

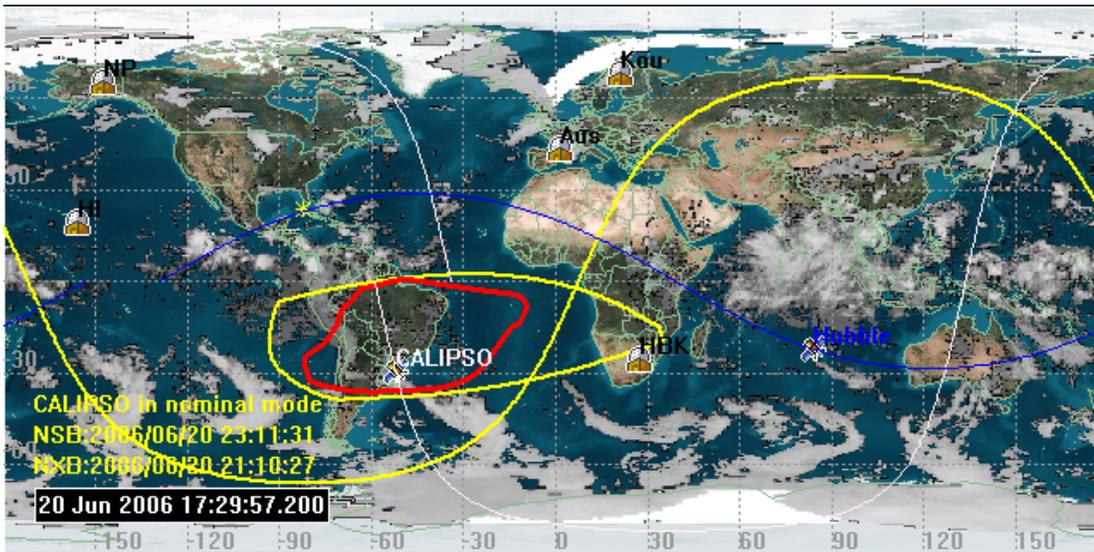
Non Radiation Hardened Microprocessors in Spaced Based Remote Sensing Systems

The CALIPSO (Cloud-Aerosol Lidar and Infrared Pathfinder Satellite Observations) mission is a comprehensive suite of active and passive sensors including a 20Hz 230mj Nd:YAG lidar, a visible wavelength Earth-looking camera and an imaging infrared radiometer. CALIPSO flies in formation with the Earth Observing System Post-Meridian (EOS PM) train, provides continuous, near-simultaneous measurements and is a planned 3 year mission. CALIPSO was launched into a 98 degree sun synchronous Earth orbit in April of 2006 to study clouds and aerosols and acquires over 5 gigabytes of data every 24 hours. Figure 1 shows the ground track of one CALIPSO orbit as well as high and low intensity South Atlantic Anomaly outlines. CALIPSO passes through the SAA several times each day.

Spaced based remote sensing systems that include multiple instruments and/or instruments such as lidar generate large volumes of data and require robust real-time hardware and software mechanisms and high throughput processors. Due to onboard storage restrictions and telemetry downlink limitations these systems must pre-process and reduce the data before sending it to the ground. This onboard processing and real-time requirement load may mean that newer more powerful processors are needed even though acceptable radiation-hardened versions have not yet been released. CALIPSO's single board computer payload controller processor is actually a set of four (4) voting non-radiation hardened COTS Power PC 603r's built on a single width VME card by General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems (GDAIS).

