

Would you help fund a space telescope?

Kasey Panetta, Managing Editor



For most people, thinking about space isn't a daily activity. Sure, there are random bursts of excitement like the [Mars Rover landing](#) [1] or Canadian superstar astronaut [Chris Hadfield](#) [2] and of course there are people—both amateur and professional—who make space their life, but in general, it's not something we think about too much.

But every so often something so interesting and so exciting pops onto the general public's radar, that everyone is suddenly talking about it.

The [ARKYD, created by Planetary Resources](#) [3], a company focused on mining asteroids, is a "Space Telescope for Everyone." The company is hoping that the general public will support their efforts to create a telescope on the condition that regular people are allowed to control and learn from the device.

Let's talk telescope

The name [ARKYD](#) [4] (pronounced ahrk-kid) was inspired by Arakyd Industries, a supplier of exploration droids from the Star Wars universe. The team for this particular telescope had members that had been involved in building every U.S. lander sent to Mars in the past 15 years including the Opportunity, Spirit, and Curiosity.

But enough about that, let's look at some of the specs:

Primary Optic: 200 mm aperture, f/4 primary optic

Resolving capability: ~ 1 arcsecond

Detection capability: to visual magnitude 19

Would you help fund a space telescope?

Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

5 MP+ image sensor

Wavelength range: 200 nm to 1100 nm

Available filters: UV bandpass (< 300 nm), B, V, R, OIII, H α , 1 μ m bandpass, Luminescence (Clear)

The telescope also features deployable solar panels, a communications antennae, an onboard screen—to display images—and an arm with a camera that can capture both the telescope itself and the background.

What will it be used for?

Aside from the very exciting potential of gathering information about dangerous asteroids or take a look at our solar systems and other galaxies, the interesting thing about the telescope is the team is offering donors the chance to send pictures and videos of themselves into space. They're also allowing some donors to "control" where the camera on the telescope is pointed and take a set amount of pictures. Since it is the closest most of us will ever get to being in space, that is a pretty exciting prospect.

There are also plans to create a mobile app to allow for a countdown to launch, a way to track the telescope and an avenue for updates and alerts about the project.

Why should you care?

I think Douglas Kind, President of the Museum of Flight in Seattle captured the spirit of the project best in the video saying, "If I could have a young person here and say 'Would you like to take a picture of mars with a telescope that's in space now? Would you like to see what you can find that nobody else has found before?' That gets someone involved, interested, and excited about what they can do, not about what somebody else does."

In a world of rapid defunding and privatization, public accessibility to space has never been more limited. A full immersion experience is the greatest form of education available and this technology allows schools and students to experience that. A few of the Kickstarter rewards give the donor the ability to choose a school, university, or museum to bequeath (depending on the amount):

- + 10 Main Optic Observations to be directed by the teacher and students
- + 10 (Digital) Space Selfies for the students to take
- + Educational Poster describing the technology that makes the ARKYD work.
- + Special Limited Edition Mission Poster Signed by the engineering team
- + Access to a curriculum and tutorial developed by the team at Planetary Resources, in collaboration with educators

Would you help fund a space telescope?

Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

+ 1-Year Membership to Planetary Society

Crowd funded space equipment? Is that a thing?

I've written about [Kickstarter](#) [5] before — and how it's a platform designed to vet projects before bad ideas become bad realities. This project is the perfect Kickstarter idea. Yes, it's beneficial to the company, but it's also rewarding for the scientific community in general because it raises awareness and gets the general public involved and excited about the telescope.

I think that excitement is most evident in some of the backers of the project which include The Museum of Flight, The Planetary society (with support from CEO Bill Nye, The Science Guy), Virgin Galactic, and number of well-known observatories and museums.

They were looking to raise 1 million dollars, but as of press time, they'd blown past that goal to \$1, 097, 557 with 12, 907 backers.

If you're interested in checking out the project, visit the Kickstarter page, [here](#) [3]. It's available in multiple languages...including Klingon.

Source URL (retrieved on 07/28/2014 - 10:12pm):

<http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2013/06/would-you-help-fund-space-telescope>

Links:

[1] <http://www.ecnmag.com/articles/2012/09/how-space-hater-becomes-space-junki>

[2] <http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2013/05/playing-games-space>

[3] <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1458134548/arkyd-a-space-telescope-for-everyone-0>

[4] <http://www.planetaryresources.com/2012/07/the-arkyd-name-origin-and-you/>

[5] <http://www.ecnmag.com/articles/2012/06/kickstarter-helpful-website-or-project-killer>