

# How You Can Make Money in Space

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*We just need to change the populations because currently we have seven billion people on Earth and none on Mars...*

*The main reason I am personally accumulating assets is in order to fund this. I really do not have any other motivation for personally accumulating assets except to be able to make the biggest contribution I can to making life multi-planetary.*

What a noble claim.

The above quote is taken from Elon Musk's paper ["Making Humans a Multi-Planetary Species"](#), outlining his colourful plan to colonise Mars through his company, SpaceX.

It's worth a read, even just for its entertainment value. Musk's eccentricity bleeds into his vision of the future as he describes the planet Venus as "not at all like the goddess" and expresses the need for cargo space so that building materials for "pizza joints" can be taken to Mars.

Do you fancy leaving humanity behind to become a Martian? Well, by Musk's estimation it should only set you back \$200,000 for a ticket (one way) once the project takes off.

Would you ever invest in a spaceflight company? SpaceX is private, and the company stressed in May that it had no plans to float shares on the stock exchange, but when you consider the costs of a Mars mission, I wouldn't be surprised if we see a SpaceX initial public offering (IPO) in the years to come.

Warren Buffett famously described airline companies on Earth as a "death trap for investors" – I dread to think what he would make of an interplanetary one. That said, he has since invested billions into American airline companies, so who knows.

Or maybe SpaceX will find the necessary funds without needing to raise capital publicly. The company has had much success in the commercial satellite launch business, which seems to be all that remains of the golden space age alongside the International Space Station.

It's also worth mentioning that the company has secured several military contracts. Of particular note is SpaceX's involvement with the military X-37B spacecraft, which was developed by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency). The mysterious unmanned craft, controlled by the US Air Force, has been accused of spying on the Chinese space station and capable of launching space weapons, although both allegations have been denied.

Perhaps military spacecraft will provide Musk the funding he needs for his Mars missions. But why is the dream of manned missions to Mars only coming back now?

## Bank of Mars

Whatever happened to the Cold War dreams of starting a colony on Mars? Or even "just" a colony on the moon?

It's strange that for all the technological advances humans have made in recent history, we've not ventured further out of low Earth orbit since 1972. Some spacecraft have kept up with the times – spy satellites from the Cold War, 60ft in length, have been replaced by those the [size of a beach ball for a fraction of the cost](#).

The abundance of these surveillance satellites has had some interesting consequences. At a military conference earlier this year, chief of US Navy operations Admiral John Richardson said that it was becoming harder and harder for the military to practise its manoeuvres in secret due to the widespread adoption of these glorified CCTV cameras encircling the planet.

I spoke to Eoin Treacy, editor of *Frontier Tech Investor*, on the subject of space recently. He is very bullish on the sector – although not in the way you would generally think. One of the trends he sees emerging from the space sector is the falling cost of communications and hyper-fast thanks to the miniaturisation of satellite technology.

But in the meantime, manned missions to space have slowed to a trickle. It's hard to imagine, but during the height of the space race, NASA was planning on putting a man on Mars in the 1980s. Had that been successful, who knows what Elon Musk would be planning on now?

Wernher Von Braun's book *Das Marsprojekt* which outlined the structure of a Mars mission was written in 1948, and Von Braun (heavily involved in the Apollo program) pushed hard for a Mars mission.

However, Richard Nixon opted in favour of the Space Shuttle program, which was much cheaper. Having beaten Russia to the moon, there wasn't much to be gained politically through further space exploration.

It's worth noting that the US dropped the gold standard at the height of the space race. In fact Apollo 15, one of the last moon landings (Apollo 18-20 were cancelled after budget cuts), returned to earth just eight days before Nixon closed the gold window.

It wasn't long afterwards that the US dollar was cemented as the world's reserve currency thanks to the petrodollar system established by the US and Saudi Arabia pricing oil in US dollars only, creating global demand for dollars. Perhaps the American space crusade was no longer worthwhile after its currency crusade had conquered the [global economy](#).

With Russia and China on the rise today though, perhaps we may see a return of *Das Marsprojekt* as the East and West race to conquer the stars, capturing the public imagination once more. A new space race might not be popular with the climate change lobby however – the Saturn V rockets used in the moon landings burned 15 tonnes of kerosene a second during take-off.

Something tells me Musk is on his own for the moment.

The idea of a human civilisation on Mars brings up some fascinating questions. What currency would settlers use, once a self-sustaining base had been set up? Would there be a central bank of Mars? A Martian branch of the Federal Reserve system? [Or a cryptocurrency – Marscoin?](#)

I always wonder how law enforcement might work up there. Should a psychopathic settler kill those opposed to him, enslave the rest, and declare themselves King of Mars, what would any be able to do about it? It's not like the police are going to up there and make an arrest.

Perhaps I'm getting a little carried away.

Have a great weekend,

Boaz Shoshan  
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