

'Exciting' project may not get to space

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The upcoming launch of a laboratory to the International Space Station has been clouded by NASA's failure to deliver a device to study the universe's origins.

The Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer was developed by 500 physicists during a 12-year period. It may remain on Earth because only 10 more space shuttle missions are scheduled and cargo space is limited, The Washington Post reported.

The European-built Columbus laboratory, to be shipped next week, will provide workspace for experiments in weightless conditions once it is operating on the space station.

Martin Zell, in charge of research for the European Space Agency, has been involved with Columbus and the AMS.

"We are very excited about the launch of Columbus and believe this will be a major step forward for the international space station," he said.

But Zell said the AMS would be "the most visible, possibly the most exciting project on the space station."

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