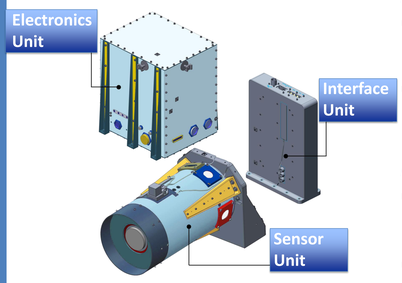
Lightning Imaging Sensor (LIS) on the International Space Station (ISS):
Assessments and Results from First Year Operations

R. J. Blakeslee[1], H. J. Christian[2], D. M. Mach[3] , K. Virts[4], D. E. Buechler[2] , T. D. Walker[2] , W. J. Koshak[1] , W. T. Ellett[2], M. F. Stewart[2]

[1]NASA Marshall Space Flight Center (email: rich.blakeslee@nasa.gov, phone: 256-961-7962), [2]University of Alabama in Huntsville, [3]Universities Space Research Association (USRA), [4]NASA Postdoctoral Program

Mission and Measurement



Mission

- Fly a flight-spare LIS on ISS to take advantage of unique capabilities provided by the ISS *(e.g., high inclination, real time data)*.
- Integrate LIS as a hosted payload on the DoD Space Test Program-Houston 5 (STP-H5) mission and launch on a Space X rocket for a minimum 2 year mission.

Measurement

- NASA and its partners developed and demonstrated effectiveness and value of using space-based lightning observations as a remote sensing tool.
- LIS measures lightning (*amount, rate, radiant energy*) with storm scale resolution, millisecond timing, and high detection efficiency, with no land-ocean bias.

Sensor Unit (legacy hardware)

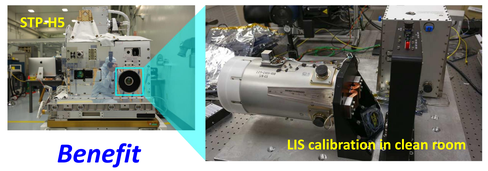
- Optical Assembly
- 128 x 128 CCD Focal Plane
- Lightning and Background detection

Electronics Unit (legacy hardware)

- Real Time Event Processor, Background removal, Data formatting
- Power conversion and control

Interface Unit (new hardware)

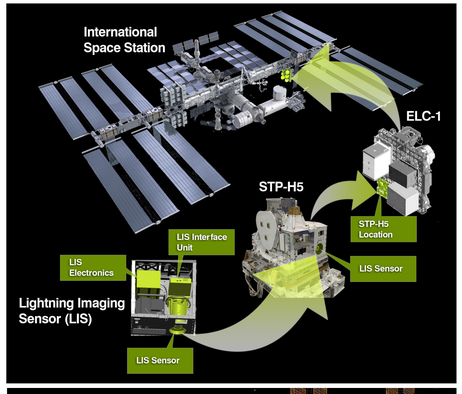
- Power conversion, timing, and control
- ISS interface

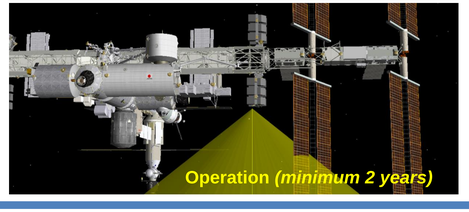


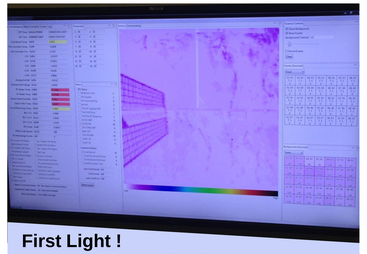
Benefit

- LIS on ISS will extend TRMM time series observations, expand latitudinal coverage, provide real time data to operational users, and enable cross-sensor calibration.