Significant radiation concerns for CALIPSO and other Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites include the South Atlantic Anomaly (SAA), the north and south poles and strong solar events. Over much of South America and extending into the South Atlantic Ocean (see figure 1) the Van Allen radiation belts dip to just 200-800km and spacecraft entering this area are subjected to high energy protons and experience higher than normal Single Event Upset (SEU) and Single Event Latch-up (SEL) rates. Although less significant, spacecraft flying in the area around the poles experience similar upsets. Finally, powerful solar proton events in the range of 10MeV/10pfu to 100MeV/1pfu as are forecasted and tracked by NOAA's Space Environment Center in Colorado can result in Single Event Upset (SEU), Single Event Latch-up (SEL) and permanent failures such as Single Event Gate Rupture (SEGR) in some technologies. (Galactic Cosmic Rays (GCRs) are another source, especially for gate rupture)

CALIPSO mitigates common radiation concerns in its data handling through the use of redundant processors, radiation-hardened Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASIC), hardware-based Error Detection and Correction (EDAC), processor and memory scrubbing, redundant boot code and mirrored files. After presenting a system overview this paper will expand on each of these strategies. Where applicable, related on-orbit data collected since the CALIPSO initial boot on May 4, 2006 will be noted.



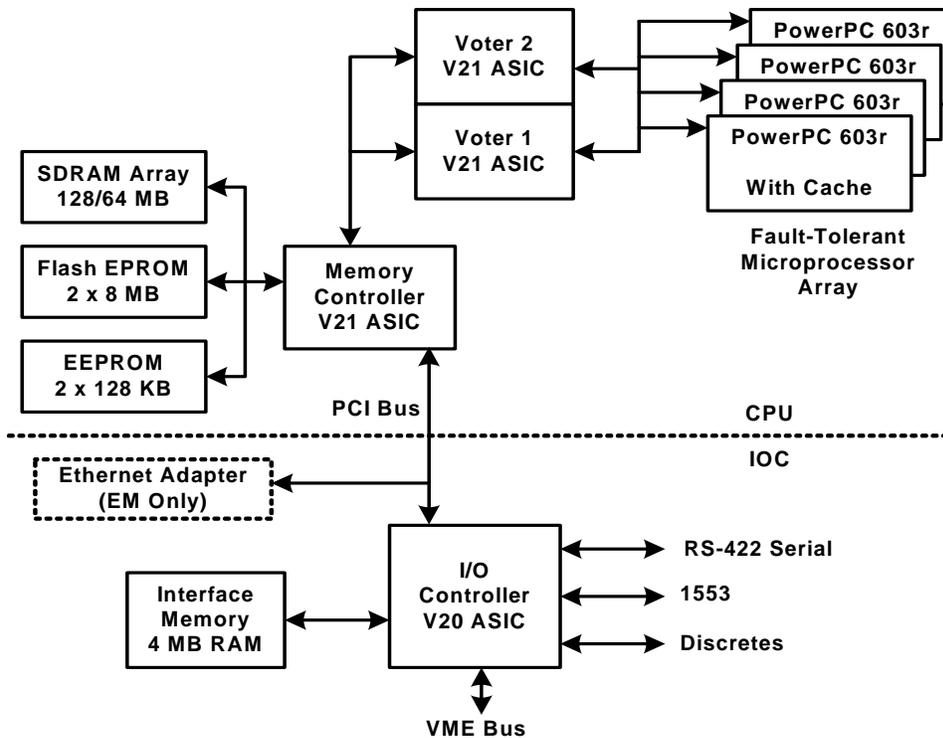
(Figure 1) South Atlantic Anomaly

System Overview

The CALIPSO Single Board Computer (SBC) is a VME single slot General Dynamics Integrated Spacecraft Computer (GDISC) system. This board was chosen for several reasons including: processor performance and radiation tolerance. A functional diagram is shown in figure 2 and significant system characteristics are listed in table 1 below. CALIPSO runs all 4 four system processors but at a reduced clock speed of 160MHz in order support spacecraft platform power requirements.

Processor	Main Processor: PowerPC 603r (4), 240 MHz. CALIPSO runs at a reduced speed of 160Mhz
Performance	480 peak MIPS at 240Mhz
Non-volatile memory	16 MB Flash (EPROM), on-orbit programmable 128KB (2) (EEPROM), storage for bootstrap code with SECDED, CALIPSO application supports verifying/updating on-orbit
RAM system memory	64MB SDRAM with Triple Error Correction/Quadruple Error Detection (TECQED)
Interface memory	4MB SDRAM with TECQED
I/O	MIL-STD-1553B Two RS-422 serial lines Three high-speed (10Mbits/sec) serial lines

(Table 1) CALIPSO Specific SBC Characteristics (Courtesy GDAIS)



(Figure 2) SBC Functional Block Diagram (courtesy of GDAIS)

CALIPSO application code, developed by Ball Aerospace in Boulder, includes more than 12 interrupt service routines and over 40 tasks many of which run briefly and/or rarely. Several of the more processor-demanding CALIPSO flight software tasks are listed below in Table 2. The utilization values listed were acquired on-orbit while in nominal data acquisition mode.

