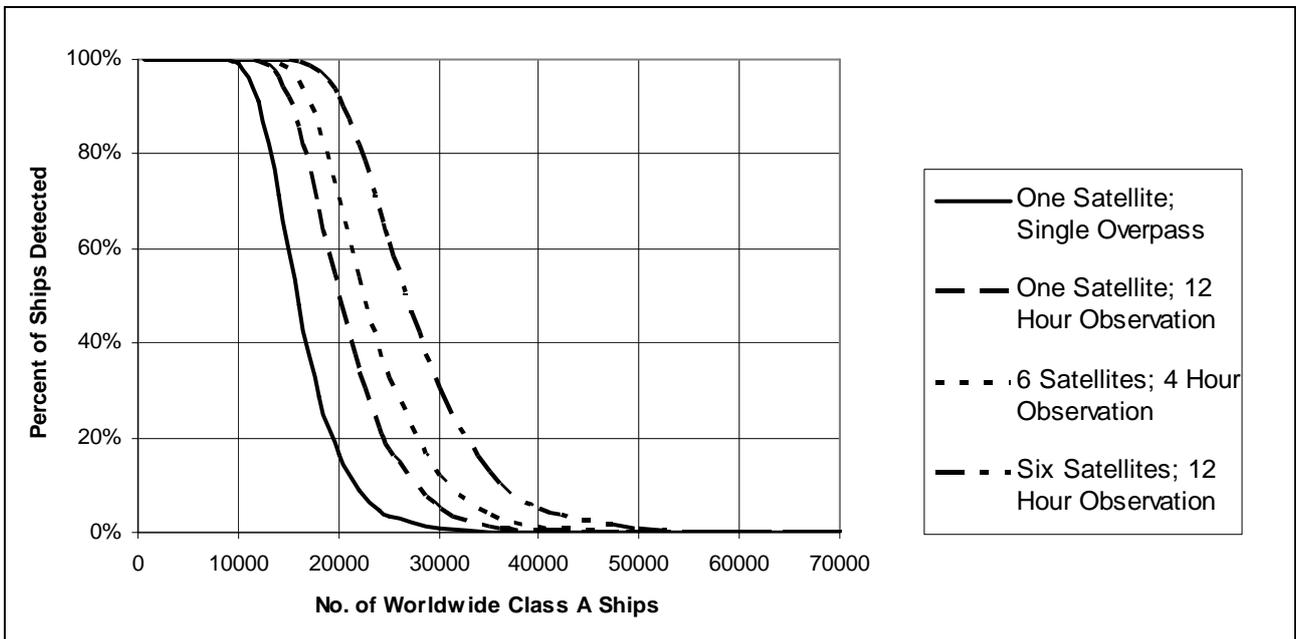


FIGURE 15

**Detection Statistics using Worldwide Ship Data
(Target Ship Located in the Gulf of Mexico)**

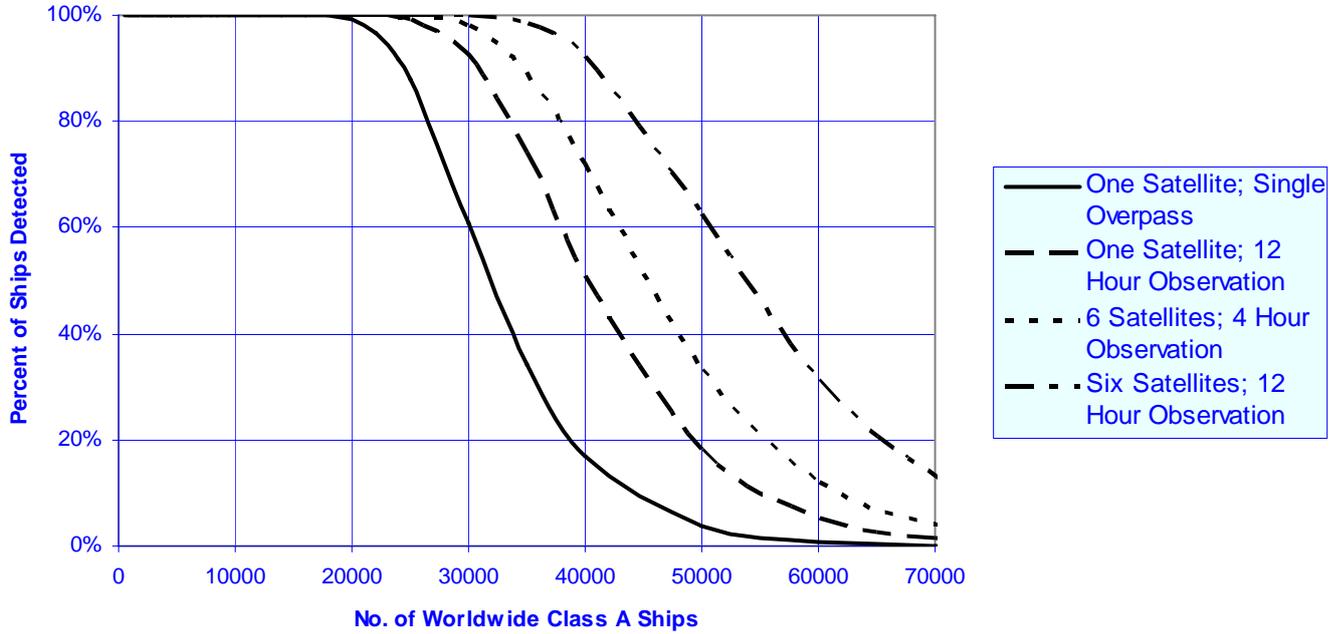
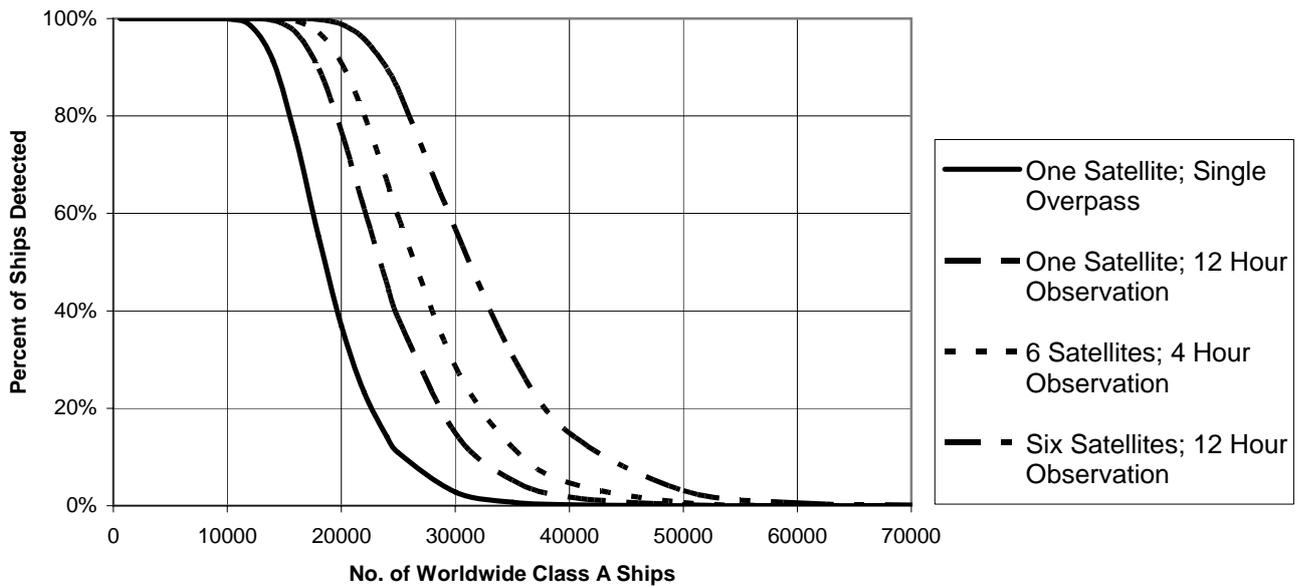


