

The AIAA Daily Launch

Today's News from Newspapers, TV, Radio and Journals

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Customized Briefing for AIAA Members – Brought to You as a Benefit of Your AIAA Membership

June 13, 2014

Leading the News

Google In Talks To Buy Stake In Virgin Galactic.

[USA Today](#) (6/12, Guynn) reported that Google is "in advanced talks" with Virgin Galactic for a "\$30 million minority stake" in the company, although the deal has yet to be finalized. The article noted that this is just one among a series of recent aerospace deals, including the recent decision to purchase Skybox Imaging.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (6/12, Winkler) "Digits" blog noted that if the deal goes through, it will be indicative of Google's confidence in Virgin Galactic at a time when it has been dealing with delays and engine issues.

The [Telegraph \(UK\)](#) (6/12, Curtis) connected the dots in that with the purchase of Skybox, Google would need a way to launch small satellites. Virgin Galactic itself has LauncherOne, "which is specially designed to launch 'smallsat' payloads of 100kg into Earth orbit."

Doug Messier at [Parabolic Arc](#) (6/12) noted that there reportedly is pressure from Aabar Investments to have Virgin Galactic Founder Richard

Branson fly into space this year, or else their funding would end. Messier does not know whether this deal would resolve that issue or not.

Also covering the story are the [Times \(UK\)](#) (6/13, Fildes), [Sky News \(UK\)](#) (6/12, Kleinman), [Inquirer \(UK\)](#) (6/12, Bell), [TechRadar](#) (6/12, Smith), [Venture Beat](#) (6/12, Blattberg), and other media sources.

Aviation and Aeronautics

Airbus Considers Reengining A330, A380.



[Reuters](#) (6/12, Hephner, Altmeyer) reported that Fabrice Bregier, chief executive of the planemaking unit of Airbus Group, said that Airbus will decide by the end of the year whether to place a new engine on the A330. He said the company has been studying the situation, which involves similar discussions with engine makers about whether the project could support multiple engine types. According to the article, Airbus is considering what strategy to take once the A350 enters service in December as expected.

Meanwhile, [Aviation Week](#) (6/12, Flottau) reported that at the Airbus Innovation Days, Airbus Chief Operating Officer-Customers John Leahy said the company is also considering studying reengining the A380. The article noted that customers have at times given differing opinions on the matter. Emirates Airline President Tim Clark said he would like the plane to have new engines, while Amedeo CEO Mark Lapidus thought that the gains would not “justify the investment.” Fernando Alonso, Airbus senior vice president of Flight—Integration Test Center, said he was “prudently optimistic” about the status of the program, although there was still “a lot of work” to accomplish.

[BO1]Changed per Airbus website

Airbus Takes Media On A350 Flight. [Flight Global](#) (6/12, Kaminski-Morrow) reported that Airbus took about 200 members of the press on a promotional flight aboard the A350, “just shy of one year since the A350’s maiden flight.”

Airbus, Boeing Increasing Passenger Capacity On Smallest Jets.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (6/12, Wall, Ostrower, Subscription Publication) reported Airbus and Boeing are competing to see how many passengers they can transport in their smallest jets. Airbus and Boeing are responding to demands from budget carriers, who are ordering more jets, but want manufacturers to maximize the amount of passengers that it can carry.

Companies Are Still Developing Supersonic Planes.

[Bloomberg News](#) (6/13, Baker) reports that despite fact that the last commercial supersonic flight took place over a decade ago, companies are still “doggedly” working on supersonic planes, with the field led by Aerion. A study on the industry done by Plano back in February found that the market could support over “600 supersonic business jets during the next 20 years.” However, some are “doubtful” the economics will make sense because of the costs of the planes coupled with the operating expenses. The article notes that in order to “overcome FAA limits” on flights overland, NASA, along with Boeing and Lockheed Martin, have been developing ways to minimize the sonic boom. Peter Coen, manager of NASA’s High Speed Project, said, “We’ve reached a point where quiet, low-boom overland supersonic passenger service is achievable.”

UC Riverside Students Participate In UAV Competition.

The [Riverside \(CA\) Press Enterprise](#) (6/12, Johnson) reported that several University of California Riverside engineering students are competing in an “Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International-sponsored event” at Maryland’s Patuxent River naval station. The undergrads constructed a UAV “from a kit and modified it with a computer, GPS and a camera.” The students conducted test flights recently “with the mentoring and support of the Riverside Radio Control Club.” During the test flights, the UAV’s “electric engine hummed” as it coasted down a concrete runway, taking off and “reaching heights of more than 300 feet.”

