

Press Release

Airbus and Xenesis Sign Payload Contract for New Bartolomeo Platform on the International Space Station

Xenesis to space-test optical communication terminal aboard Airbus facility on ISS

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Houston, 05 May 2020 – Airbus and Xenesis have signed a contract for a payload slot on the International Space Station (ISS) Bartolomeo platform for the demonstration of their Xen-Hub optical communication space terminal.

The Xen-Hub is a greater than 10 gigabyte per second optical communications terminal. The terminal was enabled with a technology transfer from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory and is designed to increase satellite communications bandwidth.

The Airbus-built Bartolomeo platform offers external science and payload hosting capabilities on the ISS, providing new opportunities for science and research. The platform, launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, was installed on the ISS Columbus module on 1st April. Bartolomeo was developed by Airbus using its own funds, is an investment of Airbus and is operated in a partnership with ESA, NASA and CASIS.

“Xenesis” payload will be one of the first from the U.S. to be installed on the Bartolomeo platform and is an opportunity to demonstrate the viability of their optical communication space terminal for multiple customers,” said Debra Facktor, Head of Airbus U.S. Space Systems. “In addition, Airbus and the ISS National Lab are inviting additional users for research and test opportunities on the Bartolomeo platform.”

The low orbit of the ISS offers a stable location for proving ultra-low latency communications, in excess of 10Gbs. Bartolomeo is located in an optimal position on the ISS, offering direct views of Earth from approximately 240 miles altitude, allowing Xen-Hub to maximize its pass time and increase the throughput of data.

“We are pleased to be partnered with Airbus for our optical communications test mission on Bartolomeo,” said Jeff Glattstein, President of Xenesis. “The Airbus platform gives us the utmost confidence for a successful endeavor, allowing Xenesis to focus on our technology development while Airbus provides the guidance, support and infrastructure necessary to host the system on the ISS.”

Bartolomeo is a cost effective and time efficient alternative to small satellites and cubesats for any kind of mission. It can accommodate up to 12 different experiment modules, supplying them with power and providing data transmission to Earth.

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Bartolomeo is suitable for many types of experiments, including Earth observation, environmental and climate research, robotics, material sciences and astrophysics. It provides sought-after payload-hosting capabilities for customers and researchers to test space technologies, verify a new space business approach, conduct microgravity experiments or enter into in-space manufacturing endeavors.

Launch opportunities are available on every servicing mission to the ISS, which occur about every three months. The payload accommodation allows slots for a wide range of payload mass, from 11 to 990 pounds. Airbus will provide optical data downlink capacity of one to two terabytes per day.

Payloads can be prepared and ready to operate in approximately 12 months. Payload sizes, interfaces, preparation before launch and integration process are largely standardized. This reduces lead times and saves costs significantly compared to traditional mission costs.

Airbus offers this easy access to space as an all-in-one mission service. This includes technical support in preparing the payload; launch and installation; operations and data transfer; and an optional return to Earth.

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About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2019 it generated revenues of € 70 billion and employed a workforce of around 135,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

About Xenesis

Xenesis is an Optical Communications Company with industry leading technology developed by JPL and patented by NASA, and Xenesis holds an exclusive license from NASA for this IP. The Xen-Hub operates at >10GB/s and is easily adapted to a variety of satellite architectures, and is software configurable to any standard. Xenesis addresses the high throughput and low latency needs for Satellite operators by providing a flight proven technology with a deep heritage, and a very seasoned team with outstanding and successful pedigree. See The Light...and Connect.

Media contacts

Quentin HUNSTAD
Ralph HEINRICH

Quentin.hunstad@airbus.com
ralph.heinrich@airbus.com

+1 703 269 8770
+49 (0)171 30 49 751

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