FIGURE 16

**Detection Statistics using Worldwide Ship Data
(Target Ship Located in the mid Atlantic Ocean)**



8 Candidate techniques to enhance satellite capacity

The analysis results presented herein demonstrate the technical viability and capacity limitations of using satellite detection of AIS to provide a long range ship monitoring capability. Using various satellite scenarios and estimates of the worldwide density of AIS Class A equipped ships, the study suggests that ship densities in certain geographic areas, especially the North Atlantic, can exceed the projected satellite ship-handling capacities. Further studies were undertaken to examine various concepts and techniques to increase the satellite AIS capacity to better accommodate these expected larger ship densities. To examine these various techniques, it is usually sufficient and more convenient to address the issue from the standpoint of a uniform ship distribution. The capacity improvements possible using a worldwide ship database will, on a percentage basis, be very similar to the results derived herein using uniform ship distribution. Four possible techniques are described below.

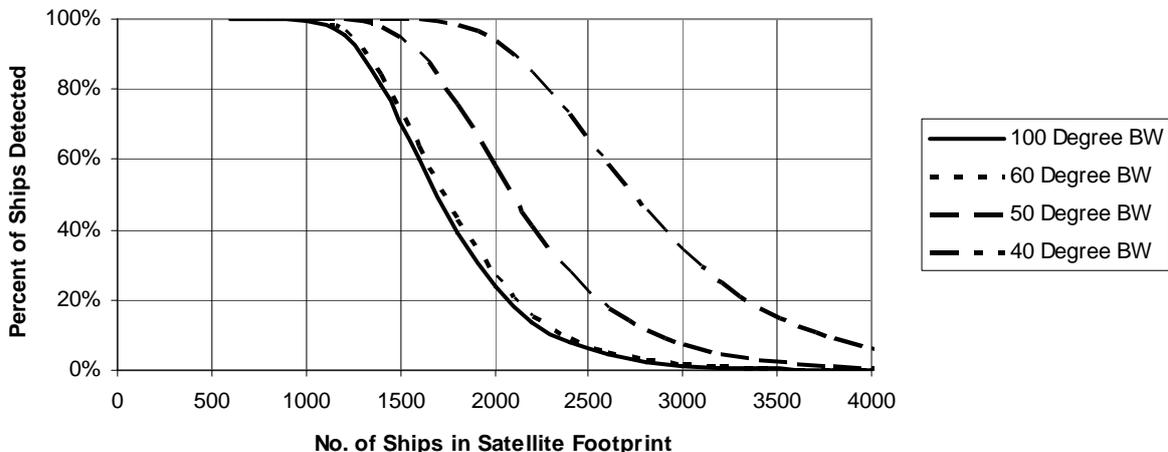
Satellite Antenna. The AIS satellite antenna assumed for this study is a broadbeam antenna (100 degree beamwidth) with the peak gain directed towards the sub-satellite point. Use of an antenna having a narrower beamwidth was examined to determine if use of such an antenna could provide an effective increase in satellite capacity. Reducing the antenna beamwidth lowers the number of competing AIS ship messages at the satellite at any given moment. The lower number of AIS messages, in turn, raises the detection probabilities, effectively increasing the satellite capacity.

Two factors, however, tend to moderate the potential capacity increases. First, even though the -3 dB beamwidth is reduced, the sidelobe gain towards the horizon may still be sufficient to detect competing ship AIS messages at or near the horizon. Second, with a smaller satellite footprint, the satellite will be visible from a given target ship for a shorter time period. From the equations given in Section 5, it is seen that a shorter satellite visibility period tends to decrease satellite capacity.

Figure 17 shows the combined effects of these three competing factors. As shown narrowing the antenna beamwidth to 60 degrees or less raises the satellite capacity. This increase in capacity, however, could come at a large cost since a smaller antenna beamwidth inherently requires a larger satellite antenna, which may not be compatible with a small LEO satellite concept.

FIGURE 17

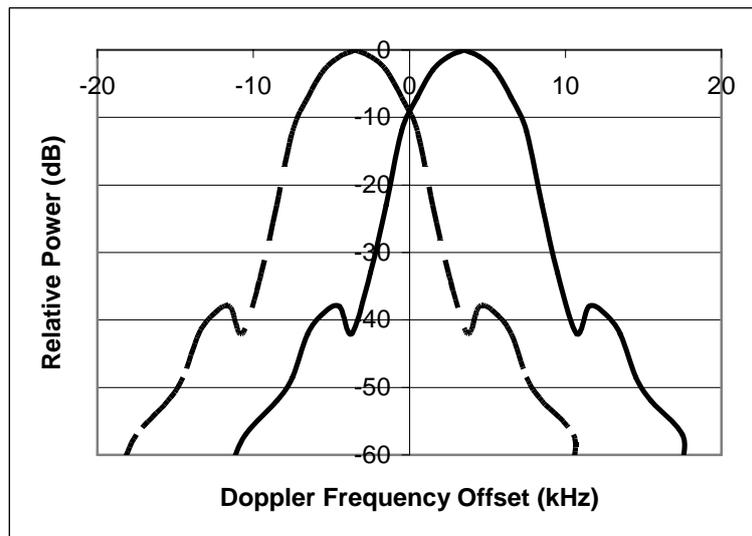
**Detection Statistics for Various Satellite Antenna Beamwidths
(One Satellite; Single Overpass Scenario)**



Doppler Tracking. One approach that is being implemented on an early demonstration satellite is the use of Doppler tracking. Because of the Doppler shifts of up to ± 3.5 kHz that occur due to satellite motion, the AIS satellite receiver bandwidth must initially be larger than optimum for the GMSK modulation. While the larger bandwidth allows reception of a desired AIS signal under any Doppler shift condition, it also allows reception of all competing ship AIS signals on the same channel under any Doppler shift condition.

