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SPACE RESEARCH PRODUCES MANY USEFUL BY PRODUCTS

AUG. 16. 1961

The drama of the Space Age has tended to overshadow the many practical applications, both foreseen and already in use, which have arisen as a result of American space research. Experimental work is under way on earth satellites that promise to improve world-wide communications and weather forecasting. Communications satellites are inherently more reliable than conventional radio and cable systems. They also can handle more traffic and provide less expensive means of transoceanic television. Meteorological satellites can easily cover the entire earth, gathering information for accurate global forecasts that will bring enormous financial savings to farmers, shippers, airlines, and other enterprises. These are direct space applications, but a great number of by-products have been put to use. Tiny radio receivers, no larger than a cube of sugar, have been developed. Pots and pans are made of a material that allows them to be placed ice cold over a hot flame without cracking or chipping. Space by-products have spread to the field of medicine. One of them is a tiny, long-lived battery that powers a small device called a heart pacemaker. It maintains the heart beat of cardiac patients (who would die without it) by sending weak, regular electric pulses into the heart itself.

A ground station for a world-wide network of communications satellites may look something like this artist's conception. Five antennas reside in the five domes. Four would communicate with satellites, one might stand by as a substitute, and one might be used in advanced experiments.

(Photo No. 61-225. Accompanies Feature F-61-198.)



*Source*

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