

Re: Back to the moon? When?

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On 9 Nov, 04:22, "Erich Kohl" <ek...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Hi everyone,

First and foremost, let me just say that I do believe that the United States was actually on the moon.

However, I am in a debate with someone who wants to know why it's taking us (or anyone else for that matter) so long to go back there. After all, if it was done once before with 1960's technology and know-how, what's causing the delay in the expedition this time?

My theory is that it must have something to do with politics and budget, combined with the fact that it might not be as high of a priority as it once was when the U.S. was in an overt space race with the Soviet Union.

Any enlightenment that can be offered will help, because I'm not sure how else to steer my argument.

Most of the other responses have been about the management of NASA. I think they have a point but there is one very fundamental reason. This is the fact of sophisticated computing and the advance of AI. If you can gain all the information you need by robotic probes what is the point of sending humans, risking lives etc etc?

Tremendous strides have been made in terms of walking robots. In the view of recent developments the Mars rovers look distinctly low tech. You will (in a short time) be able to stroll across Mars at a typical human walking speed. The robot will also be capable of making some pretty complex decisions, even without reference to Mission Control. Don't get me wrong, the Mars rovers have been extremely successful, it is just that technology is advancing.

As other correspondents have said it still takes time to build a rocket large enough to take humans to the Moon, test et etc. etc. If you want to find anything out about the Moon an agile robot, as described, can probably be built quicker and sent there in a much

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smaller rocket.

In the late 60s there was the "Cold War". This was a motivator, but not the sole one. At that date only humans could perform complex tasks. That is the essential difference.

In the 60s people thought of having telescopes on the Moon. Now we realize that fragmented telescopes floating in space are far easier to build and have far better performance.

Can robots process lunar material. Yes, of course they can. The idea of automatic processing in space is an interesting one. A fully closed system, of course, has a name. It is a Von Neumann machine.

Is there any point in manned spaceflight at all? Logically no. Everything can be done by robots at a far lower cost. The only point in manned spaceflight is if colonization is on the table. Personally I feel this to be a pipedream as far as the foreseeable future is concerned.

This is how I would steer my argument.

– Ian Parker

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