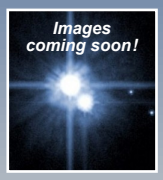
the long road to Pluto

Some planetary researchers consider a career in space science to be a lesson in patience. Imagine studying Pluto in college and then starting your career by designing prototype science instruments for a possible mission. After NASA approved funding for the New Horizons mission, four years were needed to construct the science instruments and spacecraft and another nine years were needed for the spacecraft to cross more than 3 billion miles (5 billion kilometers) to reach its target.

2015 – New Horizons comes to within 7,800 miles (12,500 kilometers) of Pluto

2015 – New Horizons begins its observation campaign

2015 – NASA's New Horizons spacecraft explores Pluto and its moons



2007 – Jupiter slingshots New Horizons toward Pluto

2006 – NASA launches New Horizons from Florida

2005 – Spacecraft is completed, undergoes testing, and ships for launch

2013 – Pope Francis of Argentina is elected the first pope from the Americas

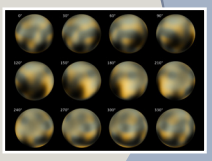
2009 – Barack Obama is inaugurated as president

2008 – E-readers introduced

2001 – NASA selects New Horizons from multiple proposals submitted

2001 – NASA seeks proposals for a new mission to Pluto

1997 – NASA releases first Hubble Space Telescope maps of Pluto



2002 – Cameras introduced as cell phone standards

2000 – Text messaging for cell phones introduced

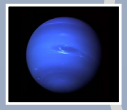
1999 – Industries fear the "Y2K" bug

1999 – The euro is introduced as currency in 11 countries

1994 – NASA begins developing advanced, miniaturized instruments for Pluto missions

1990 – NASA completes first dedicated Pluto flyby mission study, called Pluto-350

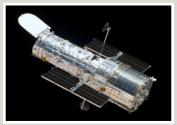
1989 – Voyager 2 reaches Neptune; scientists call for a mission to Pluto



1993 – The European Union is formally established

1990 – The Hubble Space Telescope is launched

1989 – The Berlin Wall separating East and West Germany falls



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