

Astronomy Education and Outreach in a Large Urban University

by

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Steacie Science and Engineering Library,
York University, Canada

LISA VI Conference, Pune, India, February 17, 2010



York University

- Third largest university in Canada
- Located in Toronto, Ontario
- Interdisciplinary focus
- 2 campuses
- 11 faculties
- Over 50,000 students

Faculty of Science and Engineering

- 5000 students
- Schools and Depts. offer undergraduate and graduate programs in biology, chemistry, physics & astronomy, mathematics & statistics, computer science & engineering, earth and space science & engineering, natural science and science & technology studies

Astronomy Education and Outreach at York

- IYA 2009 provides opportunity for local campus outreach in astronomy education
- York Observatory gets visibility for its public viewing program
- University promotion of science education through science rendezvous and star symposium events
- Library participation - astronomy exhibits and by engaging both in-library and virtual users

York University Observatory

- Started in 1968
- Two telescopes – 60 cm Cassegrain and 40 cm LX200 Meade
- Latter used for public viewing
- Responsibility of York faculty member – Prof. Paul Delaney who is very active in public outreach

Online Public Viewing at York Observatory

- Started in February 2009 to mark IYA and York's 50th birthday. Run by Student volunteers every Monday night
- Chat program with online viewing of night sky adapted from similar program at University of Valencia. Uses Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro Meeting software.
- Archived images posted in bad weather
- Linked to astronomy.fm

Benefits

- Viewing possible at remote locations – because of time difference viewers mostly from North America but occasionally from Europe and Australia
- Viewers may be newcomers to astronomy or amateur astronomers
- Chat is interactive, responds to questions
- Provides opportunity for personal development of students
- Links to internet resources possible
- Commentary from astronomy.fm

Online Public Viewing

The screenshot displays a web-based meeting interface with a dark theme. On the left, an 'Attendee List (15)' shows participants like Fireball, James (Staff), and Ted (staff). The central 'Chat 17' window contains a conversation about astronomy, mentioning 'Mars photo #3...' and 'Spaceweather.com'. On the right, four image thumbnails are visible: 'M-42-best-by-ian.jpg' (Orion Nebula), 'Share - Other Ted may not answer you' (a dark image with a white streak), 'mars-1st.jpg' (Mars with a blue spot), and 'm104-neb.jpg' (a bright star or nebula). A 'Note 4' at the bottom right provides context for the images: 'Upper Left: M42, the Orion Nebula', 'Upper Right: All sky cam from last wednesday showing the ISS passing over York.', 'Lower Left: Mars with clouds, imaged Friday night (the blue spot on the right is a cloud over Olympus Mons, a huge dead volcano on Mars.)', and 'Don't forget to check out the live broadcast at http://astronomy.fm/radio/'.

Meeting Help

Attendee List (15)
My Status: Active
Fireball (computer)
James (Staff)
Other Ted may no
Paul Delaney 2
Ted (staff)
Anca Contoguris
john
kk
Mac
Marty
mia
Michael - Astronor
Paul D
sam
thePrince

