AIS Cybersecurity: Growing Data Manipulation on the High Seas

AIS data, used by decision makers to track ships worldwide, is widely perceived as a reliable source of information. Massive financial investments and critical operational decisions are based on this data.

However, new research from Windward reveals that AIS data is increasingly manipulated and unreliable.

Why? Ships that seek to conceal their identity, destination or activity – for economic, criminal or security reasons – can easily manipulate the system, obscuring their activities. Let us count the ways...

Intelligence

Finance

GPS Manipulation

GPS manipulation has risen **59%** over the past two years

Chinese fishing vessels account for **44%** of GPS manipulators

Identity Fraud

1% of all ships transmit a false identity

There has been a **30%** increase in the number of ships reporting a false identity over the past two years

'Going Dark'

27% of ships do not transmit AIS data at least **10%** of the time

19% of ships that 'go dark' are repeat offender

Large cargo ships shut off AIS transmissions **24%** longer than others

Obscuring Destination

On average, ships only report their final port of call during **41%** of their voyages

55% of ships misreport their actual port of call for the majority of their voyage

The result?

AIS manipulation is a fast–growing trend with far-reaching implications for anyone tracking ship activity, from Wall Street traders to intelligence agencies. Once some of the data is compromised, none of it can be trusted at face value.

AIS data: from Game Changer to Game of Chance.

It is time for AIS Cybersecurity.