



## FleetBroadband from Stratos Brings Volvo Ocean Race to Global TV Audience

*Once described as "the ultimate human endurance test," the Volvo Ocean Race is the world's premier yachting event. For the 2008-2009 edition, the Volvo Ocean Race chose FleetBroadband from Stratos as its primary global mobile satellite service. For the first time, media crew members aboard eight technically advanced sailboats could transmit thrilling high-definition TV footage to a worldwide audience.*

### Delivering HDTV From Anywhere on Earth

The Volvo Ocean Race, which began 36 years ago, has become one of the most anticipated—and watched—sporting events in the world. The 10th edition of the Race set sail in October 2008 from Alicante, Spain and finished in June 2009 in St. Petersburg, Russia,



Eight advanced Volvo Open 70 yachts competed.

traversing roughly 37,000 nautical miles, visiting 11 ports on five continents. Eight world-class teams spent nearly 140 days at sea aboard Volvo Open 70s, the world's most advanced monohull sailing boats, competing for the title.

In the previous edition, which ended in June 2006, each boat was equipped with Inmarsat Fleet 77 satellite communications systems capable of data rates up to 128 kbps, to provide coverage of the race. For the recent edition, however, race organizers wanted to raise the bar. They wanted to deliver state-of-the-art high-definition television (HDTV) from anywhere on earth. This required much greater bandwidth, which is where FleetBroadband from Stratos came in. The race would present an unparalleled opportunity to test the service in the roughest conditions imaginable.

"The more data we can transmit from the boats," explained Knut Frostad, CEO of the Volvo Ocean Race, who sailed in the race four times as a competitor, "the better experience we can give the audience—the public following the race. HDTV is what international broadcasters want. It's essential for raising the profile of the race and our sponsors globally. And the only way it can be sent is by FleetBroadband." Providing reliable IP connections at data speeds up to 432 kbps in any weather conditions, Inmarsat's FleetBroadband service was, Frostad noted, "the natural choice."

Stratos, Inmarsat and Thrane & Thrane teamed up as official satellite communications sponsors for the race. Inmarsat owns and operates the global system of I-4 geostationary satellites that carry FleetBroadband. Thrane & Thrane provided the onboard equipment, including





the main FleetBroadband 500 terminal, as well as Fleet 33 and Inmarsat-C terminals for back-up and safety communications. Stratos sponsored all of the Volvo Ocean Race's mobile satellite services, linking the yachts in real-time with race headquarters and, ultimately, with media outlets and viewers across the globe.

## Media Crew Members Bring the Action Home

In addition to HDTV, the Volvo Ocean Race's other innovation this time was including a dedicated media crew member (MCM) on every boat. Prohibited from assisting the sailing team, an MCM's job was to capture the daily dangers and drama of competing in one of most grueling sporting events on earth. Using FleetBroadband from Stratos, MCMs set up live video confer-

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ences, broadcast radio interviews, sent photographs daily, posted email blogs, and transmitted stunning HDTV footage to race headquarters and onward to a worldwide audience. In addition to handheld cameras, each of the 70-foot yachts was equipped with five fixed waterproof cameras and microphones, linked directly to a media control center below decks.

"Our job is to send the action onboard to viewers at home at the quickest rate possible," said Rick Deppe, MCM aboard PUMA Ocean Racing's *il mostro* (The Monster). "FleetBroadband makes it idiot-proof, and frees you up to be creative."

Both living and shooting conditions were extremely harsh. "The boat is very violent and there's a lot of noise," explained Guy Salter, MCM for the Ericsson 4. "The cameras and gear have trouble standing up to this environment." After spending 12 to 14 hours a day filming on deck, an MCM would go below to edit and process the video. "Try pushing buttons on a laptop while you're doing 25 knots, being banged around inside this carbon shell they call a boat," said Sander Pluijm, the Delta Lloyd's MCM. "After a couple hours, I managed to edit the first few minutes."

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"The best moment of the day," added Mikel Pasabant of the Telefonica Black, "is when, after editing the clips and pictures, you press the SEND button."

Communications from the boats first traveled 36,000 km into space. There, an Inmarsat satellite relayed the signal to a ground station, where Stratos managed connections with terrestrial networks. Position reports every 15 minutes, race communications, and media content went to the Volvo Ocean Race HQ, which in turn transmitted weather and logistical updates back to the boats. Stratos also provided critical value-added services. Stratos GuaranteedAccess extended FleetBroadband's guaranteed bandwidth all the way to the Race HQ's doorstep, delivering streaming traffic over two 2-Mbps E1 circuits. Stratos Dashboard was used to quickly allocate vessel SIMs to the network, easily set up alternate Internet routing, and conveniently monitor FleetBroadband usage throughout the event.





