

Re: \$35 Million of Equipment Missing from NASA.....

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Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.space.shuttle/2005-04/msg00432.html>

- *From:* "Reunite Gondwanaland (Mary Shafer)" <reunite.gondwana@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 23 Apr 2005 09:19:39 -0700
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On Thu, 21 Apr 2005 20:43:12 -0500, Andrew <hal@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

> [http://tech.monstersandcritics.com/news/article_6442.php/\\$35M_of_Equipment_Missing_from_NASA](http://tech.monstersandcritics.com/news/article_6442.php/$35M_of_Equipment_Missing_from_NASA)
>
> Tech News
> \$35M of Equipment Missing from NASA
> By UPI
> Apr 21, 2005, 23:57 GMT
>
> WASHINGTON -- More than \$35 million worth of equipment is missing from
> the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, WTOP-AM in
> Washington, D.C.reported Thursday.

You know, \$35 million isn't all that much money, when you stop and think about it. That's how little NASA has misplaced in its entire property system. Does anyone know how much the agency has, total? That really has to be pure noise. I mean, that's less than the cost of one research airplane for the entire agency. When you consider that it's spread over ten field centers, a bunch of other establishments, and HQ, it's actually pretty good property control.

Also, that \$35 million is based on the price paid to buy the stuff new, completely ignoring that a lot of it has zero value. How much is a Mac 810C laptop worth?

When I retired, I discovered that they hadn't ever cleared my 810C off my property account, even though it had been surplused to a local grade school in about '99. Considering that I got it in about '93, I'm pretty sure it wasn't worth the purchase price in '02. Actually, I'm pretty sure it wasn't worth more than the salvage value by then.

> The report said documents obtained through the Freedom of Information
> Act showed NASA cannot account for thousands of items in its
> inventory. The items are missing from NASA's 10 space centers across
> the country as well as the headquarters in Washington, the report
> said.

We don't have ten space centers across the country, we have ten field

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centers. Four of the field centers are aeronautics centers. I'm not impressed with the article so far. We also have more than just the field centers and HQ.

It's just the usual property system nonsense. Slap a property tag on a computer and forget to take it off when it's surplused to a local school. Put the tag on the replaceable battery and "lose" the item when the battery is replaced. Miskey a serial number and the property tag will never match.

- > Those items include everything from lawn mowers to rocket
- > launchers."We don't consider anything an acceptable loss," NASA
- > spokesperson Robert Mirelson told WTOP.The missing items also include
- > laptops, micro computers and hard drives, which some fear may contain
- > sensitive information.But Mirelson said since NASA doesn't deal in
- > large quantities of proprietary information, it is unlikely that any
- > classified information has been lost or has fallen into wrong hands.

Not only that, but a lot of these either broke and were junked or were surplused to local schools after having the drives reformatted and new copies of the OS installed.

The sad part about this is that this exercise cost at least another \$35 million, probably more, but it was in worker's time, so it won't show up as a separate cost. There's no charge code for the thrash that goes with doing the property survey, but, believe me, it's very time-consuming and disruptive.

It would make a lot more sense to just assume a certain amount of loss and write it off regularly. That's not consonant with being guardians of the taxpayers' money, though, so thrashes like this will continue to happen and reports like this will continue to masquerade as news.

Mary

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• ***Follow-Ups:***

◆ ***Re: \$35 Million of Equipment Missing from NASA.....***

◇ *From:* Derek Lyons

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