



Suborbital: Industry at the Edge of Space (Springer Praxis Books)

Erik Seedhouse

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The nascent commercial suborbital spaceflight industry will soon open the space frontier to commercial astronauts, payload specialists, scientists and of course, tourists. This book describes the tantalizing science opportunities to be offered when suborbital trips become routine within the next 12 to 18 months. It describes the difference in training and qualification necessary to become either a spaceflight participant or a fully-fledged commercial suborbital astronaut and it describes the vehicles this new class of astronauts will use.

Anticipation is on the rise for the new crop of commercial suborbital spaceships that will serve the scientific and educational market. These reusable rocket-propelled vehicles are expected to offer quick, routine and affordable access to the edge of space along with the capability to carry research and educational crew members. Yet to be demonstrated is the hoped-for flight rates of suborbital vehicles.

Quick turnaround of these craft is central to realizing the profit-making potential of repeated sojourns to suborbital heights. As this book outlines, vehicle builders still face rigorous shake-out schedules, flight safety hurdles as well as extensive trial-runs of their respective craft before suborbital space jaunts become commonplace. The book examines some of these 'cash and carry' suborbital craft under development by such groups as Blue Origin, Masten Space Systems, Virgin Galactic and XCOR Aerospace and describes the hurdles the space industry is quickly overcoming en-route to the industry developing into a profitable economic entity.

Seedhouse also explains how the commercial suborbital spaceflight industry is planning and preparing for the challenges of marketing and financing and how it is marketing the hiring of astronauts. It examines the role of commercial operators as enablers accessing the suborbital frontier and how a partnership with governments and the private sector will eventually permanently integrate the free market's innovation of commercial suborbital space activities.



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