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LOCAL NEWS

Technology for Starshot program could be developed in Rochester

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Posted: Apr 13, 2016 / 05:16 PM EDT / Updated: Apr 13, 2016 / 06:04 PM EDT

Space. The final frontier.

But as we've seen over the last 55 years, since man first left our planet, we keep venturing farther and farther past those frontiers.

years away.

The project, called Starshot, is not an easy one. But the technology required to make it work could be developed here in Rochester.

Starshot, as explained by backer Stephen Hawking, would send a number of small probes the size of a cell phone into space on the back of a huge solar sail. The sail would be pushed by photonic lasers from earth to the nearest star.

Starshot may sound crazy, but any plan that has Stephen Hawking on its side has to carry a lot of weight. Right now, though, technology has to catch up to the idea.

Some of those catch ups could happen right here in Rochester. Photonics require optics. And when it comes to moving objects with a beam of light, Optimax is already working technology that could be useful for the Starshot project.

Over at RIT, there may be a handful of discoveries that would help propel the Starshot program. The Director of the Center for Detectors at RIT says that the Institute has the resources to make key camera components for Starshot.

RIT has already reached out to Starshot scientists to see how they can help.

Starshot may be a long shot. It's planned to launch in roughly 20 years, and take another 20 to reach its target.

But if successful, mankind's greatest feat could have Rochester's fingerprints all over it.