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SMM 2024: AI accelerates the digital transformation

Digitalising processes makes shipping more flexible, efficient and eco-friendly. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing role of growing importance in these efforts. At the leading international maritime trade fair in Hamburg, the topic will be covered in depth at the AI CENTER, where innovative start-ups will showcase their solutions.

Hamburg, 22-05-2024 – Under the heading of “Driving the Maritime Transition”, SMM 2024 will not only focus on the maritime energy transition but also on digital transformation. Predictably, future alternative fuels enabling carbon-neutral ship operation will be in short supply and expensive. It is therefore crucial to optimise the energy efficiency of ships steadily, whether they are newbuilds or vessels in service. **Dominik Schneider**, CEO of the Swiss ship engine manufacturer WinGD and chairman of the Digitalization Strategy Group of CIMAC, the global non-profit association dedicated to ship propulsion engineering, believes that retrofitting existing ships is one of the industry’s foremost challenges today. Digital tools, Big Data and IoT (Internet of Things) technology can provide a wide range of means to improve the operational efficiency of ships significantly and meet ever stricter regulatory requirements. For example, the technology company Acceleron offers a comprehensive solution called Tekomar XPERT.

Digital Route & Maritime Future Summit

From cloud-based condition monitoring devices to autonomous or partially autonomous navigation systems, and through to real-time cargo tracking and effective anti-cybercrime solutions, the leading global trade fair of the maritime industry will showcase the entire spectrum of innovative digital products and services in Hamburg. “Our Digital Route will make it easy for industry visitors to locate exhibitors of relevant products,” explains SMM Director **Christoph Lücke**. At the Maritime Future Summit on 4 September, which will be free to all fair visitors for the first time, experts will present smart technologies and discuss use cases of Artificial Intelligence.

AI in focus

AI is emerging as a main driver of digitalisation in the industry in general, and in the maritime business in particular. “Over the next ten years, Artificial Intelligence will increasingly play a key role in our industry; it can even help us cope with the shortage of skilled labour,” says **Rolf Stiefel**, Regional Chief Executive for Central Europe of the classification society Bureau Veritas. One typical application is the development of an automated drone-based inspection service to detect corrosion, cracks and deformation inside cargo tanks. **Florian Heinemann**, Senior Director Data Insights & AI



at Germany's biggest liner operator, says he is "convinced that by 2030 all business processes at Hapag-Lloyd will be AI-based".

AI CENTER: Stage for start-ups

With this in mind, SMM 2024 will put the AI topic centre stage: The AI CENTER in Hall B6 will be entirely dedicated to advanced AI technologies and potential applications in the maritime industry. "Early adopters of AI will benefit from competitive advantages," explains **Ragnar Kruse**, co-founder and CEO of AI.HAMBURG and initiator of the AI CENTER. From sales & marketing to customer support, any business process can be optimised using AI, he stresses: "Many start-ups are now integrating AI technologies in software products that any company can afford. They will be featured at the AI CENTER at SMM." A typical example: the Swedish company Cetasol offers iHelm, a software application that generates digital twins of various operational components on board ships. "Our iHelm solution uses AI, which makes it highly adaptable, enabling our customers to map their processes in a way that is future-proof," says Cetasol founder and CEO **Ethan Faghani**. The company says its solution can reduce fuel consumption by 10 to 25 per cent without requiring major component retrofits or conversions.

Award: AI for the Oceans

The leading international maritime trade fair will be a great opportunity for industry visitors to get comprehensive information about current developments and join the highly dynamic AI community. "Our AI CENTER at SMM 2020 sets a new standard," says **Claus Ulrich Selbach**, Business Unit Director – Maritime and Technology Fairs & Exhibitions at Hamburg Messe und Congress. The **AI for the Oceans Awards** will be another highlight at the trade fair: "This is where SMM, in cooperation with Deutsche Meeresstiftung, Forum Oceano and AI.HAMBURG, will honour start-ups that use AI to protect the oceans," says Selbach. The jury for this competition consists of 14 distinguished members, including personalities such as **Charles Goddard**, Editorial Director of the Economist, and aquanaut **Fabian Cousteau**, grandson of the legendary oceanographer Jacques Cousteau. Start-ups must submit their proposals by 1 July 2020 at the latest. Award winners will receive a 10,000 euro prize, a campaign on LinkedIn and a presentation to an expert audience in a true win-win competition that benefits both, the environment and committed start-ups.

About SMM

The leading international maritime trade fair takes place in Hamburg from 3 to 6 September 2024. More than 2,000 exhibiting companies and around 40,000 visitors from over 100 countries are expected to attend. Covering the entire value chain of the maritime industry on 90,000 m² in twelve exhibition halls, SMM is the world's foremost platform for innovation and the latest technologies in the maritime sector that brings together business leaders from around the world. Themed "SMM – driving the maritime transition", the 31st SMM will focus on the maritime energy transition and digital transformation. An attractive conference programme and a wide range of networking opportunities



will supplement the exhibition. For the first time, the conferences will take place on open stages inside the exhibition halls – free of charge, and accessible to all fair visitors.

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