

# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

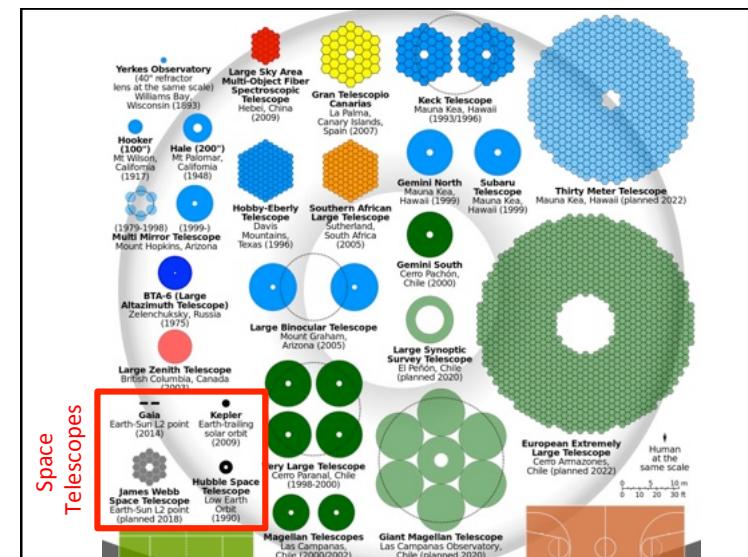


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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Introduction



Telescopes have come a long way in the 400 years since Galileo. Refractors (using lenses) gave way to reflectors (using mirrors) over a century ago as lenses larger than ~1 m in diameter are impractical.



The quest for telescopes with larger mirrors is driven by two mirror characteristics that improve with size. Larger mirrors ...

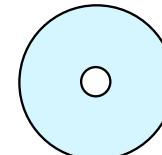
- ... collect more light → see **fainter** objects
- ... have higher resolution → see **smaller** or more **distant** objects



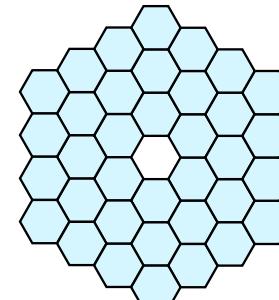
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## Introduction

In the latter part of the last century large telescopes have used multi-segment mirrors due to the difficulty of making monolithic mirrors over ~8 m in diameter.



Hale 5 m



Keck 10 m



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## Introduction

So if we have (large) telescopes on the ground, why put a (small) telescope in Earth orbit?



Larger mirrors do indeed collect more light than smaller ones but their higher resolution is compromised by the turbulence of the Earth's atmosphere.

Putting a telescope in Earth orbit, above the atmosphere, means that the telescope's resolution can be exploited to the full.



For the HST, the resolution is more than 10 times better. The 2.4 m diameter mirror in the HST was a result of the restriction that the entire telescope had to fit inside the cargo bay of the space shuttle.



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## History

- 1970 NASA started planning for a large space telescope (LST)
- 1974 Congress withdrew all funding  
National Academy of Sciences lobbied senators  
National letter-writing campaign  
Senate agreed to (reduced) funding  
Funding problems led to collaboration with ESA
- 1978 Congress funded LST project



Spacecraft construction → Lockheed  
Optical Telescope Assembly → Perkin-Elmer



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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## History

- 1979 Construction of primary mirror begins



- 1981 Polishing of mirror complete
- 1981 Work on back-up mirror (made by Kodak) halted



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## History

- 1983 Originally planned launch date  
LST named the Hubble Space Telescope (HST)



- 1984 Launch date put back due to Perkin-Elmer schedule slips
- 1985 Launch date put back due to Perkin-Elmer and Lockheed slips
- 1986 Budget exceeds \$1 billion and still rising
- 1986 Challenger disaster
- 1990 HST finally launched into Earth orbit

Total construction costs  
estimated to be ~\$2.5 billion



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## Design

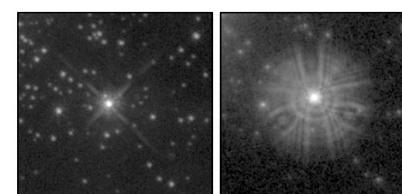
The HST is a Ritchey-Chrétien design – the primary mirror is **hyperbolic**.  
The last big telescope to have a **parabolic** mirror is the Hale Telescope at Mount Palomar which has a 5 m (200") mirror.