Launch, Activation, and Operation



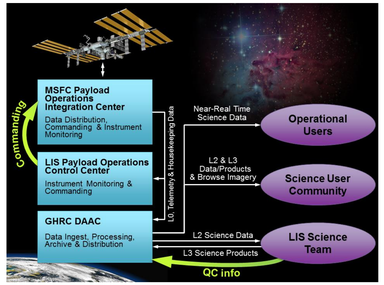




First Light !
As it appeared on the Real Time Display and Command window

- LIS launched aboard Space X Cargo Resupply Service-10 (CRS-10) mission on 19 February 2017.
- STP-H5 payload robotically installed with LIS in an Earth viewing position.
- LIS powered-up on 27 February 2017.
- Continuous operation has been maintained since LIS power-up.
- 51.6° inclination orbit, 425 km altitude (detects to ~55°), ~ 600 x 600 km FOV.
- 60 days required for complete sample of diurnal cycle.

Data Handling (Processing, Archival, and Distribution)



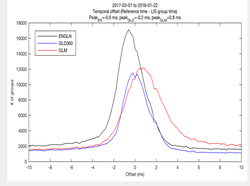
- The well-established and robust data handling infrastructure used for LIS on the Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) was adapted for ISS.
- Therefore, lightning observations from LIS on ISS can be quickly delivered to and used by science and applications users.
- Both legacy TRMM LIS format (HDF4) and a new netCDF-4/CF data are being produced for LIS on ISS, by the Global Hydrology Resource Center, one of NASA's Distributed Active Archive Centers.
- LIS data can be obtained from the GHRC DAAC at **https://ghrc.nsstc.nasa.gov/lightning/**

Assessing and Achieving Level-1 Science Requirements

Level-1 Science Requirements

- Level-1 science requirements are the same for LIS on ISS as for TRMM LIS and its Optical Transient Detector (OTD) predecessor, and includes (1) day and night lightning detection, (2) storm scale (~ *4 km*) resolution, (3) millisecond timing, (4) high, uniform detection efficiency without land/ocean bias, (5) calibrated radiant energy, and (6) background images/intensity.
- Real time lightning data was added as an additional (7th) Level-1 requirement for LIS on ISS.

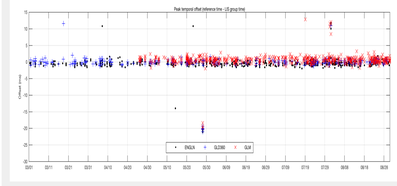
Timing Accuracy and Stability



Reference Lightning Data Sources:

1) *Earth Networks Global Lightning Network (ENGLN)*
2) *Vaisala GLD360*
3) *Geostationary Lightning Mapper (GLM)*

Time offset of LIS compared to three reference sources demonstrates sub-millisecond timing accuracy.



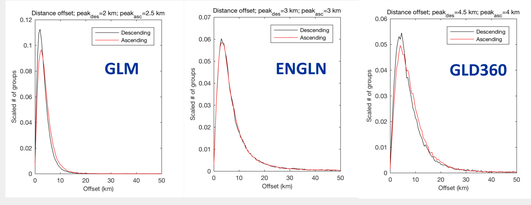
Peak time offset of LIS to reference data in 30 second bins over six months demonstrates good time stability.

Geolocation Accuracy

Distance offset of LIS compared with GLM ("apples – to – apples optical) shows sub-pixel accuracy at 2-2.5 km.

Distance offset of LIS compared with Earth Networks and GLD360 RF systems further verifies this excellent geolocation accuracy.

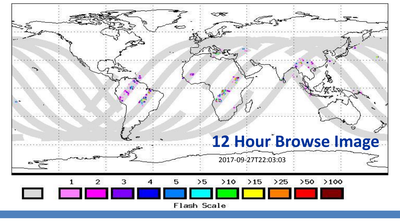
Offset better than TRMM LIS but both will be comparable after reprocessing TRMM.



