

A Report: SmallSat Conference 2015

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1. Abstract :

The 29th SmallSat Conference, hosted by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) and the Utah State University (USU), was held in Logan, Utah, USA, from August 10 to 13, 2015. About 1,800 people from 35 countries attended, with exhibitions by 130 companies and/or organizations, and 10 universities. This is considered one of the largest conferences related to small satellites. The main theme of this conference was "ALL SYSTEMS GO! - CRITICAL PIECES FOR MISSION SUCCESS". About 30 people attended from Japan, with 3 companies and 2 universities presenting exhibitions.



Impressions :

At last year's conference, the main discussion was about the commercialization of smaller satellites due to the reason that the main theme was "The Commerce of Small Satellites". It was anticipated that there would be lively discussion on this subject, however, there were no presentations or exhibitions related to the commercialization of smaller satellites. It seems that these commercialization activities are being carried out in the background. A private company named "SkyBox" made their presentation on earth observations in their booth, however, this was presented by interns. Other companies such as "OneWeb" and "Space-X" did not make any presentations or exhibitions regarding mega-constellations constructed by smaller

satellites. During last year's conference, it was easy to collect business and technical information regarding these subjects. Based on the fact that it has been difficult to collect the aforementioned information during this year's conference, it seems that smaller satellite businesses will become a reality in the near future. On the other hand, some military departments and universities made some remarkable presentations.

Another subject weighing on our minds is that there were few presentations regarding the operation and construction of constellations consisting of smaller satellites. Most of the presentations and the exhibitions were related to the technologies of a small satellite itself. Manufacturing and launching a small satellite can be done at lower cost. However, it is necessary to construct a constellation with a number of smaller satellites in order to start a commercial venture employing small satellites. It seems almost impossible for a university or startup company to establish this kind of construction by themselves. The total cost of this construction will be enormous, making it a business that requires a lot of investment. At this point in time, everyone recognizes that a system using smaller satellites does not necessarily mean that it can be done at lower cost.

Presentations & Lectures :

omitted below

Exhibitions :

omitted below

Other Miscellaneous Comments



The SmalSat conference is held in a small town named Logan, Utah State, which is about 82 miles north of Salt Lake City. As of the 2010 census, the population was around 48,000. It is difficult to make a hotel reservation during the conference period, as over 2,000 people gather in this small town. I tried to make hotel reservations last May, however all hotels in Logan were fully booked. I unwillingly had to stay in a motel located in Brigham City. Anybody unable to drive a car has to use a taxi or shuttle bus every day to get to the site. Next year's conference will be held in Logan, Utah, from August 6 to 11. I have already made a reservation at a hotel in Logan for this conference, as soon as I arrived back in Japan.

For further discussion, please contact to;



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