

Zac Manchester

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Academic Positions

Stanford University

Assistant Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics

Jan 2018 – Present

Harvard University

Postdoctoral Fellow, Agile Robotics Lab

Oct 2015 – Dec 2017

Education

Cornell University

Ph.D. Aerospace Engineering

Dissertation: Centimeter-Scale Spacecraft: Design, Fabrication, and Deployment

Advisor: Mason Peck

Ithaca, NY

2015

Cornell University

M.Eng. Mechanical Engineering

Ithaca, NY

2010

Cornell University

B.S. Applied Physics

Ithaca, NY

2009

Research Experience

Stanford University

Director, Robotic Exploration Laboratory

Stanford, CA

Jan 2018–Present

- Building motion planning and control algorithms that can reason about uncertainty and contact interactions.
- Developing navigation, communication, and control capabilities to enable massively distributed space systems.
- Pushing the limits of size, mass, and power in small spacecraft.

Harvard University

Postdoctoral Fellow, Agile Robotics Laboratory

Cambridge, MA

Oct 2015–Dec 2017

- Developed novel algorithms for robust motion planning under uncertainty and disturbances.
- Developed a new framework for modeling and controlling robotic systems that experience contact based on discrete mechanics.
- Performed wind tunnel tests to develop a full-flight-envelope model of a small UAV for planning and control of aggressive flight maneuvers.

Cornell University*Graduate Research Assistant, Space Systems Design Studio***Ithaca, NY***Aug 2010–Sep 2015*

- Pioneered the development of centimeter-scale “ChipSat” spacecraft.
- Founded the KickSat project to launch and deploy 100 ChipSats in low-Earth orbit.
- Raised \$75k through crowd-funding website Kickstarter.
- Awarded launch through NASA’s CubeSat Launch Initiative.
- Developed novel attitude control and inertia estimation algorithms.
- Developed a long-range low-power radio communication protocol for small spacecraft.
- Led a small team to design, build, test, and fly a 3U CubeSat.

NASA Ames Research Center*Aerospace Engineer***Moffett Field, CA***June 2012–Dec 2013*

- Developed attitude determination and control algorithms for small satellite missions.
- Experimented with rapid prototyping techniques for fabrication of spacecraft components.
- Performed integration and environmental testing for CubeSats.

Sandia National Laboratories*Research Intern***Albuquerque, NM***Summer 2009*

- Used semiconductor fabrication techniques to build prototype satellite-on-chip devices at Sandia’s Center for Integrated Nanotechnology.

Cornell University*Undergraduate Research Assistant, Space Systems Design Studio***Ithaca, NY***Jan 2008–July 2010*

- Designed and conducted experiments to measure the capacitance of charged objects in a plasma
- Operated a xenon ion thruster in a vacuum chamber

Teaching Experience

Harvard University*Guest Lecturer and Lab Instructor, Science of the Physical Universe***Cambridge, MA***Spring 2017**Teaching Assistant, Optimization Algorithms for Robotics**Spring 2016**Guest Lecturer, Space Science and Engineering**Fall 2016***Cornell University***Instructor, Spacecraft Engineering***Ithaca, NY***Spring 2012**Teaching Assistant, Feedback Control Systems**Fall 2010*

Other Professional Experience

Breakthrough Starshot*Advisory Committee Member**Feb 2016–Present***Sentinel IC Technologies, Inc.***Software Consultant**Spring 2010*

- Developed high performance mixed-integer optimization code in C for semiconductor design applications

Analytical Graphics, Inc.*Software Development Intern**2007–2010*

- Developed astrodynamics simulation software
- Developed a C# to Java source-to-source compiler
- Developed an algorithm for calculating rhumb lines on oblate and prolate spheroids that is now part of STK

Licenses and Certifications

Private Pilot

Single-Engine Land

2017

Amateur Radio

Technician Class

2011

Awards

Distinction in Teaching Award

Harvard University

2016

Awarded for top student reviews while serving as a teaching assistant

Thomas J. and Joan T. Kelley Prize

Cornell University

2010

Awarded for top Aerospace Engineering Master's project

Publications

Preprints.....

1. Z. Manchester, N. Doshi, R. J. Wood, and S. Kuindersma, "Contact-Implicit Trajectory Optimization using Variational Integrators," *International Journal of Robotics Research*, 2018.

Journal Papers.....

