

NASA's Near-Earth Object Office Activities

Donald K. Yeomans, JPL/Caltech

Asteroids and comets that can approach the Earth's orbit are termed near-Earth objects (NEOs) and a NASA goal is to discover, in 10 years, 90% of the population of NEOs larger than one kilometer. While the search efforts are not yet efficient enough to reach this goal, the recent discovery rate is accelerating. The Near-Earth Object Office was established to help coordinate the search for NEOs and to provide information on future close Earth approaches. An automatic computer script is run daily to download recent observations for NEOs and automatically update their orbits so that future Earth close approaches and Earth impact probabilities can be computed. Daily updates to the close Earth approach tables are provided over our web site (<http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov>). This web site provides an interactive ephemeris service for all NEOs as well as information on the various NEO search teams and the 7 missions that will investigate 13 comets and asteroids in the next 12 years. In addition, there is information explaining why NEOs are scientifically important and why they are, at the same time, potential threats to Earth and the most easily accessible raw materials for the future colonization of the solar system.