

2011 SpaceOps News Poll Results Analysis

The following summary presents the results of the four polls posted in the “Journal & Communicator” during 2011

The author found it interesting to combine the results into a scenario expressing the admittedly “non-representative” results of the SpaceOps community feelings.

The four polls were posted duly in the four quarterly issues of the “Journal and Communicator”.

Poll-11 (Jan. 2011)

The Shuttle will be retired in 2011 - the AF X-37B resembling many features of the Shuttle system just completed a 7 months unmanned, robotic mission in orbit with an automated night landing at Vandenberg AFB. Was the Shuttle system *a successful, but very expensive dead-end development or ahead of its time with great potential in the future?*

60% predicted a great future for the Shuttle approach.

Quotation: “The X-37B is the ultimate Mulligan. If we could re-do the shuttle with modern technology and trim the fat, this is what it would look like unmanned. At the very least it's a chance to dry run some new technologies and learn from our mistakes”.

Poll-12 (April 2011)

Having the recent dramatic events at Fukushima in mind, would you think that the application of Space Techniques could positively influence the worldwide "nuclear reactor" discussions by proposing *the strict application of human spaceflight security standards, the deployment of autonomous robotics, the installation of solar power generators in orbit or He-3 Moon mining and implementation of commercial fusion reactors?*

A clear majority voted for “He-3 Moon minig” (66,67%).

Quotation: “Put the money into furthering progress rather than having to clean up future unavoidable incidents.”

Poll-13 (July 2011)

The Chinese Space Agency recently announced to build its own space station starting with the launch of the Tiangong-1 module in the second half of 2011, the station would be completed in 2020. Should the ISS partner Agencies try to achieve *logistic transport and docking compatibility, Operational compatibility for communications and life support, or Science cross support only? All or none?*

The majority voted for full compatibility “All” (75%).

Quotation: “An additional space station only makes sense if supported by international partners (see MIR experience)”

Poll-14 (Oct 2011)

The (U.K. magazine) ECONOMIST's article "The End of the Space Age" (July 2011) claims the commercial benefits of spaceflight will never leave the space between LEO and GEO. Human spaceflight beyond will return to fantasy: *I agree or I believe in commercial human spaceflight*

The majority of the votes, 50% agreed with the ECONOMIST, 25% believe in commercial human spaceflight.

As an in-official summary of the above results a programmatic recommendation could be formulated reflecting the insights of the space operations community:

Go back to the Shuttle-philosophy by expanding and “man-rating” the AF X-37B concept using this vehicle to stage automated missions from a new space station (GEO?) to exploit He-3 mining on the Moon – and do this in international cooperation.

Many thanks to all the readers of the “Journal & Communicator” and their comments. It was fun to compile this little summary and to look back over the past year. We hope you all will also participate in the future as actively as you have done so far and we will follow together with interest how the future human and robotic space exploration will develop.

Joachim J. Kehr (joachimkehr@opsjournal.org) Editor SpaceOps News (Dec. 2011)

