

Seminar

Monday, 20th December 2010

11 am - Room 701

Dr. Robert Jedicke

University of Hawaii's Institute for Astronomy

***Killer Asteroids: Characterizing the Population with Spacewatch,
Pan-STARRS and ATLAS***

Not too long ago the idea that life on Earth has been profoundly affected by asteroid and comet impacts was viewed with disbelief bordering on disdain. But in the past few decades this attitude has been replaced by an international awareness of the danger posed to human life by these objects. The impact hazard is determined by the asteroids' and comets' orbit and size distribution and the best measurement of these properties for asteroids larger than about a half kilometer in diameter was performed almost a decade ago using observations of about 100 objects obtained with the 0.9-m Spacewatch telescope at Kitt Peak, Arizona. The Pan-STARRS project in Hawaii expects to observe and discover thousands of these Near Earth Objects over the next few years which will allow a dramatic improvement in our understanding of the impact threat from large asteroids and comets.

The ATLAS project in Hawaii is a proposal to build the world's first early warning system to provide days to weeks notice of an impending impact of smaller objects that are not detected efficiently by deeper, large telescope asteroid surveys.

All Welcome

Contact Details

For further information phone 364 2404, or visit our website: www.phys.canterbury.ac.nz