

Re: Hypothetical massive spacecraft question

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In article <I2As1n.JIp@spsystems.net>,

Henry Spencer <henry@spsystems.net> wrote:

>Yes, in that more complex tasks, like changing instruments or repairing
>the spectrometer power supply, are pushing the state of the art in
>robotics really hard. A mission which can do even **some** of those jobs is
>going to be costly (\$1G+) and relatively high-risk as well.
>
>And this, mind you, is teleoperation with high-bandwidth communications
>and essentially zero speed-of-light lag.

Yes, but Hubble was designed to be serviced specifically by astronauts.
If it had been up to astronomers, they would not have designed Hubble to
be serviceable at all. If ordered to design Hubble to be serviceable,
they would designed it to be serviceable by robots. The preferred orbit
alone would have made it at least as difficult for astronauts to service
that kind of telescope as it will be for robots to service Hubble.

In the unhappy marriage between the Hubble telescope and the astronaut
program, the astronaut program long domineered Hubble, then finally it
jilted it.

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  /\  Greg Kuperberg (UC Davis)
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