CONTAINERS

Telematics takes tracking to a new level

Information technology is increasingly playing an integral role in security and efficiency in the container industry – with more than 90% of the world's non-bulk cargo moved by container ships.

Jonathan Sims of specialised South African freight forwarding and customs clearing IT service provider Core Freight Systems believes that information technology shares a number of attributes with the container industry. "IT deals with the efficient processing and movement of data as containerisation addresses the physical movement of the goods," says Sims.

"As an example, the standardisation of data formats and the communication mechanisms for EDI messages interfaced from one application to another in order to track and process the international flow of goods may be compared with the ISO standards prescribed for container sizes and the production of cargo ships to carry them. Both are essential and integral to optimising performance along the logistics supply chain."

This commonality of purpose, however, provides further opportunity for combined meaningful contribution to the supply chain between containerisation and information technology, in his view. "The application of telematics – the technology of collecting and reporting data from a remote object – illustrates this," says Sims. "Imagine a device that would not only report the global position of a container, but monitor the security of the contents by recording if the container is opened, any impact suffered, deviations of internal temperature from prescribed standards, and even measure the levels of gas content within the container. We understand that this is possible.

"At Core Freight we strive to provide reliable systems, leveraging IT in combination with other participants within the supply chain to provide competitive advantage for our users, whether it relates to containers or any other aspect of their business."