

## BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)

Encouragement of Government Purchasing from Commercial Providers: Models and Examples (1)

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## HISTORY HINTS AT A DECENTRALIZATION OF FUTURE SPACE ACTIVITIES

**Abstract**

To highlight opportunistic scenarios for future space activities, patterns from history about other technological endeavors are compared to the history of spaceflight. It appears that NASA's "Vision for Space Exploration" (2004-2010), is similar to the "pride before the fall" of incumbent leaders when faced with new challenges. In this pattern, the incumbent will falter and other service providers will rise in prominence and then change the character of the activity. In the case of space, major change agents include robotic instead of human activities, entrepreneurial joy rides, commercial launch services, space programs in other countries, and the Internet. Another influential factor is that Federal funding for the US space program has remained flat and insufficient to finish the "Von Braun visions" that defined the prior space era. Future scenarios, based on historic patterns, hint that space activities will become decentralized and more diverse, with several different types of organizations filling different facets of the overall possibilities. It is unclear if Federal space activities will become dominated by militaristic or planetary protection functions. This is uncertain because of the reactionary nature of setting such priorities and the unforeseeable events (war, doomsday asteroid, environmental shifts, etc.) that will shape those priorities. If the events lead to military dominance, it is likely that NASA will become a regulatory agency rather than a major participant. Within these scenarios, opportunities are identified for which there are not yet leading participants.