

Book review

Sustainable Space Tourism: An Introduction

Annette Toivonen
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On 18 September 2021, the SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule with four passengers landed in the ocean near Florida. What made this space flight special was that unlike previous flights all crew members on this one were civilian and non-astronauts, and the flight was financed by one of the passengers. Humanity entered the age of space tourism.

The book by Annette Toivonen does an excellent job in introducing the readers to the fundamental issues of space tourism. The book consists of seven chapters that delve into the basic concepts of space tourism (Chapter 1), sustainability (Chapter 2), forecasting the future (Chapter 3), sustainable space tourism planning (Chapter 4), the social implications of space tourism (Chapter 5), the economics and space legislation (Chapter 6) and the future of space tourism (Chapter 7). I see three major strengths of the book. First, the book is quite comprehensive because it covers all important issues of space tourism and provides numerous examples. In this sense, it can serve as an excellent introductory text for undergraduate and graduate students, interested in the brave new world of space tourism. Additionally, it can inspire further research in the field. Second, a separate chapter is dedicated to the economic and legal aspects of space tourism, something often overlooked in books on other types of tourism. They are of great importance, because tourism is an

economic activity and if companies do not see the economic benefits of offering space tourism products they would not do it. Moreover, for customers costs are an important hindrance to the adoption of any innovation, including new types of tourism such as space tourism. If space tourism is going to be more than an elite type of tourism, then space tourism companies need business models and technologies that would drive their costs down. Furthermore, space legislation determines the legal framework of space tourism and identifies responsibilities of stakeholders and procedures to be followed, including in case of emergencies. Third, by discussing space tourism through the lens of sustainability, the author emphasises the fact that sustainability needs to permeate all human activities, including those beyond the boundaries of our planet.

As a weakness, the book is a bit too descriptive at places. This can be justified by the limited research on the topic and the desire of the author to report many aspects and (legal) documents relevant to space tourism and provide interesting examples in order to make the book comprehensive and appealing to a wider audience. The next edition of the book would benefit from more analytical approach to the topic. Additionally, the link between the future forecasting models elaborated in Chapter 3 and the rest of the book needs strengthening as currently the chapter looks like a standalone chapter loosely linked to Chapter 7. Nevertheless, Annette Toivonen's book is very informative and inspiring.

Currently, less than 20 tourists have seen the Earth from space but they

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have opened a new and important chapter in tourism business and research. Many questions need to be answered. What will the future of space tourism be? Will it be democratised or will it be affordable only for a small share of people? Will space tourists travel to other planets in the solar system? Do alien civilisations (if they exist) share our fascination with the stars? At the end of the day, unidentified flying objects might be the ships of alien space tourists.

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