

TECH TALK

by
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SYSTEMS



Vessel Monitoring Systems

Track everything on your boat from location to engine rpm. Here's the lowdown on seven vessel monitoring systems

W E FIRST LOOKED AT onboard monitoring systems in the June, 2013 Tech Talk article. We thought we would write a follow-up article as there have been some notable improvements, and, even for the high-end systems, the prices are coming down. Many of us do not live close to our boats and, as a result, we don't get down to the dock as often as we should to check battery levels, cabin temperature or just have a good old fashioned "look around." Older security systems that offered basic alarms or tracking have been replaced with more intuitive monitoring systems that allow you to communicate with your boat. Peace of mind is now available on your smart device, by simply using an app you can view your vessel and monitor numerous sensors in real time. But even better, if something changes on your boat like a voltage drop, low temperature, or even high water in the bilge, your boat can contact you. As an added bonus, some of the devices offer GPS fencing in the event the boat is moved without de-activating the system. You can also decide to include motion detectors and door open sensors.

This month we are going to take a look at a few different systems from basic monitoring and tracking to advanced monitoring systems using two way communication.

Basic Monitoring Nest Camera

\$249 hardware plus 10-day video storage;
\$100 per year

We have a number of clients who have installed Nest cameras using the Smart-hub cell to wifi gateway on their boat or by accessing the marina's wifi. The quality of these cameras is exceptional for the price and you can securely stream live 24/7 video to your smart device, it even allows you to zoom in for a closer look. The Nest Cam also has a microphone and speaker so you can hear what is going on or have a conversation with someone, which is a great solution if your mechanic can't make it to the boat. You do not have to purchase an annual contract but if you do, Nest Aware allows you to rewind and review up to 30 days of stored video. nest.com/camera

Nest Protect Smoke and CO Detector

\$129

The Nest Protect comes with six long-life AA lithium batteries or an optional 120V connector. It will automatically send you a text/email message when there is a problem.

nest.com/smoke-co-alarm

Basic Tracking SPOT Trace

\$120 plus a \$99 yearly service fee
The Spot Trace uses satellite technology

to track almost anything. It is a great idea for a tender or a boat on a trailer. You will receive a text/email message as soon as movement is detected which can be tracked on Google Maps. It comes with a long life battery but you can also order a waterproof DC power cable. We spoke to Spot about their Spot Hug system but it has been discontinued. findmespot.com

Advanced Tracking and Monitoring C-Pod Security Systems

\$600. \$239 for a 12-month subscription

The system allows you to survey a number of functions onboard your boat from your computer or smart device. The system permits up to 10 different alarm receivers to communicate alerts by email or text message. The communications between you and your boat are routed over C-Pod's central servers, which gives them the ability to transfer information to the police or coast guard around the world. This enables you to monitor your boat's location, intrusion or break-ins, battery levels, high water in bilge, low temperature, fire or smoke. You can also follow your boat's position around the world, whether you are on board or not. This is a great feature for boats that are chartered or lent to friends or family. In addition to these functions you can activate (or deactivate) electronic equipment onboard your boat.

c-pod.com

GOST NT-Evolution 2.0

Basic: \$4,900/with Sensors: \$8,000;

Monthly fee \$42

The satellite-based GOST (Global Ocean Security Technologies) NT-Evolution system uses the Inmarsat Satellite Constellation for all communications and control. They also offer an optional built-in quad band GPRS/GSM module for voice and text message reporting and control when in GSM cellular range. The Inmarsat M2M GPS monitors your boat's position and provides online 24/7 tracking. You can set the geofence to include only your slip or your full marina, should you wish to allow marina employees or mechanics to move the boat for maintenance, fueling or pump-outs. The system allows for up to 64 wireless sensors, such as voltage, bilge water level and entry-point. Should any of these triggers be tripped, automatic email and text messages update you on the boat's status. The system is water-resistant and includes a lead acid battery back-up.

gostglobal.com

GOST Watch HD IVR

\$1,500 per camera

GOST has unveiled their next generation in surveillance systems, the high-definition IVR (internet video recorder). The GOST Watch system works with the GOST NT-Evolution 2.0 system and is capable of storing 90 days of footage from up to six cameras, and features an incredible 4TB hard drive. Footage can be accessed locally on board the boat by downloading to a computer or a USB thumb drive, or remotely via the GOST Watch password-protected website. gostglobal.com

GPLink

\$5,400 inland/\$6,000 offshore;
Annual fee: \$1,500/\$2,250

GPLink uses an independent multi-carrier GSM cellular network as well as the Iridium LEO satellite interface, opting for the less expensive connection when available. A concierge service helps monitor your vessel, following up with automated notifications in the most critical circumstances. The engine-monitoring system is really impressive and communicates rpm, speed, heading, fuel flow and many other engine functions in real time. There are two systems, one for inland cruisers that does not include the satellite option and a more expensive one for off-shore cruisers. Neither system includes video. gplink.com

A BOAT MONITORING SYSTEM IS A purchase that deserves some homework. You really have to decide what options you want before you spend your money. If you simply want to be able to view your boat from home, then a Nest camera may be the solution. If you would like to be more interactive and add sensors, we would recommend the C-Pod system. If you have decided that you want complete control, from anywhere in the world, then it will be worth it to you to spend the money and go with a GOST or GPLink system. ☺

Pacific Yacht Systems

marine electronics & electrical

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