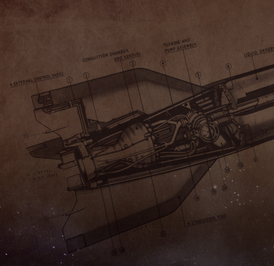
15 YEARS OF CHANDRA

In 1895, German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen discovers a new form of radiation. He called it "X-radiation" to denote its unknown nature.

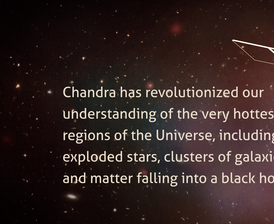


The first hint that cosmic X-rays exist came in 1949, when radiation detectors aboard rockets were briefly carried above the atmosphere where they detected X-rays coming from the Sun.

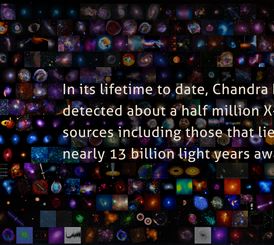
It took more than a decade before a greatly improved detector discovered X-rays coming from sources beyond the Solar System in 1962.

NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory is launched aboard the Space Shuttle in 1999, ushering a new era in the field of X-ray astronomy a mere handful of decades later.

Chandra achieved an increase in sensitivity comparable to going from looking at the night sky with the naked-eye to the seeing power of the most powerful optical telescopes over the past 400 years.



Chandra has revolutionized our understanding of the very hottest regions of the Universe, including exploded stars, clusters of galaxies, and matter falling into a black hole.



In its lifetime to date, Chandra has detected about a half million X-ray sources including those that lie nearly 13 billion light years away.

LAUNCH
1999

Projected end date
2002

PRESENT
2014

The Chandra spacecraft has reached its 15th year of operation. Because of its high orbit and the continued success of its components, it is expected to keep operating for many more years.

HTTP://CHANDRA.SI.EDU