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## The Mirror

Only when in orbit did the horror slowly dawn on those responsible for commissioning the telescope. ***It would not focus.***



Expected

Observed

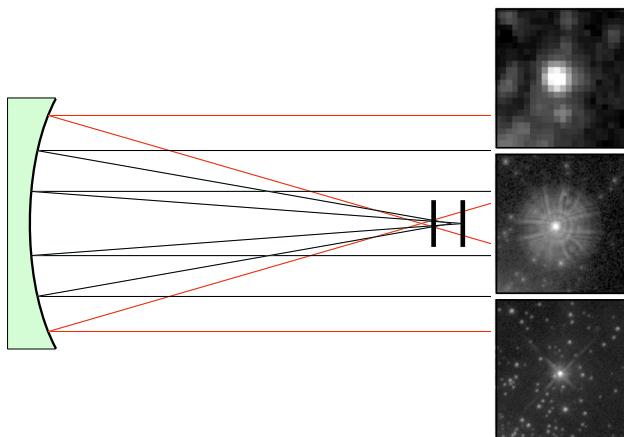
Eventually it was admitted that mirror has spherical aberration.



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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Spherical Aberration



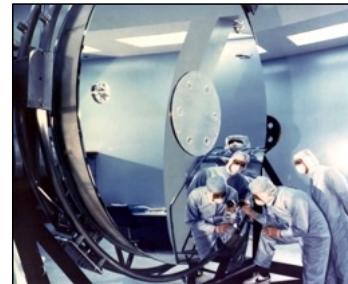
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## The Mirror

How could such a mistake be made?

Tests carried out during construction indicated that it was the most precisely figured mirror ever made – a surface roughness of ~10 nm.



For some perspective on that value, that's equivalent to a roughness of ~30 mm on an object the size of the Earth!

Unfortunately, the mirror was not the correct **shape**.

It was wrong by ~2 µm.

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## The Mirror

Because the mirror is hyperbolic, it requires a 'null corrector' to be used as part of the optics used in the test rig.

A lens in the null corrector was misplaced in the Perkin-Elmer test rig because a washer was placed on a bolt where it should not have been.

A simpler test would have revealed the fault but was deemed 'unnecessary' by Perkin-Elmer.

The backup mirror was made, and tested, independently by Kodak and so did not suffer from the same error. However, it was on the ground!



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## Saving Hubble

One thing saved the HST from a scientific and public relations disaster – it was designed from the outset to be serviced by shuttle astronauts.

Many alternatives were considered, even the option of bringing it back in the shuttle and replacing the primary mirror with the Kodak backup.

The final solution was a combination of luck and ingenuity.

A second camera (WFC2) was an identical 'non-flight' copy of the one in the HST and was sitting in the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. It would be fitted with corrective optics and sent up to replace the original WFC1.



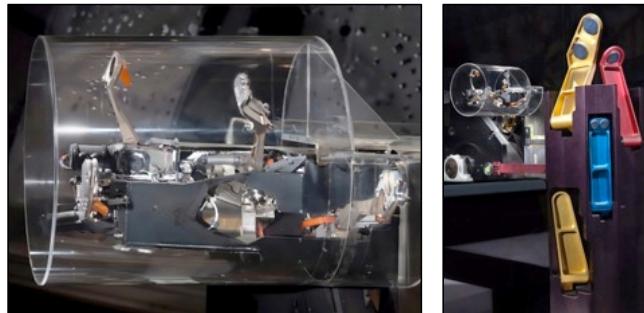
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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Saving Hubble

For all the other instruments, a complex set of corrective optics (COSTAR) would be inserted into one of the instrument bays by sacrificing one of the instruments.

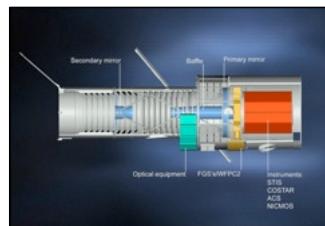


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## Instrumentation

It should be remembered that the HST is not simply a telescope with a CCD camera bolted on the back end.

At any given time the HST has had at least **two** cameras and **two** spectrographs on board – these have been swapped out and upgraded during the various service missions spread over 16 years.



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## Spectroscopy

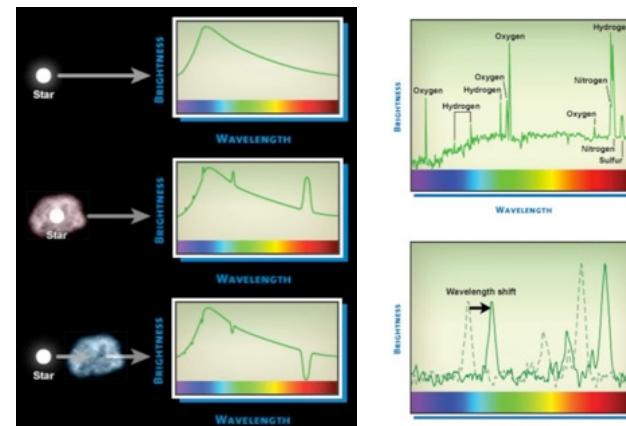
The cameras have of course been responsible for all of the incredible images that the HST has produced.