A combination of automatic tracking of the desired AIS signal Doppler shift and adjusting the frequency accordingly allows use of a narrower receiver bandwidth and consequently provides some degree of discrimination with other competing ship AIS signals having different Doppler shifts. While the details of the Doppler tracking techniques need not be described herein, the resultant gain in satellite capacity can be examined. Figure 18 shows the typical RF emission spectra of two 9.6 kb/s GMSK signals, one representing a desired AIS signal and the other a competing AIS signal with different Doppler shifts. In this example the desired AIS signal is Doppler-shifted 3.5 kHz lower than the nominal centre frequency and the undesired signal Doppler-shifted 3.5 kHz higher. The difference between the centre frequencies of the two signals is consequently 7 kHz. It is this difference in Doppler shifts that offers the possibility of discriminating against other competing ship AIS messages.

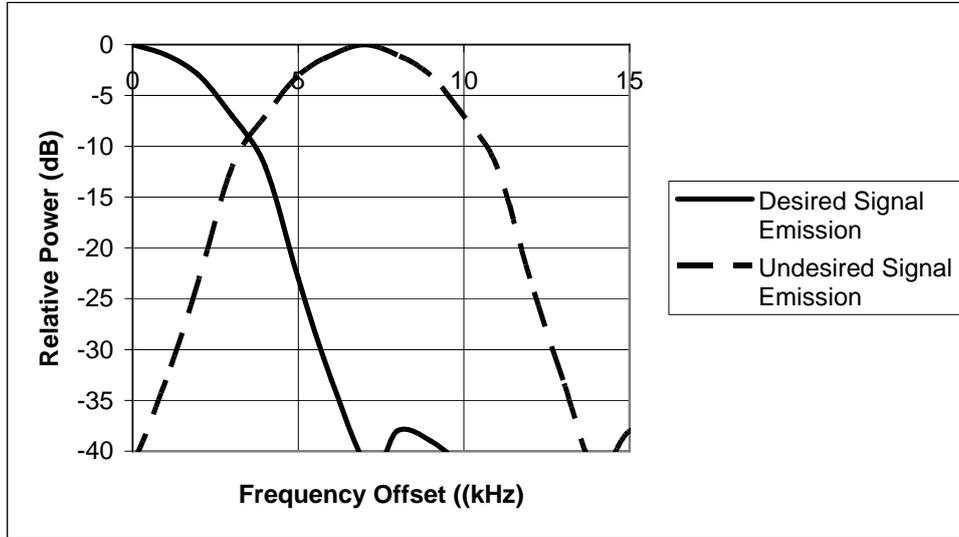
FIGURE 18
Desired and Undesired AIS Signals at Maximum Doppler Offsets



Through the use of real time tracking of the Doppler shift of a given desired signal, the Doppler frequency offset can be compensated for. Figure 19 shows the same example as above at baseband where the Doppler shift of the desired signal has been determined and compensated for, and the undesired signal is separated in frequency by the difference in Doppler shift – in this example 7 kHz.

FIGURE 19

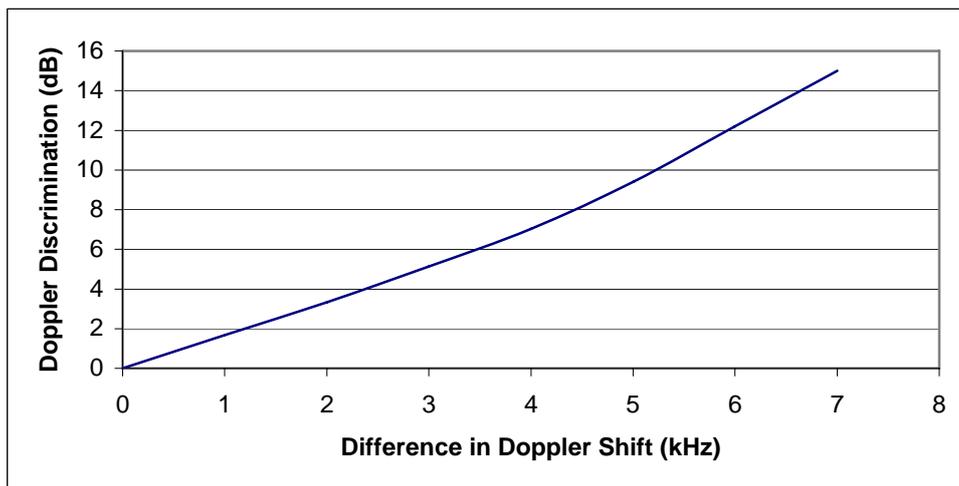
Desired and Undesired AIS Signal at Baseband after Doppler Compensation



By passing the above signal through a narrowband low-pass filter, significant reduction in the interfering signal level can be obtained. However, the above example represents the best case with the greatest Doppler shift difference. Based on ship distributions, the average Doppler shift difference is expected to be about 2.7 kHz. Figure 20 shows the resulting Doppler discrimination as a function of the difference in Doppler shift that has been achieved in a prototype system.

FIGURE 20

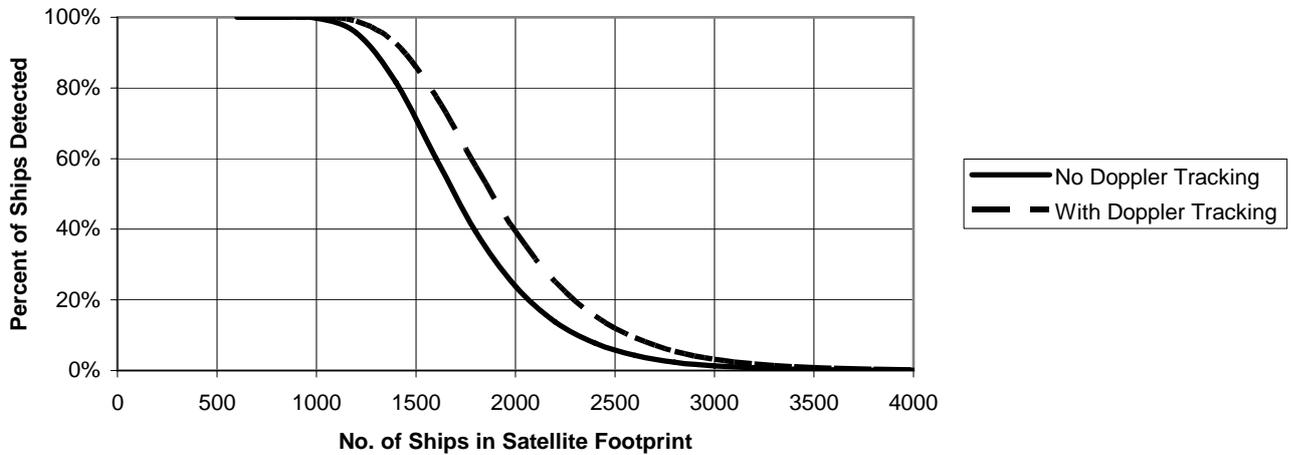
Doppler Discrimination after Narrowband Filtering



To evaluate the effectiveness of this technique, use of the simulation analysis method is required. The simulation model described earlier is further expanded to include a calculation of the Doppler frequency shift for the desired and each undesired AIS and the associated power level is reduced by the amount shown in Fig. 20 for a single satellite overpass. The results are shown in Fig. 21.

