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NASA Invites Young People to Take Virtual Space Station Spacewalks

MOFFETT FIELD, Calif. -- Imagine the thrill of floating out of the International Space Station and into the emptiness of space and what it would be like to work on the orbiting science laboratory. NASA has developed a new video game, Station Spacewalk, to give young people an "out of this world" virtual opportunity to experience the thrill of working on a mission to the International Space Station from their computers.

This new video game is based on actual work astronauts performed during the course of several NASA missions. The game is part of NASA's broader educational outreach effort to engage and inspire students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"It's all about getting the next generation excited about space exploration," said Chris Kemp, chief information officer at NASA's Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, Calif. "Players, or 'astronauts,' can virtually navigate their way through mission critical tasks. This game provides players a sense of the magnitude of complexity and thrill associated with NASA missions."

As an astronaut, players visualize a detailed virtual mock-up of the International Space Station that was created for NASA's space station program. Players participate in four critical spacewalks that provide power to the station to keep it operating at full capacity. Players must complete their tasks quickly and carefully, before the air supply runs out.

Players begin by managing their way out of the airlock. The first task is to install the S6 truss segment, the long "backbone" of the station that supports the solar arrays. The player can open the S6 solar arrays, an essential task because they provide photovoltaic energy for the space station. These tasks are based on the shuttle mission to the space station that delivered the segment and deployed the solar arrays.

Players then can use a robotic arm to repair a tear in a solar array, a task NASA astronauts performed during another shuttle mission. When the work is done, players must carefully collect tools that are floating in space.

To take a virtual spacewalk in the Station Spacewalk game, visit:

http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/3d_resources/station_spacewalk_game.html

For more information about NASA's education programs, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/education>

For more information about the International Space Station, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/station>

Information about the STS-119 mission, which deployed the station's S6 solar arrays, is available at:

http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/shuttlemissions/sts119

Information about the STS-120 mission, which included repairs to a damaged solar array, is available at:

http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/shuttlemissions/sts120

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