

Voyager 1 where is it now

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This is a real-time indicator of Voyager 1's distance from Earth in astronomical units ...

Voyager 1, which has traveled further from Earth than any other human-made object, has resumed contact after a brief period of silence.

Last month, on October 19, Voyager 1 stopped sending signals back to Earth, sparking confusion amongst scientists.

NASA managed to reconnect to the probe on October 24 using a radio not used since 1981, and on November 18, Voyager 1 resumed sending back data from its four operating science instruments on its original radio system.

Currently located some 15.4 billion miles from our planet, the Voyager 1 spacecraft has been pushing off into deep space since its launch on September 5, 1977. As the lonely spacecraft slowly runs out of power, it has been gradually switching off non-essential systems to preserve its lifespan.

Voyager 1 soared past Jupiter and its moons in 1979, before passing the Saturn system in 1980. Ever since, the spacecraft has been zipping into the abyss of space, and on August 25, 2012, Voyager 1 became the first spacecraft to enter interstellar space, crossing the heliopause, which is the boundary where the sun's influence ends.

The probe is now transmitting data about the interstellar medium, including information about cosmic rays, magnetic fields, and particle densities. Voyager 1 communicates with Earth using the Deep Space Network (DSN). Signals take about 23 hours to travel just one way due to the immense distance between the probe and our planet.

The loss of contact in October occurred because the probe turned off its X-band radio transmitter, which it uses to communicate with the DSN. This happened because NASA attempted to switch on one of the probe's heaters on October 16, resulting in the probe's fault protection system turning off the radio to conserve power.

Voyager 1 is powered by three Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators (RTGs), converting heat from radioactive decay into electricity. However, these RTGs produce less and less power each year as the plutonium on board decays.

"If the spacecraft overdraws its power supply, fault protection will conserve power by turning off systems that aren't essential for keeping the spacecraft flying," NASA said in an October statement.

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Voyager 1 then switched to using its S-band transmitter, which hadn't been used since the 1980s, and NASA reconnected to the probe.

"The probe had unexpectedly turned off its primary radio transmitter, called an X-band transmitter, and turned on the much weaker S-band transmitter," NASA explained in a statement.

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