



➔ *Seaways* looks at books, films and articles offering advice, information and general interest to Nautical Institute members

Getting a grip on data

Maritime Informatics: Additional Perspectives and Applications

➔ It will be no surprise to any maritime professional that the shipping industry is using a rapidly increasing amount of data and information systems. Used correctly this can and should lead to improved safety, efficiency and the sustainability of shipping. Done poorly – the opposite! This is why I welcome the emerging field of Maritime Informatics to provide a science for strategic development. It is often suggested that ‘someone’ should bring together all the work that is being done in the field of data and provide a coordinated guide; this book and the previous volume are an excellent introduction, and a welcome reminder that there are formal ways to deal with the issues that arise.

Maritime Informatics, according to the book’s editors is:

- The application of information systems to increase the efficiency, safety, resilience and ecological sustainability of the world’s shipping industry, and
- An applied science, developed by data scientists to meet the needs of practice and applied by practitioners and data scientists cooperatively.

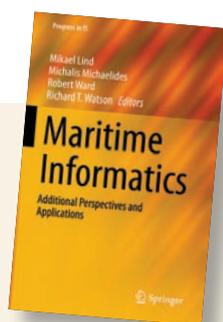
This second volume, *Additional Perspectives and Applications* builds upon the inaugural book *Maritime Informatics* by focusing on several recent practical developments and experiences addressing broad industry concerns. It complements the first volume of *Maritime Informatics* (reviewed in *Seaways*, March 2021), which provides a foundation of knowledge about maritime informatics.

This book provides further useful background and insights into the current status and future directions of maritime informatics, based on recent practical experiences, looking at such things as the supply chain in support of global emergencies, recycling resources and the circular economy, ports acting as multidimensional hubs, the standardisation of data, and the emergence of data sharing platforms in the global container trade. It provides a number of interesting case studies where maritime informatics has played an important and beneficial role in industry development.

Given the potential fragility of poorly designed information and decision-support systems and the risk of incompatibility in a global ecosystem such as the maritime domain, the emerging applied science of maritime informatics is most welcome. Also welcome is the opportunity that this book provides for maritime professionals to appreciate the benefits that maritime informatics can provide and to lay the foundation for them to apply their bright minds towards better, more efficient and sustainable shipping.

For more information about maritime informatics visit www.maritimeinformatics.org

David Patraiko FNI



Maritime Informatics (Vol 2)
Additional Perspectives and Applications (2021)
Lind, Michaelis, Ward & Watson (Ed)
www.springer.com
€135.19 (hardcover)
€106.99 (ebook)

Where are we – and who’s got the time?

Longitude, Dava Sobel

➔ I first had the joy of reading *Longitude* some ten years back and left it onboard for all to enjoy. I recently came across a delightful social media post in March this year which commemorated John Harrison’s birth and death on March 24 1776 – and I just had to purchase and read the book again.

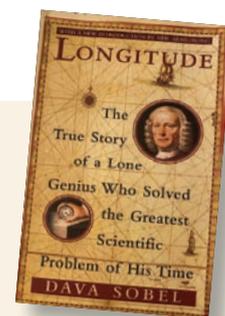
Better than any detective mystery novel, this tome of skulduggery, broken promises and a lifetime’s dedication to a seemingly lost cause against all the odds is a roller coaster of emotions every mariner will be enthralled with. Dava Sobel is a genius for writing about scientific matters for non-scientists; even I did not get lost.

I currently work at sea as a consultant where we use satellite and advanced technology to conduct metrology on large mechanical connections subsea within mm of accuracy at >1500m water depths. All this goes on while sat on DP control in the middle of the ocean with a clear horizon all about us. In a previous career, I traversed the oceans continually submerged for unimaginable lengths of time with high accuracy positioning using atomic clocks, state of the art gyros with no moving parts and a once in a while satellite fix.

When men of sail in the 18th century set foot from land, they had no such luxury. Their fate was in the hands of experienced navigators, the cosmos, a keen eye, lunar observations and lengthy maths, prayers for a clear sky and the good will of the gods. In particular, there was no way of determining longitude with any kind of accuracy. The British Parliament Longitude Act of 1714 set out the highest bounty to resolve this positioning dilemma and the great minds of the time set to the task. After 40 years of dedication – and not without considerable strife from the establishment – the chronometer was born. Instead of ending up on the rocks of far shores, sailors now knew the measurement of longitude meridians via the accuracy of the measurement of seaborne time.

As a young child I vaguely remember a school trip to the prime meridian, standing at zero degrees longitude, the centre of time and space, where East meets West. Once this pandemic is over, I shall take a trip to Greenwich with my grandchildren (suitably bribed with lollipops, no doubt) and ask them to say thank you to John Harrison. Not an admiral, Lord, academic or sailor but an uneducated Yorkshireman who taught himself the mysteries and mechanics of clocks and had a vision. I will ask them to remember the man that saved so many seafaring lives. I will also share with them the knowledge that we should always be thankful to this genius for making possible all the subsequent exploration of space and the world we live in.

Gordon Foot FNI



Longitude
Dava Sobel
Harper Collins
£8.99