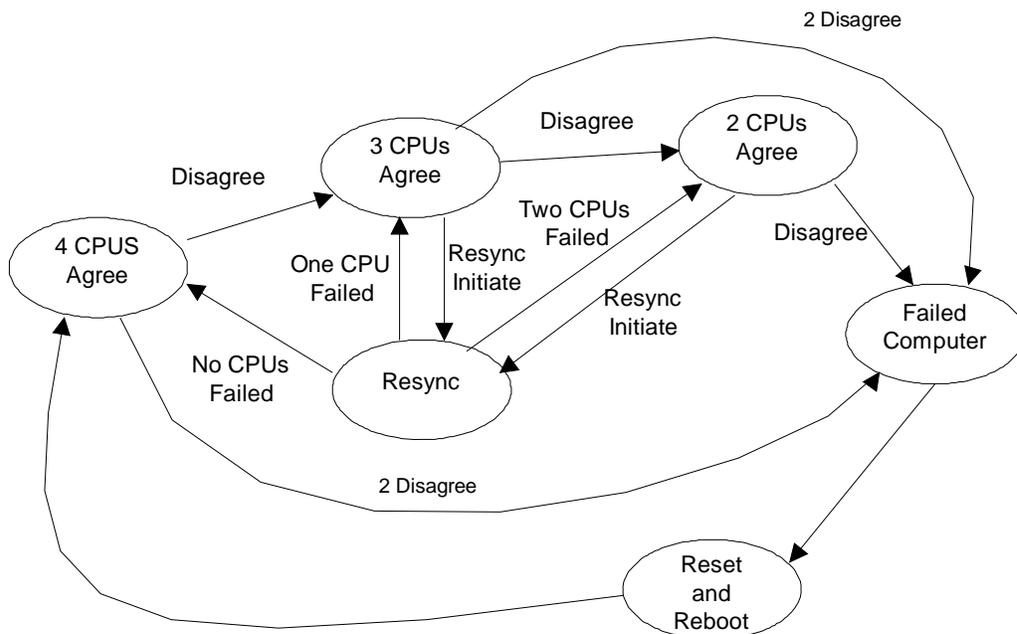
Task Name	CPU %
WFC_RECEIVE_TASK	1.398
IIR_RECEIVE_TASK	0.709
PMC_TARGET_RANGE_TASK	2.080
AD_SPPS_MON_TASK	1.067
LDR_LDP_PROCESS_532P_FRAME_TASK	22.097
LDR_LDP_PROCESS_532S_FRAME_TASK	21.715
LDR_LDP_PROCESS_1064_FRAME_TASK	18.363
WFC_PROCESS_TASK	0.151
MC_MEM_SCRUB_TASK	0.004
...	
Idle Task	29.725
Total CPU Utilization	70.28%

(Table 2) Significant CALIPSO Software Tasks

Radiation Mitigation Strategies

Redundant processors and radiation-hardened Application Specific Integrated Circuits

As mentioned earlier CALIPSO uses a General Dynamics VME Single Board Computer with 4 non-radiation-hardened COTS PPC 603r's running in strict lockstep. Address, data, and control outputs to memory and I/O are majority voted. If one of the members has been upset and is not working correctly, a voting set of three still provides correct outputs. Processors that mis-compare are disabled until they can be reset. This design allows the non-radiation hardened processors to be used while still providing mitigation of cosmic ray or proton-induced upsets. As shown in figure 3 below, if a voting set of 4 loses a processor, it continues as a voting set of 3. If a voting set of three loses a processor, it continues as a comparing set of 2. If a comparing set of 2 encounters a mis-compare, the computer will be reset and the software will restart. To ensure high reliability operation, the voter and memory control logic are implemented in redundant radiation-hardened ASIC technology. The four PowerPC voting design allows a reliable three processor voting set to be maintained even if one of the PowerPCs permanently fails, thus increasing the SBC long-term reliability [1].



