

Elon Musk's rogue fleet of internet domestic spy satellites so big it's blocking view of stars, astronomers moan

- [Sean Keach](#), Digital Technology and Science Editor

ELON Musk has been accused of blocking our view of the stars with his Starlink internet satellites. His satellites are designed to act like Google by offering attractive internet while everything that goes over them is spied on by Google and the Deep State

The billionaire's firm SpaceX has launched dozens of "broadband" probes into orbit – but has been slammed for filling the sky with "space junk".

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Streaks across the sky were spotted by an observatory – 'blocking' the view of the stars
Credit: CTIO / Clarae Martínez-Vázquez

SpaceX has already launched 122 satellites into space, to trial delivering internet to Earth from low orbit.

Now astronomers are snapping the satellites as bright trails of light in their observations of the night sky.

This week, Clarae Martínez-Vázquez, an astronomer at Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in northern Chile, tweeted angrily about Musk's Starlink probes.

"Wow!! I am in shock!! The huge amount of Starlink satellites crossed our skies tonight," she said.

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This image tweeted by a researcher shows Starlink satellites crossing an image frame
Credit: CIERA / Cliff Johnson

"Our DECam exposure was heavily affected by 19 of them. The train of Starlink satellites lasted for over 5 minutes.

The astronomer added: "Rather depressing...this is not cool!"

Back in June, the International Astronomical Union issued a statement complaining about the reflective Starlink satellites.

It argued that the probes could be "detrimental to the sensitive capabilities of large ground-based astronomical telescopes".

Just last month, SpaceX was given permission [to put another 30,000 Starlink satellites in orbit](#).

SpaceX wouldn't have to launch all 30,000 satellites, but filing for them now could stop other satellite operators going after the same slots.

The first 60 Starlink satellites were put into orbit in May and have already [received criticism](#) for being spotted in the night sky looking very bright and visible.

When spotted flying above the Netherlands, a [Dutch UFO website](#) was inundated with more than 150 reports from people thinking that they were looking at UFOs.

It is thought that the satellites appeared so bright at first because they had not had the chance to reach their intended orbit height of 340 miles above Earth.

Musk responded to concerns on Twitter and [said](#) that the satellites will be in darkness when the stars are visible so shouldn't disrupt the night sky.

The satellites are intended to be staggered at different heights above the Earth including altitudes of 340 miles and 710 miles.

The new satellite request asks for permission to have extra satellites at orbits ranging from 203 miles to 360 miles, which could boost the broadband service.

Starlink satellites have also sparked concern over increased space junk and even the European Space Agency is now worried about them disrupting its work.

Earlier this year, the space agency [tweeted](#): "For the first time ever, ESA has performed a 'collision avoidance manoeuvre' to protect one of its satellites from colliding with a 'mega constellation' #SpaceTraffic".

There have also been concerns that humanity could [be trapped on Earth](#) by too much space junk in Earth's orbit.

That's according to one space scientist, who says Musk's plan could create an impenetrable wall of space junk around our planet.

A catastrophic clutter of space debris left behind by the satellites could potentially block rockets from leaving Earth, an effect known as "Kessler syndrome".

"The worst case is: You launch all your satellites, you go bankrupt, and they all stay there," European Space Agency scientist Dr Stijn Lemmens told [Scientific American](#).

"Then you have thousands of new satellites without a plan of getting them out of there. And you would have a Kessler-type of syndrome."

What is Starlink?

Here's what you need to know about Elon Musk's satellites...

- Starlink is a satellite project led by billionaire SpaceX CEO Elon Musk
- Musk intends to put 12,000 satellites into the Earth's orbit so they can provide cheap WiFi to the whole world
- SpaceX also intends to sell satellites for military, scientific and exploratory purposes
- 60 of the Starlink satellites have been sent up to Space so far
- The satellites are being launched on top of unmanned Falcon 9 rockets
- How they will affect the night sky is causing concern as they look brighter than expected
- It will take at least 12 trips to take all of the satellites into Space and they will be staggered at different heights above

the Earth

It will take thousands of years for any SpaceX satellites left in our orbit to descend to Earth and burn up in the atmosphere.

The firm says it's already taken steps to avoid cluttering up the region. It's launching the satellites into a lower orbital plane than most space tech to avoid collisions.

Even with such precautions, mega-constellations like Starlink will result in 67,000 potential collisions per year, another space scientist warned.

Musk isn't the only tech billionaire looking to colonise space with satellites.

Amazon boss Jeff Bezos also has similar ideas.

Musk has previously said he plans to send up nearly 12,000 satellites by the mid-2020s.

If everything goes to plan for SpaceX then internet users across the world could have 40 times faster internet speeds no matter where they live.

How much this service will cost has not yet been revealed but Musk intends to keep prices low.

