THE CONNECTED CRUISE

A Signature Maritime Solution

Solution Brief

SES | Networks

IMPROVING THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

In the cruise industry, the guest experience is crucial. The market has become increasingly competitive, with 13 new cruise ships added in 2018, and an additional 37 ships projected to come online over the next few years.[1]

To gain an edge, cruise lines focus on improving the guest experience, packing their vessels with everything they can to delight their passengers, from gyroscopically balanced pool tables and bowling alleys to water slides and exotic drinks. The drive to improve guest experiences extends to the devices brought onboard. Passengers want to remain connected, with 40% reporting that internet access at sea is important to them.[2]

Cruise lines have a vested interest in supplying internet access to enable passengers to go online. Connecting guests leads to more satisfied customers, with the potential to generate ancillary revenue from internet sales—often a top-10 revenue centre onboard. Broadband also represents an expanded opportunity to engage with passengers. Many cruise lines are already leveraging email and apps to connect with guests ahead of departure. Ensuring they're online on the ship lets the cruise line continue to push out information and drive onboard spending for products and services, including excursions and specialty dining.

Connectivity is also increasingly important to cruise lines' ability to retain market share and grow their passenger base. Millennials are poised to dominate the travel market over the next few years, making it critical for cruise lines to offer reliable high-quality internet access to keep this key demographic connected to services and applications while at sea.

1 *Cruise Market Watch. https://cruisemarketwatch.com/growth/*
2 *"Cruise Travel Report." Cruise Lines International Association,* January 2017.

ADDRESSING ONBOARD DATA DEMAND

Even though a growing number of cruise lines recognise the role that high-speed internet plays as part of a larger customer experience strategy, delivering internet services at sea remains challenging.

A positive online experience depends on a solid onboard network backbone and pervasive WiFi that supports the latest specifications, however, many ships have not yet been upgraded to support that level of connectivity. Changes in customer profiles and preferences contribute to the challenge too.

Traffic Growth

As mobile users access cloud-based applications on their tablets and smartphones—including streaming video and photo sharing—broadband traffic is skyrocketing. The average mobile connection is expected to generate over 11Gb of data traffic per month by 2021.[3]

Connectivity Drives Experience

The remote control to the onboard experience is often a personal device or a smart device provided by the cruise line. This translates into more data usage as guests' online experience is interwoven into the overall cruise experience.

More Connected Devices Onboard

Guests are bringing along more internet-connected devices, many of which automatically update and sync photos and video. These devices and applications are driving network traffic onboard, as is the increasing use of connected systems on the ships, including wearable devices for passengers, and back office systems that send data back to shore.
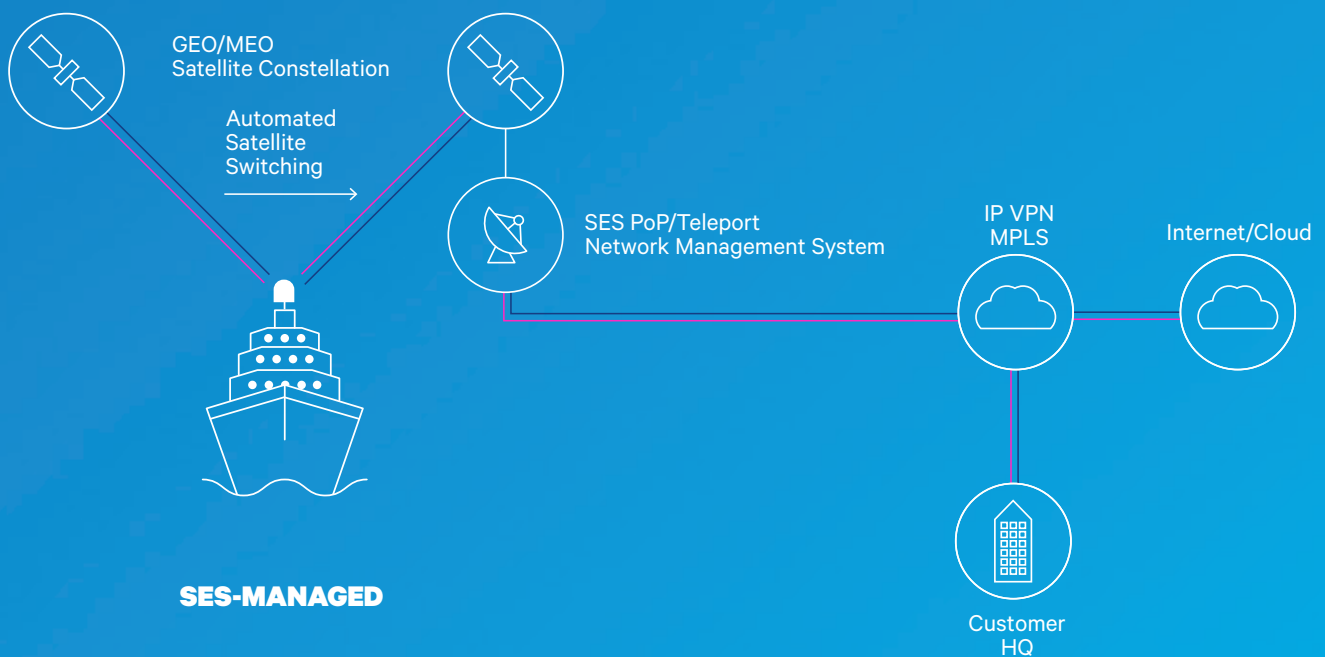
Exploring New Destinations

Trends such as eco-tourism and adventure travel are driving mobile users—particularly millennials—to distant regions, making it challenging for cruise lines to purchase long-term capacity since ships are constantly updating their destinations.