However, the spectroscopy instrumentation has been just as important from a scientific viewpoint, providing data that has augmented the image data and aided the interpretation of the images.



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## Spectroscopy



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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Spectroscopy

**A STIS absorption spectrum**  
A beam of light coming to Earth from a distant quasar passes through numerous intervening gas clouds in galaxies and in intergalactic space. These clouds of primeval hydrogen subtract specific colors from the beam. The resulting 'absorption spectrum', recorded by Hubble's Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph (STIS), is used to determine the distances and chemical composition of the invisible clouds.

Cumulative absorption spectra  
Subtracted by cloud 1  
Subtracted by cloud 2  
Subtracted by cloud 3  
Final absorption spectrum recorded by STIS

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## HST Service Missions

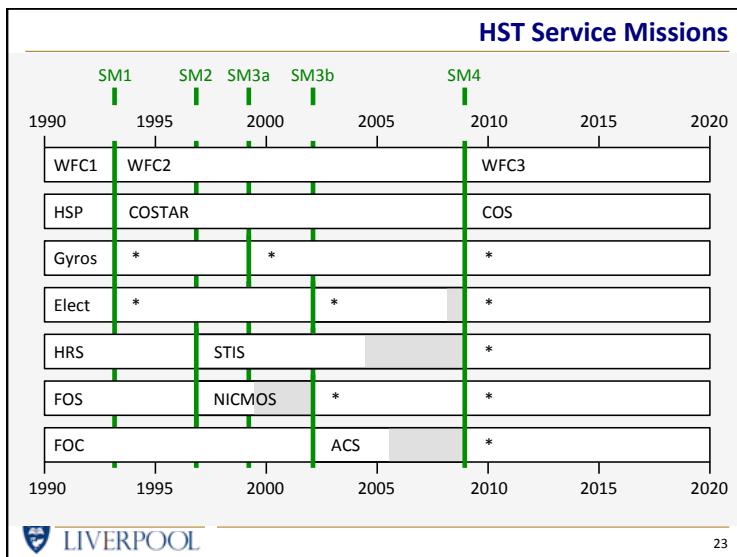
The five service missions have resulted in a confusing number of swaps and upgrades of the instrumentation, and the power (solar panels) and guidance (gyro) systems have also had major upgrades and servicing.

The need for power may be obvious, but remember that without a set of gyros, the HST would not be able to point at its target with an accuracy of *milli* arc seconds and so the advantages of the HST over ground-based telescopes would be compromised. Ultimately, the gyros may be the components that determine how long the HST continues to function.

The five service missions comprised 23 spacewalks totalling 166 hours.

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## Instrumentation

Prior to Service Mission 1 the HST was still able to carry out some observations, including imaging of bright objects or spectroscopy, neither of which were affected too badly by the flawed focussing.

However, it wasn't until after the successful installation of WFC2 and COSTAR during SM1 that the HST was ready to deliver on the promises first made twenty years earlier.

Disaster was averted and NASA gave a corporate sigh of relief.

So much for history. What about the legacy?

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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Legacy

How has the HST contributed to extending our understanding of the structure and evolution of the Universe?

Examples are legion, but here I select just a few in the fields of:

- Cepheid distances
- Exoplanets
- Star birth and star death
- Galaxy formation and evolution
- Supernovae and the age of the universe



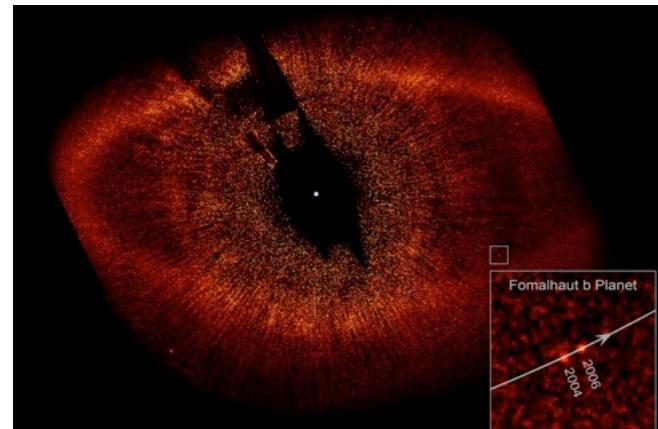
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## Cepheids