French Start-Up Firm Seeks Business Partner To Fund Flying Dune Buggy Prototype.

[Defense News](#) (6/12, Tran) reported Jérôme Dauffy, chairman of French start-up firm Vaylon, said it is seeking a “business partner soon to help fund development and production of a flying dune buggy.” It has already developed a prototype that is “going through flight trials with the French special operations forces,” and wants to add a business partner “to help raise funds for work on a second prototype and launch production next year.” If development progresses, Dauffy added “Vaylon hopes to enter the formal sales phase in the second half of 2015.”

FROM AIAA

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Call for Board of Directors Nominations Now Open

The 2014–2015 AIAA Nominating Committee will meet in August 2014 to review nominees and select candidates to participate in the 2015 Board of Directors election to fill several vacancies.

With the nomination system now open, AIAA voting members in good standing may nominate any AIAA member in good standing for any of the open positions by submitting a nomination through the AIAA website. Nominations will be accepted through 28 July 2014. To access the nomination system, visit www.aiaa.org/BoDNomination. Your participation in determining AIAA's future is appreciated!

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Space and Astronautics

New Russian Space Rivalry May Push U.S.

In an article for [TIME](#) (6/12) scheduled to appear in the June 23, 2014 issue, Jeffrey Kluger wrote that while the situation in Ukraine is stressing the relationship between the US and Russia in space, this may be good for NASA in the end. The two nations' work at the ISS has been "good politics and good optics," but the "unintended benefit" of the potential end that partnership is that NASA's manned spaceflight program may be "jolted" back after being "adrift" recently. Kluger backed this view by highlighting the commercial spacecraft being developed for NASA, as well as NASA's work on the Orion, although he is more critical of NASA than he is of the commercial companies. Kluger thinks that a new sense of competition with Russia may have the same affect on spaceflight today as it did during the Cold War.

SNC Announces New Partnership With Craig Technologies.

[Florida Today](#) (6/12, Dean) reported that Sierra Nevada Corp. (SNC) Space Systems announced that it has contracted with Craig Technologies to help prepare its Dream Chaser to launch on an uncrewed mission from the Kennedy Space Center as early as 2016. This would be ahead of potential manned flights to the ISS in 2017. Mark Sirangelo, vice president of SNC Space Systems, said that the work, which will be done at the former NASA Shuttle Logistics Depot, is an example of how Florida is "rebounding" from the end of the shuttle program. He also stressed that the Dream Chaser is not "solely" for NASA, as it is also being designed with other clients and projects in mind. Scott Colloredo, head of KSC's Center Planning and Development office, said, "It's very gratifying to see former shuttle assets, whether they're facilities or equipment or people, being transformed in support of new programs."

Weather Adds To Delays For LDSD Test Flight.

The [AP](#) (6/12, Chang) reported that after coming "tantalizingly close" to testing a new parachute system that would allow for heavier loads to land on Mars, Mark Adler of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory said that winds have prevented the tests for now. Adler added, "We're not giving up." Despite the delay in the tests, Ian Clark, project scientist, said the situation was "hardly even a hiccup. ... We're still very optimistic about the opportunities that we think we'll have in front of us to do this test."

[SPACE](#) (6/12, Pearlman) noted that "unusually poor wind" caused NASA to scrub Saturday's planned test flight, the last day of the testing window for the Low-Density Supersonic Decelerator (LDSD). Another attempt could be made at the end of the month at the earliest. Adler stressed, "In terms of the schedule and to maintain the total cost of the project, we really need to get this flight off this summer — if not, it would have to be delayed to next year."

Made In Space 3D Printer Cleared For Trip To ISS.

[SPACE](#) (6/12, Wall) reported that Made in Space's 3D printer passed the "final set of NASA checks" at the Marshall Space Flight Center, setting the stage for it to be launched to the ISS in August. Niki Werkheiser, NASA 3D Print project manager, said, "NASA was able to

provide key guidance on how to best comply with strenuous space certification, safety and operational requirements, and Made In Space excelled at incorporating that insight into the design. ... As a result, the hardware passed testing with flying colors." Once the system is installed at the ISS, it will print "21 test parts and tools" that will be tested for their "usability."

Extroverts May Not Be Good Members Of Mars Missions.