2. J. I. Lipton, R. MacCurdy, Z. Manchester, L. Chin, D. Cellucci, and D. Rus, "Handedness in shearing auxetics creates rigid and compliant structures," *Science*, vol. 360, no. 6389, pp. 632–635, May 2018. DOI: 10.1126/science.aar4586.
3. Z. Manchester and S. Kuindersma, "Robust Direct Trajectory Optimization Using Approximate Invariant Funnels," *Autonomous Robots*, Jul. 2018. DOI: 10.1007/s10514-018-9779-5.
4. Z. Manchester and A. Loeb, "Stability of a Light Sail Riding on a Laser Beam," *The Astrophysical Journal*, vol. 837, no. 2, Mar. 2017. DOI: 10.3847/2041-8213/aa619b.
5. Z. Manchester and M. Peck, "Quaternion Variational Integrators for Spacecraft Dynamics," *Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 69–76, Jan. 2016. DOI: 10.2514/1.G001176.

Conference Papers.....

6. J. Lipton, Z. Manchester, and D. Rus, "Planning cuts for mobile robots with bladed tools," in *Robotics and Automation (ICRA), 2017 IEEE International Conference On*, Singapore: IEEE, 2017.
7. Z. Manchester and S. Kuindersma, "DIRTREL: Robust Trajectory Optimization with Ellipsoidal Disturbances and LQR Feedback," in *Robotics: Science and Systems (RSS), Cambridge, MA, Cambridge, MA, 2017*.
8. Z. Manchester and S. Kuindersma, "Variational Contact-Implicit Trajectory Optimization," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Robotics Research (ISRR)*, Puerto Varas, Chile, 2017.
9. Z. Manchester, J. Lipton, R. Wood, and S. Kuindersma, "A Variable Forward-Sweep Wing Design for Enhanced Perching in Micro Aerial Vehicles," in *55th AIAA Aerospace Sciences Meeting*, Grapevine, TX, 2017.

10. Z. Manchester and M. Peck, "Recursive Inertia Estimation With Semidefinite Programming," in *AIAA Guidance, Navigation, and Control Conference*, Grapevine, TX, 2017.
11. B. Plancher, Z. Manchester, and S. Kuindersma, "Constrained Unscented Dynamic Programming," in *Proceedings of the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)*, Vancouver, BC, 2017.
12. Z. Manchester, "Lyapunov-Based Control for Flat-Spin Recovery and Spin Inversion of Spin-Stabilized Spacecraft," in *AIAA/AAS Astrodynamics Specialist Conference*, Long Beach, CA, 2016.
13. Z. Manchester and S. Kuindersma, "Derivative-free trajectory optimization with unscented dynamic programming," in *Decision and Control (CDC), 2016 IEEE 55th Conference On*, Las Vegas, NV: IEEE, 2016.
14. Z. Manchester, M. Peck, and A. Filo, "Kicksat: A crowd-funded mission to demonstrate the world's smallest spacecraft," in *AIAA/USU Conference on Small Satellites*, Logan, UT, 2013.
15. Z. Manchester and M. Peck, "Stochastic Space Exploration with Microscale Spacecraft," in *AIAA Guidance, Navigation, and Control Conference*, Portland, OR: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Aug. 8, 2011. DOI: 10.2514/6.2011-6648.
16. J. Atchison, Z. Manchester, and M. Peck, "Microscale Atmospheric Re-entry Sensors," in *7th International Planetary Probe Workshop*, Barcelona, Spain, 2010.

Dissertation.....

17. Z. Manchester, "Centimeter-Scale Spacecraft: Design, Fabrication, and Deployment," Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 2015.

Other.....

18. Z. Manchester, "How Do You Fly to Alpha Centauri in Just 20 Years? Ride a Laser Beam," *IEEE Spectrum*, Jun. 2016.
19. Z. Manchester, "KickSat: Bringing Space to the Masses," *CQ VHF Magazine*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 32–38, 2013.
20. Z. Manchester, "Measurement and Analysis of the Capacitance of Charged Objects in a Plasma with Applications to Lorentz-Actuated Spacecraft," Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, M.Eng. Report, 2010.

Invited Talks and Panels

Unusual Appendages Workshop, RSS 2018	<i>June 29, 2018</i>
WORLD.MINDS, Zurich	<i>May 9, 2018</i>
Toyota Research Institute, Technical Talk Series	<i>May 4, 2018</i>
Stanford University, Robotics and Autonomous Systems Seminar	<i>Apr 20, 2018</i>
UC Berkeley, Semiautonomous Seminar Series	<i>Feb 23, 2018</i>
Carnegie Mellon University, ECE Graduate Seminar Series	<i>Feb 8, 2018</i>
DLD Munich 2018	<i>Jan 21, 2018</i>
MIT, Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics	<i>Jul 7, 2017</i>
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Observatory Night	<i>May 16, 2017</i>
Breakthrough Discuss Conference, Stanford, CA	<i>Apr 21, 2017</i>
TU Delft, Aerospace Engineering Seminar Series	<i>March 10, 2017</i>

