

Astronaut Activates Commercial Add-on to U.S. National Laboratory onboard International Space Station

Astronaut Shannon Walker has successfully activated a new turnkey research system on the U.S. National Lab aboard International Space Station.

Developed by the entrepreneurial company NanoRacks LLC, the research platforms are designed for use by commercial customers and students within the pressurized space station environment. Each platform allows up to 16 customer payloads to effortlessly plug into a standard USB connector, thus providing power and data connectivity in one simple operation. It is the ultimate plug and play.

“Everything went great this morning,” explained NanoRacks Managing Director Jeffrey Manber. “It’s amazing that we are up and running within ten months of signing the agreement with NASA. Our thanks to the whole NASA team.”

The company is working with NASA under a Space Act Agreement for the use of the ISS National Lab on the International Space Station. To date the funds have come exclusively from the commercial partners.

The NanoRacks platform is located in US ExPRESS Rack in the Japanese Experiment Module on the International Space Station. Each Nanoracks Facility is approximately 17.34 x 9.97 x 20.3 inches and weighs approximately 12 lbs.

Each customer payload follows a form factor that is approximately 4 x 4 x 4 inches and weighs 2.2 lbs. NanoRacks has already signed multiple customers, including a high school in San Jose California and a pharmaceutical research project. Currently, there are three experiments operating on the ISS. These payloads will return to Earth on STS-133 and STS-134 Space Shuttles.

The NanoRacks team includes Kentucky Space, a nonprofit enterprise which manages the payload integration and oversees the Mission Control room at the University of Kentucky. “Space must be accessible to a new generation of users, and the simplicity and low cost of the payloads does just that” said Kris Kimel of Kentucky Space.

And with transportation from both American and non-American ISS partners, we finally have the long-awaited new chapter in our utilization of outer space” concludes Manber.

For further information, visit the web site at www.nanoracks.us