

IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)  
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THERE IS NO SPACE LAW WITHOUT SPACE SCIENCE

**Abstract**

Our knowledge of outer space, in the beginning, did not have enough time to adjust to the fast pace that the space technologies were being developed at. No one, including the lawmakers of outer space law, had a distinct knowledge of how the outer space domain operated. This would certainly have an impact on how the regulations turned out to be. This paper will argue that, had the people of that period had the knowledge on outer space that we have today, the regulations would be different and perhaps, more clearly worded than it is now.

We are bound with the information we have while making decisions. From 1967 when the Outer Space Treaty was signed to this day, almost 60 years have passed and since then, there were many discoveries in astrophysics which made us understand more about how the universe was functioning and many developments in space technologies which showed us ways to make use of outer space which we would have never dreamed of in 1967. This also had an effect on how we view the law that is applied to the domain of outer space. The best example for this would probably be the regulations on the use of the orbits. As Near Earth Orbits are the ones with the highest velocity, for example, there are new regulations in place to better deal with debris that accumulated there as the debris makes the orbit a dangerous place for spacecraft. It was not considered during the writing of Outer Space Treaty that there would be many satellites and that they could crash into each other creating an almost eternal debris in space. If this was an issue accounted for at that time, it would have an effect on how the treaty turned out.

This paper aims to showcase the importance of technological knowledge in space lawmaking. It will first focus on the development years of space law then move on to considerable changes in the law in the years and their causes to show the effect science has on the law itself. Lastly, it will talk about what would have been different if the Outer Space Treaty were to be written with today's knowledge on how space functions.