

I was strolling around my local library in second grade when I saw a small demonstration. About six or so computers running some kind of game or simulation were lined up on a table. Curious, I wandered up to the table and saw a video game. That game was *Kerbal Space Program*: a game where you could build and test rockets, rovers, planes, and basically any vehicle you wanted to. I got hooked on KSP and, subsequently, space.

So, just like how I was excited when I first landed some Kerbalnauts on Duna, the game's equivalent of Mars, I was pretty stoked when I heard that we humans might make it to Mars soon as well! This is my response to the New York Times article, "Elon Musk's Plan to Put a Million Earthlings on Mars in 20 Years."

While the article's title may seem remarkable, landing just one human on Mars is already daunting. According to the article, NASA doesn't expect humans to arrive on Mars until 2040! However, Mr. Musk hopes to achieve a thriving civilization of one million on the planet around that time. This Mars colony will certainly require enormous amounts of planning, resources, and missions. While this timeline is a bit absurd, regarding space travel, humans have been known to defy expectations, and if this mission could succeed, it could mean a lot. Colonizing another planet comes with many benefits; for example, it could help with overpopulation and would mark an important technical milestone for our species.

Whether Mr. Musk succeeds with his ambitious plan to colonize Mars or not, the human race's exploration of another planet is still something that has a profound impact.