Chat 17
Michael - Astronomy.FM: Hello Anca!
Ted (staff): Evening Michael
Michael - Astronomy.FM: Hi Ted!
Michael - Astronomy.FM: Looking at the images - three out of four ain't bad....
Ted (staff): So we have a photo on spaceweather.com ...not the front page, but we got a mention!
Michael - Astronomy.FM: where?
Paul Delaney 2: did you? you didn't tell me
Ted (staff): Mars photo #3...
Ted (staff): Oh! I forgot!
Anca Contoguris: today you have a pic on www.spaceweather.com ?
Ted (staff): Ya
Ted (staff): Go us!
Anca Contoguris: just wait to see it !
Paul Delaney 2: congratulations!
Michael - Astronomy.FM: Spaceweather com is a site I visit daily. Tony Phillips puts it together; nice guy
Ted (staff): Yes, you know him?
Anca Contoguris: me too I am visiting a few times a day
Ted (staff): Oh..Paul mentioned the ISS flair...we should find it put it up
Paul Delaney 2: i'm amazed, at how everytime there is some amazing thing going on above York, I miss it
Michael - Astronomy.FM: NASA has announced a press conference regarding Spirit tomorrow at 1pm US Eastern time (which is 1800 UTC). We'll carry the press briefing live on Astronomy.FM
Anca Contoguris: I hope they will save it
Anca Contoguris: also I hope Phoenix will answer
Paul Delaney 2: nice video! i missed this last Wednesday
john: i like your ISS fly by :)
Ted (staff): We saw it flare up
Ted (staff): it got down to about -5 for a few seconds
Paul Delaney 2: for those of us who missed it, what is a -5 magnitude comparative to in astronomical objects
Ted (staff): Brighter than anything else in the sky save the moon or the sun
Ted (staff): about twice as bright as Venus
Paul Delaney 2: at its brightest?
Ted (staff): yup
Paul Delaney 2: oh wow
Paul Delaney 2: i wish i didn't miss it

M-42-best-by-ian.jpg
M-42, the Orion Nebula

Share - Other Ted may not answer you
All sky cam from last wednesday showing the ISS passing over York.

mars-1st.jpg
Mars with clouds, imaged Friday night (the blue spot on the right is a cloud over Olympus Mons, a huge dead volcano on Mars.)

m104-neb.jpg
M104, the Whirlpool Nebula

Note 4
Don't forget to check out the live broadcast at <http://astronomy.fm/radio/>
Upper Left: M42, the Orion Nebula
Upper Right: All sky cam from last wednesday showing the ISS passing over York.
Lower Left: Mars with clouds, imaged Friday night (the blue spot on the right is a cloud over Olympus Mons, a huge dead volcano on Mars.)

To: Everyone

Uncertain about the weather, check <http://cleardarksky.com/csk/>

[Sponsor this Chart](#)

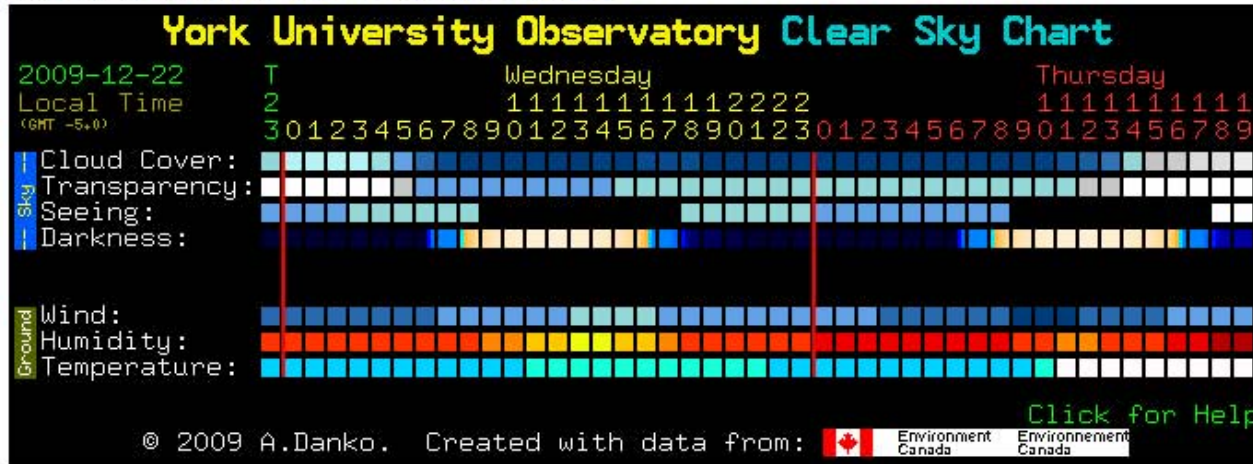
York University Observatory Clear Sky Chart

Legend page

Image Control

1. Explain color and details when you mouse-over:
2. Click on a block to show full forecast map
3. Display color legend:

Last updated 2009-12-22 23:52:46. No Image below? Read [this](#).



