Book review

After the appearance of the 3rd edition of the German version of the "Handbook of Space Technology," edited and published in 2008 by Professors Ley, Wittmann and Hallmann of the University of Aachen and highly appreciated by students of space technologies as well as by technology-interested laypeople, the publishing company (HANSER Verlag) decided to put an English version on the market.

Having had the opportunity to read the 900-odd pages before its official publishing date (15th June 2009) in my judgment the translation was worth the effort!

To my knowledge this is the first complete and systematic compilation of the status of European space technology. It covers not only current projects but also describes the underlying technology, industrial and institutional research efforts, and future plans. Also included is a historical overview of the major projects executed by European national space agencies and ESA. The book has a slight European and German bias in project coverage, but many international co-operative projects are also discussed, in particular systems, scientific and operational aspects of the ISS.

The book provides a complete survey of all aspects of space exploration and utilization, and spacecraft and mission design including detailed system engineering with the theoretical background and the basic formulas. Modern project management aspects are described in detail based on ESA " best practices" and international standards, and issues of space law are covered.

Reading through the book I was a little reminded of Bill Bryson's successful "A Short History of Nearly Everything," just transposed to space. After 30 years in the European space business it enabled me to update my technical and scientific knowledge from the point I left university to the present – and gave me the opportunity to catch up on technical fields I never used during my carrier because of specialization - and I enjoyed it all because it was easy to understand thanks to the excellent text, practical diagrams explaining principles and many high quality photographs of real project applications and their implementation.

An extensive index makes orientation easy and lends itself to using the book as a "handbook," looking up things one currently needs or is curious about.

For space engineers another real benefit is the detailed reference section at the end of each topic, identifying peer reviewed papers and relevant academic/industrial publications.

Over 70 different authors – all acknowledged specialists in their respective fields – contributed to the book, thus providing "state-of-the-art" information on their subjects of expertise.

In summary this book will enhance the library of every "space-enthusiast," whether layperson, student, engineer, scientist or space operations specialist, and whether still on the job or retired from the space business but not too old to be interested in developments.

- **Hardcover:** 912 pages
- **Publisher:** Wiley (June 15, 2009)
- **Language:** English
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- **ISBN-13:** 978-0470697399

http://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Space-Technology-Aerospace-PEP/dp/0470697393/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1242753739&sr=8-1