Brown University, Space Horizons 2017	Feb 16, 2017
Upper Canada College, World Affairs Conference	Feb 7, 2017
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, ITC Seminar Series	Jan 26, 2017
MIT Media Lab, Space Lectures Series	Nov 29, 2016
AIAA SciTech, Plenary Panel	Jan 5, 2016
NSF, Workshop on Engineering and Biology	Oct 16, 2014
Texas Instruments, Dallas, TX	May 30, 2014
Cornell University, Technology for Bootstrapped Entrepreneurship	May 5, 2014
AIAA San Francisco Chapter, Small Payloads Tech Talks	Oct 15, 2012
NASA Goddard Spaceflight Center, Seminar Series	Dec 12, 2011

Professional Service

Co-Organizer.....

- o Progress in Novel Space Propulsion, Breakthrough Discuss Conference 2018

Journal Reviewer.....

- o AIAA Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics
- o AIAA Journal of Aerospace Information Systems
- o IEEE Transactions on Robotics
- o Journal of Physics Communications
- o Advances in Space Research
- o Aerospace Science and Technology
- o IET Control Theory and Applications

Conference Reviewer.....

- o Robotics: Science and Systems (RSS 2018)
- o International Symposium on Robotics Research (ISRR 2017)
- o IEEE Conference on Automation Science and Engineering (CASE 2017)
- o International Workshop on the Algorithmic Foundations of Robotics (WAFR 2016)

External Thesis Committee Member.....

- o Daniel Djordjevski, TU Delft, 2017

Outreach

Clubes de Ciencia

Instructor

Planned and taught a one-week workshop on aerospace engineering for freshman and sophomore college students. Topics included satellite subsystems, orbit mechanics, and GPS. Activities included tracking CubeSats with amateur radio equipment and launching a high-altitude balloon.

Xalapa, Mexico

Summer 2016

Maker Faire

Exhibitor — Awarded “Educators Choice” red ribbon.

New York, NY

September 2014

Maker Faire

Exhibitor — Awarded “Editor’s Choice” blue ribbon.

Bay Area, CA

May 2013

Selected Press Coverage

1. R. Wyss, "Dieser Mini-Satellit soll das All erkunden," *Blick*, May 13, 2018.
2. L. Billings, "Reaching for the Stars, Breakthrough Sends Smallest-Ever Satellites into Orbit," *Scientific American*, Jul. 26, 2017.
3. L. Crane, "Smallest satellite ever paves way for planned interstellar fleet," *New Scientist*, Jul. 26, 2017.
4. N. Davis, "Breakthrough Starshot successfully launch world's smallest spacecraft," *The Guardian*, Jul. 28, 2017.
5. D. Freeman, "World's Smallest Spacecraft Is Prelude to Enormous Voyage," *NBC News*, Sep. 18, 2017.
6. T. Staedter, "Breakthrough Starshot's Interstellar Sail Works Best As a Ball," *Space.com*, Mar. 21, 2017.
7. K. Hartnett, "Teaching satellites to swarm," *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 30, 2016.
8. N. Jones, "Tiny 'chipsat' spacecraft set for first flight," *Nature News*, vol. 534, no. 7605, p. 15, Jun. 2, 2016. DOI: 10.1038/534015a.
9. O. Morton, "Brain Scan: Space Chips," *The Economist*, Aug. 27, 2016.
10. T. Revell, "Disco-ball sail propelled by laser could fly to a nearby star," *New Scientist*, Nov. 10, 2016.
11. *BBC World News*, Sep. 24, 2014.
12. S. Clark, "Crowd-funded stowaway to deploy 104 tiny satellites," *Spaceflight Now*, Apr. 13, 2014.
13. G. Fleishmann, "Nanosats are go!" *The Economist*, Jul. 6, 2014.
14. Q. Hardy, "Space Chips for the Common Man," *The New York Times*, May 4, 2014.
15. N. Hurst, "Q&A: KickSat's Zac Manchester and Andy Filo," *Make Magazine*, Nov. 4, 2014.
16. "Man vs. The Universe," *The Science Channel*, Aug. 2014.
17. C. Seidler, "SpaceX-Flug: Mein Haus, mein Auto, mein Mini-Satellit," *Der Spiegel*, Apr. 14, 2014.
18. R. Hollingham, "How to get to space on the cheap," *BBC Future*, Apr. 16, 2012.
19. *BBC Radio 4*, Oct. 13, 2011.