

A New Day for Flight Operations

By Jonas N. Olsen, Vice President, Blue Sky Network

In a Singapore hotel, Christian von Strombeck's day has just started. After breakfast he goes back to his room, turns on his laptop and connects to the Internet. Time to check on his fleet of nine Cessna Caravans. Four of them are already hard at work over various parts of Indonesia. Two are being ferried from the U.S. Cessna factory in Wichita, Kansas. Christian logs in to his online flight tracking system, operated by Blue Sky Network of San Diego, California, and immediately he can tell that the day is proceeding as he expected.

In McMinnville, Oregon, Bruce Currier is back in town after a much needed break. One of his first tasks is to check the status of the flight tracking and two-way messaging system used by Evergreen Helicopters to track their fleet of more than 30 helicopters operating for several different customers all over the world, including the US, the United Arab Emirates and the Caribbean. Things

are rolling along, but Bruce notices that a new aircraft has arrived. Like all the other aircraft, it is delivered with a Blue Sky Network Iridium Satellite tracking and voice communications solution installed, but since this aircraft is new to the United Arab Emirates operation, Bruce knows that he will

need to get the system configured to match the requirements of the UAE based customers. Directly from his web-account, he logs in and updates speed dial phone numbers, GPS reporting intervals and other settings. Everything is transmitted over the air and he never even has to see this aircraft

in person. Once configured, Bruce confirms the updates and goes on with his day.

Dan Pinsent of Cougar Helicopters in St. Johns, Newfoundland, has just been informed that his company has won another contract with a new customer. They will be leasing three Eurocopter SuperPuma helicopters for the next eight months. One of the reasons the new customer picked Cougar Helicopters was the company's ability to provide "automated flight following" throughout the contract. To get them started, Dan logs into the online flight following system, called SkyRouter, creating accounts for the Aviation Manager and the Logistics Manager at the customer company. Their accounts are set up so they only have access to the three aircraft they are leasing, and not all of the other Cougar Helicopters aircraft. Once the contract expires, their access will be automatically revoked.



there it routes directly to the SkyRouter web-portal. With only a few seconds delay, the customer in Brazil will know that the helicopter has moved, how fast it is going and in which direction. Voice calls follow much the same architecture and both data messages and voice calls are, of course, bi-directional.

Where is Satellite Communications in Aviation Going?

Business is going well for Iridium Satellite and its many partners spread all over the world. It is for this reason the company is already looking at replenishing its existing satellites and, towards the middle of the next decade, contemplating new service offerings that may be available once a new generation of satellites is launched. The name of the game in the satellite business, as in any telecommunications sector, is smaller, faster and more bandwidth. While staying true to its original idea of a completely global satellite network providing reliable voice communications and near real-time data

transmissions, Iridium is looking at new technologies such as smaller handsets, IP-based architectures (the satellite network would work much like the Internet does today), and faster data transmission rates.

For aviation, this could provide a whole new set of features to further enhance flight operations. One can easily imagine live-engine monitoring feeds or even streaming video feeds from an aircraft in flight. We would also expect voice quality to improve over time and for further enhancements to the equipment size and weight.

Enhancing Flight Operation – Day by Day

In Greenland, Technical Director for Air Greenland's fleet of more than a dozen helicopters, Peter Bjerre, looks up at the giant flat screen monitor in the dispatchers' office. One of his AS350B3 helicopters has just broken Minimum En-Router Altitude and is coming in on its approach in a remote village in the Eastern part of Greenland. Since Air Greenland installed its Blue Sky

5 Categories of Primary Benefits

Many of Blue Sky Network's customers have found that the low-cost and easy-to-install solutions provide a series of measurable business benefits as well as more intangible benefits related to safety and security of flight operation.

- **SAFETY:** With easy to access Mayday alerts and several other built-in alert notifications, a Blue Sky Network Iridium solution provides substantially increased safety of operation. Many of our customers have noted that we help them "take the search out of Search & Rescue."
- **GLOBAL:** Utilizing the global reach of the Iridium Satellite network, customers can literally go anywhere in the world with a Blue Sky Network solution. We have examples of customers winning contracts on new continents, and others providing relief for catastrophes, like the earthquake a few years ago in Pakistan, and relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina.
- **EFFICIENT:** By gaining a near real time picture of fleet operations, aviation managers use our solutions to optimize utilization and eliminate waste. Quick notifications to maintenance of aircraft malfunctions have also been cited as a substantial benefit.
- **BETTER FLIGHT INFORMATION:** With the ability to quickly send text weather and NOTAMS to the crew in-flight, flight operations is able to provide pilots with immediate and up to date information for quick decision making.
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE AND RETENTION:** By operating more efficiently and having better visibility and control over delays when they happen, our customers are able to provide better service. In addition, many of our customers find that once they give their customers access to flight tracking through our simple web application, they get "hooked." They come to enjoy the flight tracking service and the visibility it offers, and they are more likely to renew a contract with the operator.

Network solutions, the company has eliminated its old, heavy and often unreliable HF Radios. Pilots no longer need to call in, as location reports are transmitted automatically via the Iridium Satellite

network. Not only does it mean that every flight is a bit lighter, but it also allows the pilot to do precisely what he was trained to do – fly the aircraft.

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