

Tuesday  
May 8



**POTOMAC TECH**  
JOURNAL

Subscribe to the region's technology newsweekly! [Go!](#)

[HOME](#)

[SUBSCRIPTIONS](#)

[ADVERTISING](#)

[ARCHIVE SEARCH](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

**The region's technology newsweekly**



**AVAILABLE NOW,**  
the Region's most  
comprehensive guide to  
Technology Companies!



**OUR CURRENT ISSUE**

[Internet](#)

[Information Technology](#)

[Software](#)

[Telecommunications](#)

[Multimedia](#)

[Biotech](#)

[Aerospace](#)

[Q&A with...](#)

[Startup](#)

[Potomac Access...](#)

[Venture Capital](#)

**THIS WEEK'S CLOSE UP**

[Real Estate & Construction](#)

[MONEY](#)

[COMPANY CULTURE](#)

[OPINION](#)

[CALENDAR](#)

[PEOPLE](#)

## Space company gets license to send undersea oil data on NASA satellites

5/7/2001

By [Michael Hardy](#)

Spacedata International LLC, a start-up company that wants to transmit data using NASA satellites, has won a key license from the Federal Communications Commission.

The agency last week granted the McLean, Va., company permission to use NASA's Tracking Data Relay Satellites. The license is good for 10 years. NASA makes its satellites available for certain commercial uses under nonexclusive licensing arrangements.

Spacedata's aim is to market a service it has branded "SeismicStar" to petroleum companies. SeismicStar will allow oil companies to instantly beam information from ships to headquarters about undersea oil and gas reserves.

"There's about 32 [oil] companies that operate seismic vessels, and we estimate 157 vessels are being used," said Spacedata's president and co-founder, Jay Gnowles. "The average amount of data is about 100 gigabytes a day. [SeismicStar] allows them to get information to their supercomputers quicker. The information is immediately available so they can decide how to bid, or how to pump oil out, or where to drill," he said.

Using the network of satellites, a ship can beam data into space, and the satellites transfer it to a NASA facility in White Sands, N.M. From there it is transmitted via fiber optic cable to the customer's site.

Space Data will pay NASA a fee to use the satellites, and will charge customers \$32 to \$34 per gigabyte of data transmitted, Gnowles said. In addition, Space Data taps General Dynamics and

[RESUME](#)[EDITORIAL CALENDAR](#)[RECRUITMENT](#)[STOCK INDEX](#)**OTHER TECHNOLOGY NEWS**[MassHighTech](#)

(news from the New England Area)

[DFW Tech Biz](#)

(news from the Dallas/Fort Worth areas)

[American City Business Journal](#)

(news from 41 Business publications around the country)

Lockheed-Martin as subcontractors.

Spacedata has been operating since the beginning of the year under a temporary FCC authorization, with one vessel operated by Western GECO, a joint venture between Schlumberger Ltd. and Baker Hughes Inc., companies that offer petroleum exploration and drilling services. The one-day high data load sent to Western GECO's Houston headquarters was 422 gigabytes, Gnowles said.

He declined to project revenues, but said the company should turn profitable when five or six individual vessels are signed up as customers.

Gnowles launched the company in 1998, along with co-founders Frank Van Resslerer, now chief executive officer, and Will Zarecor, now chief technology officer, and with about \$7 million in angel funding. The company is currently looking for strategic partners and investors, but is not interested in venture capital, he said.

[EMAIL ARTICLE TO A FRIEND... >>](#)

[Home](#) | [Subscriptions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertising](#)  
All Rights Reserved. Potomac Tech Journal 2000  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#)

**Want a **FREE** subscription to Potomac Tech Journal ?**  
**Click here to subscribe!**