



Scott Herman, BlackSky's VP of product development ●●●

BlackSky is revolutionizing how we look at our world. By fusing satellite imagery with real-time data, BlackSky delivers fresher, more relevant insights. Whether you're tracking economic assets, monitoring illegal maritime activity, providing humanitarian relief, or securing troops and borders, BlackSky provides a holistic view of the situation.

The company's planned constellation of 60 satellites – with six spacecraft on orbit by the end of 2017 – provides frequent revisit rates over 95% of the Earth's population. BlackSky provides color imagery at a resolution of one meter (1 square meter = 1 image pixel). Monitoring economic activity is easier than ever – see ships in ports, earthquake damage, or herd migration.

## Web-based global intelligence service

BlackSky is a web-based global intelligence service created by Spaceflight Industries. The company plans to launch a fleet of 60 satellites into orbit, which will provide images of all major cities and zones between 40 and 70 times each day. BlackSky will market its geospatial services to a variety of industries, including government, defence, agriculture, forestry and engineering. Amy Saunders spoke with Scott Herman, BlackSky's VP of product development, to find out more about BlackSky's expected market presence and its plans going forward.

**Question: Can you provide an outline of BlackSky's development, from its founding to where it stands today?**

**Scott Herman:** When BlackSky was founded in 2013, the intent was to enable greater access to satellite imagery through our planned 60-satellite constellation and to make geospatial data more accessible to a larger number of organizations. While our initial goals remain intact, our vision has also evolved to meet the demands of the marketplace. Last year, we acquired OpenWhere's technology to expand BlackSky's geospatial data platform for satellite imagery.

Today, BlackSky's geospatial service combines easy-to-access satellite imagery, timely content feeds and analytical services to enhance our

understanding of the planet. Through a web-based secure user interface, customers can discover, task, purchase and download images from multiple high-resolution imaging spacecraft including those from Airbus, MBRSC's DubaiSat-2, 21AT's TripleSat, SIIS's KOMPSAT, and UrtheCast's Deimos-2. Customers can even acquire near real-time images by tasking the satellites to gain current insights.

Organizations are also able to access curated data feeds, comprising information from multiple sources such as news outlets, social media and physical sensor networks. Through machine learning, predictive algorithms and natural language processing techniques, the platform triangulates these relevant global events in time and space. Users then receive tailored results that are prioritized based on their preferences.

Currently, the platform is in early adoption with groups such as the World Bank, RS Metrics and the United Nations, among others.

**Question: What can you tell us about BlackSky's planned satellite fleet? How will its services compare to those of other Earth observation companies on the market?**

**Scott Herman:** The first three commercially operational satellites are scheduled for launch this year, with the complete constellation on orbit by 2020. The BlackSky constellation will operate at 450km and provide 1m resolution. We'll schedule the launches through



Coastal park south of Perth. Photo courtesy of BlackSky ●●●

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Suburban Melbourne. Photo courtesy of BlackSky ●●●

Spaceflight, Spaceflight Industries' launch and mission management service. The Spaceflight team will monitor signal acquisition from our satellite operations centre at our headquarters in Seattle, Washington.

What sets us apart from our competitors is how simple we've made it for our customers to access imagery and enable on-demand tasking of satellites for near real-time monitoring. Also, our constellation will pass over key zones hourly with a rapid revisit rate to provide fresher images so decision makers will have information that is up-to-date.

**Question: Which end user and geographical markets will BlackSky target, and which do you expect will have the greatest impact on the company's business?**

**Scott Herman:** Our audience is broad, spanning foreign and domestic government agencies and financial services, humanitarian, oil/gas, agriculture, forestry, defence/security, manufacturing and media organizations.

There are a multitude of organizations that can benefit from access to affordable, on-demand satellite imaging and related data. It is beneficial to any group who needs to make informed decisions about their global assets. The sky really is the limit.

**Question: In April 2016, BlackSky established a partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) – how will UNITAR use BlackSky's capabilities to improve its operations?**

**Scott Herman:** BlackSky's platform will

provide UNITAR with fresher images at a faster rate than ever before. UNITAR and BlackSky will work in tandem to explore how imaging and insight can be applied to humanitarian relief, human security, climate change adaptation, sustainable water management, territorial management, high priority peace-keeping missions, maritime monitoring of illegal activity, and more.

**Question: In September 2016, BlackSky's first Pathfinder Satellite was launched from India's PSLV. Can you provide an update on the satellite's progress since the launch?**

**Scott Herman:** Spaceflight Industries built and launched Pathfinder-1 and operates the spacecraft with our command and control system, which includes ground stations and constellation management software.

Following the successful launch of

Pathfinder-1, a key demonstration satellite for our constellation, we've claimed complete mission success after proving out our overall business plan and system architecture, and of course, taking beautiful pictures.

**Question: What have been the biggest challenges to date while working towards the launch of BlackSky's fleet, and what potential challenges do you expect as you move forward?**

**Scott Herman:** The biggest challenge for BlackSky is really about executing on and scaling the entire system – from developing the user interface people use to search and buy imagery, to building and operating the satellites and bringing the images back to Earth. No one's ever done that before, and while a challenge, it's also incredibly rewarding to see it come to fruition.

**Question: What does BlackSky expect from 2017 and the years to come?**

**Scott Herman:** We have several exciting milestones we're looking forward to this year, including the launch of the constellation's first three commercial satellites and the expansion of our platform through strategic partnerships. As we continue to advance our imaging and insight capabilities, we are committed to leveraging new tools and resources to help organizations address global challenges with a deeper understanding. 🌟



United Arab Emirates. Photo courtesy of BlackSky ●●●

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