

Development of a wide-field X-ray imaging spectrometer for solar system exploration

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We present our development of a wide-field X-ray imaging spectrometer for solar system exploration. In the past decade or so, various types of X-ray emission have been discovered in the solar system (Bhardwaj et al., 2007, Planet. Space, Sci., Ezoe et al., 2011, Adv. Space, Res.). These X-rays are often associated with energetic particles in planetary magnetosphere and neutrals in planetary atmosphere and cometary coma. Therefore, X-ray observations of solar system objects will lead to better understanding of solar system environments and astrophysical phenomena.

For this purpose, we are developing a wide-field X-ray imaging spectrometer for future exploration missions such as GEO-X (Ezoe et al. 2014, Space Sci. Symposium) and JMO (Sasaki et al. 2011, EPSC-DPS). This instrument is composed of an ultra light-weight X-ray telescope and a low-power radiation-hard semiconductor pixel sensor. The telescope covers a wide field of view of ~ 4 deg in diameter in 0.3–2 keV with the angular resolution of < 5 arcmin. It uses sidewalls of etched holes through thin 4-inch silicon wafers for X-ray mirrors (Ezoe et al., 2010, Mircosys. Tehc.). The detector covers a wide area of $\sim 20 \times 20$ mm² with a $\sim 300 \times 300$ μm^2 pixel. It is an active pixel sensor developed by MPE and PNsensor (Strueder et al., 2010, SPIE). Compared to X-ray CCDs, this type is more radiation hard and allows higher frame time less than 1 ms. This instrument can satisfy stringent resource constraints in the exploration missions. The mass, size, and power are estimated to be ~ 10 kg, ~ 30 cm cubic, and ~ 10 W, respectively. Multiple units of this instrument are considered for GEO-X to achieve a wider field of view, while one unit will meet science requirements of JMO. In this presentation, we will describe design, fabrication, and performance of the instrument components and future prospects.

Keywords: X-ray, imaging spectroscopy, Earth's magnetosphere, Jupiter, Mars