FIGURE 21

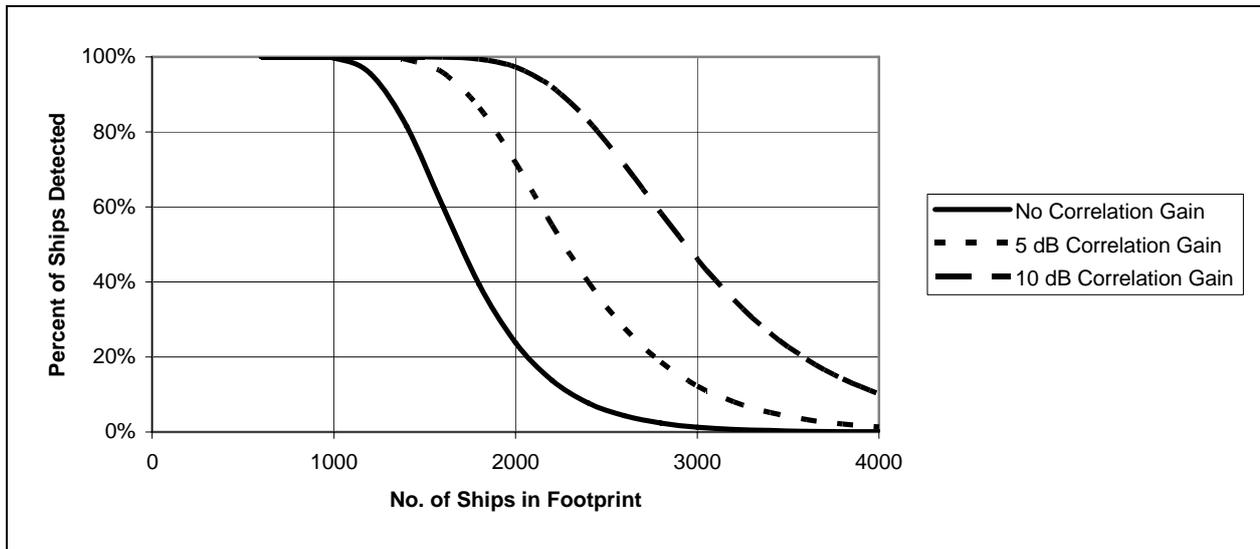
Satellite Detection Statistics with Doppler Tracking



Correlation Processing. Another possible technique to improve satellite capacity would require a modification to the satellite architecture to provide on-board processing or continuous downlinking of the data received on the two AIS channels for processing at an earth station on the ground. This method would take advantage of the fact that the AIS messages transmitted from a given ship have a high degree of correlation from one message to the next. For example, during the 13 minute visibility period of a typical satellite overhead pass, a given ship will transmit about 116 AIS messages. During this period, approximately 60% of the bits in each of these AIS ship message are repeated identically. The MMSI ship identification code is, in particular, repeated with each message. By continuously correlating the two received AIS signals with digitized copies of the signals received during the previous 13 minute period, some degree of correlation gain could be achieved. Given the moderately low data rates of AIS transmissions, use of massively parallel correlator techniques may be possible to permit continuous real time processing of the received downlink data.

Although further study would be required to determine the degree of correlation gain achievable using this technique, the effective impact on satellite AIS detection capacity can be estimated. Any correlation gain of a desired AIS signal that results via this technique would provide, on a dB-for-dB basis, discrimination against other undesired AIS messages. The result would be that successful detection could occur at lower D/U ratios than would be otherwise possible, effectively reducing the D/U protection criteria from the reference value of 10 dB. Using the AIS detection simulation model described earlier, the effect on detection probabilities of varying the D/U protection criteria can be determined. Figure 21a compares the detection statistics under the assumption that 5 and 10 dB of correlation gain with the reference curve with no correlation gain for a single satellite overpass.

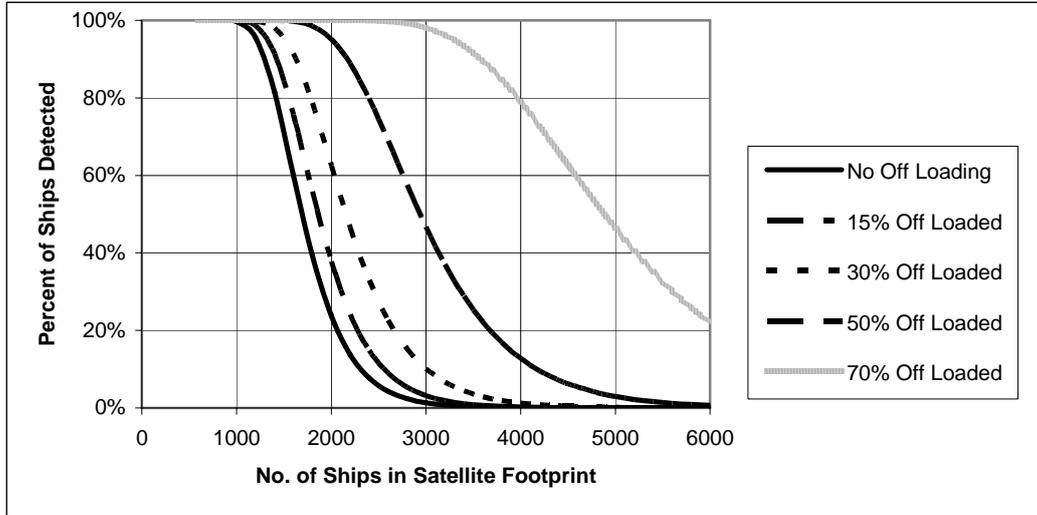
FIGURE 21A
Satellite Detection Statistics with Correlation Processing



Offloading of Coastal Ship Traffic. The AIS architecture provides the capability for an AIS coast station to direct ships within its communication range to automatically shift one of the AIS channels to an alternate frequency in the VHF maritime band. The switch in frequency is transparent to the ship operator and has minimal impact on the normal ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore AIS communications functions. Use of this capability on a routine basis in heavily used coastal areas would reduce loading on AIS satellite detection from coastal ship traffic. Consequently, satellite detection probabilities of AIS messages from ships at sea could improve. One means to test this concept would be to modify coastal stations from the ship distribution database defined earlier in Figure 12 so that only AIS 1 were operable and rerun the simulation analysis. However, identifying and modifying the coastal ships in a database of 80 000 records proved a challenge. It was observed that, because of the very large satellite footprint and the randomizing effects of the satellite motion, simply modifying the same fraction of ships from throughout the database, rather than just coastal ships, gave virtually the same result. Figure 22 shows the resulting detection probabilities using the same non-uniform ship distribution described earlier with various amounts of AIS 2 traffic offloaded during a single satellite overpass. This range of values would include the situations where only ships near major port areas were directed to offload AIS 2 to an alternate channel and all coastal ships offloaded.

