

NASA Declassification Management Program

www.hq.nasa.gov/office/ospp/

Transparency Participation Collaboration

The primary objective of the NASA Declassification Program is to review all historically valuable classified information to assess what needs to remain classified and what can be released to the public while protecting the national security interests of the United States Government. The NASA Declassification Program establishes the roles and responsibilities of the Mission Directorates, NASA Records Managers, FOIA Officers, Center Program Offices, Declassification Authorities (DCAs) and Center Protective Services Offices for completing declassification actions Agency wide. This program establishes procedures within the NASA Procedural Requirements (NPRs) that will ensure that mandatory declassification reviews, systematic reviews, and overall classification management requirements are completed in accordance with the mandates set out in pertinent Executive Orders.

Overview

On April 17, 1995, President Clinton signed an Executive Order (EO 12958) that provided a uniform system for classifying, safeguarding, and declassifying national security information. This EO required that all classified information more than 25 years old deemed of historical value shall be automatically declassified within five years whether or not the records have been reviewed. On November 19, 1999, President Clinton signed a new Executive Order (EO 13142) that provided an extension of three years to satisfy the requirements of EO 12958. On March 25, 2003, President Bush signed his own Executive Order (EO 13292) as an amendment to EO 12958 to extend the deadline for declassification review until December 31, 2006.

Although NASA had numerous challenges to meet this deadline, we succeeded by reviewing more than eight million documents and declassifying more than five million. The 25 Year Automatic Declassification Review is a sliding requirement that takes place every year.

President Obama has clarified and updated requirements of Agency declassification programs through a new EO 13526 as part of his push for openness in government.

In order for us to meet the requirements of the Executive Order, the Agency must remain engaged and involved in the declassification effort. The trained and officially appointed DCA is responsible for reviewing the records for continued classification or declassification. The NASA Security Management Division will continue to provide training and certification for all NASA DCAs to ensure maximum transparency. We will also perform random quality control checks on records to ensure compliance with EOs.

How This Fits into Open Government

Declassification is the first step toward making previously classified information available to the public. The process we have in place requires inter-NASA collaboration to determine what is considered classified and when something can be declassified. Declassification of government information that no longer needs protection, in accordance with established procedures, is essential to the free flow of information

Open Government Goals

- Three months
 - Update the Office of Protective Services Web site, which includes information about our declassification programs and how to access declassified materials.
 - Improve the workflow between all the participants that play a role in the successful administration of the Declassification Program Agency wide.
- Six months
 - Provide a process where the public can provide input on what types of information should be prioritized for declassification.
 - Continue to improve the Declassification process to better meet the needs of the public.
- One year
 - Ensure that the appropriate funding and human resources are allocated to continue the Declassification Program at the current level.
 - Conduct an industry survey and benchmarking exercise across government to determine if Web-based tools can assist in the declassification process.
- Two years
 - Implement recommendations from the industry survey and benchmarking exercise.

CORONA Program

<http://msl.jpl.nasa.gov/programs/corona.html>



Recovery of Discoverer 14 return capsule

The Corona program was a series of U.S. photographic surveillance satellites used from the late 50s through the early 70s. The satellites used film canisters that were returned to earth in capsules (a.k.a. “buckets”) for evaluation. Corona was officially secret until 1992. In 1995 the imagery acquired by the Corona (and other programs) was declassified. The declassified imagery has since been used by a team of scientists to locate and explore ancient habitation sites, pottery factories, megalithic tombs, and Palaeolithic remains in northern Syria.

Useful Links

1. The Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO): www.archives.gov/isoo
2. Electronic Code of Aeronautics and Space Regulations: ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfrandtpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title14/14cfr1203_main_02.tpl
3. NASA Handbook for Writing Security Classification Guides: www.hq.nasa.gov/office/ospp/documents/scg_guide.pdf