LAUNCH ACTIVITY · HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Space Launches by Year: Global Trends from 2006 to 2026

A measured view of orbital and deep-space launch activity: annual volumes, long-term growth and the limits of the latest data.

Source snapshot · 29 October 2026 GCAT / Jonathan McDowell Scope · O + D launches

RECORDED LAUNCHES	PEAK COMPLETE YEAR	FULL-YEAR GROWTH MULTIPLE	LATEST YEAR · INCOMPLETE
2,680	**329**	**4.98×**	**254**
2006–2026 · O + D	2025 · annual launches	2006 → 2025	2026 · year-to-date

The annual launch trajectory

Recorded launches by calendar year · UTC



Source: GCAT · Counted once per launch identifier

Includes successful and failed launches

2026 is incomplete. Its 254 recorded launches are shown as year-to-date only. No growth rate or direct comparison with the previous full year is calculated.

READING THE DATA

What the record shows

01

A larger annual launch volume

Annual launches rose from 66 in 2006 to 329 in 2025 — 4.98× the starting level. Both are complete calendar years in this snapshot.

02

The busiest complete year

2025 recorded 329 launches, the highest total among complete years in the selected period.

03

The largest annual increase

The increase into 2025 was 67 launches (25.6%) over 2024, the largest absolute increase between adjacent complete years in this snapshot.

THE UNDERLYING NUMBERS

Annual launch counts

Year-over-year change is calculated only between adjacent complete calendar years.

O + D launches, 2006–2026

YEAR	LAUNCHES	YOY CHANGE	COVERAGE
2006	66	—	Complete year
2007	68	+3.0%	Complete year
2008	69	+1.5%	Complete year
2009	78	+13.0%	Complete year
2010	74	-5.1%	Complete year
2011	84	+13.5%	Complete year
2012	78	-7.1%	Complete year
2013	81	+3.8%	Complete year
2014	92	+13.6%	Complete year
2015	87	-5.4%	Complete year
2016	85	-2.3%	Complete year

YEAR	LAUNCHES	YOY CHANGE	COVERAGE
2017	90	+5.9%	Complete year
2018	114	+26.7%	Complete year
2019	102	-10.5%	Complete year
2020	114	+11.8%	Complete year
2021	146	+28.1%	Complete year
2022	186	+27.4%	Complete year
2023	221	+18.8%	Complete year
2024	262	+18.6%	Complete year
2025	329	+25.6%	Complete year
2026	254	—	Incomplete · YTD

TRANSPARENT BY DESIGN

Methodology & sources

What counts as a launch?

We count unique GCAT launch identifiers classified as O (orbital) or D (deep space). Successful, failed and partial-outcome launches are included. Near-orbital N flights, pad explosions and aborts without liftoff are excluded. GCAT's classification is retained, including its treatment of experimental flights.

Coverage and timing

The snapshot was retrieved on 29 October 2026. The latest recorded launch in this dataset is 2026-10-27T07:25:23Z. The snapshot year is incomplete; its total is neither annualized nor compared with the previous full year. Earlier years are complete calendar periods, not a guarantee that the source is error-free.

How comparisons are calculated

Annual change is the difference from the preceding complete year divided by that year's total. Growth multiples compare the latest and earliest complete years shown. Missing annual observations are not converted to zero. All findings describe this dataset; they do not establish causes or predict future activity.

Source and attribution

Data from GCAT — Jonathan C. McDowell, licensed under CC BY 4.0. Compatisto filters, aggregates and visualizes the source records. See the launch-field documentation and .

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Source SHA-256
ee70d1d8b7cb72a239f60a996c061cd1ddf4fed493686f2d8e8333a83a91d5c3
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