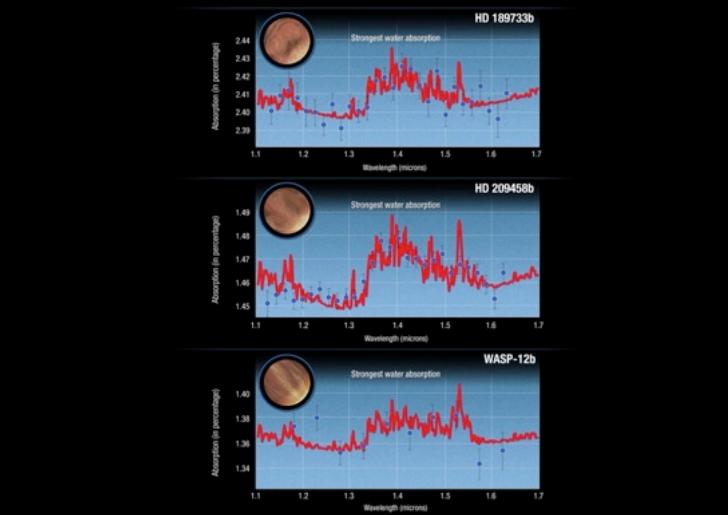
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## Exoplanets



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## Hubble measures water abundance on three exoplanets



# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

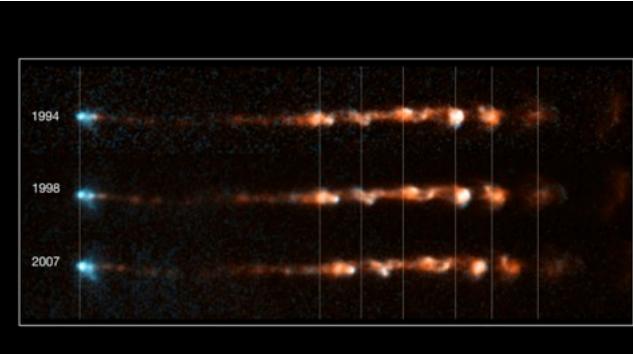
## Stellar Evolution



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## Stellar Evolution



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## Stellar Evolution



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## Galaxy Formation



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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

Galaxy Formation



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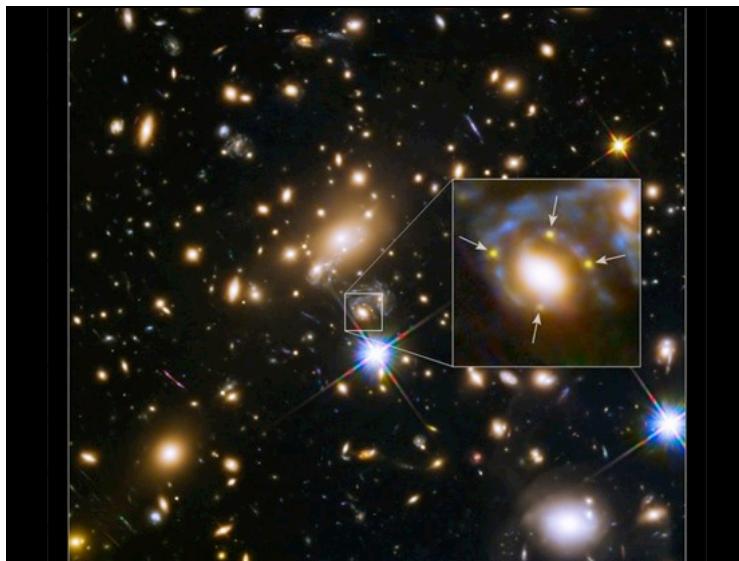
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Galaxy Formation

