

HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT SYMPOSIUM (B3)
Commercial Human Spaceflight Programs (2)

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VIRGIN GALACTIC: COMMERCIAL SPACELINE

Abstract

Virgin Galactic, a privately funded company based in the USA, is on track to become the world's first commercial spaceline. Beginning in 2005, Virgin Galactic and prime contractor Scaled Composites—the company that built the Ansari XPRIZE-winning SpaceShipOne—began work on a new suborbital spaceflight system that consists of two vehicles: a carrier aircraft, called WhiteKnightTwo, and a suborbital spaceplane, called, SpaceShipTwo. In 2013, SpaceShipTwo became the first vehicle designed for commercial service to break the sound barrier since the Concorde; in 2014, SpaceShipTwo will reach space altitudes and begin commercial service. These vehicles are designed for frequent, affordable, and safe suborbital voyages, and customers ranging from tourists to researchers and educators to automated payloads. This presentation will provide status updates and a technical overview on SpaceShipTwo and Virgin Galactic's business, with a focus on relevant opportunities for the IAC audience.