

Near Earth Asteroids Accessible to Human Exploration in 2020-2035

Nathan Strange and Damon Landau

Jet Propulsion Laboratory / California Institute of Technology



Chit Hong Yam, Francesco Biscani, and Dario Izzo

ESA Advanced Concepts Team, ESTEC

Introduction

On April 15th, at the Kennedy Space Center, President Obama announced new goals for NASA's human spaceflight activities. One of the most exciting challenges that he gave to NASA was a human journey to an asteroid in 2025 as part of a path to human Mars missions in the 2030s.

This poster presents the results from a trajectory search for candidate asteroids for human exploration missions in 2020-2035. This search was conducted using independent methodologies by astrodynamics researchers at the NASA/JPL and ESA/ESTEC research centers.

Not much is known about the physical properties of many of these asteroids, and it is hoped that the asteroids identified in this search can be targets for both ground-based and space-based observations that will help to identify the most scientifically interesting targets for future human missions.

Search Parameters

Launch Years: 2020-2035
Maximum Launch V-Infinity: 5.5 km/s
Maximum Return V-Infinity: 5.5 km/s
Maximum Deep Space ΔV: 5 km/s
Minimum Stay Time: 30 days

ACT (ESTEC) Methodology

We optimize the total DV of the whole mission, which includes the DV to rendezvous with the asteroid, the DV to depart the asteroid, the first DSM on the Earth-Asteroid leg, the second DSM on the Asteroid-Earth leg, and any excess launch/arrival V-inf (more than 5.5 km/s).

We employ a parallel global optimization strategy to search for optimal round trip trajectories to asteroids taken from the Minor Planet Center's MPCORB database. A preliminary filter is put on the asteroid semi-major axis so that only orbits with a $a < 1.8$ AU are considered (~4000 asteroids). In total ~16000 global optimization problems needed to be solved. Our search strategy employs as main algorithms are Differential Evolution and Nelder-Mead. In particular, eight populations of trajectories are optimized by Differential Evolution with migration allowed along a ring topology (that is, individual can migrate only between adjacent islands). After each migration, the best individual is sent for optimization to an instance of Nelder-Mead. The different optimizers are all running asynchronously. The optimization is left running for ten seconds for each target asteroid in an eight processor architecture. At the end, the best individual across all populations (generally the one coming from Nelder-Mead) is stored and a new optimization (next asteroid in the database) is started. All the code is available in open source as part of the PaGMO SourceForge project. The code used for the computations is included as one of the example files contained in the main distribution and named hm_2_asteroids.cpp

JPL Methodology

We conducted an exhaustive search of return trajectories across ~10,000 asteroids classified as Near Earth Objects (NEOs). This is done using a series of Lambert fits to conduct a broad, non-optimal search for trajectories. These trajectories were then filtered for the lowest ΔV cases within a flight time bin (e.g. 200 days or 400 days). These cases were then optimized using Sequential Quadratic Programming method to solve the constrained optimization problem.

About the ACT

The advanced concepts team (ACT) is part of the European Space Agency's Future Studies Office (DG-PF). The team is essentially a channel for the study of technologies and ideas that are of strategic importance in the long term planning of the Agency. Placed at corporate level, it serves the function of a think tank providing decision makers the support of a highly multidisciplinary research group.

JPL Acknowledgment

Work described in this poster was carried out at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

