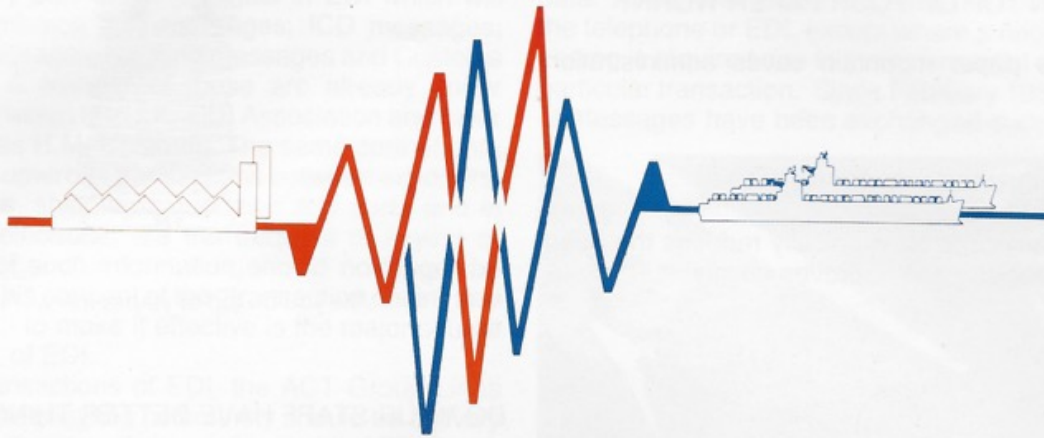




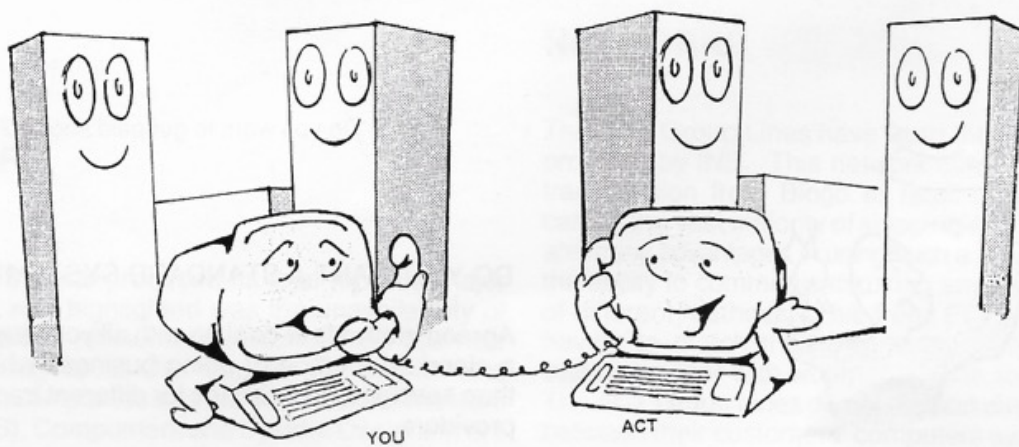
Group Lines



ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE

Thousands of column inches have been written about Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Hype and jargon have now obscured why major companies like the ACT Group Lines have invested in an EDI capability. From August, 1985, the ACT Group Lines have been actively involved with the Data Interchange For Shipping (DISH) project and, more recently, the EDI Association. Many other companies are now considering the use of EDI in their organisations.

EDI is not confined to the Shipping Industry. Its use is now commonplace in retailing and growing rapidly in Banking and Insurance and in the Automotive, Chemical and Construction industries. The use of EDI in the transport sector, whether in sea, air or rail, may well therefore be an extension of a company's links with other communities in the same business or within its own internal network.



"Let our computers do the talking"

Why have the ACT Group Lines been at the forefront of EDI development in the U.K. Shipping Industry? Because we believe that there are significant benefits to be gained by our trading partners in using electronic means to transfer data.

ARE YOU ON TOP OF YOUR PAPER WORK?

Reducing the paper mountain saves administration costs.

IS YOUR INFORMATION CORRECT?

Transferring any data electronically reduces the need for manual checking and improves quality.



Are you on top of your paperwork?



Do you need information faster?

DO YOU WANT TO GET PAID SOONER?

The faster invoice payments cycle gives the opportunity to achieve earlier settlement of invoices and therefore improve your cashflow.



