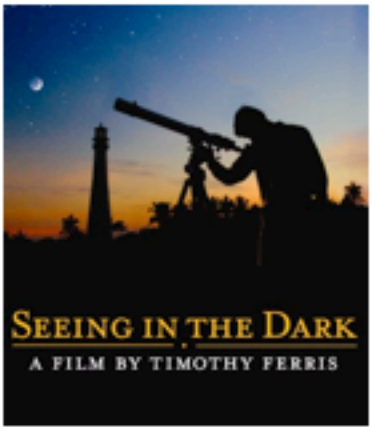

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FACT SHEET

The *Seeing in the Dark* Internet Telescope (SIDIT)

As part of an extensive national educational outreach program, students will have free access to the *Seeing in the Dark* Internet Telescope (SIDIT) through the website www.pbs.org/seeinginthedark (available after Labor Day). Students can register online, then send an email specifying the object they would like to image. Over 100,000 objects lie within range of the telescope and its digital imaging chip, including star clusters and nebulae in our galaxy, the Milky Way, and thousands of galaxies beyond.

Students using the SIDIT can enjoy the simple pleasure of taking a deep-space photo of their own, as well as conduct preliminary scientific research projects such as searching for supernovae (exploding stars) and the optical component of gamma-ray bursts, and attempting to discover asteroids.

Science teachers are invited to use the Internet telescope and to involve their students. In addition, the *Seeing in the Dark* website features extensive stargazing teaching exercises, all of them field-tested in advance, free to teachers and their students.

The SIDIT will be located at New Mexico Skies, a high-altitude site in the Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft, NM with a proven record of successful support for Internet telescopes. The telescope is a Meade Instruments carbon-fiber Schmidt-Cassegrain on a Software Bisque Paramount, with imaging through an SBIG chilled digital CCD camera.

The camera produces black-and-white images only: no color. (Color astronomical images require extensive post-processing that would be impractical for most students.) It is suitable for imaging galaxies and other deep-space objects, but not planets or the Moon, which are too bright for this deep-space instrument. Galaxies tens of millions of light years away can be imaged readily with the *Seeing in the Dark* Internet telescope. Typical turnaround times – the interval between receiving an email request and a resulting image being emailed back – are expected to be as little as a day or two, but some requests may take longer due to local weather and user loads.

The *Seeing in the Dark* Internet Telescope is provided by ClockDrive Productions with a grant from the National Science Foundation.