NASDA's Aqua satellite was launched on May 4, 2002, and since then has been collecting data about the Earth's atmosphere, biosphere, hydroplanet, and cryosphere. It has 19 Earth-observing instruments to observe the Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS), the Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer (AMSR-E), the Advanced Land Imager for Rapid Response (ALI), four of the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instruments, the High-Resolution Infrared Radiation Sounder (HIRS), the Clouds and the Earth's Radiant Energy System (CERES), and the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instruments that work together. The instrument suite also includes the Earth Observing System (EOS) Aquarius, which records ocean-surface salinity measurements. This brings the total to 11 Earth-observing instruments on board Aqua. These instruments work together to provide a comprehensive view of the Earth's surface and atmosphere.

In addition to its scientific goals, Aqua also has a public outreach component. The mission has been featured in numerous podcasts, webcasts, and videos, including the EarthSky series on a variety of topics related to cloud and climate science.

Aqua Outreach at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory

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MODIS Rapid Response System (RRS)

The MODIS RRS is a system that allows Aqua to respond quickly to new events and conditions on Earth. It uses the MODIS instrument to provide near-real-time data on a variety of topics, including atmospheric composition, land cover, and ocean color. The RRS provides data within hours of an event, allowing scientists and decision makers to respond quickly to new conditions on Earth.

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