



# Keeping Up with Space Science in 2014 and 2015 at the Museum of Science, Boston



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## Introduction

The Museum of Science, Boston hosts over 1.5 million visitors each year and has been part of the Boston community since 1830. While many aspects of museums are static, the Current Science & Technology Department develops and delivers up-to-the-minute live presentations and special events covering breaking news from all disciplines of science and technology. What follows is a summary of our coverage of space science in 2014 and a look ahead to 2015.



The Rosetta Mission's target comet, 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko

## Live Mission Coverage

Current Science & Technology has had great success covering high-profile missions such as Space Shuttle launches, with hundreds of guests watching live. This year we reimagined live launch coverage with the Soyuz TMA-14M mission in September that carried three astronauts to the International Space Station. The program covered the retirement of the Space Shuttle, an overview of ISS operations, and concluded with live coverage of the successful liftoff of the Soyuz spacecraft.

In addition to crewed mission coverage, the Museum of Science also hosted a viewing party for the unmanned test flight of the Orion crew capsule. The Exploration Flight Test 1 in December was a great success both in terms of a near-flawless mission and our event reaching hundreds of people with live mission coverage, hands-on activities, and updates on other human spaceflight stories.

## 2014: Year of the Comet

2014 had many newsworthy comet-related stories, and our coverage of each one waxed as it approached in time. The presentation *Comet Watch 2014* began with an explanation of what comets are, where they are located, and why we should study them. The second part detailed the comet-related events happening in 2014. The dynamic nature of the show allowed each presentation to include the latest breaking images and data from each story.

**Comet ISON** The biggest comet story at the beginning of 2014 was the breakup of Comet ISON. The dramatic time-lapse video of the comet's final solar approach was useful in explaining why it did not survive its close encounter with the sun.

**Rosetta Mission** After ESA's Rosetta Mission had its successful comet encounter, new images were available every day. This gave us a unique opportunity to update the presentation to reflect the latest developments, including the exciting lander touchdown.

**Comet Siding Spring** The close pass of Mars by comet C/2013 A1 Siding Spring in October 2014 offered an opportunity to talk about protecting our robotic explorers from cosmic mishaps. We explained how each of the seven spacecraft (including rovers and orbiters) would take precautions to ensure their continued operation as well as gather data from the comet.



The Gordon Current Science & Technology Center features multiple daily presentations in addition to live event coverage and guest scientist lectures.

## Guest Scientists

We often host guest researchers who give short lectures to museum guests on their field of expertise. Visiting scientists included Richard French (Cassini Radio Science Team Leader), who told the story of ten years of up-close science in the Saturn system, and Michael Hecht (Principal Investigator, MOXIE), who gave an overview of the Mars 2020 rover. We also interview scientists for our podcast, available through our museum website or iTunes.



Live coverage of the December 2014 NASA Orion Exploration Flight Test 1

## Looking Ahead to 2015

If 2014 could be considered the Year of the Comet, then 2015 can easily be looked forward to as the Year of the Dwarf Planet. The Dawn Mission's March arrival at the asteroid Ceres will answer some of our oldest questions about the formation of the Solar System, and it will be covered on our stage throughout its science phase.

In July, New Horizons completes its decade-long journey to the outer Solar System, giving us our first-ever up-close look at Pluto. There is the potential for a live event at the museum to see images from the mission as they arrive after their 9-hour transit time.

In addition to covering the crewed launches to the International Space Station, we plan on also covering cargo launches (such as SpaceX's Dragon capsule) and live look-ins at events such as spacewalks. Our department would love to meet your outreach needs; please leave your card to contact us!

## Contact

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