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18 cool sites and apps that teach you about space

by [Don Reisinger](#)

Few topics interest me more than space. Though I'll admit that I don't know nearly as much as I would like, it has always been my goal to learn about the universe. I bet I'm not alone. That's why I'm sharing this list of 18 space sites. They all offer something neat. And they're all informative.

446
diggs

[digg it](#)

Space sites

[Amazing Space](#) Though the site is designed for students, Amazing Space is a fantastic resource for anyone who wants to learn something about space. If you want basic information on topics such as gravity and black holes, the site offers it. If you want to gain some knowledge about Earth and how it was formed, you can learn that too. It's not as in-depth as some sites in this roundup, but it's not meant to be. Amazing Space is for the beginner.

[Astroengine](#) Each day, Astroengine sifts through studies and documents released by scientists around the world and publishes those that don't get noticed. For example, Saturn's icy moon, Enceladus, might have a liquid ocean, according to a study published by scientists. Astroengine has a nice discussion on that. Few major sources do.

[Astronomy Picture of the Day](#) If you just want pictures of what's going on in space, look no further than NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day. Each day, the site is updated with one picture of space. Underneath the picture is an informative description of the image's significance. I go there every day to see what they'll display next. You should too.

[Chandra](#) The Chandra X-Ray Observatory from Harvard University continuously takes pictures of space phenomenon thousands of light years away. You can view all those pictures on the site. I'm amazed at the quality of the photos. If you want to see space outside of the solar system, this is the destination for you.

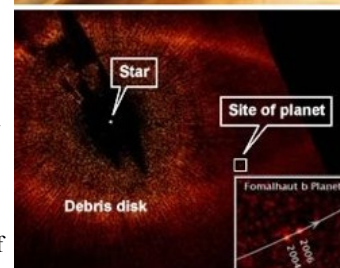
[Daily Galaxy](#) Daily Galaxy provides news and information about galactic events. There are also some videos that help you gain a better understanding of space. Daily Galaxy doesn't often stray beyond the Galaxy (thus its name), but you'll still find a wealth of information on the site. Check it out.

[Hubble Site](#) As you might expect, Hubble Site takes an in-depth look at the Hubble Telescope. From news to its latest image captures, the site has it all. You can even learn about how it works and how it helps scientists learn about space. The best part of the site is its galleries section. I literally spent over an hour last night looking through the beautiful images. The Hubble Site is fantastic. It's a must-see.

[NASA](#) The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's site is filled with space news. It also has updates on missions. But if you want to be entertained, you can spend hours perusing the site's images and videos depicting different solar systems and star clusters around the universe. NASA.gov even has interactive features that let you see objects in Space in 3D. You'll be blown away by NASA's resources.

[Nine Planets](#) Nine Planets gives you an in-depth "tour" of the solar system. It provides information on the sun, all the planets, and much more. It even shows satellite pictures taken of a variety of clusters and nebulae. Though the information on the site isn't as in-depth as what you'll find on NASA's pages, it's still worth consulting as you learn more about our solar system.

[Non-Messier Objects Indexes](#) I couldn't write this roundup without adding at least one geeky site. And the Non-Messier Objects Indexes is exactly that. Non-Messier objects are those astronomical "objects" that were not originally included in French astronomer Charles Messier's Catalog of Nebulae and Star Clusters. The site is an index of star clusters, galaxies, and nebulae thousands of light years away.



Amazing Space provides incredible pictures.

(Credit: [Amazing Space](#))



A picture taken of a far-away galaxy by the Hubble Telescope.

(Credit: [Hubble site](#))

You'll find pictures of the objects, descriptions, and all kinds of scientific data. The Non-Messier Objects Index is definitely for the space expert. But it's also one of the most informative space sites on the Web.

