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

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UPDATE ON THE GOOGLE LUNAR XPRIZE IN 2015

Abstract

The Google Lunar XPRIZE, the largest international incentive based prize ever, is a US\$30 Million prize purse competition to engage citizens around the world and to foster a new space economy through low-cost, efficient access to the Moon. The first privately funded team to land on the Moon, move 500 meters and send back collections of high definition video and imagery, referred to as a Mooncast, will win the US\$20 Million Grand Prize. Additional money is available for a second team to meet the requirements or for a team to complete specific technical achievements on the lunar surface such as visiting a heritage site or surviving the lunar night. In early 2015 US\$5.25 Million in Milestone Prizes was awarded across five teams that demonstrated advanced progress towards flight readiness in the key challenge areas of landing, mobility and imaging. This paper examines the objectives, plans and implementation of the Milestone Prizes as well as the results and their expected impacts. The acceleration of technical and financial progress within the five Milestone Prize recipients as well as the other thirteen teams remaining in the competition helped secure an extension of the overall prize deadline to December 31st, 2016 and this paper and accompanying presentation highlights the progress and mission plans for some of the teams that are most likely to launch and make an attempt to claim the Grand Prize.