



Civic Lab: Who Owns Space?

Future outer space travel is not just about science. As more privately owned companies venture outside Earth's orbit, who determines the rules and regulations of what goes up into outer space? Explore these resources on current policies and treaties between space-faring nations and projections of commercial space travel.

Conversation Questions

1. What are the ethical considerations for space use or travel?
2. Who should regulate commercial space travel?
3. Would you take a family vacation to the moon?

Key Definitions (from Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary)

- *Outer space* – the region beyond the Earth's atmosphere in which there are stars and planets
- *Treaty* – an official agreement that is made between two or more countries or groups
- *Commercial* - related to or used in the buying and selling of goods and services

Core Resources

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

<https://goo.gl/HJbi3g>

This office is responsible for “promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space” by implementing international space law and providing a space object registry. Its ad hoc committee, COPUOS, governs global use of space.

International Institute of Space Law (IISL)

<https://iislweb.org/about-the-iisl/introduction/>

IISL, a nongovernmental organization, promotes “the further development of space law and the expansion of the rule of law in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.”





Outer Space Treaty

<https://goo.gl/7ZyYHL>

This 1966 UN treaty outlines expectations for outer space exploration and use by countries across the globe.

Listen

The Laws that Govern Outer Space with Dale Stephens and Pete Hays

<https://goo.gl/5PSX7Y>

This episode of *Intercross the Podcast* discusses how outer space use by companies and the military affects our daily lives and explores the laws governing outer space use.

Read

Who Owns the Moon?

<https://www.space.com/33440-space-law.html>

This article provides an overview of how countries have agreed to use outer space resources.

The Politics of Space Exploration

<https://goo.gl/NuEvxF>

This piece discusses the political motivations of space exploration and why the United States is not a frontrunner in the next space race.

Who Owns Outer Space?

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-34324443>

This article argues that there is a pressing need to reevaluate laws and policies governing outer space exploration and use.

Explore Further

What companies are venturing into space? Learn more about four companies taking business into outer space.

- Blue Origin, www.blueorigin.com
- Moon Express, www.moonexpress.com
- Planetary Resources, www.planetaryresources.com
- SpaceX, www.spacex.com