FIGURE 22

Satellite detection Statistics with Coastal Offloading of AIS 2

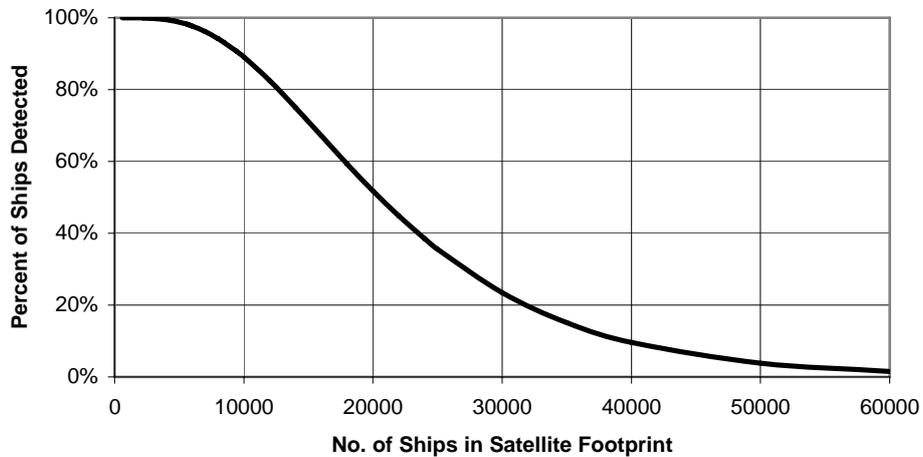


Long Term Studies/Solutions. On a long term basis it may be practical to simultaneously implement several of the techniques described above in order to further enhance satellite detection.

As an alternative long term study, the possibility of using a third AIS channel with the message structure optimized for satellite detection has been introduced within the IMO. The concept has not been finalized with regard to the possible frequency band of operation or specific channel used for a third frequency option. In determining the possible frequency bands or channels for operation, the interference environment resulting from the existing services in those bands must be taken into account in determining the feasibility of accommodating satellite AIS in any given band or channel. Regardless of the frequency band of operation, the use of a shorter message length and longer transmit period can dramatically increase satellite capacity. For example using the analytic method described earlier, a 128 bit message and a 3 minute interval can increase the satellite capacity to over 10 000 ships within the satellite footprint, as shown in Fig. 23. This option would require modification of the installed base and future installations of AIS ship equipment.

FIGURE 23

Example Satellite with 3rd AIS Channel



9 Compatibility with other incumbent fixed and mobile systems

The two frequencies that have been designated as channels within the maritime mobile service for the terrestrial AIS function are not allocated on an exclusive basis. Rather, these channels and adjacent channels are allocated and used throughout various regions of the world for other mobile service applications including VHF public correspondence stations (VPCS) in the maritime mobile service and land mobile radio (LMR) systems. The VPCS continue to be deployed in certain geographic regions in limited numbers along coastal areas. Most administrations have chosen to assign LMR stations that are at a distance from coastal areas and navigable waterways to assure mutual compatibility between the maritime mobile and land mobile services. However, because the satellite antenna beam covers a large geographical area, transmissions by mobile systems operating inland can still be received at the satellite.

Available frequency assignment records show that the current density of deployment of LMR systems on these AIS channels is less than on other channels in 156-162 MHz and is greatly reduced from the density that is typical for other VHF frequencies allocated for the land mobile service.

The following paragraphs describe the performance of AIS satellite detection when operated with co-channel and adjacent channel mobile systems. The study will initially focus on simple scenarios using a uniform ship distribution followed by several examples using the more realistic non-uniform ship distributions described earlier.

Co-channel Mobile Systems.

The first step in investigating AIS satellite operation with mobile systems is designation of technical parameters of LMR and VPCS systems. Table 10 lists representative technical parameters for VPCS and LMR systems. As seen in this table, both the VPCS and LMR systems may typically employ an effective radiated power (ERP) up to 14 dB higher than the ship AIS transmitters sharing these frequencies. These ERP differences present no compatibility problems among the two terrestrial services as long as the distance separations are adequate. However, this would not be the case for satellite detection of AIS. As described earlier, the footprint on the Earth of a LEO satellite can have a radius of approximately 3 281 km. For several time periods every day, any co-channel mobile system within this radius will have a line-of-sight path with the satellite.

TABLE 9

Typical VPCS and LMR technical parameters

Parameter	Land mobile base station (wideband)	Land mobile base station (narrowband)	VHF public correspondence coast station
Transmit ERP	37 to 56 dBm (54 dBm typical)	37 to 56 dBm (54 dBm typical)	50 dBm
Modulation	16F3E	11F3E	16F3E
Channelling	25 kHz	12.5 kHz	25 kHz
Antenna Gain	0 to 9 dBd (6 dBd typical)	0 to 9 dBd (6 dBd typical)	
Antenna Pattern	Omnidirectional	Omnidirectional	Omnidirectional

Given the higher ERP of typical mobile systems, negative D/U ratios values can sometimes result from a single co-channel VPCS or LMR located within the footprint of the satellite. A preliminary study indicated that D/U values during these line-of-sight periods for a representative scenario could possibly vary from -17 dB to +5 dB with an average of -6 dB, all of which were below the nominal D/U threshold for practical AIS detection.⁷ The average D/U value of -6 dB calculated in that study is consistent with the 6 dB higher effective isotropic radiated power (EIRP) used in that study for the mobile system transmitter as compared to an AIS ship transmitter. Table 10 provides sample calculations from that study for two satellite overpasses for a representative LMR transmitter in the central United States and an AIS equipped ship in the Atlantic Ocean. If these co-channel mobile service transmitters were to be operated on a 100% duty cycle basis, the upfront conclusion would directly follow that satellite detection of AIS is not compatible with other co-channel mobile service applications.

⁷ For that study, a simplified methodology was used as follows: Mobile EIRP was constant at 50 dBm over the upper hemisphere; Ship AIS EIRP was constant at 44 dBm over the upper hemisphere; Satellite antenna had constant gain towards the Earth; No polarization discrimination; Free space propagation was used during periods of satellite visibility.