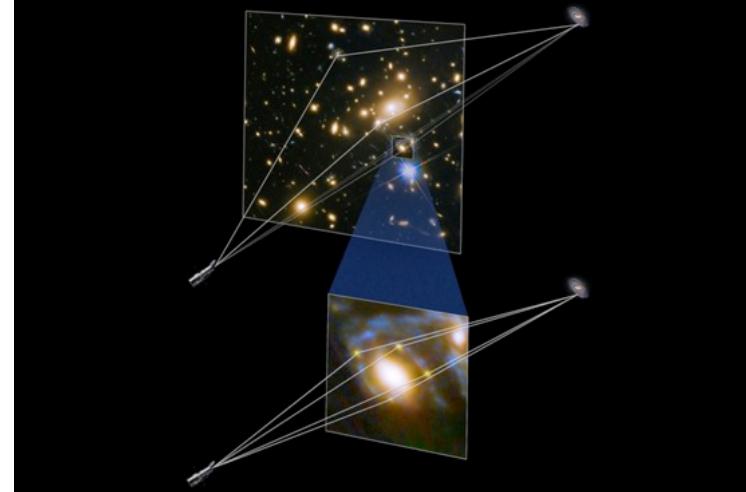


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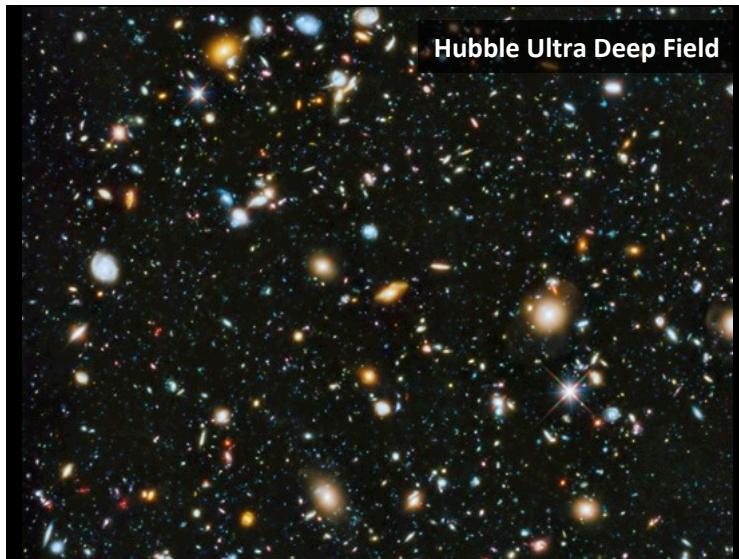
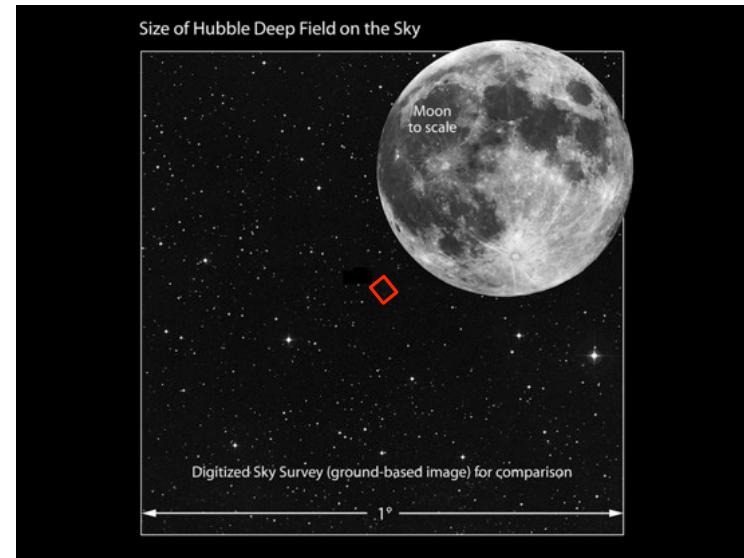
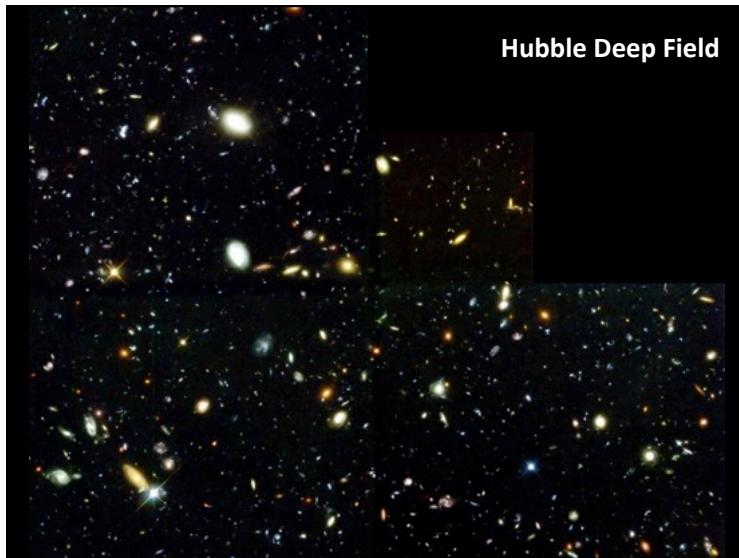
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Hubble Sees Distant Supernova  
Multiply Imaged by Foreground Galaxy Cluster



# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope



## Legacy

In addition to its scientific legacy, the HST has managed to do what most scientific instruments have failed to do — it has touched the public consciousness.

