

Watch construction of Nasa's new Mars rover live on the web

October 21 2010



The Curiosity Cam live video feed allows the public to watch technicians assemble and test NASA's next Mars rover in a clean room at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. Image credit NASA/JPL-CalTech

(PhysOrg.com) -- A newly installed webcam is giving the public an opportunity to watch technicians assemble and test the next NASA Mars rover, one of the most technologically challenging interplanetary missions ever designed.

NASA's Mars Science Laboratory, also known as the [Curiosity rover](#), is in a clean room at the agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. The webcam, affectionately called "Curiosity Cam," provides the video feed, without audio, from a viewing gallery above the clean room floor. The video will be supplemented periodically by live Web chats

featuring Curiosity team members answering questions about the rover. Currently, work in the clean room begins at 8 a.m. PDT Monday through Friday.

Clean room technicians have been busy adding new avionics and instruments to the rover. Beginning Friday, viewers will see technicians carefully add the rover's suspension system and its six wheels. On Monday, Oct. 25, the rover's 7-foot-long [robotic arm](#) will be carefully lifted and attached to the front of the rover.

Continuous live video of rover construction is available [online](#). The camera shows a portion of the clean room that is typically active; but the rover, spacecraft components and technicians may move out of view as work shifts to other areas of the room. When activity takes place in other testing facilities around JPL, the clean room may be empty. The camera may also be turned off periodically for maintenance or technical issues.

Months of assembly and testing remain before the car-sized rover is ready for launch from Cape Canaveral, Fla. The rover and spacecraft components will ship to NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida in spring of 2011. The launch will occur between Nov. 25 and Dec. 18, 2011. Curiosity will arrive on Mars in August 2012.

Curiosity is engineered to drive longer distances over rougher terrain than previous rovers with a science payload 10 times the mass of instruments on NASA's Spirit and Opportunity. The new, large rover will investigate whether the landing region has had environments favorable for supporting microbial life and for preserving evidence about whether life existed on the Red Planet.

More information: For information and news about Curiosity, visit: mars.jpl.nasa.gov/msl/

Provided by JPL/NASA

Citation: Watch construction of Nasa's new Mars rover live on the web (2010, October 21)
retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-nasa-mars-rover-web.html>

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