[LiveScience](#) (6/12, Rettner) reported that Suzanne Bell, an associate professor of psychology at DePaul University, led a team in a NASA-funded study that examined the "types of personalities" that would be most beneficial on a long mission to Mars. Researchers found that extroverts may become a "liability" on long-term missions because their "gregarious nature" could negatively impact other team members. While in general, extroverts are good team members, the scientists determined that the confined spaces involved in a trip to Mars may change the situation. According to the article, Bell noted that "more specific studies" on the subject would be needed, which could be done on the ISS.

New Images Reveal Details Of Near-Earth Asteroid That Recently Flew By Earth.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (6/12, Netburn) "Science Now" website reported that NASA released "some of the most detailed images of a near-Earth asteroid ever taken." The images were of an asteroid called "the beast" that flew by Earth last weekend. Lance Benner of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, noting that the asteroid had two lobes, said, "Quite a few that we've seen have looked like that. ... Maybe 1 out of 6." NASA used the Deep Space Network antenna at Goldstone and several other radio telescopes to obtain the new "detailed images," including the Arecibo radio telescope. Benner said, "By itself the Goldstone antenna can obtain images that show features as small as the width of a traffic lane on the highway. ... With Arecibo now able to receive our highest-resolution Goldstone signals, we can create a single system that improves the overall quality of the images."

NASA Expects OCO-2 Satellite Launch To Go Better Than Original OCO's.

The [Pasadena \(CA\) Star-News](#) (6/12, Poulisse) reported that NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory are expecting that "more reliable launch technology" will make the July 1 launch of the Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 (OCO-2), a "carbon copy" of the original OCO, more successful. The launch of the first mission aboard a Taurus rocket failed. Christian Frankenberg, an OCO-2 research scientist, said that because there was "nothing flawed" with the original OCO, NASA decided to save money by not implementing changes.

NASA Instruments Aboard Rosetta Spacecraft Begin Sending Back Data.

Emily Carney at [AmericaSpace](#) (6/12) wrote that NASA announced that its three instruments aboard the ESA's Rosetta mission are now sending back data. This is ahead of the spacecraft's August rendezvous with comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, which will culminate in the landing of the Philae probe on the comet's surface in November in order for it to drill for samples. Claudia Alexander, Rosetta project scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said, "We are happy to be seeing some real zeroes and ones coming down from our instruments, and cannot wait to figure out what they are telling us. ... We are delighted to play a part in such a historic mission of exploration."

Legislation and Policy

Huerta Wants Incentive Program To Accelerate NextGen.

[FierceGovernmentIT](#) (6/12, Walker) reported that in testimony to the House Small Business Committee on June 11, FAA Administrator Michael Huerta said that the Next Generation (NextGen) Air Transportation System program to modernize the U.S. air traffic control system could be accelerated if an incentive program was created to help pilots to equip aircraft with the necessary technology. However, Huerta noted, "We do, currently, lack one provision and that is the necessary appropriations authority in order to implement a partnership incentive program with a private investor ... To be clear we are not setting up a bureaucracy or office to do this. The application we have is from a private-lending entity that we would simply be providing the guarantee behind."

Also in the News

NASA Helps Celebrate World Cup.

Many articles tout the recent video showing ISS astronauts playing soccer aboard the station, such as [NBC Nightly News](#) (6/12, story 7, 2:20, Neely), which noted the astronauts are “celebrating its start.”

Other coverage includes the [International Business Times](#) (6/12, Poladian), which reported that NASA also has a Flickr page of images of the nations participating in the World Cup taken from space. Furthermore, ISS astronauts Alexander Gerst and Reid Wiseman tweeted more views of the World Cup taken from the ISS.

World Cup Ball Expected To Perform Better Than Last Time. Jesus Diaz at [Gizmodo](#) (6/12) wrote that NASA has explained why World Cup players this year should like the official ball, the Brazuca, much better than the one used four years ago, the Jabulani. NASA said that Adidas “worked with hundreds of players to develop the Brazuca football.” Rabi Mehta of the Ames Research Center, who tested the ball at the Fluid Mechanics Laboratory, said that even though the ball has only six panels, when compared to the previous ball, “it is more stable in flight and will handle more like a traditional 32-panel ball.”

Thursday's Lead Stories

- [DigitalGlobe Allowed To Sell Higher Resolution Satellite Imagery.](#)
- [Emirates Cancels Airbus Order.](#)
- [Galley Water Heater Determined To Be Source Of Smoke At ISS.](#)
- [Cantor's Primary Loss Has Potential Impact For Defense, Export-Import Bank.](#)
- [Glenn Is Recovering From Heart Surgery.](#)

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