Do you want a standard system?

DO YOUR STAFF HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO?

The re-keying of data is a significant overhead that costs money and uses resources that could be better deployed elsewhere.

DO YOU NEED INFORMATION FAST?

The more sophisticated a business practice becomes, the greater the requirement for information quickly.



Do you want to get paid sooner?

DO YOU WANT A STANDARD SYSTEM?

Agreed methods of dealing with all your suppliers gives a standard method of doing business which is better than specialist approaches for different trade or service providers.

DO YOU PREFER A STABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH US?

Regularised methods of doing business will lend stability to your trading relationships.

THE SHIPPING COMMUNITY

The current messages used in DISH exchanges are the Booking, the Transport Order (or Shipping Instruction), the Waybill and Transport Charges. However, these represent only part of the potential in EDI which will eventually embrace port messages, ICD messages, insurance messages, banking messages and Customs messages. A number of these are already under development within the U.K. EDI Association and other bodies such as H.M. Customs. The same core of data is passed in numerous transactions between exporters, agents, banks, shipping companies and ports and in the modern electronic era the frequent re-keying or transcribing of such information should no longer be necessary. This concept of the "transaction chain" and the use of EDI to make it effective is the major source of the benefit of EDI.

Given the transactions of EDI, the ACT Group Lines believe that the shipping community should be actively investigating its use. This applies to all ACT Group Lines customers whether they are freight-forwarders, consolidators, shippers or importers.

THE WAYBILL

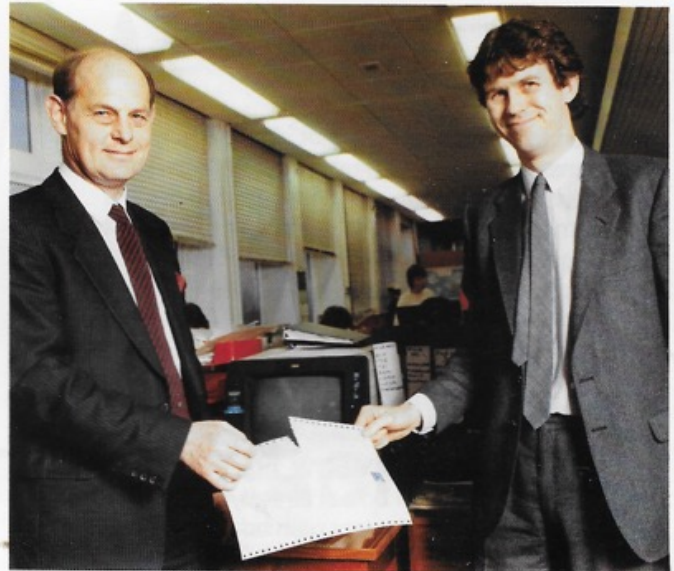
Of particular importance is the use of the electronic "Contract Status Message" which equates to the Non-Negotiable Waybill. Discussions continue in shipping and legal circles as to the potential for an electronic negotiable Bill of Lading. However, the Non-Negotiable Waybill option is a viable alternative for many types of shipment currently carried under a Bill of Lading. A Waybill can be transmitted using EDI and the information used, thereby reducing delays associated with negotiability and the speedier flow of goods to the consignee.

SOFTWARE

When the DISH trial produced its final report a major problem that was highlighted was the unavailability of suitable software. A number of companies are now actively working to fill this gap in the market and products from companies such as International Network Services (INS), Compument and System Designers are now available in the market place. Such products allow companies to take up EDI on a low cost basis. Additionally, they allow companies to experiment with EDI before, perhaps, incorporating EDI facilities into their own in-house systems.

ICI AND ACT TRADE ELECTRONICALLY

ICI and the ACT Group Lines have been amongst the first trading electronically. The use of printed documents was dropped in favour of electronically exchanged data. All communication between the companies is via the telephone or EDI, except where a negotiable Bill of Lading is required due to the commercial demands of a particular transaction. Since February 1987 thousands of messages have been exchanged successfully.



Above, Ian Rodgers of ICI is showing his feelings for the Bill of Lading as ICI and ACT move to the Waybill and EDI for their mutual benefit.

