

Building the Hera Sampler

Thomas Dougan – Student, University of Arkansas - Mechanical Engineering

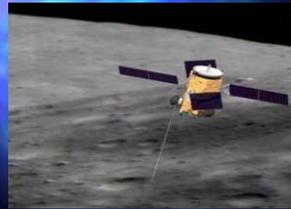
Dr. Larry Roe – Professor, University of Arkansas - Mechanical Engineering

The Hera Mission

Multiple Near-Earth Asteroid Sample Return

- The Hera mission will return samples from 3 near-earth asteroids
- There is wide ranging scientific benefits from a sample return mission
- The recent success of the NEAR mission and technological innovations precipitate further study of asteroids
- Asteroids may hold the key to the origins of the solar system

Hera Spacecraft



Artist's rendition from www.ark.edu/era

EROS



From http://near.jhuapl.edu

“Bubble Gum”

pros and cons

- Very simple from an engineering standpoint
- Easy to test for reliability
- Low energy consumption
- Working in microgravity increases sample size
- Finding an adhesive that works under harsh conditions of space (e.g. vacuum, cold, radiation)
- Making sure adhesive pad is not prohibitively large
- I thought asteroids were big rocks??

Test equipment

This is what we used for the preliminary testing

Sample foot

Adhesive

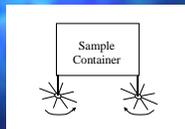
Sampler Objectives

What we are aiming for...

- To return 3 samples from each visited asteroid (3) each sample from a different location
- Minimum sample size is 300g
- Should pose no danger to the ship
- Sampler must be reliable under any conditions
- Should require a minimum amount of electricity

Honeybee Robotics Sampler

Counter rotating blades push sample into storage container



Not actual schematic, only conceptual reproduction

Preliminary Test Results

The results of the preliminary testing

| Test | Samt (300-425 µm) | Test 2 | Samt (125-5000 µm) |
|--------|-------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Sample | Sample Size (g) | Sample | Sample Size (g) |
| 1 | 5.692 | 4 | 21.518 |
| 2 | 5.148 | 5 | 17.128 |
| 3 | 6.838 | 6 | 14.878 |
| AVG | 5.885 | AVG | 17.774 |

Requires a 1 meter pad for 300 gram sample return

Requires a .4 meter pad for 300 gram sample return

Sample 2

Sample 4

Preliminary Testing

Will this idea really work?

- Thanks to the NEAR mission we have close up pictures that show that the outside of an asteroid is covered with sand sized particles
- To test the feasibility a small adhesive pad was used to pickup asteroid simulant
- Working with the 3M adhesives team to find adhesives that will work in space has been promising
- Rolling pin type devices have been devised as well

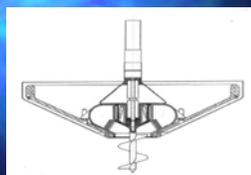
Current Ideas

And the not so current...

- One of the most promising designs is the adhesive foot pad dubbed the “Bubble Gum” design
- Ideas range from the faithful clamshell design to an auger design to a ballistic sample release design
- Honeybee Robotics and Lockheed Martin Astronautics have already proposed designs

Lockheed Martin Sampler

Auger-type design



From www.ark.edu/era

3M Adhesives

Possibilities for Adhesives that will work for the Hera Sampler

Conclusions

and where to go from there

The preliminary test results were good. The results showed an adequate sample could be retrieved if the sampling pad of approximately 1 meter in diameter were used. If the surface of the asteroid contained rocks larger than 425 microns the sample would be much larger.

For further study we can look at ways to increase the surface area of the sampler without increasing the surface area of the pad and also do extensive testing on how adhesives react to the space environment.