

Robot arm will install new earth-facing cameras on the space station

October 1 2014, by Elizabeth Howell



Canadarm2 is backdropped by Earth and the HTV-3 vehicle in this shot from the International Space Station. Credit: NASA

Canada's robotic Canadarm2 will install the next two Urthecast cameras on the International Space Station, removing the need for astronauts to go outside to do the work themselves, the company announced today.

Urthecast plans to place two Earth-facing cameras on the United States side of the station (on Node 3) to add to the two they already have on the Russian Zvezda module. Technical problems with the cameras forced the Russians to do an extra spacewalk to complete the work earlier this year.

The company plans to make images and streaming video of its imagery available to the general public and interested paying customers. One of the Russian-side cameras is facing technical difficulties with pointing, but more equipment is scheduled to blast up to fix it on a Soyuz flight this fall. The camera should be ready by December, Urthecast said.

The U.S.-side cameras will be an improvement over the Russian-side ones, as they will be able to take imagery in radar and multiple other wavelengths simultaneously – a first in space, the company said.

The suite will include a medium-resolution camera perpetually pointing down, and a high-resolution video [camera](#) that can focus on a target ahead of the station and swivel for 60 to 90 seconds to keep it in the frame as the station moves.

Urthecast made the announcement at the International Astronautical Congress, which is being held in Toronto this week. The company is working in association with NanoRacks, which is shipping the payload to the station and handling the installation.



The International Space Station seen by a departing space shuttle in 2009. Credit: NASA

Once the cameras are working fully, the company expects revenues will flow from customers willing to pay for the imagery. So far they have been funded by private investment and also by a \$57 million initial public offering on the Toronto Stock Exchange in 2013.

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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