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Scientists Discover That Uranus Smells Like Rotten Eggs (space.com)

Posted by BeauHD on Wednesday April 25, 2018 @06:00AM from the you-can't-make-this-shit-up dept.

An anonymous reader writes: According to a study published in Nature Astronomy, scientists have determined that the atmosphere of Uranus smells like rotten eggs. The smell of Uranus was determined by the use of a Near-Infrared Integral Field Spectrometer (NIFS), an instrument that allows scientists to determine what an atmosphere is composed of based upon the reflections of sunlight that bounce off of it. Specifically, the clouds in Uranus' upper atmosphere consist of hydrogen sulfide, the molecule that makes rotten eggs so stinky. "If an unfortunate human were ever to descend through Uranus' clouds, they would be met with very unpleasant and odiferous conditions," study lead author Patrick Irwin, of Oxford University in England, said in a statement. But that wayward pioneer would have bigger problems, he added: "Suffocation and exposure in the negative 200 degrees Celsius [minus 328 degrees Fahrenheit] atmosphere, made of mostly hydrogen, helium, and methane, would take its toll long before the smell."

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The Fine Print: The following comments are owned by whoever posted them. We are not responsible for them in any way.

Re: (Score:2) by LaughingRadish ( 2694765 )

Uranus Smells Like Rotten Eggs" is much less puerile than how a bunch of other news outlets are running this story. They're going with "Uranus Smells Like Farts".

2 hidden comment(s)
Obligatory Uranus Smells Like Rotten Eggs (Score:3, Funny)

As Public Terminal named Uranus in 2620 to end that stupid joke once and for all [youtube.com].

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Re: (Score:1) by Anonymous Coward
Who submitted this?
Honestly, I saw this story yesterday in at least a half a dozen major news outlets, and it was all variations on a theme.
The reality is, the Uranus jokes write themselves, and I'm pretty sure the scientists gave them a nudge in that direction.
What better way to get your real scientific research widely covered than allowing for the most puerile humour to drive it around the web?
Un-clench. Don't be so anal about it.

Re: Who submitted this? (Score:3) by bill\_mcgonigle ( 4333 ) \*

Look at all the /,ers acting like fifth-graders and giving the site their ad impressions. The audience has made the site into what it's become.

It's done (Score:1) by Anonymous Coward
So Professor Farnsworth finally built his smelloscope.

Re: (Score:2) by TeknoHog ( 164938 )

aka Spectrometer, Near-Infrared Integral Field.

Oh my (Score:5, Funny) by war4peace ( 1628283 ) on Wednesday April 25, 2018 @06:05AM (#56498899)

The amount of jokes stemming from this article is endless. Still, cool science, quite literally.

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Re: (Score:2) by tinkerton ( 199273 )

Science which spawns jokes is good science.
http://dilbert.com/strip/1994-... [dilbert.com]

Re: (Score:2, Funny) by Anonymous Coward
This article contains quite the impressive opening! There's still gaps in our knowledge, but hopefully the scientists can get to the bottom of it. I hope they're not tooting their own horn prematurely, that would be shitty because they'd just make asses of themselves and be the butt of jokes.

1 hidden comment

Re: (Score:3) by Chris Mattern ( 191822 )

Calling it "urinous" [merriam-webster.com] has its own problems, though.

Re: (Score:1) by Anonymous Coward
Is that problem #1 or problem #2?



**Re:Black holes (Score:4, Informative)**

by [thomst \( 1640045 \)](#) on Wednesday April 25, 2018 @08:19AM ([#56499231](#)) [Homepage](#)

Patrick Moore used to avoid this problem by pronouncing it your-uh-nuss, with the stress on the first syllable. The original pronunciation of the name of the planet's eponymous Greek god almost undoubtedly was "oo-ran-os" (with the stress on the initial syllable), rather than "your-uh-nuss." The latter pronunciation is an artifact of British public school conventions, not authentic, classical Greek ones. (The Brits tend to Romanize both the English spelling and pronunciation of Greek words in general, and names in particular ... )

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**Pronunciation ... (Score:2)**

by [kbahey \( 102895 \)](#)

Right.  
It is also Ubuntu = Ooh-boon-tu, not You-buntu.  
And many of the C things are actually K, Kephalos = Cephalus, Cetus = Kaitos, ...etc.

