

IAA MULTILINGUAL ASTRONAUTICAL TERMINOLOGY SYMPOSIUM (E8)  
Multilingual Astronautical Terminology (1)

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME? REDEFINING "ASTRONAUT"

**Abstract**

Over 60 years ago, Yuri Gagarin traveled into space and altered the trajectory of humankind. Since the 1960s, the terms for those who dared to venture into space have changed and expanded. From "astronaut" to "cosmonaut" to "space tourist" and to "space flight participant," the terms have evolved over time and definitions have been blurred. While the specific term for human space explorers has varied by culture, new technological advancements combined with increased accessibility have complicated the definition of an "astronaut."

This paper argues that due to the dawn of the Commercial Space Age, the term "astronaut" fails to appropriately distinguish professional astronauts from private tourists. In addition, this paper argues that clarification of who qualifies as an "astronaut" is essential for carrying out State obligations and duties under Article V of the Outer Space Treaty and the Rescue and Return Agreement. This paper further argues that due to the importance of terminology during translation, the definition of an "astronaut" must be standardized.

This paper commences with a brief history of human space exploration and the development of the term "astronaut." The paper explores the evolution of the term over time and provides cultural context for the various terms used for humans in space. The paper goes on to analyze the legal obligations, duties, and rights of States and astronauts under the Outer Space Treaty and the Rescue and Return Agreement. This paper suggests that separate terms with distinct definitions for a professional, government sponsored astronaut and a private, space tourist must be established in order to avoid unnecessary confusion and potential harm.