Real Time Data Production

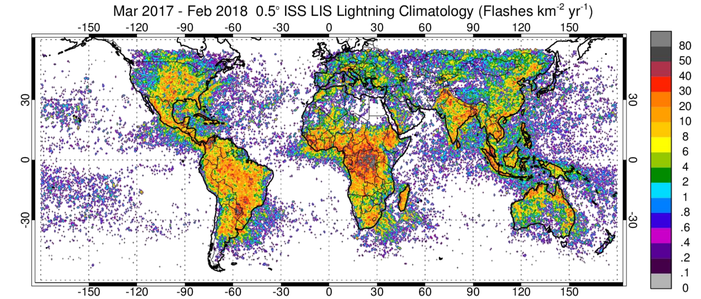
- LIS on ISS data is processed in real time in 2-minute processing increments.
- This data is available from GHRC DAAC.
- Both 2 minute and 12 hour browse image are created in real time and displayed at:

https://lightning.nsstc.nasa.gov/isslisib/isslisnrt



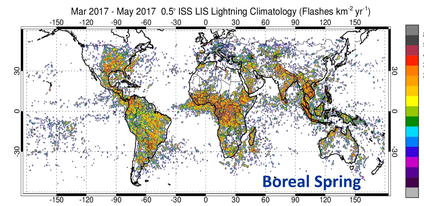
First Results

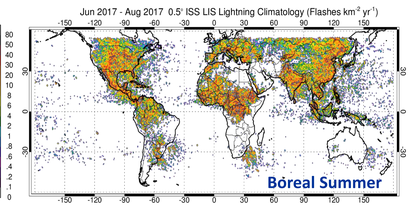
Annual Global Flash Rate

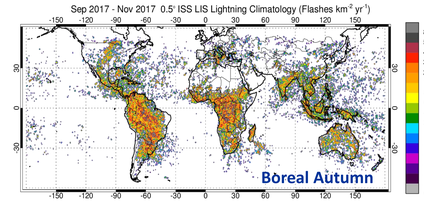


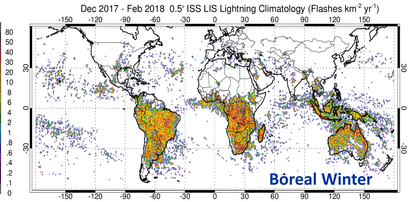
Annual global lightning flash rate (Flashes km^{-2} yr^{-1})from LIS on ISS over first year with view time and detection efficiency corrections applied. Results similar to combined OTD/LIS climatology. Same for Seasonal behavior.

Seasonal Global Flash Rate







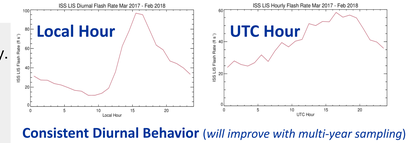


Other Preliminary Flash Statistics

One year is too short a duration to get robust statistics from low Earth orbit, but values consisted with OTD/LIS climatology.

Table shows flash rate (fl s^{-1}) for LIS/ISS versus climatology[1].

Region	Annual	MAM	JJA	SON	DJF
World	45.7	44.1	55.7	47.2	35.9
<37.5°	40.7	40.9	42.5	42.5	34.9
LIS/ISS	41.1	39.8	52.5	41.2	30.8



Consistent Diurnal Behavior (*will improve with multi-year sampling*)

[1]*Blakeslee et al., Atmospheric Research 135-136 (2014) 228-243*

Summary

- All Level-1 science requirements met and preliminary global flash statistic produced.
- Key science and operational applications of LIS lightning observations are being pursued that range from weather and climate to atmospheric chemistry and lightning physics.
- These applications exist due to the strong quantitative connections that can be made between lightning and other geophysical processes of interest.
- The space-base vantage point, such as provided by LIS on ISS, still remains an ideal location to obtain total lightning observations on a global basis.