

Standard for Digital Tide Tables

1. Following TWLWG3 the IHB contacted the Chair of SNPWG in accordance with Action TWLWG3-4.2.1 and received the response given below:

-----Original Message-----

From: pah [<mailto:pah@ihb.mc>]
Sent: 19 April 2011 10:36
To: Acland David
Cc: 'PAD'; Jones Christopher (Tides)
Subject: Digital Tide Tables

Hi David,

Last year I passed you a document prepared by France regarding a Standard for Digital Tide Tables. There was also a draft product spec prepared by UK, not sure who though. I attach copies of both papers. At TWLWG3 this year we did not discuss these any further as it was felt that we need some guidance on this matter. TWLWG, naturally contains tidal experts but when it comes down to product specs etc we are swimming in the dark somewhat.

TWLWG4 is not until May next year but any help guidance SNPWG can provide to allow us to take this forward would be much appreciated.

From David Acland:

Hi Steve,

Chris and I have now discussed this TWLWG work.

The first thing to say is that it takes a long time.

Although this is not happening with the ENC, there is a view that the product specification for other products should be produced by the data provider. The product specification tells the ECDIS what is in the data set.

Whether this will be achievable, I do not know. But I think the holy grail of ECDIS architects is that the future ECDIS will be sufficiently flexible to read a product specification, understand what data is coming, read in the data, read the portrayal specification, and then display the data in accordance with the portrayal design. There is a new motivation to relax the control on display a bit so that ECDIS manufacturers will have a little more freedom to compete over how to display information.

The best guidance I can give from the SNPWG experience is to start with listing what you want the product to contain.

This then forms the items that need to be in the feature concept dictionary, from which product specifications are made. I do not know enough about tides to know how this would work. I wonder if the harmonics are information features? If so they could be in either the Hydro or NPUBS register.

We have taken 3 or 4 years to get the NPUBS feature concept dictionary to its current state and there is still a long way to go.

What we are doing in the SNPWG now is writing a specimen product specification and using Marine Protected Areas to do this. Meanwhile I am aware of two other product specifications being written by others for different products, using items from both the IHB Hydro and NPUBS registers and elsewhere.

You probably want to work out the minimum data that should be in a Digital Tide Tables product and the standard that the data should achieve. This minimum is then likely to form the core of any specific product produced by a Hydrographic Office.

In this area tides and water level seems enviably simple because you can set standards for accuracy for time, height of tide, rate and direction. You could also set the standards for types of display and resolution.

Unfortunately in Sailing Directions and some of the Radio Signals books, the content is just information in essay form and how do you set standards of accuracy or resolution for that?

A bit of a ramble I am afraid but I hope this is some help.

David

2. TWLWG4 is invited to consider this information and take any action it considers appropriate.