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Highlights from the November 2012 issue of Photonics Spectra

Lasers Find Varied Uses in Space Applications

On the Mars rover Curiosity, in cutting-edge telescope technology, and in guide star adaptive optics, lasers are space pioneers. With the beginning of the Laser Lunar Ranging experiment in the 1960s, the use of lasers in space moved out of the realm of science fiction into reality. While lasers-as-lightsabers are still only *Star Wars* fiction, the numerous ways we use lasers in space applications are pretty cool, even to non-nerdy folks.

FULL ARTICLE >>

Telescopes Require Polishing to Perfection

Farsighted projects such as the European Southern Observatory's gargantuan Extremely Large Telescope, to be installed in 2022, require advances in polishing technology. The project will put a 39.3-m-diameter main mirror atop a mountain in Chile for visible and near-infrared observation.

FULL ARTICLE >>

Storage Keeps Pace with Data from Space

There are few fields in which the challenge of image storage and analysis is more keenly felt than in space research. From ground-based telescopes to instruments in the outer reaches of the solar system, the influx of image data that is continually being generated is staggering. And this volume is set to grow as technologies for space exploration become more sophisticated.

FULL ARTICLE >>

In Situ Method Optimizes Optical Coatings

From the simplest broadband AR coatings used on eyeglasses and camera lenses to the complex coatings used in civilian and military lasers, optical fiber devices and high-brightness LEDs, optical thin films are to be found everywhere. Although we may not be aware of their presence, thin-film coatings enable commercialization and efficient operation of optical devices that simply would not be possible otherwise.

FULL ARTICLE >>

Superpolished Optics Enable High-Sensitivity Laser Applications

Superpolished optics represent a critical enabling technology in some of the most sensitive and high-precision lasers and laser-based systems. They are some of the most demanding components to make, coat and measure. However, the extraordinary performance delivered by these optics enables some of the most cutting-edge and exciting applications for lasers today.

FULL ARTICLE >>

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Products from this Issue

Negative GDD Mirrors
Research Electro-Optics, Inc. (REO)

Benchtop Fluorometer
HORIBA Scientific

Co-Fired Piezo Bimorph Actuators
PI (Physik Instrumente) L.P.

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