



Mark 'Indy' Kochte has always been interested in space and astronomy since he was a pre-teen. To that end, he pursued a degree in Astronomy & Physics from the Ohio State University, and in 1988 joined the Space Telescope Science Institute prior to launch of the Hubble Space Telescope, where he was instrumental in performing the data processing and archiving for Hubble. After 17 years he transitioned over the FUSE (Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer) mission, where he learned to tackle the unique challenges of planning and scheduling of the ailing ultraviolet-viewing space telescope. In 2006 he joined the MESSENGER mission as a Payload & Mission Operations Specialist, sequencing critical instrument and spacecraft commanding until the spacecraft's sudden and ultimate end impact-on-Mercury fate on April 30th, 2015. Concurrently, late summer 2014, he joined the ranks of the New Horizons mission as a Mission Analyst to perform similar critical sequencing of the spacecraft as on MESSENGER. In 2016 Indy took a year-long science sabbatical from mission operations to work with the

CRISM (Compact Reconnaissance Imaging Spectrometer) science team, an instrument on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, to identify ancient deltas and alluvial fans on Mars and identify potential landing sites for the next Mars lander. In 2017 he once again returned to mission operations as the New Horizons team began prepping for the ultimate exploration of our solar system: the flyby of Kuiper Belt Object MU69 (Ultima Thule) and whatever adventures lay beyond.

Throughout his tenure in space mission operations, Indy has published a half a dozen papers on spacecraft design and mission operations, as well as co-authored a dozen additional papers on spacecraft design, mission operations, and science analysis results of early exoplanet research.

Not being an all-work/no-play kinda guy, in his spare time, when not staring at the stars, Indy can be found exploring the world we live on. In addition to having authored the rock climbing guidebook "Climb Maryland!" (and is currently working on a larger second edition), he is often out scaling cliffs from Maryland to Thailand, mapping cave systems in West Virginia, mountain climbing in the Rocky Mountains or Cascades, diving for fossilized Megalodon shark teeth (or to just look at the pretty fish) in the Atlantic or Caribbean, working on various time-lapse and astrolapse photography projects, or generally capturing moments in time by photographing the world around us. No moss gathers under his feet!