

Autonomous ships and the human element

As vessels become more and more autonomous consideration has to be given to the human element of future vessel operations, according to David Patraiko (*illustrated*), Director of Projects at The Nautical Institute.

Speaking on 11 September at the Autonomous, robotics and IoT – exploring the potential and human impact conference organised by WISTA-UK (Women in Shipping and Trading Association) as part of London International Shipping Week, he said the human element in developments could not be ignored.

He explained: *‘Although some might be surprised that the leading maritime professional organisation that is so well recognised for its commitment to the human element should be involved in the autonomous vessel debate, there are some very good reasons.’*

Pointing out that the existence of autonomous vessels is a reality with hundreds working today, Patraiko said they will be increasingly interacting with manned vessels. The NI’s work was of importance in ensuring relationships between the autonomous vessels and humans.

He added: *‘NI members are already dealing with many autonomous systems onboard, including machinery, cargo, communications and navigation. Understanding and refining the interaction between the human and these systems is a priority as we move into the future.’*

The NI is dedicated to supporting those in control of seagoing craft and has opened its membership to all maritime professionals accepting the need of those in autonomous ship operations to embrace professional development.

Patraiko concluded by saying that it will be essential to ensure the competencies of all involved in controlling autonomous vessels, whether onboard or ashore, are maintained.