

Nasa's spacefaring: all to no avail?

[Science](#), [Astronomy](#)



NASA is an acronym for the Nation Aeronautics and Space Administration. It was created on the first of October in 1958 by Dwight D. Eisenhower. The primary goal of this organization was simply to see if it was possible to fly to outer space and to see what there was to offer. NASA tested this objective during Project Mercury. Project Mercury had six manned spacecrafts orbiting earth, they all had to same task, which was to test how the average human acted when it was not in the atmosphere. (Loff, 2015). Sarah Loff is a senior web editor in NASA Headquarters Office of Communications.

While those missions and many others were deemed successful since they met all their obligations, there were also countless, detrimental failures that costed billions of dollars and the lives of many astronauts. Very commonly, space ships would malfunction and ended up exploding while in the air. This killed all members on board and destroyed the equipment and evidence onboard the spacecraft. This happened with the famous Challenger and Columbia space shuttles; they burst into flames and disintegrated upon launch and reentry, respectively. (Diane Vaughan, 1997). Diane Vaughan is an author who has written several books and received awards for them like the Guggenheim Fellowship for Social Science. Although these mistakes can pose as a learning experience, spacefaring is not worth the effort since it wastes the government's money that could have been used for another cause. It is not worth the countless lives lost because of an error in a complex calculation. NASA and the citizens of the United States do not gain any knowledge of what the missions were initially meant for if they unexpectedly fail. However, without mathematicians, scientists, engineers and more types of laborers working for incredibly long hours everyday, we

would not have made progress towards discovery in space. According to the Journal of Infometrics, the people who put their efforts into space research usually work hours past their shifts, sometimes they work all the way to the next day. (Lian Peng, Chuanli Wang, Xianbing Wang, Xianwen Wang , Zhi Wang, Shenmeng Xu, Chunbo Zhang, 2012).

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The amount of manned voyages conducted has dramatically decreased in the more recent past. There was approximately twenty-two manned voyages in the 1960s, which gradually decreased to sixteen missions since 2007. (A history of manned space missions; 2012; Robert A. Braeunig, 2016).

Braeunig is the creator of Rocket & Space Technology, or a website focusing on the technology in the missions. He has an education in the field of engineering, but does not work for NASA. So, one can conclude that there has been less of a demand for manned voyages. Some argue that it costs too much money for little to no avail; it is and was simply not worth it. Others believe that we do not have the technology needed yet. NASA can use robots rather than risking the lives of people to do the same tasks. The situations presented of money and technology sparks curiosity on why NASA has not been launching humans into space. NASA has always been funded by the government. But, they have had a drop in support over the years; the United States citizens do not want as much of their tax dollars to go towards NASA any longer. As a result, the government cut the administration's budget

severely. This in turn leads to research being found slower since NASA cannot afford to make the technology needed to advance in spacefaring. The debate of whether or not the government should continue funding NASA's spacefaring is highly talked about among today's society.

In the mid 1950s, the United States announced its plan to launch the world's first artificial satellite in the next eighteen months. U. S. S. R., also known as former Russia, responded by launching Sputnik 1, in October of 1957, before the United States had even finished creating their satellite. This marks the beginning of the event called the Space Race. It consisted of technological tension between multiple countries such as the United States, Russia, China and Japan, although the competition was mostly between the United States and Russia. It lasted from 1957 to 1975. The Soviet Union was always ahead of the United States in the early years of the race. They launched the first satellite into space, had the first lunar flyby, orbited and photographed the moon first, landed rovers on the moon and lastly, accomplished getting the first human into space in 1961.

Soon, by 1969, NASA achieved what is known to be the greatest achievement in today's world. NASA successfully landed Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins on the moon. This put the United States in a vast lead. As the United States sent ten more astronauts to the moon throughout the next three years, former Russia became unmotivated and shifted their goals towards space stations. As stated above, the race came to an end in 1975 when the United States and the former Russia conducted the Apollo-Soyuz project. Both countries docked in Earth's orbit, sharing gifts and

a meal. The final handshake goodbye represents a new era of peace between Russia and the United States.

Although the Space Race led to an incredible amount of growth in our knowledge of space, it also had many negativities. One example is that it was extremely expensive. According to Green Garage the Eco Friendly Blog, the amount of money it takes for the government to fund one voyage varies, but it costs us roughly \$18.7 billion to fund space exploration projects in one fiscal year. By 2011, NASA has used \$195 billion from the government, where the money is obtained from the people of the United States. Our space program prohibits other significant programs to rise since they do not have enough money to do so. For instance, many citizens complain that the United States education system is weak, and that it needs remodelling. However, we cannot spontaneously grow money, it must be divided amongst the branches government already is funding. So, one must take money from one area, NASA, to fund another, education.

Going to outer space can also harm the astronauts directly. HZE, or high energy ionic cosmic ray's presence can cause cancer in humans and animals, especially mammals. It can also lead to mutations in chromosomes and embryos. Not to mention the skin of astronauts becomes thinner, along with them suffering muscular and skeletal dystrophy. (Green Garage Blog). It is not morally right to send people and animals to space if their health is at risk. These can impact the astronauts throughout the rest of their lives or even kill them prematurely.

Moving on, scientists, especially in the astronomical industry, often work long past the length of their scheduled shifts. They even work until the next morning. This is because they are so determined to find accurate solutions as quickly as possible. But, working for long periods of time can be detrimental to their health. Side effects of working for too long include a lack of sleep and the presence of anxiety and depression. These things cause a fluctuation in hormones that can increase the risk of cancers, mostly commonly breast cancer. So, it is unethical to allow these people to work for so long since these factors can affect someone for the rest of their life.

A solution to the problem of it being morally wrong to send astronauts to space is to send machines instead. Today, the advanced technology we have can complete the same tasks that humans do and more. They can orbit a planet, repair broken equipment, travel across bodies and can even fly out of the solar system. It also costs less money since robots do not need vital supplies like food, water, space shuttles, astronaut suits or oxygen tanks. They also are safer, since no human will be harmed in the case of an accident. When one puts NASA into perspective, the amount of manned space flights slowly has decreased over the years. So, one can conclude that they are slowly being pushed towards robots, satellites, telescopes and rovers to receive information, not humans just like the rest of the United States. As previously said, funding NASA doesn't let other areas that need attention financially grow, like education. NASA is seen as an extra type of corporation by the people, making it not as important to the people and the government to put their hard earned money towards. With no funding, comes no spacefaring. Also, manned voyages are currently not in demand

because there is no technology advanced enough to complete the missions that NASA would like. Next, not only does going into space not beneficial nowadays, it also harms the astronauts. For instance, going into space causes their muscles to deteriorate making them weaker as they return from space. The scientists at work on Earth are also negatively affected by being overworked, leading to mental and physical health problems. All in all, it is not ideal for the government to fund NASA's spacefaring.