(Figure 3) SBC Processor Fault Detection and Reaction (courtesy of GDAIS)

CALIPSO flight code uses a polling technique to detect and reset as needed any processors that mis-compare. This process significantly reduces and can eliminate system resets due to mis-compare. This technique called “Processor Error Scrubbing” will be discussed in more detail in the “Processor and Memory Scrubbing” section below.

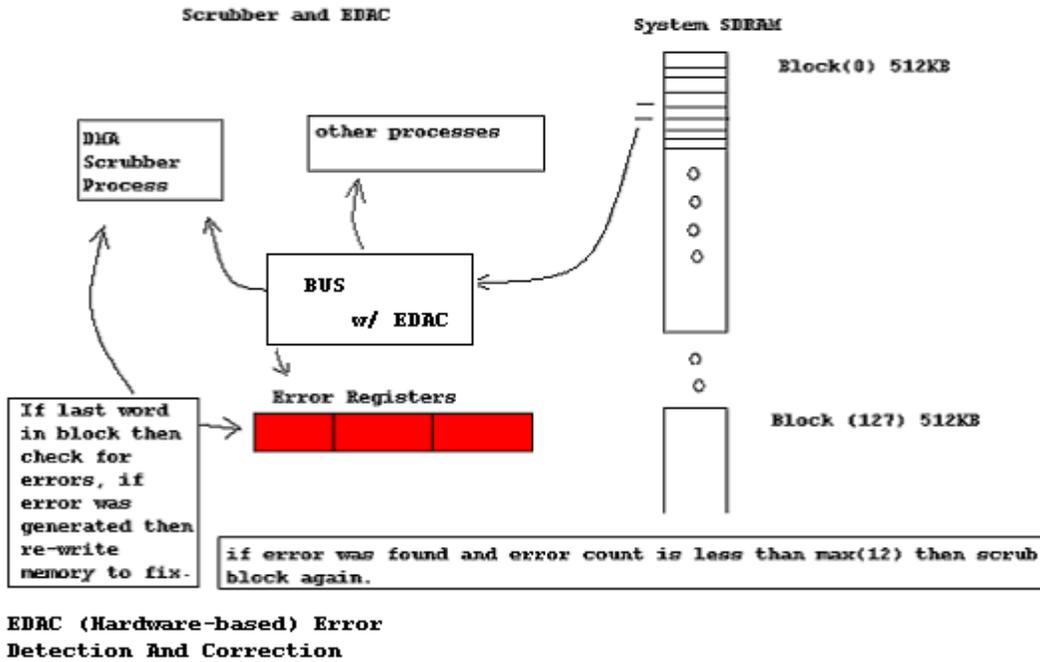
Hardware-based Error Detection and Correction (EDAC)

The GD SBC implements hardware-based EDAC in order to ensure each task processes correct data. EDAC runs all of the time on all in-use SDRAM and on the boot EEPROM during system initialization. Two additional byte wide columns of RAM memory chips are implemented for each 64-bit word. If a memory device fails, this spare memory can be used to replace the failed device, enhancing long term reliability. This mechanism can even circumvent shorts on data lines [1]. Spare RAM i.e. memory not currently being used is not supported by EDAC. During operations errors are corrected as they are read but are not corrected in the memory array, i.e. not written back to the device. Therefore, bit errors in system and interface memory can build up over time. Permanent corrections only occur as part of the CALIPSO flight software Memory Error Scrubbing (MES) Task, discussed in more detail in the “Processor and Memory Scrubbing” section below. In normal memory mode the SBC supports SECDED or Single-bit Error Correction/Double-bit Error Detection but CALIPSO uses the optional mirrored memory mode whereby the two 64MB banks of RAM store the same image thus supporting Triple bit Error Correction and Quadruple bit Error Detection (TECQED). The EDAC processing will therefore correct all single, double, and triple-bit errors, and will detect all quadruple errors within a single byte.

