If it works properly, the benefits of AIS could be huge.

The new Automatic Identification System (AIS) should come into its own and has the potential to revolutionise collision avoidance. An AIS system is a means by which it can keep an eye on what ships are passing through its area of responsibility. It has stated that they would target additional resources into the investigation of any non-AIS transmitting ships. By this it means that any ship passing through its area of responsibility, that was not using AIS, would be suspected of being involved in criminal activities. If you know the identity of other ships and port authorities. This gives them the benefits of a full picture of what is going on around their ports or coast. Maritime states will know that cargoes are being carried and ports will have a better idea of what ships are passing through its waters. It has stated that they will target additional resources into the investigation of any non-AIS transmitting ships. By this it means that any ship passing through its area of responsibility, that was not using AIS, would be suspected of being involved in criminal activities. Therefore, if you go through the Dover Strait heading for Rotterdam and you are unsure of being involved in criminal activities. Therefore, if you go through the Dover Strait heading for Rotterdam and you are unsure of what you are carrying? But parting with this concern, one probable consequence of knowing the identity of other ships will be a massive rise in VHF communication. It is difficult to predict if that will have a positive or negative effect upon collision avoidance. However, I would bet that there will be a collision soon which the lawyers will blame upon the use of AIS. We will then be able to add "AIDS assisted collision" to the nautical phrasebook.

This is the theory: detailed, unambiguous information about every other AIS-equipped ship within VHF range. Everybody knows where every other ship is going, how they are manoeuvring, what their identity is and what they are carrying. But is that actually how it would be? Many VTS operators have already reported that between 60 and 80 per cent of all AIS messages contain errors. These errors range from draught of vessel’s ship’s cargo and weather conditions, while there is a requirement under the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention to carry the equipment, there is no requirement to turn it on. This is, however, a good thing because would you really want everyone in the vicinity of the Malacca Straits to know what you are carrying? But parting with this concern, one probable consequence of knowing the identity of other ships will be a massive rise in VHF communication. It is difficult to predict if that will have a positive or negative effect upon collision avoidance. However, I would bet that there will be a collision soon which the lawyers will blame upon the use of AIS. We will then be able to add “AIDS assisted collision” to the nautical phrasebook.