

View of earth from Nasa space centre

DOVES

SOLVING COMMERCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES WITH SATELLITE IMAGERY

By Planet Labs

Project URL: www.planet.com

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- Economic Empowerment
- Environment & Sustainability
- Audiovisual
- Data

Planet Labs calls their array of 28 satellites Flock 1, and this flock of 'Doves' constitutes the world's largest collection of earth-imaging satellites. Born out of a Californian garage in 2012, Planet Labs aims to have 150 Doves in orbit delivering on CEO Will Marshall's plan to "image the entire planet, every day".

The concept behind Planet Labs' Doves is to deliver information on the ever-changing world to organisations that need the updated imagery, especially those that can use it to lead change and make a difference. Through partnerships with NGOs, the imagery produced is providing the necessary raw data to combat issues such as deforestation, illegal fishing, flooding and even potential human rights abuses with Amnesty International.

Commercial customers use the Doves' output through a range of tools, taking advantage of Planet Labs' automatic data pipeline of regularly refreshed imagery. These images work to a resolution of 3-5 metres, and are produced by satellites that are no larger than a shoebox. The Doves are 95% cheaper than traditional satellites, and Planet Labs is currently enhancing its capabilities with a number of corporate acquisitions, like RapidEye, through which it has acquired an archive of six years of global imagery.

Governing the use of a constant stream of data is Planet Labs' Code of Ethics. The company maintains that imagery it produces will be used responsibly, by itself and its clients, and – in a very forward-looking statement – that the Doves will not hasten the problem of space debris. The company also operates an Artist In Residence programme, to incorporate original art within its satellites.

Would you like to be part of the community that explores the future of Earth imaging? Planet Labs welcomes applications from potential user-testers. More details are available on their website.

Image 'Great Lakes and Central U.S. Viewed From the International Space Station' courtesy of NASA's Marshall Space flight centre.

Last updated: 25th of August, 2015