Many companies, both large and small, in Europe and the U.K. are either using EDI already or planning to in the near future. Many household names, such as United Distillers, Guinness, Glaxo, Rothmans, Beechams, Burlington Ocean, British Steel, Boots, Forbo-Nairn and Shell International, have already joined the EDI Association.

NETWORKS

The ACT Group Lines have used the Tradanet service provided by INS. This network carries many types of transmission from Bingo to retail data and currently carries the vast majority of shipping-related data. There are many advantages in using such a network, particularly the ability to communicate using any one of a selection of different methods. This frees EDI participants from having to match their own equipment to that of the trading partner with whom they wish to communicate. The ACT Group Lines do not support direct connections between their customers' computers systems and their own. Although this is technically possible, we do not believe that it will be in our customers' best interests. For example, most customers wish to have the freedom of dealing with a selection of different ocean carriers, particularly when trading to a variety of destinations.

THE WAY AHEAD

The ACT Group Lines are committed to the development and use of EDI as a means of improving customer services and improving cost-effectiveness. Through its involvement in, and commitment to the new EDI Association and other industry groupings, ACT expects to see and be active in a rapid increase in the use and spread of EDI, particularly in the exporting, importing, Customs and banking communities. The ACT Group Lines believe that their customers in turn can make similar effective use of EDI in their dealings with customers and suppliers.

The ACT Group Lines recommend:

1. Companies which have not already done so should consider the part EDI might play when establishing future development. Companies that are not computerised can consider building in EDI from the beginning of any new development.
2. Companies which have not already done so should consider joining the new U.K. EDI Association. The cost is £110 joining fee plus £220 per annum. Members are entitled to full participation in the EDI Association's activities. Further details can be obtained from EDIA, Almack House, 26-28 King Street, London SW1Y 6QW, or from ACT.
3. Companies, which do not already do so, should consider how they might gain advantage from trading electronically with the ACT Group Lines and others.



Mr. Jim Austin has been appointed to the newly created post of EDI Analyst within ACT Services, the service arm of the ACT Group Lines. Jim has wide experience of the commercial and operational activities of ACT and his role will be to support the implementation of EDI, in particular to provide advice to ACT's customers. Contact can be made at:



ACT Group Lines,
Richmond House,
Terminus Terrace,
SOUTHAMPTON SO9 1GG
Tel: 0703-634433
Telex: 477622
Fax: 0703-330940

These are the EDI contacts in the companies that make up the ACT Group Lines



ACT(A),
136 Fenchurch Street,
LONDON EC3M 6DD
Tel: 01-626 3233
Contact: Peter Taylor

Associated Container Transportation (Australia) operates in the Australian, New Zealand and Fiji trades from the U.K. and Europe. ACT(A) operates to many destinations from Australia and New Zealand and now incorporates the Shipping Corporation of New Zealand.



B.L.C.,
33 St. Mary's Street,
EDINBURGH EH1 1TN
Tel: 031-557 2323
Contact: Roger Miall

Ben Line Containers operates in the Trio consortium in the Far East and Middle East trades.



Blue Star,
Albion House,
30 James Street,
LIVERPOOL L2 7PS
Tel: 051-227 4333
Contact: Roger Gibson

Blue Star operates in a number of trades including the Johnson ScanStar service to the USA and Canada and BRISA service to South America.



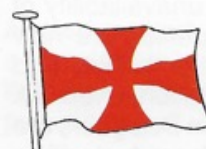
Cunard Ellerman,
Lancaster House,
Mercury Court,
Tithebarn Street,
LIVERPOOL L2 2QP
Tel: 051-227 5555
Contact: Bob Holmes

Cunard Ellerman is involved in a number of services between the UK and Northern Europe and North America (through ACL, GCL and PES), Portugal, The Mediterranean, The Red Sea, The Arabian Gulf, East Africa, India and Pakistan.



E.H.C.L.,
12-20 Camomile Street,
LONDON EC3A 7EX
Tel: 01-283 4311
Contact: John Hodgson

Ellerman Harrison Container Line operates in the SAECS consortium to Southern Africa.



T. & J. Harrison,
Mersey Chambers,
Covent Garden,
LIVERPOOL L2 8UF
Tel: 051-236 5611
Contact: Alan Jones

Harrison Line operates in the CAROL consortium to Central America and the Caribbean, the BEACON consortium to the Red Sea and East Africa, as well as services to Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico.