


# MARINE ELECTRONICS & COMMUNICATIONS

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# Electronic solution results in faster boarding

The Italian ferry operator Moby Lines has selected a fully integrated system from E-Dea, also based in Italy, for managing passenger, cargo and operational processes.

Chief information officer at Moby, Michele Mangiatordi, comments: "We implemented a range of E-Dea's technologies in order to reach our quality and efficiency targets. It was important to find a supplier who can continuously support us in developing applications and services for our reservation and boarding systems."

The passenger check-in process is significantly streamlined, thanks to E-Dea's eBoarding product, which, claims the company, is the first complete self-service check-in solution in the maritime field. Using a combination of wireless printers and other equipment installed at those ports served by Moby Lines, passengers can self check-in at service kiosks located around the boarding area, therefore significantly reducing average boarding time. "Passengers preparing to board a Moby vessel are able to complete check-in formalities within seconds, thereby preventing queues forming at the ticket office," says Paolo Bufarini, E-Dea's European sales director.

To speed up embarkation, Moby selected another product from E-Dea's portfolio – ShipBoarding. This is based on optical character recognition (OCR) cameras and other sensors placed on the ramp of a ship, which provide a quick and reliable way of reading number plates and accurately measuring dimensions of all vehicles accessing or leaving the ship.

At any time during embarkation, staff can view and analyse key data collected by the system from a dashboard console. Information displayed includes estimated time for the car deck to reach capacity, average boarding time, and if necessary, details on any individual vehicle.

E-Dea also implemented a sophisticated booking system and completely revamped Moby's website. "The idea here was to provide a system capable of supporting the development of business strategies for



*E-Dea's system can measure the dimensions of all vehicles accessing a ship*

the operator for many years to come, as well as paving the way for several new revenue optimisation models, enabling Moby to market its products and services more effectively," comments Mr Bufarini. Through the combination of the E-Dea eBooking and eBoarding software, Moby can issue its tickets as traditional printed cards, as e-mails or as mobile phone text messages.

While each of eBoarding, eBooking and other products in E-Dea's portfolio can be deployed as stand-alone applications, when used in conjunction with one another, the company recommends doing so on its 'Integrated Maritime Operating System' (IMOS). This approach therefore made sense for Moby Lines, whose particular implementation featured numerous customisations to meet company specific requirements.

IMOS is an advanced middleware platform engineered by E-Dea to meet the data management requirements of ferry, cruise and ro-ro operators, as well as satisfying the needs of port authorities, and cargo and terminal management operations. All data for maritime operations, including scheduling, booking, check-in and security records and invoicing is managed and manipulated using messages encoded in XML.

The IMOS kernel provides a

common integration layer that makes communicating and re-using data between different applications more straightforward. E-Dea states it can also act as a gateway to interface with external legacy applications, without code duplication and without resorting to developing product specific adapters.

In terms of technical specification, E-Dea's solution for Moby Lines is based on Java Enterprise Edition (EJB 3.0) with a 'service-orientated architecture'. Notably, the web interface takes advantage of Ajax, a popular new programming technique for creating a more responsive and intuitive user experience. According to E-Dea, this high specification makes it one of the most technologically advanced integrated booking and check-in systems currently offered for the maritime transportation sector.

It adds that reliability and performance are ensured by employing BEA WebLogic 10 as an application server and Oracle 10g in RAC mode (Real Application Clusters) for database management. As a result, the E-Dea system can cope with approximately 6 million passenger reservations covering 10 ports and 10,000 sailings, while printing 7.5 million boarding cards from 80 self-check-in kiosks and hand-held operator devices.