

Diabologic: More Trash Talk

by Frank Dolinar

In mid-January, a 14 ton Russian probe originally intended for a trip to Mars failed to reach Earth orbit – from which it would have been sent on its path to the red planet – ultimately falling back to Earth over the south Pacific.

A chunk of technology of that size could ruin your day if it landed near you.

This problem is exacerbated with each launch by any spacefaring nation.

That's the bad news and it's not going to get better anytime soon.

However, the news isn't all bad.

On January 18, 2012, Michael Cooney reports the following in his blog for NetworkWorld

(<http://www.networkworld.com/community/blog/us-finally-backs-international-space-code-conduct>):

Perhaps it was the concern that the nearly 14 ton Russian Mars probe would land smack-dab on the White House or maybe they just came to their senses, the US State Department today said it would indeed work with the European Union and other countries to develop a formal space code of conduct.

Of particular concern is the growing amount of space trash and how the world can go about eliminating or controlling the problem. There is also the desire to keep space free of military weaponry.

Cooney also provides an excerpt of the text of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's statement about US cooperation with the EU to develop a formal space code of conduct. Finally!

The European Union has in fact had a code since 2008 which sets standards for minimizing accidents, improving security, and bolstering the ability for all countries to freely explore outer space.

NASA's website (http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/news/orbital_debris.html) describes the status of the orbital debris. Think of it as a stream of particles, of varying sizes, moving at 17,500 mph, acting like a continuous, high-speed, sand-blaster. Even small particles traveling at that speed are easily enough to damage a satellite or spacecraft.

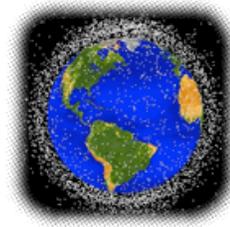
There is a lot more on this topic on the NASA site, further articles by Michael Cooney, and a large collection of sites available as live links from the two sites I've referenced above.

And as I noted before, until we solve this problem, humans have not demonstrated that we are smarter and have a better survival potential than the dinosaurs.

Progress will be slow, but the process has been started.

Now if we could just convince people here on Earth to learn something about ecology.

Where's Don Quixote when you need him?



More articles available at <http://www.nanosteps.net/Diabologic>