

Re: Burt Rutans plans for a manned mission to Mars

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- *From:* Fred J. McCall <fmccall@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 16 May 2006 06:53:47 GMT
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Rand Simberg <simberg.interglobal@xxxxxxxxx> wrote:

:Fred J. McCall wrote:

:

:> :> :Fred J. McCall wrote:

:> :> :

:> :> :> :> Think about it. You have a \$5 million government grant for research.

:> :> :> :> Are you going to blow \$20k of it to send up a grad student with your

:> :> :> :> experiment or are you going to just send the experiment. Either have

:> :> :> :> someone already up there do it for you or else spend another \$5k to

:> :> :> :> make it automatic so it 'does itself' and sends you the results.

:> :> :> :

:> :> :> :How do you know it's only "another \$5K" to do, with any assurance as to

:> :> :> :reliability of such automation, when you know nothing of the nature of

:> :> :> :the experiment?

:> :> :>

:> :> :> How do you know it isn't

:> :> :

:> :> :I don't know. I wasn't the one making the claim. Why can't you answer

:> :> :the question?

:> :>

:> :> Why can't you, Rand?

:> :

:> :Once again, you evade the point. It's obvious why, and I suspect all

:> :can see that.

:>

:> :Once again, you evade the point. It's obvious why, and I suspect all

:> :can see that.

:

:Sorry, that one only works in the schoolyard as well.

You ought to know.

:> :I have made no claim in this matter, and hence have no need to support

:> :said claim, and hence have done no analysis, lacking such need. "So's

:> :your mother" works on the schoolground, sometimes, but not in a sci.*

:> :newsgroup.

:>

Re: Burt Rutans plans for a manned mission to Mars

:> So why are you trying it?

:

:I am not.

Sorry, that one only works in the schoolyard as well.

: If you disagree, support your argument.

:> Current hardware prices do a pretty good job of supporting mine.

:

:Ever heard of software? And what hardware are you referring to?

Yeah, dumbass, I've "heard of software". Just how much do you think standard device drivers cost? Whatever experiment you're doing, there is some instrument or indicator to show the outcome. Your grad student needs that. Wire it up to a few standard ASICs and a fairly dumb processor and you don't need the grad student to be there anymore.

We use graduate students because they are CHEAP, Rand. When you have to spend tens of thousands of dollars to have them do grunt work tending an experiment for a few days they're no longer cheap, particularly when they can be replaced by a few pounds of hardware.

Calculate the cost of putting up your graduate student plus their share of the vehicle used to carry them up plus life support for however long they're going to be up there. Even at \$250/kg it's a fair chunk of change.

:> :You made a claim that it can be done for \$5K. Back it up with data and

:> :math, or admit the obvious---that you pulled it out of your ass at the

:> :spur of the moment.

:>

:> Engage your brain, Rand. How much does a microprocessor and some

:> sensors cost? How much mass do you have to put aloft to put up a grad

:> student with life support (who still needs some sensors to tell what's

:> going on)?

:

:Still waiting for an argument to support your claim, and laughing at the

:contention that it's my responsibility to refute it, rather than yours

:to support it. You pulled a ludicrous number out of your ass when you

:didn't even know the nature of the experiment, or the requirements.

Go look at standard hardware prices, Rand. You can put together a general purpose computer for a few hundred dollars. Add some A/D boards hooked to your instruments (which you need in any case) and you're pretty much done. Hell, you probably don't even need to worry about A/D if you're using halfway modern instruments.

This ain't rocket science. Maybe that's why it's beyond you to understand.

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:We continue to await substantiation for your bold statement. I suspect
:we will wait in vain.

I suspect you will wait firmly up your own ass and locked, but that's
your problem.

—

"Ignorance is preferable to error, and he is less remote from the
truth who believes nothing than he who believes what is wrong."

— Thomas Jefferson

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