Observatory, of [York University](#), with [public observing](#).

Page Contents

[What is it?](#)

[How do I read it](#)

Nifty Links:	Sun & Moon Data	Road Map	Sat Image	Satellite Predictions	Star Map
	CalSky	Light Pollution map			

Other Charts

- [All](#)
- Ontario: [List](#) [Ma](#)
- Within 100 Km: [List](#) [Ma](#)
- Within 200 Km: [List](#) [Ma](#)

[Astronomy Telescop](#)
Search Thousands of
Catalogs for Astronom
Telescope
www.globalspec.com



Ads by GOX

Promoting OPV at the York Observatory on Steacie Facebook

facebook

Home

Profile

Friends

Inbox

Inbox

Sent Messages

Notifications

Updates



Updates from Steacie Science & Engineering Library

[Back to Updates](#) | [View Steacie Science & Engineering Library's Page](#) | [View All Sent Updates](#)

Displaying 1-5 of 28 updates.

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [Next](#)

• Astronomy Public Viewing Online

Today at 10:30am

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy. On Monday evenings, you can access real-time views through telescopes at the York University Observatory by visiting its web site. It's out of this world!

See also the YFile story here: <http://bit.ly/9Qd5K>

www.physics.yorku.ca

Source: www.physics.yorku.ca

In celebration of York University's 50th Birthday as well as the world wide celebrations for the International Year of Astronomy, the Observatory is pleased to offer an online viewing experience:



Share 

Steacie Science and Engineering Library





Subject Collections

- General Science,
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Earth and Space Sciences
- Physics & Astronomy
- Chemistry
- Nursing
- Biology
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Kinesiology and Neuroscience

Library Staff

- 4 science librarians
- 2 reference assistants
- 1 Circulation supervisor
- 3 circulation assistants
- 1 records assistant

Steacie Science Library Initiatives to promote astronomy education

- Astronomy Exhibits Display
- Promotion on Facebook and Yfile/Ylife online community news bulletin
- Hawaiian Starlight (CFHT) video projection
- Library Instruction for astronomy courses
- New books blog

Galileo Display at Steacie Library

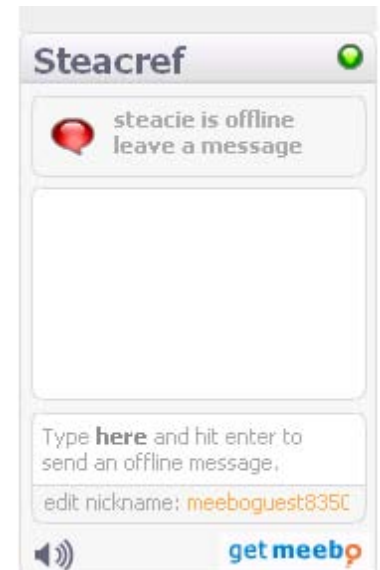


Telescopes of the World Exhibit



Librarians' use of Web 2.0 tools

- Facebook as a promotional tool for astronomy topics
- Meebo chat for answering online enquiries from large astronomy classes
- New books blog for promoting popular titles in astronomy



Promoting the event on Daily Campus Newsletter YFile

- [Today@York](#)

York University Events Calendar

International Year of Astronomy Exhibits

Aug 13, 2009 to Oct 26, 2009, 8-11PM

Continuing its celebration of the International Year of Astronomy, Steacie Science & Engineering Library is spotlighting various resources related to Galileo and astronomy.

Location: Steacie Science & Engineering Library, 8am to 11pm

Sponsor: York University Libraries

Posted by: [Ricardo Laskaris](#)

Web Site: <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=147662&id=9040772036&l=9ea22f9929>

- **International Year of Astronomy Exhibits**
In celebration of the International Year of Astronomy, the Steacie Science & Engineering Library is spotlighting resources related to Galileo and astronomy...