TABLE 10

Examples of D/U calculations for a typical environmental ground station in central United States to the satellite communicating with a ship in the Atlantic Ocean

Co-channel system to Satellite			Ship to Satellite			
Azimuth	Elevation	Range	Azimuth	Elevation	Range	D/U
(deg)	(deg)	(km)	(deg)	(deg)	(km)	(dB)
Pass 1						
9.1	24.8	1 838.9	316.7	1.5	3 470.7	-11.5
16.1	33.6	1 534.4	310.3	3.4	3 274.1	-12.6
28.7	44.6	1 285.6	303.1	5.0	3 115.5	-13.7
54.4	55.4	1 131.2	295.3	6.2	3 001.5	-14.5
95.4	57.0	1 112.1	286.9	6.9	2 937.7	-14.4
125.8	47.4	1 234.7	278.2	7.0	2 927.4	-13.5
140.9	35.9	1 463.6	269.7	6.5	2 971.0	-12.1
149.0	26.5	1 757.3	261.6	5.4	3 066.1	-10.8
153.8	19.1	2 087.8	254.1	3.9	3 207.5	-9.7
157.1	13.2	2 439.3	247.4	2.1	3 388.9	-8.9
159.4	8.3	2 803.1	241.4	0.1	3 603.5	-8.2
112.6	3.1	3 290.4	217.1	28.2	1 693.2	-0.2
117.9	0.5	3 556.0	208.7	21.1	1 982.8	-0.9
Pass 2						
93.9	0.5	3 568.8	184.1	65.3	1 038.1	4.7
87.0	1.5	3 464.2	63.6	89.3	956.9	5.2
79.8	2.1	3 401.9	7.3	64.9	1 043.2	4.3
72.4	2.3	3 384.5	6.7	45.9	1 262.7	2.6
65.0	2.0	3 413.0	6.6	32.7	1 559.6	0.8
57.8	1.4	3 486.3	6.7	23.3	1 897.0	-0.7
51.1	0.3	3 601.3	6.8	16.4	2 255.9	-1.9
52.6	1.5	3 477.2	3.9	18.4	2 142.9	-1.8
59.9	1.3	3 487.0	7.7	25.6	1 802.5	-0.3
67.0	0.9	3 536.0	13.9	35.0	1 493.1	1.5
73.8	0.1	3 622.7	25.7	47.3	1 239.7	3.3
144.3	4.7	3 122.4	230.7	5.0	3 098.7	-5.9
147.3	1.2	3 472.4	225.4	2.1	3 376.8	-5.8
38.5	1.1	3 514.7	358.1	8.2	2 841.9	-4.2
94.2	1.5	3 457.1	201.5	65.5	1 036.2	4.5
150.9	20.4	2 021.3	255.4	4.9	3 115.2	-9.8
154.7	14.3	2 366.4	248.4	3.1	3 288.7	-8.9
157.4	9.3	2 725.9	242.2	1.0	3 497.6	-8.2
102.9	13.2	2 445.7	261.2	30.3	1 627.0	-2.5
92.5	14.8	2 347.1	279.3	32.7	1 554.9	-2.4
81.3	15.3	2 315.9	298.2	31.7	1 584.9	-2.7
70.3	14.7	2 354.9	314.5	28.0	1 711.4	-3.2
59.9	13.1	2 460.7	326.9	22.9	1 914.9	-3.8
50.9	10.9	2 625.1	336.0	17.8	2 173.2	-4.4
43.2	8.2	2 837.4	342.7	13.1	2 468.1	-4.8

Fortunately, most mobile communications systems operate at less than a 100% transmit duty cycle. Based on over-the-air spectrum measurements performed in the United States in selected portions of the 138-174 MHz band and other data sources, it is possible to broadly categorize mobile service transmitters into high (30-100%), medium (10-30%), and low (<10%) duty cycle categories. Examples for each category are given in Table 11.

TABLE 11
Example Mobile System Transmit Duty Cycle

High duty cycle (30-100%)	Medium duty cycle (10-30%)	Low duty cycle (<10%)
Paging Systems	Multiple User LMR Business/Industrial Repeaters (i.e. Community Repeaters)	Most Single-User Private LMR Systems
Trunking System Control Channel	Public Safety Dispatch	Most Administrative Government LMR Systems
Broadcast Type Systems (such as weather broadcasts)	Trunking System Communication Channels	Some Types of LMR Fixed Control Links
Some Transportable Telemetry (such as seismic sensors)	VHF Maritime Mobile Working Channels	
VHF Public Correspondence Coast Stations		
Some Types of LMR Fixed Control Links		

Analysis of the co-channel operation of VPCS and LMR transmitters having a transmit duty cycle less than 100% can be accomplished in a similar manner as the intra-system performance analysis described earlier. As in the intra-system analysis, the key technical parameters to consider are the transmitter EIRP, the antenna elevation gain pattern, and the transmitter duty cycle. Analysis of the co-channel impact from VPCS/LMR transmitters can be accomplished by simply adding the additional transmitters into the simulation model described earlier using the appropriate EIRP, antenna, and duty cycle parameters. For this study, a mobile system was used having an EIRP of 50 dBm, vertical polarization and a cosine squared antenna elevation pattern. AIS parameters described in Table 5 were used. The only change necessary was to account for the fact that most mobile systems operate on a single frequency rather than the alternating frequencies of AIS transmitters.

Figures 24 through 27 present the results under a variety of conditions for the baseline single satellite/single overpass scenario. Figure 24 shows the percent of ships detected if there were 1 000 Class A ships in the satellite footprint and both AIS channels were used with co-channel mobile systems having a range of transmit duty cycles. Figure 25 is the same except that only one channel, AIS 1 or AIS 2, were used with co-channel mobile systems. Figure 26 is a third example where the duty cycles of the co-channel mobile systems are unevenly distributed on AIS 1 and AIS 2. Figure 27 is an example where the satellite is effectively operating at capacity with 1 415 ships in the mainbeam (i.e. 80% of the ships are detected) and co-channel mobile systems are sharing on only one AIS channel. Figure 28 is similar to Fig. 27 except using the 6 satellite/12 hour observation scenario. Table 12 summarizes the criteria used to develop Figs. 24 through 27.

TABLE 12

Summary of Criteria Used to Develop Figs. 24 through 28

Figure	No. of Satellites	Observation Period	No. of Ships within Footprint	Mobile Duty Cycle on AIS 1	Mobile Duty Cycle on AIS 2
24	1	Single Overpass	1 000	Varies*	Varies
25	1	Single Overpass	1 000	Varies	No mobiles
26	1	Single Overpass	1 000	Varies	All 10%
27	1	Single Overpass	1 415**	Varies	No mobiles
28	6	12 Hours	2 381**	Varies	No mobiles

* Varies = All co-channel mobile systems within satellite footprint have a duty cycle as indicated on each figure.

** Satellite is at capacity (defined as detecting 80% of the ships) for the given scenario.

FIGURE 24

Satellite Detection Performance Statistics with Co-Channel Mobile System
(Equal Co-Channel Operation on Each AIS Channel)

