
Could Humans Live on Moon Within 20 Years?

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The study by NexGen Space LLC and partly funded by NASA lays out a detailed roadmap for when and how to take the next step of performing a lunar landing.

According to the study, a robotic return to the Moon could happen as soon as 2017 if NASA were to adopt the plan right away. Rovers would scout the lunar poles for hydrogen in 2018, and prospecting could begin by 2019 or 2020.

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Robotic construction of a permanent base would begin in 2021 in anticipation of landing humans on the Moon later that year, 'The Verge' reported.

According to the study, NASA can do it all within the existing budget for human spaceflights.

The way for NASA to do this is to adopt the same method that it is using for re-supplying the International Space Station (ISS) - a public-private partnership with companies like SpaceX, Orbital ATK or the United Launch Alliance.

NASA can cut the cost of establishing a human presence on the Moon "by a factor of 10," according to Charles Miller, NexGen president and the study's principal investigator.

This would allow NASA to expand its ambitions for lunar exploration without reaching beyond the almost USD 4 billion per year it receives for human spaceflight.

A number of obvious risks are addressed in the study. For one, the cost and risk of developing a lunar base is far beyond that what is considered acceptable for businesses looking for a return on their investment.

NASA is already planning to go back to the Moon with its next-generation rocket, the Space Launch System (SLS), but there are no plans to land.
