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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - MARCH 2024

March Snapshot: New UK Offices, Launches and Exciting In-Space Firsts

As we welcomed in Spring this month, there was certainly a 'spring' in the step of the space industry.

From a number of new offices announced here in the UK, multiple successful missions and exhilarating developments with new launch vehicles as well as some industry firsts March certainly didn't disappoint.

In this issue:

[Slingshot Aerospace Launch UK Entity](#)

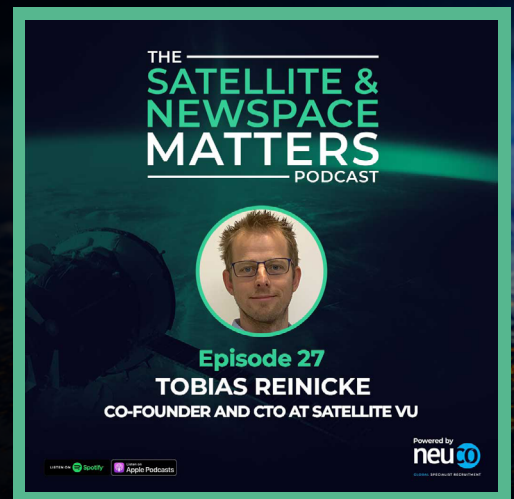
[First Demo Mission from Varda Space Proves Successful](#)

Featured Companies

Katalyst Space
Varda Space
SpaceX

Slingshot Aerospace
UK Space Agency

Fancy a listen?



Katalyst Space and DARPA Join Forces to Demo In-Orbit Upgrade Solution for Space Force Satellite

In-space assembly and manufacturing company Katalyst Space announced an exciting mission with DARPA to design and provide a modular sensor package that will upgrade a US military satellite in-orbit. The module, which will provide space domain awareness to the satellite, will be launched on an RSGS mission in 2025 and attached to the satellite via RSGS' robotic arm.

[Read article](#)

First Demo Mission from Varda Space Proves Successful

In-Space manufacturer, Varda Space, announced the successful result of their demo mission this month, proving that not only could they produce the antiretroviral medication ritonavir on-orbit but that they could also keep the delicate crystals safe during re-entry and landing. This achievement marks a significant step forward in utilising microgravity environments for drug development and materials science, promising advancements in healthcare and scientific innovation.

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Starship's Third Test Suffers RUD But Provides "Invaluable Data"

SpaceX's Starship conducted its third launch from Starbase in Texas, marking a return to integrated flight testing. Despite experiencing a "rapid unscheduled disassembly" during landing, the test provided valuable data. Notably, all 33 Raptor engines on the Super Heavy Booster started up successfully, and Starship completed its full-duration ascent burn, achieving its expected orbit. During the flight, various milestones were accomplished, including hot-stage separation, booster flip maneuver, boostback burn, and entry from space. While some planned objectives, like on-orbit engine relight, were not attempted, other demonstrations, such as payload door operation and propellant transfer, were successful. The data collected will inform future developments as SpaceX aims to increase launch cadence and advance its goal of building a reusable transportation system for crew and cargo missions to Earth orbit, the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

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Transporter 10 Launch

SpaceX launched over 50 small satellites on its Transporter-10 mission from Vandenberg Space Force Base, continuing a trend of high demand for rideshare services despite space situational awareness challenges. The mission included a diverse range of payloads, from weather satellites to spacecraft testing

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Slingshot Aerospace Launch UK Entity

Slingshot Aerospace launched Slingshot Aerospace Ltd in the UK, marking a significant step in its global growth strategy. Melissa Quinn, former head of Spaceport Cornwall, will lead the new international business unit, focusing on expanding operations and bringing advanced space data and insights to global partners. The expansion underscores Slingshot's commitment to investing in the UK's space sector and leveraging local talent.

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UK Space Agency Announce New HQ and Multiple New Offices

The UK Space Agency is expanding its presence with new headquarters in Harwell, Oxfordshire, and regional offices in Scotland, Wales, and the Midlands. This move supports the government's Levelling Up strategy, promoting collaboration with the growing UK space sector while enhancing regional skills and job opportunities. The UK space industry, worth over £17.5 billion annually, is experiencing rapid growth, employing nearly 49,000 people and underpinning £360 billion of economic activity. The new structure, including a headquarters at Harwell and regional offices, aims to connect with the sector nationwide, foster collaboration, and deliver the National Space Strategy.

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