

SEPTEMBER 2014

HELLO WORLD



A Super Moon is when a full moon is at the closest approach on its elliptical orbit. This results in the largest apparent size of the lunar disk as seen from Earth. The next Super Moon is on September 9, 2014. Regis Vincent, Associate Director at SRI International, used his keen eye to snap this image of the moon over San Francisco. Magical and wonderful to view, the Super Moon draws the world together. While the moon does have a tidal connection to the upper atmosphere, Super Moons do not have any known effect on space weather.

Space weather? SRI International researchers in the Center for Geospace Studies investigate the atmosphere. Weather on Earth — such as thunderstorms, lightning and drought — has a large impact on our everyday existence. Space weather phenomena include hurricane-force winds, large temperature variations and large-scale storms. This affects space-based communication and navigation systems. Space weather scientists Asti Bhatt, Ph.D. and Elizabeth Kendall, Ph.D. pursue work on how these phenomena affect our daily lives. Using an all-sky imaging method, they detect space weather's impact on Earth. The all-sky imaging device was funded by SRI International. By using off-the-shelf parts, it is 1/10th the cost of other commercial devices. The camera system needs to be kept cool, which is difficult when the camera is outside. A special enclosure was designed (with some help from the model shop) that keeps the airflow in the camera.

Asti earned her Ph.D. from Cornell University, with post doctoral work at MIT. Asti got interested in space weather while studying satellite images of Earth at Utah State University and is fascinated by plasma physics. Elizabeth's Ph.D. is from Stanford and her post doctoral work was at Cornell. Space weather was illuminated for Elizabeth while studying lightning in New Mexico. They enjoy sharing this fascinating subject with others, lecturing at a number of high schools as well as the general public. Their unique partnerships also help train future scientists, including students in rural areas where the schools are hosting the imaging devices. In August, Asti and Elizabeth presented at Café Scientifique — watch it on YouTube.

Meanwhile, back here firmly on Earth, members are looking for cars that will hold up under unusual space weather! For a really easy vehicle loan, snap a picture of your sales contract or vehicle registration and email it to our Super Loan Professionals at connect@srifcu.org! We'll make it so easy.

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