

**Cassini Scientist for a Day: a tactile experience**

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*Abstract*

In September 2011, the Cassini spacecraft took images of three targets and a challenge was launched to all students: to choose the one target they thought would provide the best science and to write an essay explaining their reasons (more information on the “**Cassini Scientist for a Day**” essay contest official webpage in: <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/education/scientistforaday10thedition/>, run by **NASA/JPL**) The three targets presented were: Hyperion, Rhea and Titan, and Saturn. The idea behind “**Cassini Scientist for a Day: a tactile experience**” was to transform each of these images into schematic tactile images, highlighting relevant features apprehended through a tactile key, accompanied by a small text in Braille with some additional information. This initial approach would allow reach a broader community of students, more specifically those with visual impairment disabilities. Through proper implementation and careful study cases the adapted images associated with an explanatory key provide more resources in tactile astronomy.

As the 2012 edition approaches a new set of targeted objet images will be once again transformed and adapted to visually impaired students and will aim to reach more students into participate in this international competition and to engage them in a quest to expand their knowledge in the amazing Cassini discoveries and the wonders of Saturn and its moons.

As the winning essays will be published on the Cassini website and contest winners invited to participate in a dedicated teleconference with Cassini scientists from NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, this initiative presents a great chance to all visually impaired students and teachers to participate in an exciting experience.

These initiatives must be complemented with further information to strengthen the learning experience. However they stand as a good starting point to tackle further astronomical concepts in the classroom, especially this field that sometimes lacks the resources.

Although the images are ready, any feedback received is paramount. With this initiative we would like to make a call to all interested in participating in the implementation of this project in their country. All interested parties will have the images provided in their native languages by sending the text on your native language translated from the English version.