

Erratic And Insane Elon Musk Tells Employees to Build Massive Catapult on Moon

Fire away!

By [Frank Landymore](#)

As Elon Musk tries to [sweep his Mars ambitions under the rug](#) like an embarrassing teenage phase, he's now shifting focus to the Moon — with no less eye-brow raising ideas.

According to [new reporting](#) from the *New York Times*, Musk told employees at xAI — his AI company [recently acquired by SpaceX](#) — that it needs to construct a factory on the Moon to churn out AI satellites. And to launch the satellites into space, he says, it needs to build an enormous electromagnetic catapult.

Sci-fi readers already know where this is going: Musk is thinking about building a mass driver, which is essentially a coilgun for launching payloads instead of deadly projectiles. Paired with the lunar facility, Musk views it as a necessary step in building out computing power for his AI empire, which must not be bound by the finitude of terrestrial real estate.

“You have to go to the Moon,” Musk said at an all-hands meeting, per the *NYT*. “It’s difficult to imagine what an intelligence of that scale would think about, but it’s going to be incredibly exciting to see it happen,”

The outpouring of lunar enthusiasm from Musk comes after his aerospace company SpaceX bought xAI ahead of what is anticipated to be a historic IPO.

In an announcement about the acquisition stuffed with more sci-fi concepts, Musk argued that space-based AI was the “only way to scale” the technology. He spoke of putting data centers in the Earth’s orbit, where in theory they’d have access to practically unlimited amounts of solar energy. Along with orbital data centers, he imagines populating the orbit with a vast constellation of AI satellites, something he likened to building a “sentient sun.”

The Moon may sound like a logical destination for a space company, but it actually represents [an incredible about-face for Musk and SpaceX](#). Musk has spent years denigrating lunar missions, viewing them as a waste of time and a “[distraction](#)” from his ultimate goal of sending humans to Mars. His mantra has always been to “make life multiplanetary,” and “extend consciousness to the stars.” He has frequently provided optimistic timelines for achieving this, including promising in 2017 that the company’s first Mars mission would launch in 2022, [and its first astronauts would arrive by 2025](#). He has consistently reiterated this mission, and presented SpaceX employees [with a roadmap to reaching the Red Planet](#).

Of course, Musk insists he’s not abandoning Mars. In the Tuesday meeting, he described the Moon as a stepping stone to Mars. First, he wants to build “a self-sustaining city on the Moon,” then travel to Mars — and then, naturally, search the rest of the galaxy for aliens.

He provided a timeline for his dueling Moon-Mars ambitions in a recent tweet justifying the pivot.

“SpaceX has already shifted focus to building a self-growing city on the Moon, as we can potentially achieve that in less than 10 years, whereas Mars would take 20+ years,” Musk [explained](#). “That said, SpaceX will also strive to build a Mars city and begin doing so in about 5 to 7 years, but the overriding priority is securing the future of civilization and the Moon is faster.”

More on SpaceX: [*Elon Musk Going Through It After Putting Mars City on Ice*](#)