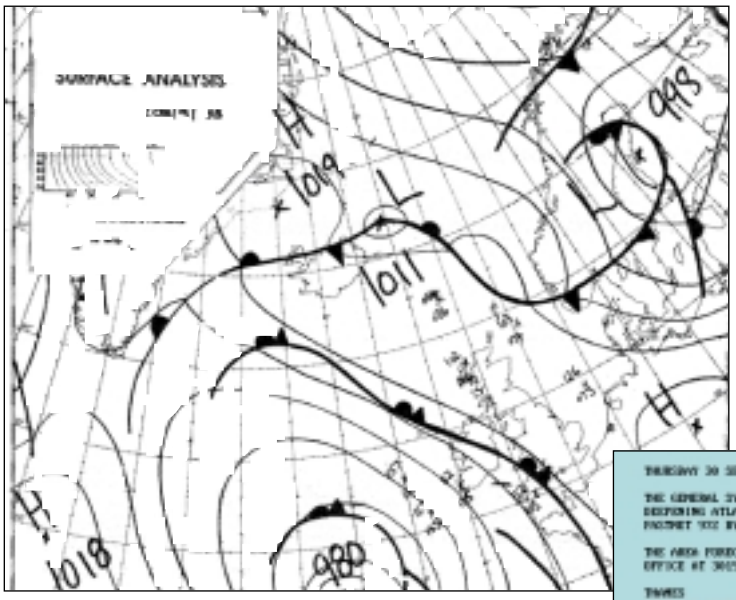
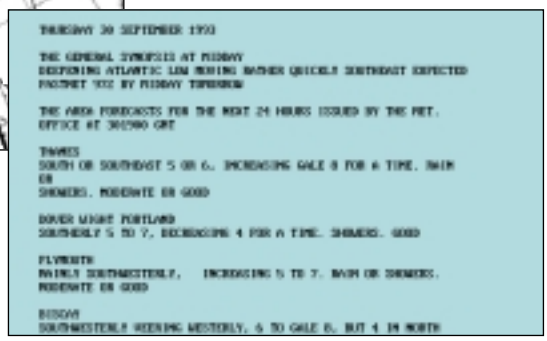
ICS FAX-III Weather Facsimile Software

THE BEST IN RADIO WEATHER MONITORING





ICS-FAX III

Probably the most widely used weather fax program available for marine use, ICS-FAX III was used by all the boats in the 1992-93 British Steel Challenge race and in many of the new Whitbread 60 class yachts in the 1993-94 Whitbread Round the World yacht race.

Since ocean navigation has been made easier by the introduction of GPS, the real skill in long distance sailing involves weather routing, based on the kind of information which ICS-FAX III can provide.

This software continues to lead other programs in terms of reliability and simplicity of use. On-screen graphics resolution is clear and precise. Sufficient to derive the last drop of detail from every map.

Whilst weather facsimile is its main application, ICS-FAX III also receives printed (mainly English language) weather forecasts via Navtex, Morse Code, FEC (MSI) and RTTY. Used in conjunction with any good quality short wave SSB radio receiver, ICS-FAX III will give reliable weather reports and forecasts virtually anywhere on earth.

In the latest version of this product, we have concentrated on improving ease of use even further. A unique map based information system shows you the range of available weather transmitting stations for your location. This can be used in conjunction with an editable transmission data base to provide an on-line almanac that can save hours of hunting through books.

The ICS-FAX III package comes complete with high quality manual, software on 3.5" disks, an audio tape of typical signals and an interface to connect between the 9 pin serial interface socket of a lap portable PC and an SSB radio. This new surface mount electronic interface is much smaller physically than competing products and it take less room on the chart table. Special circuitry is included to avoid radio frequency noise generated by the computer being passed to the radio.

AVAILABLE WEATHER INFORMATION

The definitive source of information on transmitting stations, with their schedules and frequencies, is the 'Admiralty List of Radio Signals, Volume 3'. Navtex information is also contained in Volumes (GMDSS).

Weather Facsimile transmissions are made by stations all over the world and are receivable over very long distances. They are made simultaneously on several frequencies to improve reliability of coverage. Normally, new weather maps are transmitted at 6 hour intervals, with forecast maps for each of the next five days sent daily. Sea state maps, sea surface temperature maps, maps of ocean currents, ice limits etc. extend the usefulness of the information provided well beyond simple weather forecasting.

