

SPACE EXPLORATION SYMPOSIUM (A3)
Moon Exploration – Part 1 (2A)

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A CURRENT OVERVIEW OF THE GOOGLE LUNAR X PRIZE

Abstract

The mission of the X PRIZE Foundation is to bring about radical breakthroughs for the benefit of humanity. In doing so, the organization has fostered innovative, high profile competitions, that motivate individuals, companies, and organizations across all boundaries to solve the grand challenges that are currently restricting humanity's progress. To accomplish such innovation, the organization has adopted the concept of Incentive Prizes. Incentive Prizes both act as a sort investment themselves and help to attract further outside investment, and are a proven instrument for innovation particularly when the path to a solution is unclear. The applicability of incentive prizes to the international aerospace community has been proven in the past, with the successful story of the Ansari X PRIZE for suborbital spaceflight and the ongoing Northrop Grumman Lunar Lander Challenge; and it is now being shown again in the largest international incentive prize to date, the Google Lunar X PRIZE. The Google Lunar X PRIZE, announced in September of 2007, offers a total of US\$30 Million in prizes to the first privately funded teams to successfully explore the surface of the Moon with a robotic spacecraft. This completion has helped spur 29 teams from 17 nations to put forth an effort at a commercial lunar venture; many of those teams are multinational in nature, meaning that team members are actively pursuing this prize in more than seventy nations. This paper and the accompanying presentation will give the latest update on the status of the Google Lunar X PRIZE and the opportunities within the competition, calling on the most current information on the competing teams that is cleared for public distribution