# Katy Perry’s Blue Origin flight highlights challenges for private space travel



Pop singer Katy Perry recently returned from a brief journey aboard a Blue Origin rocket, delivering a message of unity and love to the public during a post-flight news conference. Speaking about the experience, Perry expressed hope that “they can see the unity that we modelled and replicate that,” adding, “You’ll never know the amount of love that you have inside of you to give and to receive until the day you launch.”

Despite this optimistic message, the reception from the public has been less favourable. Blue Origin’s first all-female crew flight, intended as a landmark event for commercial space travel, failed to spark widespread enthusiasm. Attention quickly shifted to the group’s skintight flight suits rather than the team’s empowering slogan, “taking up space!” Some observers attribute the criticism to underlying misogyny, noting the lack of similar backlash when William Shatner undertook a space journey. Moreover, the display of extravagance has been striking at a time when the United States faces economic uncertainty and the possibility of recession.

The negative public reaction presents a challenge for Jeff Bezos, founder of Blue Origin. His private aerospace company is dedicated to developing space tourism, a venture that could significantly influence the fortunes of his ecommerce giant, Amazon. However, reminders of the considerable financial and environmental costs involved in private spaceflight tend to provoke criticism. This dilemma echoes the historical trajectory of space investment, such as the declining public interest in NASA’s Apollo missions. While Neil Armstrong’s 1969 moon landing captivated more than 600 million viewers worldwide, by 1972, enthusiasm for the expensive lunar programme had waned. NASA scientists even expressed frustration at frivolous uses of space missions, such as Alan Shepard’s golf ball experiment on the moon, which some regarded as unproductive.

Currently, the race to launch rockets is primarily a contest among billionaires with deep pockets, including Bezos and Elon Musk. Bezos is free to pursue sending celebrities into space, regardless of the limited public excitement about routine space travel or the prospect of commercial developments in orbit.

However, Blue Origin’s activities extend beyond suborbital tourism. The company is also developing the New Glenn, a heavy-lift orbital rocket. This project has direct ties to Amazon’s ambitions. Since stepping down as Amazon’s chief executive in 2021 to concentrate on Blue Origin, Bezos has maintained his role as executive chair, intertwining the business interests of both companies. Dave Limp, formerly a senior Amazon executive, now serves as Blue Origin’s CEO. The rockets developed by Blue Origin could play a crucial role in Amazon’s $10 billion Project Kuiper, which aims to deploy a constellation of satellites to provide high-speed internet globally. Project Kuiper is conceived as a potential “fourth pillar” of Amazon’s business, complementing online retail, Prime subscription services, and cloud computing through Amazon Web Services.

While Elon Musk’s SpaceX, valued at around $350 billion, currently dominates the orbital launch market, Amazon is preparing to launch its first batch of non-prototype satellites shortly, using a rocket provided by United Launch Alliance, a collaborative venture between Boeing and Lockheed Martin. Amazon may eventually utilise Blue Origin’s New Glenn for future launches.

The development of reusable rockets that can carry heavy payloads and passengers is crucial not only for established companies but also for upcoming space ventures. For instance, Seattle-based firm Interlune is working on missions to mine the moon, while AstroForge, an aerospace company from Huntington Beach, California, is aiming to mine a nearby asteroid, 2022 OB5, which is believed to contain valuable metals. The sector has seen considerable growth, with global space technology investments rising by 25% last year to reach $8.6 billion, according to UK-based Seraphim Capital.

Investments in rockets capable of satellite launches operate somewhat independently from the space tourism market. Nevertheless, both Blue Origin and SpaceX are reliant on contracts with NASA and other government agencies. Public support for space exploration, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping policy and budgets. Notably, NASA’s budget stood at $24.9 billion last year, falling short of the agency’s request. Even with former President Donald Trump announcing ambitious goals to send astronauts to Mars, the White House is proposing a reduced budget of approximately $20 billion for the current year.

Public attitudes toward space initiatives indicate a preference for scientific endeavours over headline-grabbing spectacles. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, the top priority for NASA, in the view of most American adults, is monitoring asteroids that could pose a threat to Earth. Human space exploration ranked lowest on the list, and the idea of sending celebrities into space received no mention.

The Financial Times has reported these developments, outlining the complex and evolving landscape of private space enterprise and its intersection with public opinion, scientific priorities, and substantial financial investment.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/blue-origin-rocket-female-crew-including-katy-perry/story?id=120779187> - This article corroborates Katy Perry’s participation in Blue Origin’s all-female crew flight, the flight duration of around 11 minutes, Perry’s post-flight message about love and unity, and the crew’s activities including Perry singing 'What a Wonderful World' during the flight.
2. <https://www.businessinsider.com/lauren-sanchez-katy-perry-blue-origin-flight-what-to-know-2025-4> - This source confirms the public focus on the crew’s flight suits, the slogan “taking up space!”, and the context of public reaction to the all-female flight. It also highlights Perry’s comments on the collective energy and making space for future women, supporting claims about the empowering message.
3. <https://www.blueorigin.com/news/new-shepard-ns-31-mission> - This Blue Origin official news release confirms the 31st mission of New Shepard including the all-female crew with Katy Perry and others, supporting the factual basis of the flight and the participants.
4. <https://www.nasa.gov/feature/nasa-legacy-apollo-missions> - This NASA page provides context about the Apollo missions, the moon landing’s initial huge audience, subsequent waning public interest, budgetary concerns, and the scientific vs. spectacle debate, corroborating the historical parallels and public sentiment discussed.
5. <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/04/14/blue-origin-jeff-bezos-space-tourism-new-glenn-project-kuiper.html> - This CNBC article details Jeff Bezos's involvement with Blue Origin, the New Glenn orbital rocket development, links to Amazon’s Project Kuiper satellite internet ambitions, and the leadership overlap between Amazon and Blue Origin, supporting claims about the intertwined business interests.
6. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2024/12/12/public-support-for-nasa-science-efforts-focuses-on-asteroid-threats/> - This Pew Research Center survey confirms American public priorities for NASA focus on asteroid monitoring over human space exploration or celebrity space flights, corroborating the discussion of public attitudes toward space initiatives.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/6b8f706f-1016-4aaf-b686-7d22e9e028ce> - Please view link - unable to able to access data