Navtex transmissions are made every 4 hours on 518 kHz with a nominal range of 200-300 nautical miles, each station having a different time slot. Weather forecasts are in English for the following 24 hours. Navigation warnings such as lights extinguished, new wrecks, Decca or satellite navigation system off-air warnings etc. are also sent. Gale warnings or search and rescue information can be sent at any time.

North West Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean have been well covered for some time, but new stations at La Corunna, Tarifa, Las Palmas and Toulon will be available soon, thus filling in previous gaps.

Optional hardware modules are available to permit remote frequency control of Lowe or Icom receivers.

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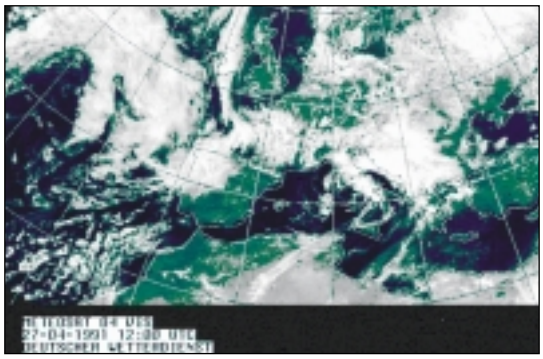
FEC (Forward Error Correction) is used for transmitting ocean area forecasts. For example, Portishead Radio sends out a detailed North Atlantic forecast twice per day on FEC, along with its traffic list. In some areas such as the Western Atlantic and Baltic, the older RTTY (Radio Teletype) mode is still used.

Although in the process of being phased out for professional marine radio operators, CW (Morse Code) is still in widespread use and can often provide useful information. For example, Rome transmits an English language forecast for the whole Mediterranean area every day using CW.



FEATURES

- Covers weather facsimile, Navtex, FEC (MSI), RTTY and CW.
- On-screen tuning indicator for precise receiver tuning.
- Automatic tuning and signal tracking
- Automatic IOC and RPM detection.
- Mouse control.
- Unique editable graphics database to show services available at a given location.
- Built in timer for automatic unattended reception.
- Scroll, zoom, store and print.
- Post reception picture editing to improve clarity .
- Navtex message category and station selection.
- New, compact RF noise reducing surface mount technology computer interface.
- .PCX image file output.
- Images can be recalled, from within ICS-SeaPro and ICS-Logmate navigation and charting software.
- Optional remote frequency control of Icom or Lowe receivers.

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

An IBM-PC compatible lap portable computer with VGA compatible screen and 640K memory or greater. Hard disk for image storage. CGA, EGA and Hercules graphics modes are also supported, but 640 x 480 x 16 grey level VGA is to be preferred.

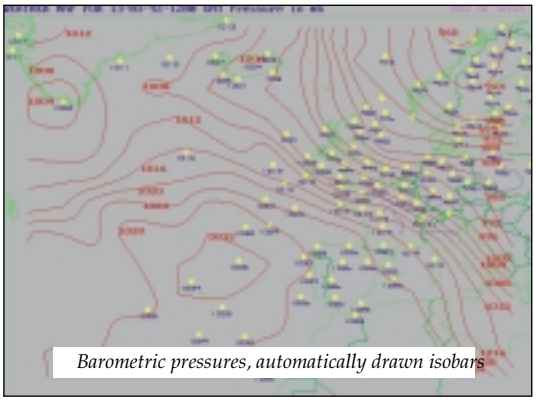
CHOOSING A RADIO FOR WEATHER DATA RECEPTION

A good quality short wave SSB radio receiver should be used, with selectable USB/LSB and digital tuning to an accuracy of 100Hz. The more frequency memories the better. Tuning should be provided from 100Khz to 20 MHz.

A full range of receivers is stocked by ICS and our dealers. All are capable of either 12 volt or mains use. We can also supply an active antenna or a transformer to couple to an insulated backstay. The latter is always the preferred antenna configuration.

As with most products, the more you pay for a radio receiver, the better the results. A good radio receiver will also allow reception of spoken forecasts, time broadcasts, long distance broadcasting services etc. Most receivers are portable enough to remove for use at home for use at home or on holiday when not on the boat.

ICS-WeatherPlot SYNOP plotting option



Barometric pressures, automatically drawn isobars

ICS-WeatherPlot software operates directly with ICS-FAX III, unlike ICS-SYNOP III software ICS-WeatherPlot does not operate in real time but accumulates received observational data in memory for later plotting. This allows synoptical weather observation data to be received via radio and then plotted directly on the screen of the computer. Included is a library of user definable World maps and weather information such as wind, pressure, temperature etc. can be selectively plotted. Once plotted, Isobars or Isotherms can be automatically plotted.

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