We originally purchased the Iridium GO! And PredictWind Offshore Professional because we felt it was important to be able to get the ECMWF forecast model..the European model...at sea. And the only way we could find to do this from offshore, easily, was through the Iridium GO! The Iridium GO! Is a satellite WiFi hotspot to connect all of your devices to including a laptop, iPad, or smartphone. It’s not fast, but it’s sure and steady, and very convenient. With the latest firmware updates, and the new satellite recently launched, it connects at the full 5 bars, every time, without exception. If it happens to disconnect halfway through a download, it reconnects quickly and picks up where it left off. We have the Marine package from PredictWind for the Iridium GO and the external antenna, as well as the PredictWind Application/Data. We purchase the Unlimited data package from them, on a month to month basis.

But we quickly learned here in the Indian Ocean, that the ECMWF reports are but the beginning of what PredictWind offers. We thought their proprietary forecast models, PWE and PWG were simply fluff to add value to their product. We faithfully downloaded the reports, simply to gauge how sure the ECMWF forecasters were of their prediction, to compare that model, the two PredictWind models and the more familiar American model GFS which is accurate only about 50% of the time for us.

Surprise... the PredictWind models, PWE and PWG are by far and away, the most accurate models to use offshore. They are often right to the hour. We take down sails, leave up sails, and even do laundry by these forecasts! These two models are available nowhere else. In addition, we have finally, after all this time, learned the value of always looking at the ocean currents. This seems to be a fairly accurate science, but once you leave internet, it may be harder to get the data. And currents change rapidly, shift positions with countercurrents nearby, so these are important to have underway, not just at the start of a voyage.

If I didn’t know better, I would think that PredictWind and the Iridium GO were made by the same company. Sometimes I still get confused where the two begin and end. They work seamlessly together. It is like having a slow internet at sea for all your weather needs. It’s one of the best additions we have made to Brick House in a while, and sadly, the SSB radio is not getting the upkeep it once had. It’s a backup that seems to be barely needed.

Our HAM license still does come in handy though. Not only is the Go supported very elegantly in Sailmail, it is also very good in Winlink Express. Your email and familiar GRIB reports, BBC news reports and Saildocs and others can be gotten Over the Iridum Go with one check mark in either application.

Facebook posts and some web pages can be retrieved via the GO, though it should neither be counted on, nor should it have very high expectations. This is still slow and quirky, though with practice it is viable. The main thrust of the Iridium GO is the ability to get PredictWind, Sailmail or Winlink, and your emails. Everything else is a bonus. It should also be noted that weather can not be just gotten from anywhere..it can only work with an Iridium GO certified application such as PredictWind or Sailmail. Predictwind itself can work with SSB or GO, or satellite phones.