The Status of the Cassini Mission

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The Cassini spacecraft was launched in October, 1997. Since then it has been on an interplanetary trajectory toward Saturn. It arrives and goes into Saturnian orbit on July 1, 2004. En route, Cassini has flown by Venus, Earth, and Jupiter. Each of these events yielded new scientific results. The Cassini flyby of Jupiter provided, with Galileo, the first-ever conjunction of two spacecraft at an outer planet. This was a unique opportunity to investigate the giant planet's magnetic field and the properties of the Jovian system. It provided a focused period for intensive observations of Jupiter. We have examples of scientific cooperation with investigators using Galileo, Hubble, Chandra, and ground-based observatories. The results achieved at Jupiter were no less than stunning (Nature 415, 965-1005, February 28, 2002). Recent results and the current status of the spacecraft and mission will be discussed.

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