

Re: Physicist James Van Allen Dies at 91

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- *From:* fairwater@xxxxxxxxxx (Derek Lyons)
 - *Date:* Sun, 13 Aug 2006 06:36:52 GMT
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Dave Michelson <davem@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Derek Lyons wrote:

Apples and oranges are real too Henry. That doesn't mean comparisons between them are valid.

No, the comparison is entirely valid. What Henry didn't mention, but has alluded to elsewhere, is that the need for manned presence is entirely dependent on the environment.

No, the comparison **isn't** valid – because it's comparing two very different things, that had different levels of support, etc... etc.. Henry like the comparison – because it supports his bias. But he handwaves when challenged.

It's when the above assumptions break down – that is, when the environment is unpredictable, the sensors and actuators required to execute the mission are not as amenable to automation, and the craft will likely encounter surprises, that one will require some form of human presence to help sense, decide, or act.

OK, name such an environment. (With the caveat that it must be a real place – which knocks out every place we've sent robots to date.)

While teleoperation has made tremendous strides in recent years, it's still expensive and, the fact is, in many circumstances, it's still quite limited. This is particularly true when long propagation delays are encountered. Moreover, one can't overcome such limitations simply by throwing money at them. In spite of what you might have seen on television or the movies, it will require time and effort over a long haul to develop the appropriate theory and techniques.

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<yawn> Are we done handwaving yet?

As telepresence, in whatever form, improves, the argument for manned presence will diminish. For now, however, it's still not quite there.

Nope.

D.

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Touch--twice life. Eat. Drink. Laugh.

--Resolved: To be more temperate in my postings.

Oct 5th, 2004 JDL

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