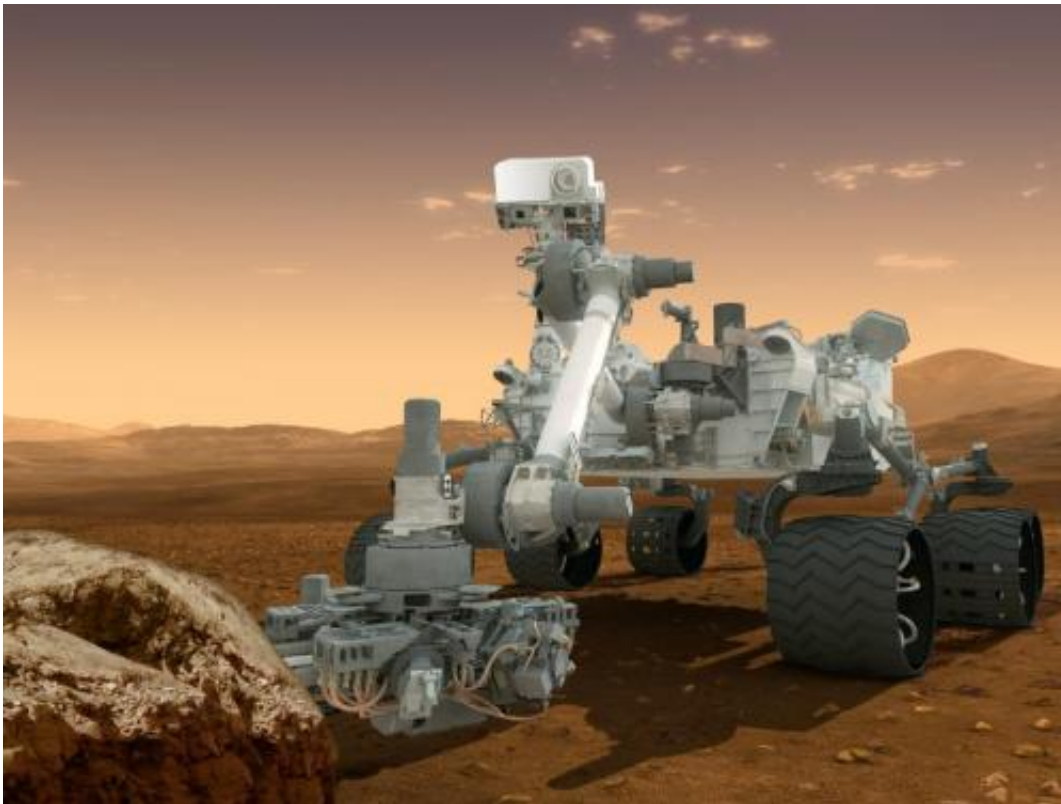


Curiosity rover checks in on Mars using Foursquare

October 3 2012, by Courtney O'connor



This artist's concept features NASA's Mars Science Laboratory Curiosity rover, a mobile robot for investigating Mars' past or present ability to sustain microbial life. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(Phys.org)—NASA's Curiosity Mars rover checked in on Mars Wednesday using the mobile application Foursquare. This marks the first check-in on another planet. Users on Foursquare can keep up with

Curiosity as the rover checks in at key locations and posts photos and tips, all while exploring the Red Planet.

"NASA is using Foursquare as a tool to share the rover's new locations while exploring Mars," said David Weaver, associate administrator for communications at NASA Headquarters in Washington. "This will help to involve the public with the mission and give them a sense of the rover's travels through Gale Crater."

After landing in Gale Crater last month, Curiosity began a planned 23-month mission that includes some of Mars' most intriguing scientific destinations. Curiosity is roving toward [Mount Sharp](#), a mountain about 3 miles (5 kilometers) tall. The rover is conducting experiments along the way, seeking clues in the rocks and soil that would indicate whether Mars ever was capable of supporting [microbial life](#). It is taking and sharing pictures of the trip.

Back here on Earth, Foursquare users will be able to earn a Curiosity-themed badge on the social [media platform](#) for check-ins at locations that generate an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Available late this year, this new badge will encourage Foursquare users to explore science centers, laboratories and museums that pique scientific curiosity.

NASA has been on Foursquare since 2010 through a [strategic partnership](#) with the platform. This partnership, launched with astronaut Doug Wheelock's first-ever check-in from the [International Space Station](#), has allowed users to connect with NASA and enabled them to explore the universe and re-discover Earth.

The partnership launched the NASA Explorer badge for Foursquare users, encouraging them to explore NASA-related locations across the country. It also included the launch of a NASA Foursquare page, where

the agency provides official tips and information about the nation's space program.

The Jet Propulsion Laboratory manages the Mars Science Laboratory mission and its Curiosity rover for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. The rover was designed, developed and assembled at JPL, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

More information: To find out more about Mars Curiosity and NASA on Foursquare, visit: www.foursquare.com/MarsCuriosity and www.foursquare.com/NASA

Provided by NASA

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