

A journey in space and time: Status of the Dawn mission

Russell, C.T.; Raymond, C.A.; Patel, K.; Rayman, M.D.

University of California, Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics, Los Angeles, USA
(ctrussell@igpp.ucla.edu)

Dawn is a Discovery-class NASA mission to explore the two most massive asteroids, 4 Vesta and 1 Ceres, by rendezvousing with and orbiting them for 7 and 5 months respectively. The objective of Dawn is to journey in space and time to understand the conditions and processes at the beginning of the solar system. Dawn carries a German framing camera, an Italian visible and IR mapping spectrometer, a gamma ray and neutron spectrometer and a radiometric tracking system for gravity studies. Originally scheduled for launch in June 2007, its launch will now be in September 2007 after a series of incidents in the preparations of the launch vehicle and in the acquisition of downrange telemetry.