CLAIMS:

1. A tracking system comprising:

a client device; and

a central control arrangement which is configured to communicate with the client device, the central control arrangement comprising:

a processor; and

a memory coupled for communication with the processor, wherein the central control arrangement is configured to:

receive vessel data from a plurality of vessel data sources and store the vessel data in the memory, the vessel data indicating at least one vessel status parameter for a vessel;

receive cargo data from at least one cargo data source and store the cargo data in the memory, the cargo data comprising at least an item identifier which identifies an item of cargo carried by the vessel;

receive port data from at least one port data source and store the port data in the memory, the port data comprising at least one port parameter related to the vessel;

receive a tracking request from the client device which requests tracking data corresponding to one or more of the vessel or the cargo; and

in response to the tracking request, output at least a portion of the tracking data to the client device to enable a user of the client device to track at least one of the vessel or the cargo,

wherein the tracking system further comprises:

at least one beacon arrangement which is configured to communicate with the central control arrangement and the client device, wherein the at least one beacon arrangement is configured to communicate with the client device over a limited distance range, and wherein the client device is configured to restrict a user from accessing

at least one function of the client device when the client device is not within the limited distance range of at least one beacon arrangement.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the client device is a mobile device selected from a group including a smartphone, a tablet, a smartwatch or a portable computer.

3. The system of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the at least one beacon arrangement is configured to communicate with the client device over a limited distance range of up to 500 metres.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one beacon arrangement is configured to communicate directly with the client device over a limited distance range of up to 100 metres.

5. The system of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the central control arrangement is configured to calculate the geographic position of the client device relative to the known geographic position of the at least one beacon arrangement based on data communication between the client device and the at least one beacon arrangement.

6. The system of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the client device is configured to:

send a tracking request to the central control arrangement, the tracking request requesting tracking data corresponding to one or more of a vessel or an item of cargo;

receive tracking data corresponding to at least one of:

vessel data from a plurality of vessel data sources which indicates at least one vessel status parameter for a vessel, or

cargo data from at least one cargo data source which comprises at least an item identifier which identifies an item of cargo carried by the vessel; and

output at least a portion of the tracking data to a user interface of the client device.

7. The system of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the plurality of vessel data sources are selected from a group including a port authority system, a marine service provider system, a customs authority system, a port operator system, a shipping line system, a shipping agent system or a system accessible via the Internet.

8. The system of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the central control arrangement is configured to:

transmit a port clearance document to the client device to enable a user to process a port clearance document related to the user's vessel using the client device.

9. The system of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the central control arrangement further comprises:

a machine learning module which is configured to use machine learning to analyse historical data and current data generated by the system to generate at least one of a predicted arrival time and a predicted departure time for a vessel.

10. A tracking method comprising:

receiving vessel data from a plurality of vessel data sources, the vessel data indicating at least one vessel status parameter for a vessel;

receiving cargo data from at least one cargo data source, the cargo data comprising at least an item identifier which identifies an item of cargo carried by the vessel;

receiving port data from at least one port data source and store the port data in the memory, the port data comprising at least one port parameter related to the vessel;

storing the vessel data, cargo data and the port data in a memory of a central control arrangement of a tracking system;

receiving, from a client device, a tracking request which requests tracking data corresponding to one or more of the vessel or the cargo; and

in response to the tracking request, outputting at least a portion of the tracking data to a user to enable the user to track at least one of the vessel or the cargo, wherein the method further comprises:

communicating data between a client device and at least one beacon arrangement directly over a limited distance range;

restricting a user from accessing at least one function of a client device when the client device is not within the limited distance range of at least one beacon arrangement.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the limited distance range is a distance of up to 500 metres.

12. The method of claims 10 or claim 11, wherein the method further comprises:

calculating the geographic position of the client device relative to the known geographic position of the at least one beacon arrangement based on data communication between the client device and the at least one beacon arrangement.

13. The method of any one of claims 10 to 12, wherein the method further comprises:

providing an alert message to a user comprising at least a portion of the tracking data.

14. The method of any one of claims 10 to 13, wherein the method further comprises:

grouping a portion of the vessel data and a portion of the cargo data for a user; and

outputting to the user at least a portion of the tracking data corresponding to the grouped vessel data and cargo data.

15. The method of any one of claims 10 to 14, wherein the method further comprises:

transmitting a port clearance document from the central control arrangement to a mobile device to enable a user to process a port clearance document related to the user's vessel using the mobile device.

16. The method of any one of claims 10 to 15, wherein the method further comprises:

storing statistics data corresponding to the vessel data and/or the cargo data over period of time.

17. The method of any one of claims 10 to 16, wherein the method further comprises:

using machine learning to analyse historical data and current data generated by the system to generate at least one of a predicted arrival time and a predicted departure time for a vessel.

18. A tangible computer readable medium storing instructions which, when executed by a processor, perform the method of any one of claims 10 to 17.