*"The laws of physics have created these incredible structures, and Hubble has revealed them."*

*"Through all the research, Hubble has brought the public along for the ride. It has taken the excitement that scientists feel with new discoveries and brought it to non-scientists."*

*Astronomy (April 2015)*

Let us take a few minutes to remind ourselves with just a few of the breath-taking images that the HST has produced ...

## Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope



## Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope



Mystic Mountain



Sombrero Galaxy



M5 Globular Cluster



Barred Spiral Galaxy

## Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope



Westerlund 2.



Rose Galaxies

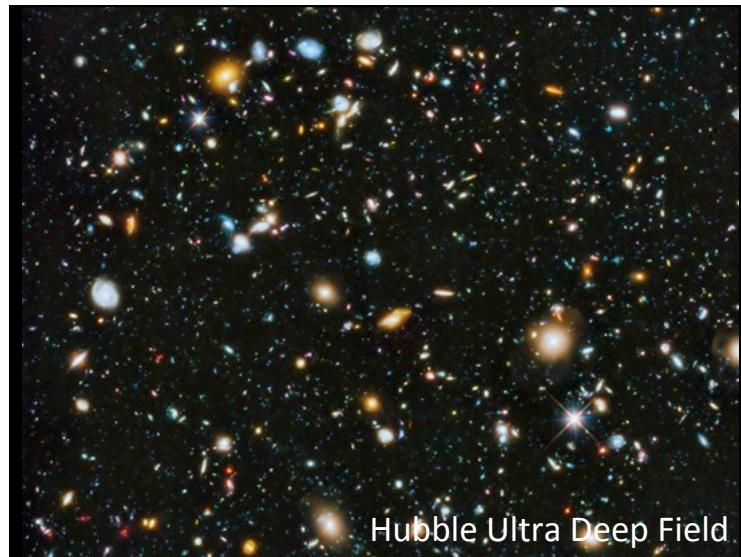
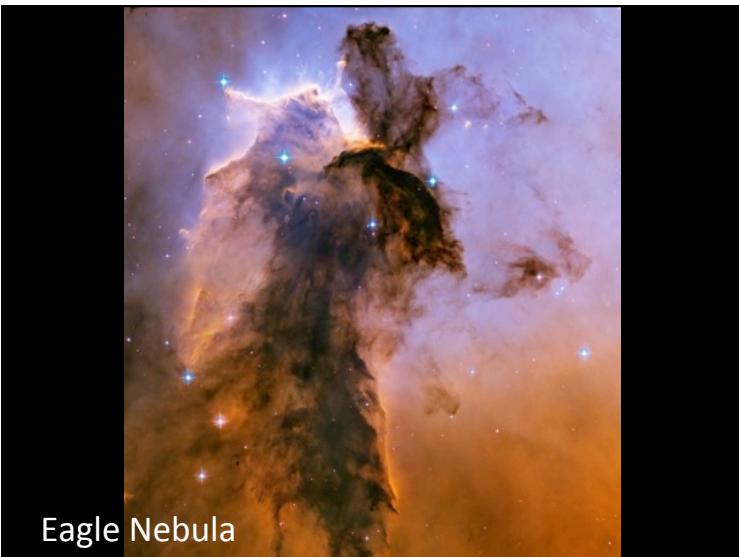


Pillars of Creation



M106 Galaxy

# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope



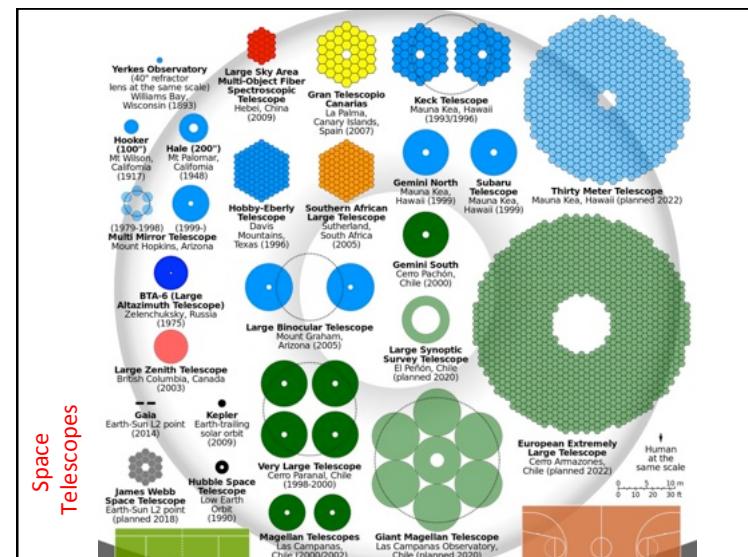
**Beyond Hubble**

So what lies beyond Hubble?

