

AI Is the New Astronaut

The future of space isn't just rockets—it's algorithms.

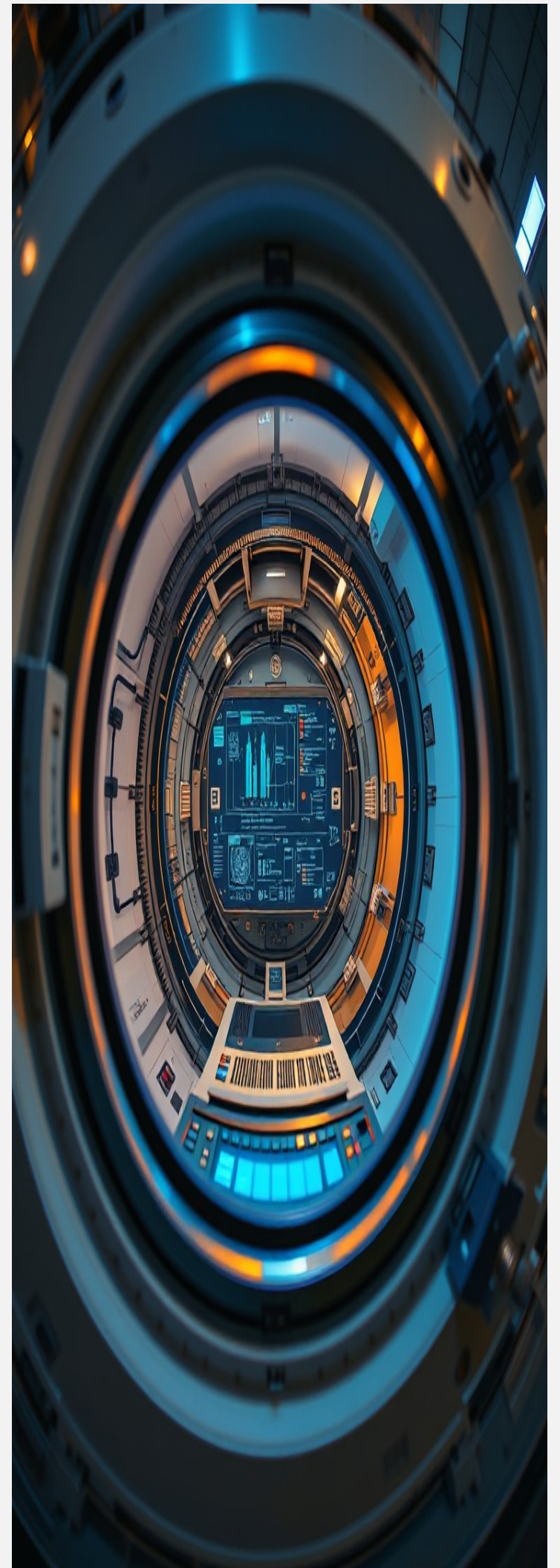
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October 28–29, 2026

Inauguration Event Window

The event window marks the formal transition of Caltech's 10th president, Ray Jayawardhana, and signals a new era of public-private space engagement.

This two-day inauguration at Caltech is not just ceremonial—it's a strategic signal. The 'Brave New Space Age' panel, scheduled for October 28, brings together AI, aerospace, and policy leaders to debate how autonomy, data, and machine learning are reshaping orbital operations, mission planning, and risk assessment. The timing aligns with a global shift toward AI-driven space missions, where real-time decision-making replaces ground-based command chains.





01

AI as Mission Critical Infrastructure

The panel's focus on 'New Space' implies a shift from human-centric to AI-centric operations. With NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman and Google's Eric Schmidt on stage, the discussion underscores that AI is no longer a support tool—it's embedded in mission architecture. From autonomous satellite swarms to real-time anomaly detection in deep space, AI is becoming the primary decision engine in commercial and scientific missions.



02

The Ethics of Autonomous Space

As AI assumes control over spacecraft navigation and resource allocation, the panel raises a critical second-order effect: accountability. If an AI system fails during a lunar landing or a Mars sample return, who is responsible? The absence of clear governance frameworks means that AI's speed and adaptability may outpace legal and ethical oversight—especially in commercial ventures where profit motives intersect with national security and planetary protection.

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