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3 *Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast, 2016-2021." Cisco Visual Networking Index,* July 2018

CRUISE SERVICES FROM SES NETWORKS

Our cruise offering, part of the SES Networks Signature Solutions portfolio, helps cruise lines elevate their guest experience. Major cruise lines have long relied on the high-speed, low-latency broadband connectivity provided by our O3b MEO constellation to power their ship and guest experience systems, while our global GEO fleet ensures a seamless and ubiquitous connectivity experience wherever cruise ships sail.

GEO/MEO
Satellite Constellation

Automated
Satellite
Switching

SES PoP/Teleport
Network Management System

IP VPN
MPLS

Internet/Cloud

Customer
HQ

SES-MANAGED

Cruise Ship Communications
Bringing connectivity to vessels at sea

FLEXIBLE COVERAGE OPTIONS

MEO-based services provide flexibility in how they are allocated, including full beam, follow-the-ship (FTS) or Shared Capacity Services (SCS) models. This enables cruise lines to deliver tailored connectivity to each ship based on its individual requirements, with data speeds up to 1Gbps to a single ship. Our GEO fleet provides network resilience, with automatic switching between orbits via advanced multi-band antennas.

VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

Our broad portfolio of additional services goes beyond basic connectivity, helping cruise lines further improve the guest experience. For example:

- A captive portal solution that supports the creation of tiered and customised service plans, tracks usage, and provides a channel to upsell passengers once they are onboard
- Optimisation technologies such as caching, TCP acceleration, and application-aware traffic steering that ensure efficient of network resources
- An analytics solution that enables cruise lines to better understand customer and device behaviour, and use that information to create targeted service bundles and manage the guest experience from end to end
- Voice services for passengers and crew via the ship's connection to traditional and cellular-based networks
- Flexible technology options, including a range of antenna platforms that can be tailored to the cruise line's specific requirements

DE-RISKING THE INVESTMENT

Our cruise solution is provided as an end-to-end managed service, enabling cruise operators to deliver high-quality broadband to their customers without the high up-front cost associated with purchasing and implementing communications infrastructure. The managed service model also removes the complexity associated with procuring and managing capacity, and integrating third-party value-added services. Our portfolio of Ascent Lifecycle Services includes service delivery, training, and full lifecycle support from start to finish, so you can leverage our extensive expertise and dedicated resources for the cruise market.

FUTURE-PROOFING CRUISE CONNECTIVITY

Our ongoing technology investments ensure that SES will keep pace with the growing demand for broadband in the cruise industry. Our existing low-latency O3b MEO service will be augmented in 2021 by our next-generation O3b mPOWER satellite constellation, providing unprecedented flexibility and scalability to the cruise market. At SES Networks, we continue to invest in the future of the cruise industry, evaluating services and solutions in our reference architecture lab.

MARITIME CONNECTIVITY IN ACTION

Our Signature Maritime Solutions are market-proven
on cruise liners operating around the world.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN

Elevating the Cruise
Experience with Smart Ships

Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines has been on the cutting edge of technology since its industry-leading ship Quantum of the Seas was unveiled in 2014. Guests personalize their cruise experience via RCL-branded mobile apps, a web portal, and kiosks throughout the ship. Waterproof RFID wristbands help passengers navigate around the ship, make purchases, and serve as a room key. Robotic bartenders take orders and mix drinks. And a 24/7 video gaming suite lets guests compete with Xbox Live gamers around the world. Our O3B MEO constellation delivers the low-latency broadband capabilities RCL needs to deliver smart ship technology, while providing high-speed WiFi to cruise passengers and crew so they can upload content to social media sites, and chat with friends and family back home. Our cruise solution helps RCL ensure its guests enjoy a hassle-free travel experience that exceeds their wildest expectations.

A CRUISE EXPERIENCE FOR THE GIGABIT ERA

The cruise industry has changed dramatically over the last several years, and it continues to evolve as guests demand differentiated and dynamic experiences. Consistent, high-quality broadband is a key part of those customer experiences. Our cruise solution delivers low-latency, cost-effective, and scalable broadband connectivity, as well as deep technical expertise, 24/7 support, and defined service level agreements—provided as a turnkey managed solution. This enables cruise lines to reduce their operational and deployment risks and eliminate complexity, letting them focus on doing what they do best—providing world-class guest experiences.

Talk to us today about how our Signature Maritime Solutions can help you improve your guest experience.

Ready to improve your guests' experience?

getconnected@ses.com

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