Ground-based telescopes now have adaptive optics that can compensate for the Earth's turbulent atmosphere, so is there a need any more for space telescopes?

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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Beyond Hubble

Even with adaptive optics, ground-based telescopes can only achieve high resolution over a limited field of view.

Space telescopes can achieve their specified resolution over the entire field of view covered by their detectors (the CCD chips).

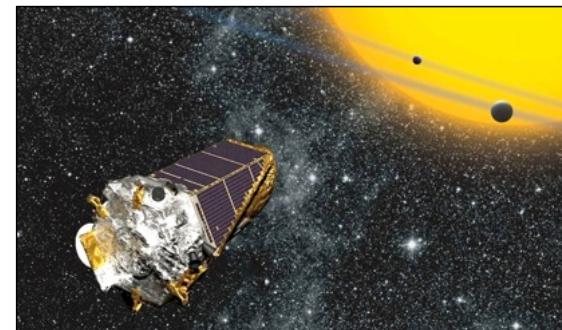
Other, perhaps less well-known, telescopes are already in orbit.



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## Kepler

Kepler had a very specific mission ...

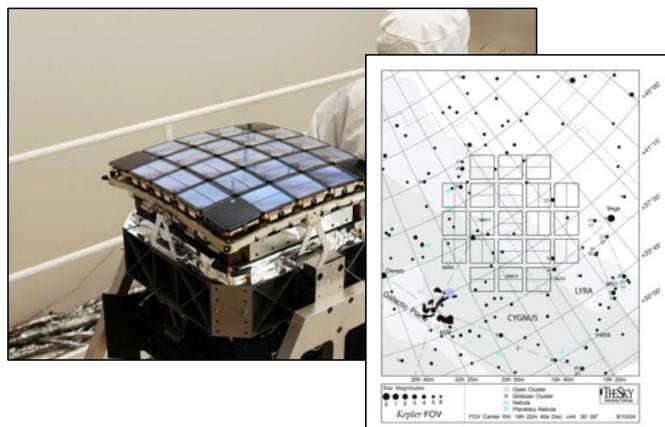


... to find earth-like planets orbiting other stars.



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## Kepler



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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

**Gaia**

Gaia is an ESA mission with a number of very ambitious aims:

• To measure the positions of ~ 1 billion stars  
• To measure to an accuracy down to ~ 25 micro arc seconds  
• To perform spectral and photometric measurements  
• To derive star velocities in the Milky Way  
• To use this data to create a 3D structural map of the Milky Way







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**Gaia**

In addition, almost as a 'by-product' of its attempt to determine the positions of stars to incredible precision, Gaia will also:

- Detect and classify thousands of extra-solar planetary systems
- Survey the huge numbers of minor bodies in our Solar System
- Survey neighbouring galaxies
- Survey distant quasars (quasi-stellar objects)





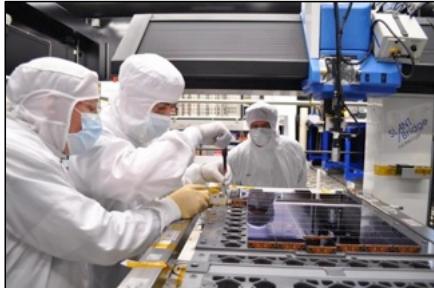


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**Gaia**

How does Gaia achieve such precision with, like the HST, mirrors of a very modest size?

The answer lies with its gigapixel CCD detector array.

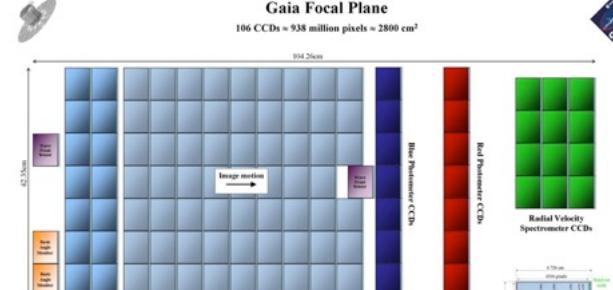


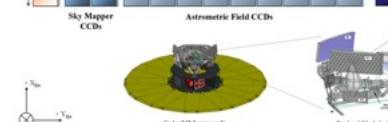


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**Gaia**

**Gaia Focal Plane**  
106 CCDs = 938 million pixels = 2800 cm<sup>2</sup>







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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

## Beyond Hubble

Reflecting on the Hubble Space Telescope ...