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*— Knut Frostad, CEO, Volvo Ocean Race*

Thanks to FleetBroadband from Stratos, when media crew members hit the SEND button, hundreds of millions of loyal fans worldwide could follow the race daily on TV, radio and the Internet. "What's it like to ride the big waves in the Southern Ocean, to wait for wind in the Doldrums, to be constantly under

pressure from close racing?" asked Gustav Morin, MCM for the Ericsson 3. "My goal is to answer those questions with pictures, video and writing." If the race was a test, FleetBroadband apparently passed with flying colors.

### Global Media Coverage: A Phenomenal Success

Global media coverage of this edition of the Volvo Ocean Race was phenomenal, due largely to the introduction of media crew members, high-definition television—and, of course, FleetBroadband from Stratos. "FleetBroadband has made

the Volvo Ocean Race one of, if not the most, connected sporting events in the world," concluded CEO Knut Frostad. "Billions of people have been able to see the incredible imagery coming off the boats, sharing the drama and excitement of one of the world's most extreme competitions."

Just listen to post-race emails from fans. "The media crew really made the race a lot more interesting, providing more extensive material," said Christian Hellner of Brazil. "The web coverage was excellent," observed Toronto's Alex Antonevych. "I checked the reports and new videos several times a day, and watched all the in-port races live."

"My wife and I followed the race like two little children," added Roland from Cape Town. "We were drawn into being part of the action, and loved sharing the trials and tribulations of every sailor. As one of the weekly programs said, 'This is the Mount Everest of sailing.' But unlike the mammoth Everest climb, this race was brought right into our homes, from the first gun until the finish."

Not surprisingly, viewers have requested even more videos, more photos, possibly even live web cams for the next edition of the Volvo Ocean Race, slated for 2011.



Media crew member Guy Salter shooting HD footage.



FleetBroadband 500 antenna aboard the Ericsson 4.





## Stratos Media Solution

Stratos provides two offerings that allow customers to transmit HDTV coverage from practically anywhere on the globe. FleetBroadband (for maritime customers) and BGAN (for land customers) are easy-to-use, versatile solutions that enable broadcasters to keep one step ahead of the competition.

### The Stratos Advantage

- Stratos Dashboard – to monitor and control costs, our extensive online customer care Dashboard provides real-time information on the amount of traffic used for voice and data and associated costs. Stratos Dashboard also allows customers to instantly activate, deactivate and change service configurations.
- Stratos Trench (Customer Managed Firewall) – a personal firewall between the internet and the FleetBroadband or BGAN network. Web traffic and applications can be authorized or blocked via a user-friendly interface.
- BusinessAccess – customers can now easily extend their LAN networks to FleetBroadband and BGAN connected laptops using our cost saving and secure BusinessAccess service.
- GuaranteedAccess – our infrastructure extends FleetBroadband and BGAN's guaranteed bandwidth to the maritime and terrestrial sides, so bandwidth, including end-to-end streaming services, is really guaranteed all the way to the customer's doorstep. Customers using GuaranteedAccess will always get what they pay for.
- IP Access – our value added infrastructure allows customers to benefit from all possible types of internet access via public, private, static and dynamic IP addresses.

### FleetBroadband and BGAN Key Benefits for Media

- BGAN is highly portable: terminals weigh as little as 1 kg and fit in a backpack
- FleetBroadband is easy to install: a typical installation takes a couple of hours
- FleetBroadband requires a small antenna: diameter/size: FBB 150/250: 25 cm, FBB 500: 57 cm
- Simultaneous Voice and Broadband Data: one terminal serves as the complete communications tool
- Global Coverage: do not be restricted by terrestrial networks
- Flexible: supports both ISDN and IP up to 492 kbps (BGAN)/432 kbps (FBB)
- Compatible: works with legacy media software applications
- Reliable: guaranteed bandwidth is available through GuaranteedAccess

## About Volvo Ocean Race

The Volvo Ocean Race first set sail in 1973, originally christened the Whitbread Round the World Race. The first edition drew 17 yachts from 7 countries. Nine subsequent editions established the race as one of "the longest, most demanding and perilous sporting contests" in the world. In 1998, it was re-branded as the Volvo Ocean Race. The 10th edition was the first time Stratos sponsored the race's mobile satellite services. To view spectacular videos from the race, go to [www.volvooceanrace.tv](http://www.volvooceanrace.tv).

## About Stratos

Stratos is the world's trusted leader for vital communications. With more than a century of service, Stratos offers the most powerful and extensive portfolio of remote communications solutions including mobile and fixed satellite and microwave services. More than 20,000 customers use Stratos products and industry-leading value-added services to optimize communications performance. Stratos serves U.S. and international government, military, first responder, NGO, oil and gas, industrial, maritime, aeronautical, enterprise, and media users on seven continents and across the world's oceans. For more information visit [www.stratosglobal.com](http://www.stratosglobal.com).



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