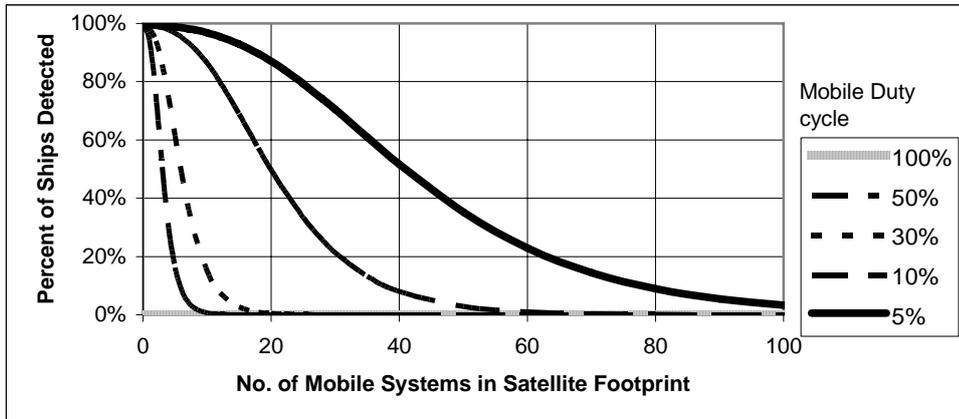


FIGURE 25

**Satellite Detection Statistics with Co-Channel Mobile Operation
(Co-channel Operation on One AIS Channel Only)**

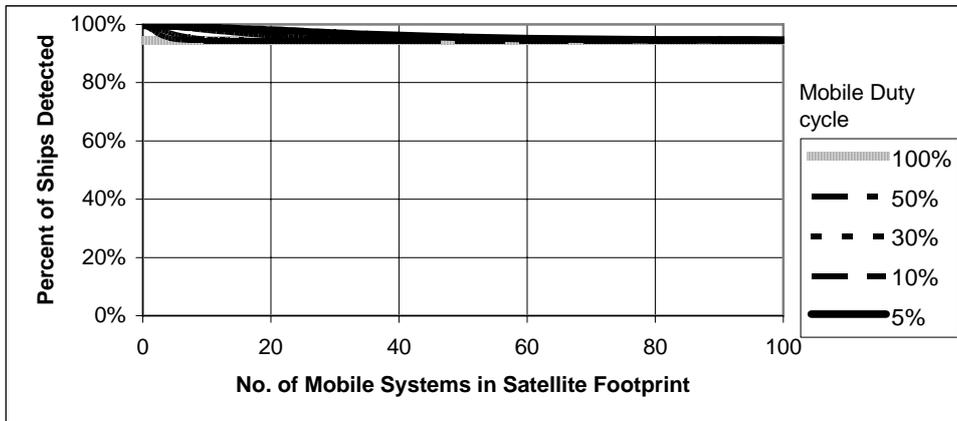


FIGURE 26

**Satellite Detection Performance with Co-Channel Mobile Operation
(Duty Cycle at 10% on One Channel Only)**

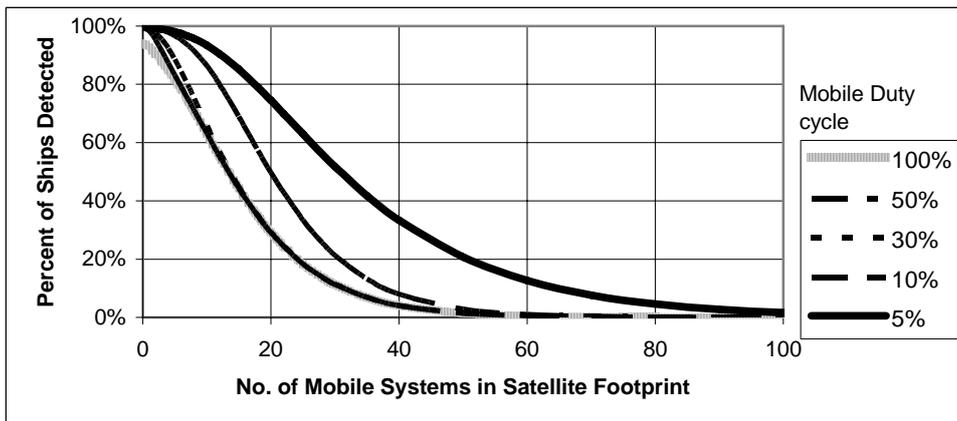


FIGURE 27

**Satellite Detection Performance with Co-Channel Mobile Operation
(Satellite Operating at Capacity (80% Detection); Co-channel operation on One AIS channel)**

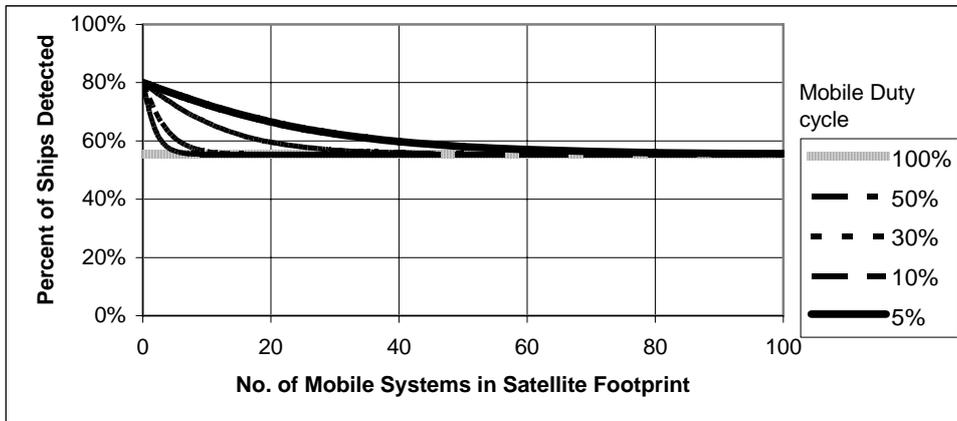
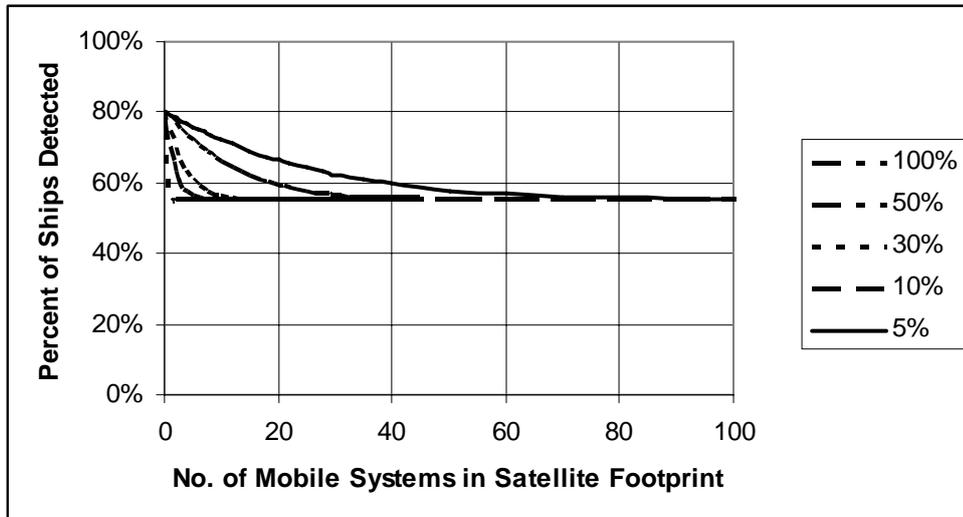


FIGURE 28

**Satellite Detection Performance with Co-Channel Mobile Operation
(Satellite Operating at Capacity (80% Detection);
Co-channel Operation on One AIS Channel Only; Six Satellite Scenario)**



The examples shown in the figures above illustrate AIS satellite detection performance under a variety of assumptions. Because of the multidimensional nature of these curves it was not practical to address all possible conditions. In some administrations, the sharing situation is different for the two frequencies used by AIS. In such situations, Figs. 27 and 28 provide the limiting case where sharing is present on one AIS channel and AIS is operated on an exclusive basis on the other channel. For both the single satellite and six satellite scenarios, these two figures show that a limited number of low duty cycle, co-channel mobile systems within the satellite footprint have a minimal effect of AIS satellite detection performance. For the case of larger numbers of co-channel mobile systems within the satellite footprint, satellite detection of AIS is still possible albeit with a lower, percentage of the ships detected.