Library Instruction for Astronomy Courses using web 2.0 tools

- Natural Science students – 1500 students taking natural science as a general education requirement. Science librarian uses Meebo chat for reference enquiries
- Bethune seminar for science students – non-astronomy majors. Essay assignment was based on IYA podcast “365 days of astronomy”.

New books blog by subject - [Astronomy](#)

Astronomy Oct. 1-10

David Levy's guide to observing meteor showers
QB 743 L48 2008

Innovation in astronomy education
QB 61 I54 2008

**Stephen James O'Meara's Observing the night sky with
binoculars: a simple guide to the heavens**
QB 63 O64 2008

**Stargazing basics: getting started in recreational
astronomy**
QB 63 K466 2008

Facts and speculations in cosmology
QB 981 N29 2008

A

Astronomy (58) ▾

ARCHIVES

December 2009

November 2009

October 2009

September 2009

July 2009

June 2009

May 2009

April 2009

March 2009

February 2009

January 2009

December 2008

IYA Canada Website



The screenshot shows the IYA Canada website interface. At the top, a dark blue banner features a silhouette of a person and a child looking at the stars, with the text 'INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY 2009' and 'THE UNIVERSE: YOURS TO DISCOVER'. Logos for IAU and the Canada National Node are also present. Below the banner is a search bar and navigation links for Home, News, Student Blogs, Activities, Events, Resources, About IYA2009, and Contacts. A sidebar on the left contains a 'Galileo Moment Counter' showing 01063113, 'IYA Events & Activities' with search and registration links, and a 'Login Form'. The main content area has a dropdown menu for 'Student Blog' (English and French) and a heading 'The International Year of Astronomy'. The text describes IYA2009 as a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, with a focus on young people. It encourages participation in local activities and volunteering. A vibrant image of a galaxy is shown on the right side of the page.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY 2009

THE UNIVERSE: YOURS TO DISCOVER

IAU CANADA NATIONAL NODE

search...

Français A+ A- AO

Home News **Student Blogs** Activities Events Resources About IYA2009 Contacts

Home **Student Blog - English**

Student Blog - French

The International Year of Astronomy

The International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) is a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, stimulating worldwide interest not only in astronomy, but in science in general, with a particular slant towards young people. IYA2009 is an activity for the citizens of Planet Earth. It conveys the excitement of personal discovery, the pleasure of sharing fundamental knowledge about the Universe and our place in it, and the value of scientific culture.

So get involved! Participate in your town's activities! Plan activities of your own! **Volunteer!** Make IYA a year to remember for you – and for Canada!

Celebrate the IYA 2009 with Canadian Space Agency Astronaut Robert Thirsk

Galileo Moment Counter

To this date

01063113

Canadians have experienced a Galileo moment in 2009. Our goal: 1 million. Are **you** part of the number?

IYA Events & Activities

Search for Local Events

How to Register Your Event

Login Form



Traditional Inuit Night Sky Story

Aboriginal Program ▾
Muin – Mi'kmaq Night
Sky Story

Galileo Moment
Astronomy Kit
Planetarium and Science
Centre Productions ▶
Heavenly Arts
Galileo Lecture Series
Astronomy Student Blogs
100 Hours of Astronomy
Canadian Astronomy
Images
Dark Sky Preserves
Commemorative Stamps
International Activities

Galileo Moment Counter

To this date

01063113

Canadians have experienced a Galileo moment in 2009. Our goal: 1 million. Are you part of the number?

IVM Events & Activities

Traditional Mi'kmaq Sky Story Brought to Life for Year of Astronomy



Written by Andy Woodsworth

January 27th, 2009 (Sydney, NS): A traditional Mi'kmaq sky story has been brought to life in a celebration of the International Year of Astronomy 2009, blending modern technology with the oral teachings of First Nations Elders.



An animated version of the Mi'kmaq sky story, Muin and the Seven Bird Hunters, is now available in English, French and Mi'kmaq to people around the world in celebration of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009). The Mi'kmaq version, with an English introduction, can be viewed [here](#).