≤ 200 Day Missions

Asteroid	Flight Time [d]	Total Deep Space DV [km/s]	Launch Date	Launch Vinf [km/s]	Launch C3 [km ² /s ²]	Arrival Date	Departure Date	Stay Time [d]	Earth Return Date	Earth Arrival Vinf [km/s]	Entry Speed [km/s]	Absolute Magnitude	Albedo	Diameter Est. [km]	Known Diameter [km]	Rotational Period [hr]	Spectral Type (SMASST)	Spectral Type (Tholen)	Orbit SMA [AU]	Orbit Ecc.	Orbit Inc. [deg]	MOID [AU]	Orbit Condition Code
2007 UN12	200	2.087	23-Jun-20	1.70	2.9	25-Sep-20	15-Oct-20	20	3-May-21	2.19	11.29	28.7	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	4.00
2006 RH120	200	2.182	23-Jun-20	0.70	0.0	23-Jun-20	23-Jun-20	0	23-Jun-20	0.70	11.16	28.6	0.103	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	4.00
2008 EA9	200	2.694	27-Oct-31	2.04	4.1	12-Feb-32	3-Mar-32	20	19-Sep-32	2.78	11.42	27.7	0.010	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5.00
2008 HU4	200	2.908	26-Jan-24	0.24	0.1	15-Apr-24	9-May-24	20	25-Nov-24	0.17	11.07	28.2	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	4.00
2005 UV64	200	3.093	3-Apr-20	4.24	16.3	5-Jul-20	21-Sep-20	20	10-Jul-20	3.99	11.77	27.4	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	6.00
2006 UQ216	200	3.120	29-Jul-28	2.81	7.9	2-Dec-28	22-Dec-28	20	10-Jul-29	4.20	11.84	27.3	0.012	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	6.00
2004 QA22	200	3.235	23-Apr-30	2.59	6.7	17-Aug-30	6-Sep-30	20	25-Mar-31	3.93	11.75	27.9	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	5.00
2007 VVR3	200	3.300	22-Apr-26	5.50	30.3	15-Jul-26	4-Aug-26	20	20-Feb-27	5.79	12.49	24.8	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	4.00
2000 SG344	200	3.366	29-Mar-28	1.02	1.6	13-Jun-28	3-Jul-28	20	19-Jun-29	1.56	11.18	28.8	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	3.00
1999 RA32	197	3.489	7-Mar-25	5.68	32.3	29-May-25	18-Jun-25	20	28-Dec-25	5.50	12.36	20.9	0.226	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.226	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2.00
2006 DQ14	200	3.493	3-Aug-30	3.57	12.7	25-Oct-30	14-Nov-30	20	2-Jun-31	3.77	11.70	27.0	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	6.00
2008 VQ2	200	3.554	5-Oct-27	0.85	2.5	15-Jan-27	5-Feb-27	20	15-Jan-27	0.85	11.26	26.9	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	6.00
1999 AO10	199	3.659	12-Aug-25	1.06	1.1	30-Dec-25	19-Jan-26	20	2-Aug-26	2.66	11.39	23.9	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	4.00
2009 DB43	200	3.755	2-Jul-30	3.40	11.6	4-Nov-30	24-Nov-30	20	12-Jun-31	4.96	12.13	26.5	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	7.00
2008 UD2	200	3.877	2-Apr-33	3.10	9.7	9-Jun-33	2-May-33	20	15-Jan-34	3.28	11.58	27.2	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	7.00
2008 UD95	200	3.976	1-Apr-30	3.05	9.3	19-Jul-30	8-Aug-30	20	24-Feb-31	3.54	11.62	25.7	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	7.00
2007 XB23	200	3.997	21-Nov-24	2.17	4.7	26-Dec-24	15-Jan-25	20	3-Aug-25	4.31	11.88	27.1	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	6.00
2009 OS5	200	4.012	3-Feb-20	1.18	1.4	23-May-20	12-Jun-20	20	29-Dec-20	2.11	11.27	23.6	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	5.00
2001 GP2	200	4.020	13-Mar-20	1.37	1.9	31-Aug-20	20-Sep-20	20	16-Dec-20	2.63	11.38	28.9	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	6.00
2006 UB17	200	4.029	19-May-34	1.10	1.2	30-Aug-34	19-Sep-34	20	7-Apr-35	0.95	11.11	26.3	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	7.00
2008 ON10	195	4.067	29-Jul-23	3.99	15.9	28-Sep-23	18-Oct-23	20	26-Apr-24	4.28	11.87	24.6	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	6.00
2007 BB	200	4.080	10-Jun-33	4.40	19.4	25-Sep-33	15-Oct-33	20	9-May-34	5.00	12.15	27.8	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	6.00
2008 CM74	200	4.087	21-Feb-33	4.01	16.1	13-Mar-33	3-Jun-33	21	19-Dec-33	4.94	12.13	28.0	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	6.00
2000 LG6	200	4.178	27-Dec-28	2.04	4.2	17-Apr-29	7-May-29	20	23-Nov-29	3.56	11.63	29.0	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	6.00
2001 OC34	200	4.200	13-Dec-31	4.78	22.9	16-Dec-31	7-Jan-32	20	23-Sep-32	4.59	11.99	27.8	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	6.00
2008 LD	200	4.265	8-May-24	3.65	13.3	6-Jul-24	26-Jul-24	20	11-Feb-25	3.51	11.61	28.9	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5.00
2001 QJ142	200	4.288	30-Mar-24	1.63	2.7	5-Jul-24	25-Jul-24	20	10-Feb-25	1.90	11.23	23.4	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	6.00
2003 WT153	200	4.295	27-Jun-20	2.10	3.4	15-Apr-20	8-May-20	20	16-Sep-20	2.10	11.41	28.4	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	6.00
2008 JL24	200	4.314	1-Jan-26	0.56	0.3	10-Apr-26	30-Apr-26	20	16-Nov-26	1.67	11.20	29.6	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	3.00
2008 DL4	200	4.342	7-Oct-33	1.62	2.6	10-Sep-33	2-Mar-34	20	18-Sep-34	3.23	11.53	26.8	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	6.00
2000 SZ162	200	4.366	13-Mar-26	3.26	10.6	24-Jul-26	13-Aug-26	20	1-Mar-27	4.66	12.01	27.1	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	7.00
2000 TS60	200	4.380	19-Apr-28	0.28	0.1	15-Sep-28	4-Sep-28	20	15-Mar-29	0.81	11.49	28.1	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	6.00
2007 HL4	187	4.453	31-Oct-32	3.27	10.7	18-Feb-33	10-Mar-33	20	19-Aug-33	3.58	11.64	24.2	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	7.00
2006 SY5	198	4.597	23-Aug-22	4.73	22.4	9-Dec-22	29-Dec-22	20	11-Jul-23	5.50	12.36	22.1	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	3.00
1999 SF10	199	4.602	17-Jun-24	0.94	1.6	15-Sep-24	10-Nov-24	20	21-Oct-25	2.69	11.20	29.4	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	6.00
1999 VX25	199	4.703	27-Apr-34	0.67	0.5	14-Sep-34	4-Oct-34	20	15-Apr-35	2.63	11.38	26.7	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	6.00
1998 KG3	192	4.866	11-Oct-32	3.07	9.4	8-Jan-33	28-Jan-33	20	30-Jul-33	2.92	11.45	22.1	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	7.00
2006 XW	200	4.992	17-May-21	4.20	17.6	11-Jul-21	20-Aug-21	20	8-Mar-22	4.34	11.89	23.7	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	6.00

