Attitude and Pointing Concepts for ISS Payload Operations

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Topics

• What Can Pointing Do for Payloads
• Typical Questions for Payload Customers
• Variables that Affect Target Viewing
  – Time
  – Blockage
• Examples of Pointing Support for Payloads
  – SCaN
  – OPALS
  – SOLAR
Attitude and Pointing Office

- The Pointing Officer is responsible for flight control support of communications predictions, unique target lines-of-sight (LOS) computations, and optimization of ISS attitude to support payload, onboard systems, or user pointing requirements, as requested.
- Pointing can integrate multiple planning products into a single output:
  - TOPO’s trajectory predictions
  - ADCO’s attitude timeline
  - PRO’s solar array plan
  - SPARTAN’s radiator plan
  - ROBO’s robotic plan
What Can Pointing Do For Payloads?

- Line-of-Sight Capabilities
  - Determine instrument (e.g., sensor, aperture, etc.) operation times based on orbital constraints
    - Compute acquisition times for targets
    - Integrate operational constraints (like sun avoidance) into analysis
  - Compute ISS (and any other orbiting object) overflight information for given ground sites
  - Incorporate any sensor Field of View (FOV) limits/constraints
  - Compute look angles to target, within any reference frame (ISS, payload, etc.)
  - Filter target computations based on S and Ku comm. availability (if required)
What Can Pointing Do For Payloads?

• Attitude Capabilities
  – Compute ISS / Robotics / payload attitude combinations to satisfy requirements for payload release, to acquire science, and to accomplish payload objectives
  – Verify operational constraints are not violated during robotic motion for installation

• Blockage Capabilities
  – Create blockage diagrams for antennas/instrument FOVs, from a specific point on ISS or payload structure
  – Model movement of ISS appendages (SSRMS, radiators, etc.)

• Integration Capabilities
  – Incorporate payload-specific information into analysis
  – Provide information to payload in their language
Typical Questions for Payload Customers

- Does your payload have certain sensor requirements?
  - Can the Sun/Moon get in its field-of-view?
  - Do constraints matter if the sensor is on or off?
  - Time limit for how long it can look at the Sun?
  - Is there an additional buffer that needs to be protected?

- Does your payload need concurrent ISS communication with the ground?
  - S-band for telemetry?
  - Ku-band for video?

- Can ISS elements block your sensor field-of-view?
  - Solar arrays?
  - Thermal radiators?
  - Robotic elements?
Variables that Affect Target Viewing

• Trajectory
  – Weekly trajectory updates realize an average of 10 – 30 seconds of acquisition error

• Attitude
  – The ISS attitude fluctuates during the course of an orbit

• Time

• Structural Blockage
Variables that Affect Target Viewing: Time

• The ISS is moving at ~7 kilometers per second
• A significant factor in line-of-sight predictions for high resolution instruments is knowledge of exact time
• Depending on sensor resolution, being off by half a second may mean completely missing a small target
• GPS time is official time source for ISS
  – Currently GMT and GPS differ by 17 seconds
Variables that Affect Target Viewing: Structural Blockage

- ISS structure is big and frequently in the way
- Solar arrays
  - When in autotrack, arrays are moving at 4 deg/min
  - Predictive data received from Power Resource Officer (PRO)
- Radiators
  - Can cause significant amount of blockage
  - Positioning is typically static, but usually repositioned for high beta periods and visiting vehicles
  - Positioning plan for the future received from SPARTAN console
- Robotics
  - Robotic elements – MBS, SSRMS and SPDM – can cause significant blockage
  - Positioning plan for future received from Robotics Officer (ROBO)
Examples of Pointing Support for Payloads

- SCaN Testbed
- OPALS
- SOLAR
SCaN Testbed

• LOS Operations
  – Line of sight calculations to TDRS
  – Requires scheduled events during times ISS has S-band and Ku-band services available
  – It is also common for SCaN to request LOS analysis of non-TDRS targets such as the Sun and ground sites

• Analysis Provided by ISS Pointing
  – SCaN provides a TDRS Communication Request weekly to Pointing
  – Pointing determines available times SCaN will have events with TDRS satellites three weeks ahead
  – The week prior to SCaN activities, Pointing updates line-of-sight calculations with latest inputs and relays significant changes to scheduled passes
SCaN Testbed FOV

- SCAN Antenna FOV
- Solar array in FOV
OPALS

- LOS Operations
  - Communication with ground sites via a laser
  - Need considerable accuracy
  - Acquire ground beacon
  - Closed loop

- Analysis Provided by ISS Pointing
  - Provide ISS flyover times of ground sites for next three weeks
  - Determine viable passes when ground site and Sun are not concurrently within OPALS FOV
SOLAR

• LOS Operations
  – Observing Sun
  – Pointed out ISS -Z axis

• Analysis Provided by ISS Pointing
  – ROBO notifies Pointing and SOLAR if planned robotic operations will cause any robotic elements to enter SOLAR FOV
  – Pointing analyzes if Sun’s track will pass behind robotic elements and notifies SOLAR of any violations
  – SOLAR uses this information to note potential interruptions to their data
SOLAR FOV

Sun traces through the FOV

SSRMS in FOV

SOLAR FOV
Questions?
Further Information

• If you have any questions, please contact:
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