Tim Thornton – Biography

Tim Thornton has spent his career at the union of marine activities and computing, combining both research work and commercial applications. Starting in the field of racing yacht design, he worked in using maths and computing in the design and optimisation process, working for a number of leading design offices. At the same time, he became involved in developing race navigation, performance and weather routing software in the early 1980's, predating both GPS and the PC. He also worked for the RORC on yacht handicapping systems, especially IOR and Channel Handicap (now IRC).

He then worked for six years as a Research Scientist at IBM, where his interests included surface modelling, 3-d computer graphics, and data visualisation techniques.

On leaving IBM he set up Marine Computing International, that grew into the leading UK supplier of on board computing systems, especially for the superyacht and cruising sectors, as well as doing software development work and consultancy.

In 2005 he decided to concentrate on consultancy and software development, through Smartcom Software. The company has been a key player in the MIDAS project, funded by the European Space Agency to develop a weather information service for the marine sector; the ALIS project prototyping an e-navigation system; and the CADRE project described in this paper, as well as a number of smaller projects.

He is the author of a number of papers on his areas of research, as well as books and magazine articles on navigation and related matters.