

NASA makes an EPIC update to website for daily earth pics

February 3 2017, by Rob Gutro



An EPIC Natural Color image (left) and an Enhanced Color image (right) of the Earth on January 26, 2017. Credit: NASA/NOAA

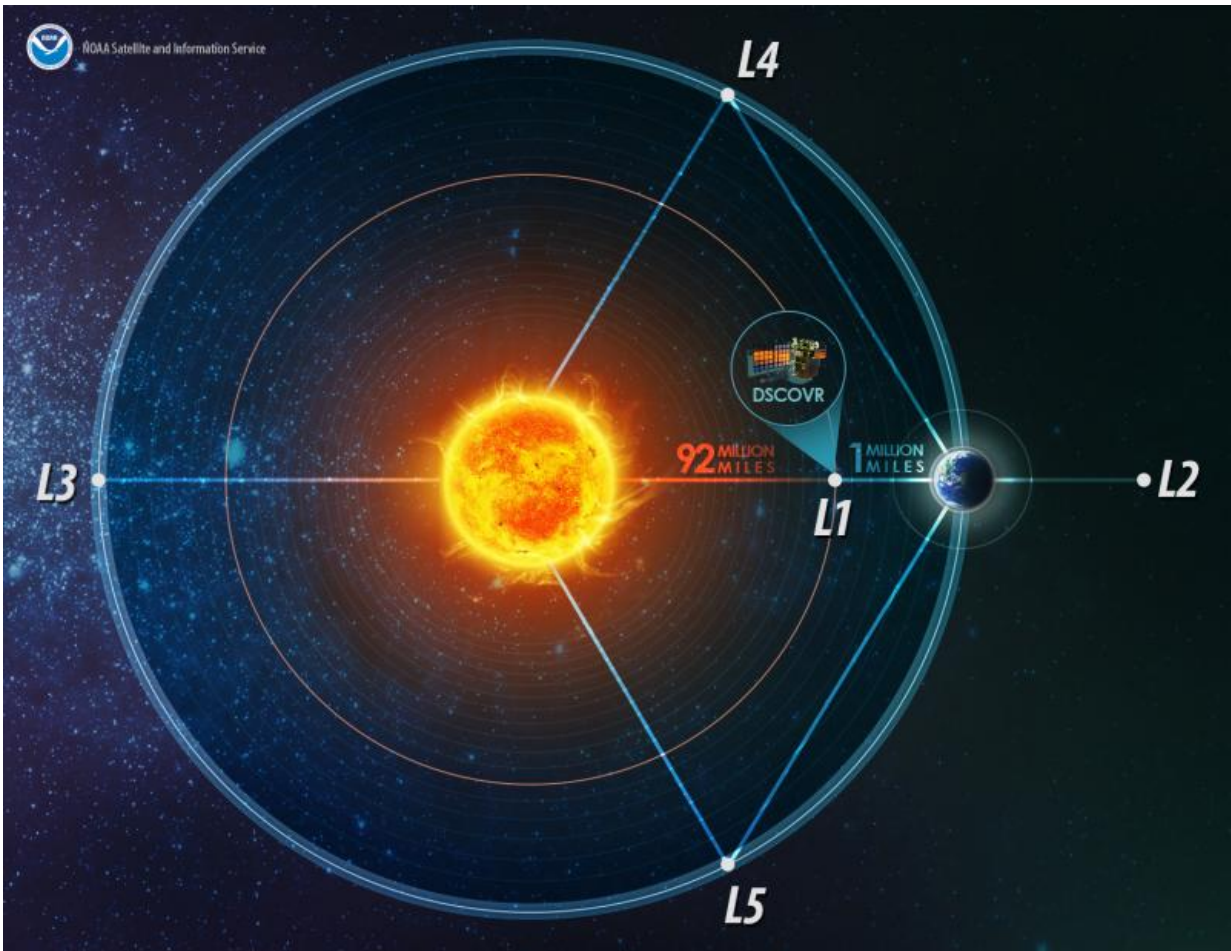
NASA has upgraded its website that provides daily views of the Earth from one million miles away. NASA's Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera (EPIC) camera imagery website was recently updated allowing the public to choose natural or enhanced color images of the Earth and even zoom into an area on the globe.

"The 'enhanced' color [images](#) make land features more visible," said Sasha Marshak, DSCOVR deputy project scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland. "This is achieved by enhancing low intensity pixel values. The effect of atmospheric haze caused by air molecular scattering and attenuation of solar light by ozone has been also removed."

EPIC is a four megapixel CCD camera and telescope aboard NOAA's DSCOVR satellite that takes 10 narrow-band spectral images of the entire sunlit face of Earth from 317 to 780 nanometers. EPIC takes a new picture approximately every hour from mid-April to mid-October or every two hours for the rest of the year. EPIC images reveal how the planet would look to human eyes, capturing the ever-changing motion of clouds and weather systems and the fixed features of Earth such as deserts, forests, and the distinct blues of different seas.

The website was initially launched in 2015 after NOAA's Deep Space Climate Observatory or DSCOVR satellite achieved orbit almost one million miles from Earth. DSCOVR is a NOAA Earth observation and space weather satellite launched by Space-X on a Falcon 9 launch vehicle on February 11, 2015 from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The website upgrade includes a new magnification feature where users get a zoomed-in look at an area under their cursor. Magnified areas appear in a circular box on screen.



NOAA's DSCOVR satellite, positioned between the sun and Earth, is able to maintain a constant view of the sun and sun-lit side of Earth. This location is called Lagrange point 1. (Illustration is not to scale). Credit: NOAA

A new "Image Information" box on the left-hand side of the website allows for downloading the image on screen (by clicking on a down arrow). There is also information that provides the EPIC camera's distance to Earth and to the sun. The Sun-Earth-Vehicle angle is also listed.

A map of the Earth in the "Image Information" box shows the user

which side of the Earth is being shown by the EPIC image.

Below the "Image Information" section is a new "Slideshow controls" section. Users can click on the right facing arrow (>) to move through all of the latest day's images. By clicking on the arrow, the viewer will see the images update as the Earth rotates, providing views of the whole planet.

The most recent images are always on the front of the webpage. To find images for a specific date, users can click on the date in the "slideshow controls" box, and a drop down calendar will allow selection of images from another date (other than the latest date).

A "filmstrip" of Earth images lines the bottom of the page. Those are the images taken by EPIC for that day that are selected by clicking the arrows or the thumbnails.

The website also contains galleries of images and animations from specific events like moon transits. The basic information about the EPIC camera is in the "EPIC" section, and information about the imagery is found in the "About" section. A link to NOAA's site is in the "DSCOVr" section.

Provided by NASA

Citation: NASA makes an EPIC update to website for daily earth pics (2017, February 3)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-02-nasa-epic-website-daily-earth.html>

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