

Liquid-Fed Pulsed Plasma Thruster for Propelling Nanosatellites

Track Code: 2019-SHAS-68727

Categories:

- Aeronautics

Keywords:

- Liquid-Fed Pulsed Plasma Thruster for Propelling Nanosatellites

Researchers at Purdue University have developed a liquid fed pulsed plasma thruster (LF-PPT) for use in nanosatellites. Contemporary solid/gas phase propellants have been employed with limited success in nanosatellites, stemming from low efficiencies, limited operational lifetime, contamination issues, and complex/bulky injection systems. To remediate these disadvantageous qualities and make thruster systems more applicable to nanosatellite designs, this technology presents a novel micro LF-PPT propulsion system comprised of a pulsed plasma accelerator and a low-energy surface flashover igniter. No propellant feed mechanism is needed with this design, making it beneficial for nanosatellite application due to their volumetric constraints. Pentaphenyl trimethyl trisiloxan was used as a propellant for testing parameters of the system including igniter breakdown, plasma dynamics, and exhaust velocity.

Advantages:

- Increased efficiency
- Smaller sized propulsion system
- Increased lifetime
- "Green" propulsion system

Potential Applications:

- Nanosatellites
- CubeSats

People:

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Intellectual Property:

Application Date: June 23, 2020

Type: Utility Patent

Country of Filing: United States
Patent Number: (None)
Issue Date: (None)

Application Date: June 25, 2019
Type: Provisional-Patent
Country of Filing: United States
Patent Number: (None)
Issue Date: (None)

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