[1 hidden comment](#)

**Re: (Score:2)**

by [Ecuador \( 740021 \)](#)

Almost correct. The Greek pronunciation would be "oo-rah-NOS" with the stress on the last syllable. Perhaps also "oy-rah-NOS" in early Classical or pre-Classical (AFAIK we are not very sure when diphthongs started being pronounced they way they are in Koine Greek for example).

**Re: (Score:2)**

by [desdinova 216 \( 2000908 \)](#)

rectum, no it damn near killed him.

**NIFS? (Score:2, Insightful)**

by Anonymous Coward

Why didn't they make the acronym SNIF?

[1 hidden comment](#)

**Who's? (Score:2)**

by [jrmymllr \( 4703481 \)](#)

When they say Uranus smells like that, who's exactly? Certainly not mine.

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**Re: (Score:2)**

by [Mjlnr \( 609829 \)](#)

When they say Uranus smells like that, who's exactly?  
Well, I am exactly. Aren't you?

**No it smells of nothing (Score:3)**

by [thegarbz \( 1787294 \)](#) on Wednesday April 25, 2018 @07:20AM ([#56499049](#))

If the H2S concentration is high enough to mask some of the composition on the underlying layers it would most certainly paralise your sense of smell instantly, something that happens as low as 100ppm concentrations. Uranus smells of nothing. Which frankly is far more pleasant than most jokes would suggest.

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**Re: (Score:3, Informative)**

by [NichardRixon \( 869899 \)](#)

It's odd that the Oxford scholars didn't mention the toxicity of hydrogen sulfide, but mention suffocation from inhalation of methane and the effects of low temperatures. Although the odor can be detected at very minute concentrations, (around 0.000047 ppm) it's about as poisonous as cyanide at about 360 ppm. Suppression of the sense of smell doesn't happen instantaneously, and many deaths have occurred because victims who noticed the odor thought the gas had dissipated when they could no longer smell it.

**Re:No it smells of nothing (Score:4, Informative)**

by [Known Nutter \( 988758 \)](#) on Wednesday April 25, 2018 @08:30AM ([#56499269](#))

Came to say this. H2S at around 100 ppm can/will deaden the sense of smell. Usually, the lack of instantaneous loss of olfactory functions can be attributed to the gradual increase in concentration of H2S in a given area during an incident.

But I guess saying Uranus smells like a bag of farts is more entertaining than actual science.

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**Re: (Score:2)**

by [NichardRixon \( 869899 \)](#)

"But I guess saying Uranus smells like a bag of farts is more entertaining than actual science."  
Agreed. I smell fake news.

**Hmm (Score:4, Funny)**

by [SCVonSteroids \( 2816091 \)](#) on Wednesday April 25, 2018 @07:22AM ([#56499057](#))

Depends what I ate.

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**Re: (Score:1)**

by [chaotic\\_clanger \( 4698665 \)](#)

you need a food rich with sulphur. kim chi fart would provide the real uranus feeling i guess.

**Re: (Score:2)**

by [asylumx \( 881307 \)](#)

And what exactly is uranus feeling?

**It sure does! (Score:2)**

by [sabbede \( 2678435 \)](#)

Hoaray for this story! Now, it's time for my morning dump so I'll be proving them right.

**Maybe (Score:2)**

by [angelbar \( 1823238 \)](#)

Cloudn't they use a Spectrometer for Near-Infrared Integral Field? (SNIF)

**Smells like ... (Score:2)**

by [PPH \( 736903 \)](#)

... the exhaust of a car with a catalytic converter.

**It's just a Rumour (Score:1)**

by [Zaiff Urgulbunger \( 591514 \)](#)

I don't know who started this rumour, but if I ever find out, I'll see them in court!!!

**BeauHD and msmash (Score:1)**

by [forkfail \( 228161 \)](#)

Two editors, one shark.  
Who can jump it better?

**Sense of smell (Score:2)**

by [OrangeTide \( 124937 \)](#)

I'm pretty sure my sense of smell doesn't function at -200 C.

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Whenever people agree with me, I always think I must be wrong. - Oscar Wilde

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