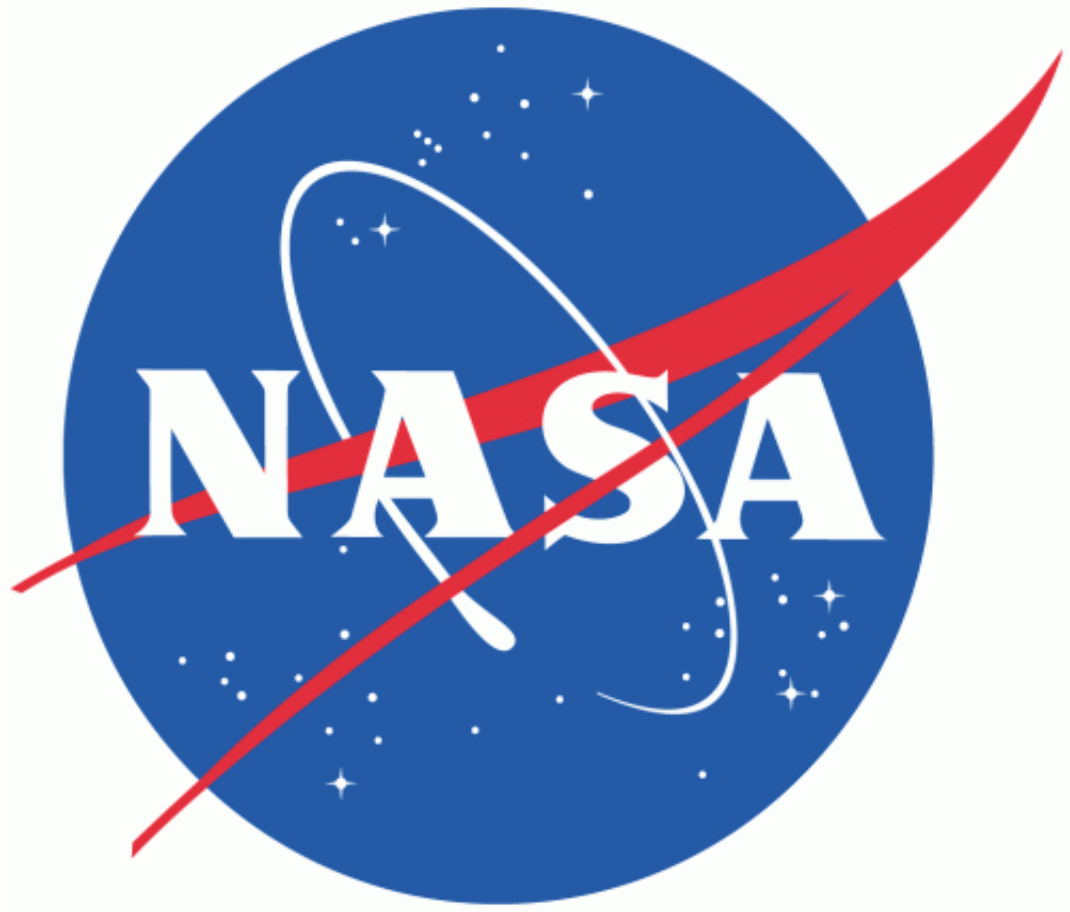
NASA set to debut online software catalog April 10

April 5 2014, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org) —Get ready for a stimulating software catalog. You may want to write NASA CAT. next to Thursday, April 10, on your calendar.

That is the day that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is to make available to the public, at no cost, more than 1,000 codes with its release of a new online software catalog. The catalog, a master list organized into 15 categories, is intended for industry, academia, other government agencies, and general public. The catalog covers technology topics ranging from project management systems, design tools, data handling, image processing, solutions for life support functions, aeronautics, structural analysis, and robotic and autonomous systems. NASA said the codes represent NASA's best solutions to an array of complex mission requirements.

"Software is an increasingly important element of the agency's intellectual asset portfolio," said Jim Adams, deputy chief technologist with NASA. "It makes up about one-third of its reported inventions each year." With this month's release of the software catalog, he said, the software becomes widely available to the public. (Each NASA code was evaluated, however, for access restrictions and designated for a specific type of release, ranging from codes open to all U.S. citizens to codes restricted to use by other federal agencies.)

The catalog nonetheless fits into NASA's ongoing efforts to transfer more NASA technologies to American industry and U.S. consumers As *Wired*'s Robert McMillan wrote on Friday, "This NASA software catalog will list more than 1,000 projects, and it will show you how to actually obtain the code you want. The idea to help hackers and entrepreneurs push these ideas in new directions—and help them dream up new ideas."

Adams said, "By making NASA resources more accessible and usable by the public, we are encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Our technology transfer program is an important part of bringing the benefit of space exploration back to Earth for the benefit of all people."

Daniel Lockney, technology transfer program executive with NASA's

Office of the Chief Technologist, underscored this down-to-earth mission side of NASA in 2012 in an article in *Innovation* in 2012. "NASA really is the gold standard for technology transfer," he then said. "The money spent on research and development doesn't just go up into space; it comes down to earth in the form of some very practical and tangible results." Lockney said they know the investment in technology creates jobs, boosts the economy and provides benefits in addition to the mission focus. "Our technologies have done everything from make hospitals more efficient to making transportation safer and greener. The technology reaches into all aspects about our lives."

McMillan reported that "Within a few weeks of publishing the list, NASA says, it will also offer a searchable database of projects, and then, by next year, it will host the actual software code in its own online repository, a kind of GitHub for astronauts."

More information: www.nasa.gov/press/2014/april/ …-earth/#.Uz8h1_lP4hY