



Assessing Potential Propulsion Breakthroughs (Paperback)

By Marc G Millis

Bibliogov, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 246 x 189 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. The term, propulsion breakthrough, refers to concepts like propellantless space drives and faster-than-light travel, the kind of breakthroughs that would make interstellar exploration practical. Although no such breakthroughs appear imminent, a variety of investigations into these goals have begun. From 1996 to 2002, NASA supported the Breakthrough Propulsion Physics Project to examine physics in the context of breakthrough spaceflight. Three facets of these assessments are now reported: (1) predicting benefits, (2) selecting research, and (3) recent technical progress. Predicting benefits is challenging since the breakthroughs are still only notional concepts, but kinetic energy can serve as a basis for comparison. In terms of kinetic energy, a hypothetical space drive could require many orders of magnitude less energy than a rocket for journeys to our nearest neighboring star. Assessing research options is challenging when the goals are beyond known physics and when the implications of success are profound. To mitigate the challenges, a selection process is described where: (a) research tasks are constrained to only address the immediate unknowns, curious effects or critical issues, (b) reliability of assertions is...

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