Adjacent Channel Mobile Compatibility

As with all mobile communications systems, sharing with adjacent channel systems is also a factor to be considered. It is recognized that satellite operations must take into account existing adjacent channel systems that operate in accordance with existing out-of-band emission requirements.

For the present study, two scenarios need to be addressed:

Case 1. compatibility considering AIS transmitters and adjacent channel mobile system receivers, and

Case 2. compatibility considering adjacent channel mobile system transmitters and the satellite receiver.

The first case is, of course, not a new situation and exists irrespective of satellite AIS detection. This has been examined and documented in a detailed measurement and analysis report on public record in the United States.⁸ The study considered a worse-case AIS signal (2-second transmit interval) and mobile system receivers having both analog frequency modulation (FM) voice and digital data operating modes. In the FM voice mode, the study concluded that when separated in frequency by 25 kHz and with antennas as close as 3 metres, performance degradation was minimal and would not prevent normal using of the mobile system. The study further concluded that use of forward error correction would be necessary in the mobile system receiver when operating in the digital data mode to assure compatible operation. These results would be applicable to any adjacent channel pair on any frequency in the 156-162.025 MHz maritime mobile band.

The second case is unique to satellite AIS detection. Just as in the case of co-channel operation, other mobile systems will also be operating on channels adjacent to those used by AIS. The three channels adjacent to AIS 1 and AIS 2 are 161.950, 162.000 and 162.050 MHz. Addressing adjacent channel considerations introduces additional dimensions to the study, namely the distribution of mobile systems across the five channels and the degree of adjacent channel rejection possible in the satellite receiver. The primary focus of this adjacent channel examination is to isolate the specific effects on AIS satellite detection of mobile systems operating on the adjacent channels.

Adjacent Channel Rejection. To meet applicable IEC specifications, conventional shipboard AIS receivers are required to have at least 70 dB of adjacent channel rejection. However, a satellite AIS receiver must be optimized for maximum sensitivity and may not be able to achieve this level of adjacent channel performance. For purposes of this study, adjacent channel rejection values of 30 dB, 40 dB and 50 dB are considered.

Distribution of Mobile Systems. Since various administrations may use the five channels considered herein in a variety of ways with respect to mobile systems, the number of mobile systems operating on each of the channels may vary widely in various geographic regions. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine differing mobile system usage on the three adjacent channels. For purposes of this study, the number of mobile systems operating on the channels adjacent to AIS located within the satellite antenna footprint was assumed to be the same on all three channels.

Geographic Distribution of AIS-equipped Ships. Because of the multidimensional nature of the issues being addressed, the cases addressed below considered only a single density of ships, specifically 1 000 Class A AIS-equipped ships uniformly distributed within the satellite footprint.

⁸ Roberts, Melvin S., et al, EMC Analysis of Universal Automatic Identification and Public Correspondence Systems in the VHF Maritime Band, Joint Spectrum Center, Annapolis Maryland, February 2004

Results. Using the simulation model described earlier, the effect on the performance of AIS satellite detection as a result of adjacent channel mobile systems was examined. The analysis methodology used was to reduce the transmit power of the adjacent channel mobile systems by an amount equal to the indicated adjacent channel rejection at the satellite receiver, dB for dB.

Table 13 lists the analysis results showing the percent of ships detected as a function of various parameters. In this table, the maximum number studied of mobile transmitters on each adjacent channel was 240 and the maximum transmit duty cycle used was 30%.

TABLE 13

Results of Adjacent Channel Study*

No. of Ships	No. of Mobiles on AIS 1 and 2	No. of Adjacent Channel Mobiles**	Mobile Duty Cycle	Adjacent Channel Rejection	Percent of Ships Detected
1 000	0	0	–	–	100%
1 000	0	40	5%	30 dB	100%
1 000	0	80	5%	30 dB	97%
1 000	0	160	5%	30 dB	70%
1 000	0	240	5 %	30 dB	15%
1 000	0	20	10%	30 dB	100%
1 000	0	40	10%	30 dB	90%
1 000	0	80	10%	30 dB	60%
1 000	0	160	10%	30 dB	0%
1 000	0	TBD	30%	30 dB	TBD
1 000	0	TBD	30%	30 dB	TBD
1 000	0	240	5%	40 dB	100%
1 000	0	240	10%	40 dB	100%
1 000	0	160	30%	40 dB	100%
1 000	0	240	30%	40 dB	80%
1 000	0	240	30%	50 dB	100%
<p>* All cases examined assumed a uniform geographic distribution of AIS-equipped ships and mobile systems located within the satellite antenna footprint.</p> <p>** Number of mobiles on each of the three channels adjacent to AIS 1 and AIS 2.</p>					

As expected, the analysis results show that the performance of AIS satellite detection in the presence of coexisting adjacent channel mobile systems is strongly dependent on the amount of adjacent channel rejection available in the satellite receiver and the transmit duty cycle of the mobile systems. The analysis shows that with only 30 dB of adjacent channel rejection, the performance of AIS satellite detection can be degraded with only a moderate number of coexisting adjacent channel mobile systems. With 40 dB of adjacent channel rejection, AIS satellite detection becomes much more robust with coexisting adjacent channel mobile systems. With 50 dB of adjacent channel rejection, no reduction of detection performance was identified within the range of parameters studied.

10 Summary

This contribution introduces the concept of satellite detection of AIS messages for the current terrestrial AIS system, and demonstrates, under a given set of assumptions, the technical feasibility and capacity of AIS satellite receivers to operate in an environment of a large number of AIS-equipped ships. Five scenarios were included which defined the number of AIS-equipped satellites (1 and 6 satellites) and the period of time allowed for updating ship locations (single satellite overpass to 12 hours). Satellite capacity (defined as detecting 80% of the ships) ranged from 1 415 to 2 380 for these scenarios. Analyses conducted using a representative worldwide distribution of AIS-equipped ships showed that ship densities in many regions of the world are expected to exceed these calculated AIS capacity limits.

Four candidate techniques were investigated to enhance satellite capacity, which individually showed capacity improvements of up to 175%.

The study investigated co-channel operation between the two AIS designated channels with other mobile communications systems. Because of the large satellite antenna footprint, mobile systems operated several thousand kilometres from navigable waterways can affect the performance of AIS satellite detection. Results showed that AIS satellite detection can co-exist with a limited number of low-duty-cycle, co-channel mobile systems. The results further showed that AIS satellite detection is much more robust when co-channel sharing with mobile systems was present on only one of the channels used by AIS.