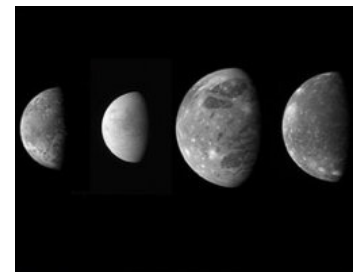
[SLOOH Space Camera](#) If you want to stay mesmerized on one site for hours, the SLOOH Space Camera is for you. Once you sign up for the site and pick one of its membership packages -- \$14.95 for 100 minutes on a telescope or \$49.95 for an unlimited amount of time for one year -- you'll have the option to explore space. You'll take hold of a telescope, zoom in on, well, anything you see, and Otto, the site's mascot will tell you what you're looking at. You can also take pictures of whatever you've seen. You can view your gallery of pictures at any time. I could go on, but suffice it to say that SLOOH is awesome. It's worth every dime.

[Solar System Live](#) With Solar System Live, you can view the entire solar system or, if you want, just the planets. You can set time and date to see where everything is located. You can also change your observing location, track an asteroid, or see where comets are traveling. It's an impressive service that gives you a lot of insight into the solar system and how it has changed over time. You'll learn quite a bit.

[Solar System Simulator](#) The Jet Propulsion Laboratory has a Solar System Simulator that gives you the option to see anything in the Solar System. So, if you want to see Pluto from the sun, you can do it. If you want to see Jupiter's moons from above, you can do that too. The possibilities are practically endless. And the results are mesmerizing.

[Space.com](#) Space.com provides some of the best information on the Web about the universe. You can see the latest space news. You can even monitor space missions. The site has a "SpaceViews" section offering up pictures and videos for you to see what's out there. I could spend hours on Space.com. And I think you could too. Check it out.

[Space Daily](#) If you're looking for news on space, Space Daily is for you. The site gives you news each day that it gathers from a variety of astronomers and sources, like NASA. You'll find information on topics ranging from the extinction of dinosaurs to theories on the creation of small galaxies. It's a fine resource for space news.



Jupiter's moons on Space.com

[Space Weather](#) Have you ever wanted to know where geomagnetic storms will be impacting Earth? (Credit: [Space.com](#)) If so, Space Weather is for you. The site takes a look at all kinds of space weather issues impacting the globe. From solar wind to X-ray solar flares, it has it all. You can even find out when the next asteroid encounters could occur (we dodged all the bullets in April). Space Weather is a handy site for the expert space enthusiast. But if you're a novice, you'll probably have a tough time understanding the site's content.

[Stellarium \(Windows|Mac\)](#) Stellarium is billed as a "planetarium for your computer." And it delivers. It's free (and open source) and delivers a catalog of over 210 million stars, as well as realistic views of space, providing one of the most awe-inspiring experiences in this roundup. You can see where the planets are from your view atop a rover on Mars or check out shooting stars light years away. If you want to add some deep sky objects, you can do that too. I spent 20 minutes today hanging out on the Moon, looking at Earth. What did you do? Check out Stellarium. You'll be blown away by what it offers.

[Windows to the Universe](#) It's probably best-suited for the classroom, but Windows to the Universe is still a useful site for those of us who don't know much about space. The site provides a history of space, a look into the Earth's climate, and a directory of space missions. It has also has some fun games you can play to pass the time. I like Windows of the Universe. But if you're a more advanced space enthusiast, you probably shouldn't waste your time with this site.

[WorldWide Telescope](#) Microsoft Research Lab's WorldWide Telescope is worth trying out for anyone who's interested in space. You can either download the Windows client or preview the site's Web client, as long as you have Silverlight 2 running on your PC. Either way, you'll be invited into a compelling app that brings you on a guided tour of space with some of the leading astronomers in the business. You'll probably learn more in the average WorldWide Telescope tour than reading articles on a site like Space.com. It's that informative. Plus, you'll have the ability to *see* different space objects that you might have never known about. The WorldWide Telescope is an outstanding learning tool. I think you'll love it. I certainly do.

The Top 3

If you don't want to sift through all these sites, here are the top 3 sites you *must* check out:

1. [NASA.gov](#)
2. [SLOOH Space Camera](#)

3. Stellarium



Don Reisinger is a technology columnist who has written about everything from HDTVs to computers to Flowbee Haircut Systems. Don is a member of the CNET Blog Network, and posts at [The Digital Home](#). He is not an employee of CNET.

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