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Author: Mr. PJ Blount  
LL.M. in Air and Space Law, United States, pjbblount@gmail.com

SPACE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND THE UNITED STATES DATA SHARING ENVIRONMENT

**Abstract**

Space traffic management has increasingly become an issue on the agenda of numerous national and international entities. As more actors participate in space activities, congestion will increase. As the IAA's Cosmic Study on Space Traffic Management made clear, effective space traffic management can only be achieved through a network of legal, policy, and technical mechanisms that facilitate a cooperative effort to maximize the sustainability of the space environment.

As a major space actor, the United States has a great deal to lose if the space environment degrades significantly. As a result, the United States is currently investigating mechanisms with which to manage its own space actors on-orbit activities. One of the central questions is how to manage space situational awareness data to maximize space sustainability without sacrificing national security. This paper will argue that a single federal agency should act as a clearinghouse for open source and freely available data. It will further argue that with proper statutory definition, such an agency would be a positive step towards both national security as well as international cooperation.

This paper will proceed by first giving a background of the SSA data sharing environment. It will then discuss the attributes of a properly defined data sharing regime. Finally, it will conclude by arguing that an open source data center protects national security and furthers the goal of developing an international governance system of space traffic management.