Processor and Memory Scrubbing

The sole purpose of the Memory Error Scrubbing (MES) task is to keep single-bit errors from accumulating up to the point where uncorrectable multi-bit errors occur. The MES task uses DMA and thus the processor does not have to dedicate resources for this task. All of the used system and interface memory are scrubbed every 10 minutes (selectable via software table value). Spare system memory is NOT scrubbed. The MES task for system memory scrubbing is illustrated in figure 4; interface memory scrubbing is similar. The 128MB System Memory is partitioned into two 64MB banks to support mirrored mode. The 64MB banks are broken up for scrubbing into 128 512KB blocks. The MES Task scrubs both 64MB banks together. Every 10 minutes this DMA process starts, and beginning at the top of memory, pulls every 32-bit word across the bus, stopping at the bottom of each 512KB block. When the bottom of a block is reached, the process checks an error status registers and if set, generates an interrupt. The Interrupt Service Routine (ISR) for this corrects the data at the memory address noted in the error register. Also, an entry is placed in the Mission Support Software (MSS) error log

indicating the MES task corrected an error[2]. CALIPSO flight code reads this log at a 1Hz rate and stores the data for transmission to the ground for analysis. If an error was detected/corrected the MES task will re-scrub the same block starting at the address immediately following the address that was just corrected. The current version of CALIPSO flight code will repeat this “block-retry” process until 12 errors are detected/corrected in a block or until no errors are generated. Once the limit is reached or no errors are found, the MES task will move on to the next block in the the 128-block series. All active memories are scrubbed every 10 minutes.