≤ 400 Day Missions

Asteroid	Flight Time [d]	Total Deep Space DV [km/s]	Launch Date	Launch Vinf [km/s]	Launch C3 [km ² /s ²]	Arrival Date	Departure Date	Stay Time [d]	Earth Return Date	Earth Arrival Vinf [km/s]	Entry Speed [km/s]	Absolute Magnitude	Albedo	Diameter Est. [km]	Known Diameter [km]	Rotational Period [hr]	Spectral Type (SMASST)	Spectral Type (Tholen)	Orbit SMA [AU]	Orbit Ecc.	Orbit Inc. [deg]	MOID [AU]	Orbit Condition Code
2000 SG344	300	0.964	6-Apr-28	1.08	1.2	6-Sep-28	26-Sep-28	20	23-Jul-29	1.54	11.18	24.8	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	3.00
2000 SG344	400	0.998	31-Jan-28	0.31	0.1	5-Aug-28	26-Aug-28	21	29-Sep-29	1.03	11.12	24.8	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	3.00
2006 RH120	300	1.192	29-Mar-28	0.28	0.1	23-Jun-28	23-Jun-28	0	23-Jun-28	0.70	11.16	28.6	0.103	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.103	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	4.00
2008 UA202	300	1.233	24-Dec-28	2.23	5.0	30-May-29	19-Jun-29	20	15-Apr-30	2.76	11.41	29.4	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	6.00
2001 GP2	400	1.244	9-Sep-20	1.52	2.3	2-Dec-20	22-Dec-20	20	26-Jan-22	3.55	11.63	26.9	0.014										