

Xtalk

by Nexans Cabling Solutions

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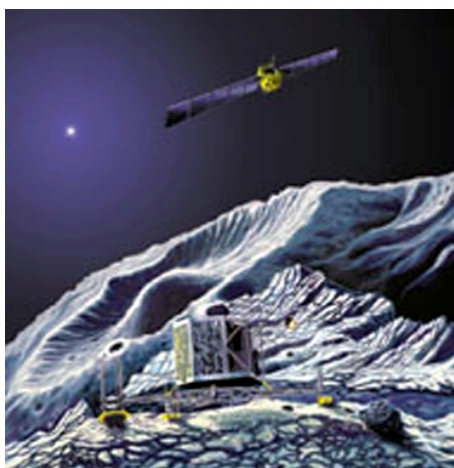
The Rosetta 'Comet Chaser', with cable harnesses made by Nexans, finally lifts off

Nexans has produced the electrical harnesses for the space probe Rosetta which aims to land a probe on a comet for the first time. The probe was finally launched on its 10 year mission using the Ariane-5 rocket.

The probe lifted off at 07:17GMT on 2nd March 2004 from its launchpad in Kourou, French Guiana.

The harnesses were supplied for space infrastructure firm Astrium (United Kingdom and Germany), under a European Space Agency (ESA) contract.

It has taken engineers and technicians working for Nexans' harness production plant (situated on the outskirts of Brussels) **three years to make the 12,000 electrical connections** which will enable onboard equipment and systems to function correctly.



Cocooned inside a protective fairing on top of one of the world's most powerful rockets Ariane-5, the Rosetta comet probe was planned to be launched on February 26, 2004 but was delayed twice. The probe is scheduled to **reach its destination in 2014**, almost 10 years after departure.

The role of Rosetta, which takes its name from the Rosetta Stone, is to help ESA researchers gather essential information about the formation of the solar system.

The probe should have been launched one year ago, but following improvements made on Ariane 5, the launch was postponed. It will be launched into orbit close to the 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko comet, which it will accompany for eighteen months. The probe will pass Mars and the Otawara and Siwa asteroids before positioning itself in orbit around the comet in November 2014.

As specialists in spatial cabling, **Nexans has already produced electrical harnesses for scientific mission satellites** (Spot5, Jason, IASI, Mars Express) and telecommunications satellites (Globalstar, Express A and A1R, Hispasat, New Bird, Stellat and GE2i) and is currently manufacturing electrical harnesses for the Venus Express, Goce and Herschel & Planck satellites.

Carlo Bredt, Managing Director of Nexans' harness activity says: *"Rosetta was of prime importance for Nexans, which has been present throughout the project, from the feasibility and development study through to qualification and installation on the customer's final integration site".*

Nexans' electrical harnesses were also installed on the **Mars Express probe**, which visits Mars and deploys a lander to analyze ground samples for signs of life.



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