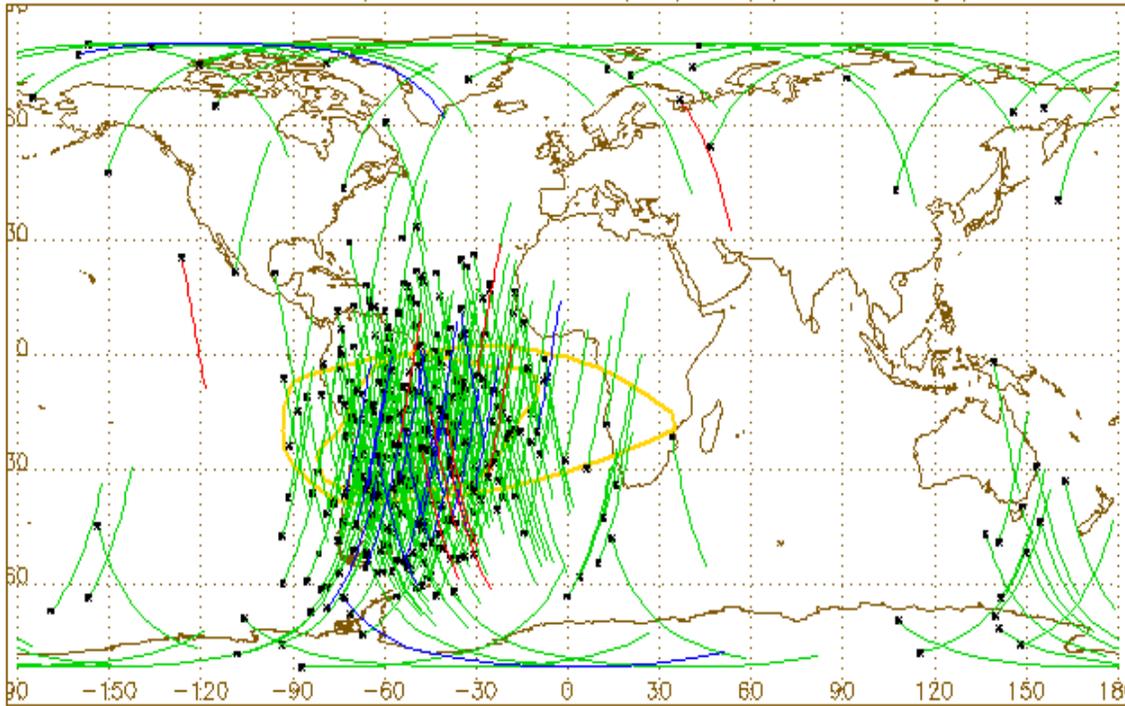


(Figure 4) CALIPSO System Memory Scrubbing Diagram

	Total SEUs in Time Interval			
	1 SDRAM	2 SDRAMs	20 SDRAMs	22 SDRAMs
Worst (peak) minute	0.057	0.11	1.14	1.254
Worst hour	0.95	1.89	18.94	20.834
Worst 4.6 hours	4.36	8.71	87.1	95.81
Worst 24 hours	22.7	45.5	454.6	500.06
Quiet (peak) minute	0.005	0.010	0.101	0.1111
Quiet hour (no SAA)	0.013	0.027	0.267	0.2937
Quiet 4.6 hours (no SAA)	0.06	0.123	1.227	1.35
Quiet 24 hours (no SAA)	0.26	0.520	5.200	5.72

(Table 3) CALIPSO Pre-Launch SEU Rate Predictions

CALIPSO Memory Scrub Events – 7/29/06 (Uptime 87 Days)



Interface Memory: 32

System Memory: 461

Processor Miscompares: 9

* Scrub Time Denoted by Asterisk

(Figure 5) Memory Error Scrub Geo-location Map

The location of all system memory errors and processor mis-compares that the CALIPSO scrubbing software has fixed to date are shown in figure 5. The asterisks in the plot represent the location of CALIPSO when each error was fixed, as flight software scrubs and fixes all memory errors every ten minutes the actual location of CALIPSO when the error occurred is not known, therefore the line trailing each asterisk represents 10 minutes of travel.

CALIPSO pre-launch predicted orbital average SEU rate:

$(5 \text{ minutes} * 1 \text{ peak} * 0.1111 \text{ SEUs/min}) + (94 \text{ minutes} * 0.0049 \text{ SEUs/min}) = 1.015$
SEUs/orbit or 0.0102/minute

The CALIPSO SBC currently uses 22 SDRAMs including 20 for system memory and 2 for interface memory. Table 3 above shows the pre-launch SEU predictions based on proton testing at GD and table 4 below shows the MES SEU data acquired from the time CALIPSO was first powered on May 4, 2006 through July 29, 2006.

	Size	SEU Count	% of Total Scrub Events
System Memory	64MB	461	93
Interface Memory	4MB	32	7
Totals		493	100%

(Table 4) CALIPSO SEU Data from the MES Error Log

As of July 29, 2006 CALIPSO had been running for 87 days and at 16 orbits per day the predictions indicate that the total SEU count should be $87 \times 16 \times 1.015$ or 1412. CALIPSO is currently experiencing an SEU rate of approximately 0.345/orbit or 0.0034 per minute, well below predictions. Based on the pre-launch SEU predictions CALIPSO flight code was configured such that a 60K SEU scrubbing margin would be supported.

$$12 \text{ SEUs (per block)} * 512 \text{ (blocks)} / 10 \text{ (minute scrub period)} / 0.0102 = \sim 60\text{K}$$

With the current SEU rate CALIPSO’s scrubbing margin is:

$$12 \text{ SEUs (per block)} * 512 \text{ (blocks)} / 10 \text{ (minute scrub period)} / 0.0035 = \sim 175\text{K}$$

It is expected that CALIPSO will experience this large margin for its entire planned 3 year life.

The purpose of Processor Error Scrubbing (PES) is to prevent multiple CPUs from sitting in a disabled state. As noted earlier processors that suffer radiation induced upsets and that do not vote with the majority are disabled until explicitly resynchronized. Multiple processors in this disabled state will lead to a system reset. CALIPSO flight software polls the SBC “re-sync pending” register bit at a rate of 1Hz and if indicated initiates a processor resynchronization. Per GD engineers “re-syncing” time is approximately 1 ms. The pre-launch predictions indicated that CALIPSO may see 3 processor mis-compare every week or every 168 hours. Shown in table 5 are the on-orbit mis-compare data acquired for 87 days between May 4, 2006 and July 29th 2006.

