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An Overview of Electric Propulsion Activities at NASA

By John W. Dunning

BiblioGov. Paperback. Book Condition: New. This item is printed on demand. Paperback. 22 pages. Dimensions: 9.7in. x 7.4in. x 0.1in. This paper provides an overview of NASA's activities in the area of electric propulsion with an emphasis on project directions, recent progress, and a view of future project directions. The goals of the electric propulsion programs are to develop key technologies to enable new and ambitious science missions and to transfer these technologies to industry.

Activities include the development of gridded ion thruster technology, Hall thruster technology, pulsed plasma thruster technology, and very high power electric propulsion technology, as well as systems technology that supports practical implementation of these advanced concepts. The performance of clusters of ion and Hall thrusters is being revisited. Mission analyses, based on science requirements and preliminary mission specifications, guide the technology projects and introduce mission planners to new capabilities. Significant in-house activity, with strong industrial/academia participation via contracts and grants, is maintained to address these development efforts. NASA has initiated a program covering nuclear powered spacecraft that includes both reactor and radioisotope power sources. This has provided an impetus to investigate higher power and higher specific impulse thruster systems. NASA continues to work closely with...

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-- Prof. Dan Windler MD