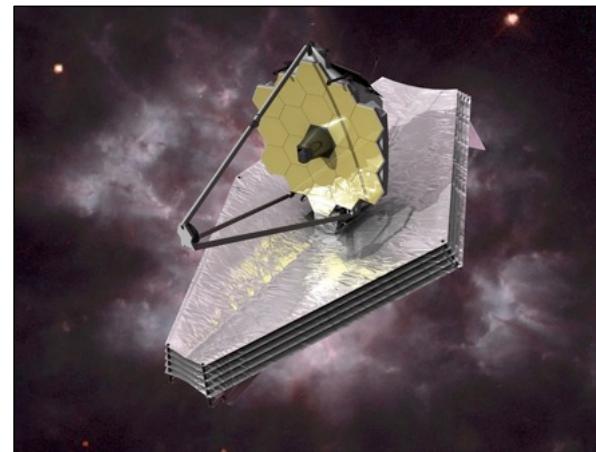


Is there a successor waiting in the wings?



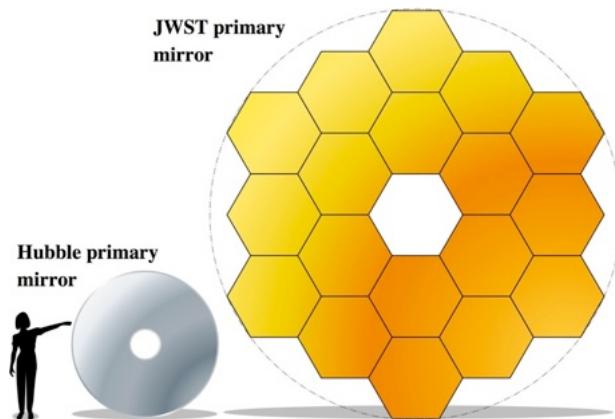
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## James Webb Space Telescope



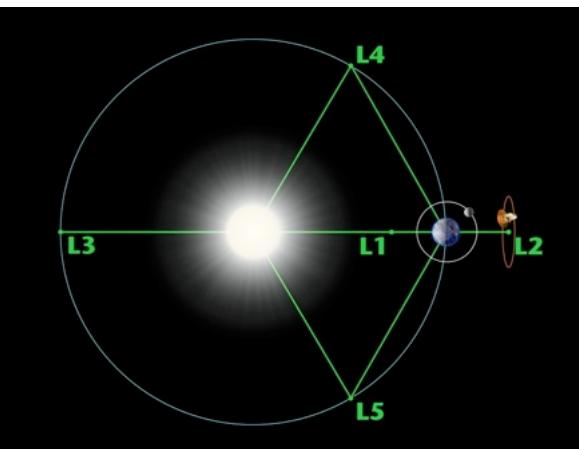
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## James Webb Space Telescope



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## JWST @ L2



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# Legacy of the Hubble Space Telescope

**James Webb Space Telescope**

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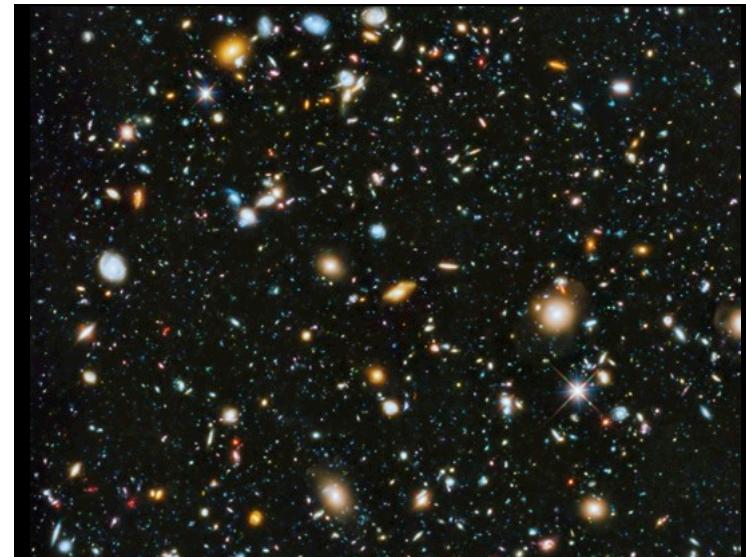
What will the JWST do?  
By working in the infrared it will be able to see more than the HST.



Visible - WFC3 - 2015      Infrared - WFC3 - 2015

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**Summary**

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<b>Introduction</b>	Need for a space telescope Ground-based alternatives
<b>History</b>	Why the mirror was flawed How the optics were fixed
<b>Legacy</b>	Extending our understanding Touching the public consciousness
<b>Future</b>	Need for a space telescope Ground-based alternatives

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