Processor Number	Mis-Compare Count	% of Total
Processor (0)	2	22
Processor (1)	3	33
Processor (2)	3	33
Processor (3)	1	10
Total	9	100

(Table 5) CALIPSO Processor Mis-Compare Data

Based on the data to date CALIPSO is experiencing a processor mis-compare rate of approximate 0.726 per week, well below the prediction. With this relatively low mis-compare rate the CALIPSO re-sync period of 1Hz is more than adequate to prevent most if not all system resets due to mis-compared processors.

Redundant Boot Code

The non-volatile 128KB EEPROM contains the bootstrap code which is used upon power up to initialize, configure, and verify the SBC hardware. These two 128KB EEPROM devices store identical boot code images, power to these devices is applied only when needed and as a result these chips are powered off the majority of the time. A soft reset will automatically result in a switch to the redundant EEPROM. During start-up EDAC is performed on the active boot device. All single bit errors are corrected while multi-bit errors may result in a watchdog timeout and subsequent soft reset. This Single Error Correction/Double Error Detection (SECEDED) feature requires an extra byte of check data for each 4 byte address, thus the 68KB boot image is 80KB when this SECEDED information is added. The CALIPSO software team decided that on-orbit verification and if necessary update to the boot code would be implemented. While on-orbit the boot images are routinely dumped to the ground and verified, if errors are observed the original image can be rewritten. If the device itself begins to fail a new image can be built that bypasses failed memory addresses. As an operations note, to load a new boot image of approximately 80KB requires 15 minutes of spacecraft contact time or two nominal contacts. The CALIPSO software teams at NASA Langley and Ball Aerospace have verified that they can rebuild from source code a valid boot image. As a developers note the GD Refresh Boot Memory (RBM) API was used to support rewriting EEPROM. As of 29 July, 2006 the onboard EEPROM devices have been dumped and examined three (3) by the operations group at Langley and no errors have been identified.

Mirrored files

Application files are stored on redundant 8MB EPROM devices which like the boot devices for radiation reasons are powered only when being accessed. These files are checked by operations staff on a regular basis via payload command and rewritten as necessary. Certain executable image files are mirrored, i.e. stored on both devices for added safety. CALIPSO maintains 2 operational images onboard, one on each device, and one "maintenance" image. This maintenance image is expected to be used only when

neither of the operation images will boot, this is the only file that is mirrored on both EPROM devices, to date no errors have been detected.

Conclusions

Spaced based remote sensing systems that include multiple instruments and/or instruments such as lidar generate large volumes of data and require robust real-time hardware and software mechanisms and high throughput processors. Due to onboard storage restrictions and telemetry downlink limitations these systems must pre-process and reduce the data before sending it to the ground. This onboard processing and real-time requirement load may mean that newer more powerful processors are needed even though acceptable radiation-hardened versions have not yet been released.

Use of non-radiation hardened systems requires that robust mitigation strategies be developed and employed. CALIPSO utilizes several mitigation techniques including: Error Detection and Correction (EDAC), memory and processor scrubbing, device, file and processor redundancy. CALIPSO is proof that with the right mix of software and hardware COTS systems can be used in LEO and used effectively and efficiently.

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- [2] General Dynamic's Intergrated SpaceCraft (ISC) Software Programmers Guide (SPG), version 13232438v7
- [3] M.N. Lovellette, K.S. Wood, D.L. Wood, J.H. Beall , P.P. Shirvani, N. Oh and E.J. McCluskey, "Strategies for Fault-Tolerant, Space-Based Computing:Lessons Learned from the ARGOS Testbed"
- [4] Doyle Lahti, Gary Grisbeck, and Phil Bolton, "ISC (Integrated Spacecraft Computer) Case Study of a Proven, Viable Approach to Using COTS in Spaceborne Computer Systems", 14th Annual USU Conference on Small Satellites, pp IV-4.1-8, 2000.