Now there's an app for NASA's Swift Observatory

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This is the NASA Swift app. A new, free iPhone application gives you the details of all the latest gamma-ray-burst discoveries that NASA's Swift observatory is making throughout the universe. The app also allows users to track, in real time, the location of Swift as it orbits the Earth, to see where Swift is pointed right now, and to view an informative gallery of beautiful images obtained by the Swift satellite. http://www.science.psu.edu/news-and-events/2011-news/Kinnea10-2011 Credit: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

Interested in the latest discoveries of NASA's Swift satellite? The Swift team has released a free iPhone application that gives you the details of all the latest gamma-ray-burst discoveries that the Swift observatory is making throughout the universe. The app also allows users to track, in real time, the location of Swift as it orbits the Earth, to see where Swift is pointed right now, and to view an informative gallery of beautiful images obtained by the Swift satellite.

"We developed the iPhone app to be fun and informative, but also to be useful for both amateur and professional astronomers," said Jamie Kennea, science operations team leader for NASA's Swift Mission and a researcher at Penn State University. Kennea and Patrizia Caraveo, the director of the Italian Institute of Space Astrophysics in Milano, conceived of this project and presented it in a talk during the "Time Domain Astrophysics" conference at Clemson University on Monday, 24 October 2011.

The new smartphone app for the iPhone, iPod, and iPad allows anyone to obtain up-to-date information on gamma-ray-burst discoveries in real time and to see the same data that scientists are using to better understand gamma-ray bursts. The app even will send a message to your phone when a gamma-ray burst is discovered. So whether you are an amateur astronomer or a professional, you can point your telescope in the direction of these bursts to hunt for the light from the most powerful explosions in the universe.

The iPhone app was developed at the Swift Mission Operations Center near the Penn State University Park campus in Pennsylvania U.S.A. by a student from the University of Trento in Italy, Giacomo Saccardo. The "NASA Swift" app has four different features:

- An interactive map of the world, showing Swift's current location in its orbit.
- A list and a map showing the recently discovered gamma-ray-bursts, including optical images and data from all three of Swift's detector.
- A real-time, updated guide to Swift's current observations;
- A gallery of Swift-related images with full descriptions, compiled by Swift scientists.

You can download the Swift app from Apple's App Store by using the search term "NASA Swift" or by going to the URL http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nasa-swift/id465669299

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