

Re: New scope with 3.2 giga pixel camera

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On Thu, 25 May 2006 23:10:01 -0400, Davoud <star@xxxxxxx> wrote:

Not at all. They can't possibly build enough such telescopes to cover the amount of sky covered by amateur comet hunters. That 'scope will be sitting inactive in daylight one day while an amateur on the other side of the world is discovering a comet with a somewhat more modest instrument.

Just one of these can cover the entire sky accessible at a given latitude and time of year, and it can do it multiple times each night. While it is possible that a lone observer will get lucky and beat it to a discovery by a few hours, the odds are against it. Already, the vast majority of comets are discovered by automated instruments like Linear. That number will just increase as advanced survey instruments like this come on line (and more than one is planned).

On the plus side if I read
their site info correctly their raw data will be publically available.

Decent of them and all, but /their/ raw data is not /my/ raw data. /My/ raw data comes from /my/ /own/ humble little 'scopes. It may be out of focus, under/over exposed, poorly guided, what-have-you, but it is my data and I learn from it and try to do improve.

Of course, collecting and processing one's own data is part of the fun. And there will always be scientific and aesthetic opportunities for amateurs. But hunting for comets and asteroids from the backyard probably isn't going to be one of them for much longer.

I very much hope that it will be quite a few years before I am reduced to doing astronomy vicariously!

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I wouldn't say "reduced". It is just another aspect of astronomy, one that opens new doors for amateurs. Already, amateurs have discovered comets using SOHO data. And of course, many fine images have been produced that relied on collaboratively collected data. Such projects in no way conflict with entirely personal projects, carried out with your own data.

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