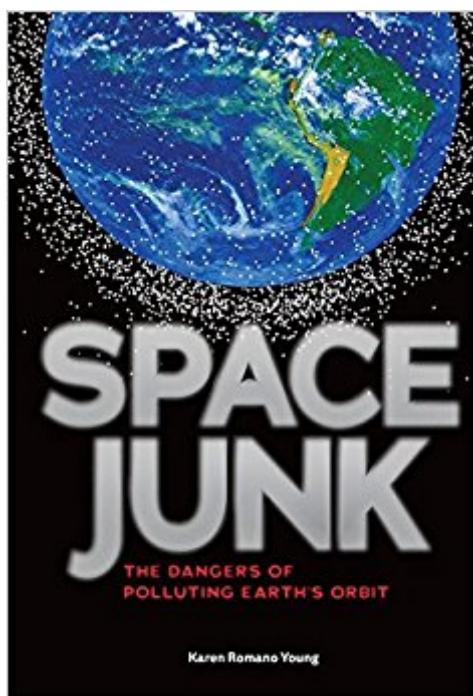


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Space Junk: The Dangers Of Polluting Earth's Orbit



Synopsis

Scientists have identified at least 100 million pieces of space debris—from paint chips to nonoperational zombie satellites—floating in Earth's orbit. And over 100 tons of those pieces enter Earth's atmosphere each year! Journey into outer space and learn about the dangers of space junk collisions, how scientists track them, and how space agencies are working to develop new technologies to clean up the space junk. Along the way, you'll hear from the scientists who are working to ensure that outer space remains a safe place to travel and explore. If we don't tackle the space junk problem, it might be impossible to travel into space; it could even trap us on Earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8. A great cover beckons readers inside what should be a fascinating tour of the space around Earth—and it is, despite a somewhat dry and repetitious writing style. Each of the four chapters opens with a black spread that includes space photos and white type with red highlights; the following pages feature black print on white backgrounds. The book is filled with photos and sidebars that bring greater range to the text—and a few grammatical issues. There is little else available for students about this important topic for future space engineers.

VERDICT General purchase.—Dorcas Hand, Annunciation Orthodox School, Houston, TX

Great for the concept and of getting kids to conceptualize the planet earth and our impact on it.

This is one of those books that a general reader will stumble across and find immense value and interest within it. Space junk is one of those things that we hear about on the news from time-to-time and maybe our attention is grabbed by a report about a part of a failed space launch falling to earth, yet do we really understand the true implications of what is happening high up above us? It is no laughing matter. One collision between two satellites led to thousands upon thousands of bits of junk floating in space. Each bit has the potential to damage satellites and space craft. Add in countless other bits of junk from disused and abandoned satellites and spacecraft and there is a real big problem that is going to get worse rather than better. Estimates of over one hundred million pieces of space junk have been made and this is probably quite conservative. Space might be big but space in orbital positions is quite limited and, well, if something is in an orbital position it will be orbiting and suddenly things are a little more crowded. There is not yet a space vacuum cleaner that can go and tidy up. It is a question of good fortune, changing orbits and hope that space junk gets burned up as it enters the earth's atmosphere that is saving satellites and spacecraft thus far. More launches equate more inevitable refuse and, of course, risk! Earth itself can also face risks as debris can fall to earth and survive the re-entry process. You do not want a high-speed chunk of space junk landing on your head! Despite this being a serious subject, the author has not treated it as a horror film on steroids. Instead the reader is treated to a well-written, factual, serious look at the subject whilst maintaining the right balance of information, tone and engagement. It does draw you in. Engineers are trying to clean up space, repairing broken satellites, pushing junk into re-entry orbits and the like, but the junk that is already out there is enough of a challenge today and we've not declared a moratorium on space launches in the meantime. On the contrary, space activity shows no sign of slowing down. As the author warns, if we don't tackle the space junk problem, it might be impossible to travel into space in the future and thus this junk, our junk, could trap us on earth. This is a fairly short book and the price might be a little too high for the general reader. A "random purchase", yet the astute shopper may find this book available for less than its sticker price and it certainly is something worthy of strong consideration in any case!

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