WORLD’S FIRST UKHO APPROVED APP
An official paper chart correction service

As part of a continuing mission to enhance navigation standards in the maritime industry, on 1 September the navigation management company Da Gama Maritime (DGM), will launch their new ‘Vasco App’, it is learnt.

Having been accepted by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) as meeting the rigorous standards to provide official paper chart corrections, this is the first means, it is understood, by which the information is provided to the mariner by way of an electronic tablet device.

DGM’s Managing Director Steve Monk commented: ‘We appreciate there are other chart correction software packages already available but it became apparent to us that many of them are overcomplicated and bombard the mariner with more functionality than they need or want. Despite our providing feedback to these companies, we realised the best course of action was to develop our own software which simply provides the chart corrections, tracings, blocks and notices required to maintain the paper chart outfit.’

He went on: ‘We are also aware that while many vessels are moving to ECDIS, a large number still carry a reduced paper outfit but do not want to pay high costs for software to download corrections to what amounts to a few weekly updates. Our app provides a much more economical solution with reduced download times, lower software costs and less time spent correcting the outfit.’

The team at DGM are all mariners with, it is claimed, over 130 years’ combined navigation experience. They utilised their background, as well as working with trusted clients, to generate an efficient and easy to use app which provides simple flexibility in chart updating.

As a distributor of UKHO products it was evident to DGM that it was not necessary to incorporate any of the Admiralty Digital Publications (ADPs) as updates to these are already available at no charge from the UKHO through e-mail and the internet.

Monk further commented: ‘We wanted to develop a product which gives mariners just what they need to update their paper chart outfit without the addition of numerous other services which are provided already by the UKHO. At the same time we have also built the app in such a way as it allows shore management accessibility to the chart outfit status of any of their vessels at any time by way of a web portal without having to request the information from sea.’
In what is believed to be another industry first, the Vasco app has been developed to allow for multiple copies of the same chart to be recorded in the system. This makes it ideal for training academies to keep a record of the correction state of every chart even when they have many copies of the same chart for their students, or for vessels which have routes inked in on copies of the same chart for regular routes in or out of a port. Each copy of the chart can be given a unique tag or label to identify it.