



The Swift X-ray Telescope (XRT)

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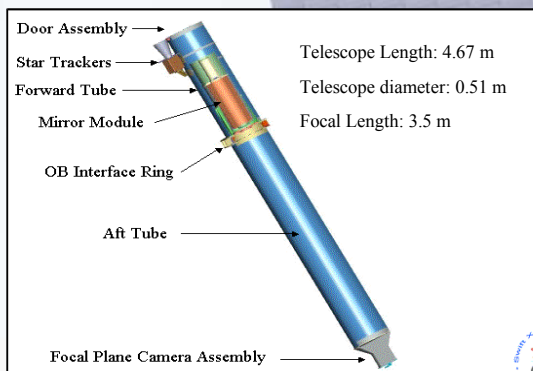
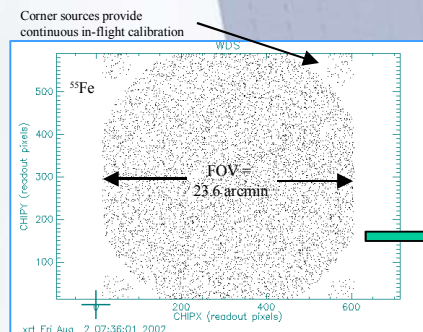
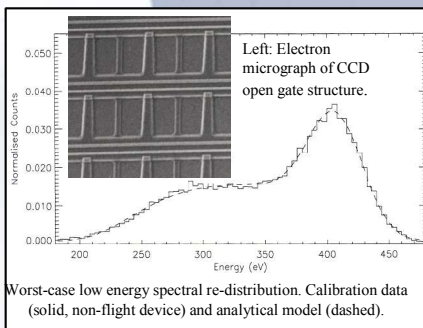


Abstract:

The Swift Gamma-Ray Burst Explorer will make prompt multiwavelength observations of Gamma-Ray Bursts and Afterglows. The X-ray Telescope (XRT) provides key capabilities that permit Swift to determine GRB positions with several arcsecond accuracy within 100 seconds of the burst onset. The XRT is designed to observe GRB afterglows covering over seven orders of magnitude in flux in the 0.2-10 keV band, with completely autonomous operation. GRB positions are determined within seconds of target acquisition, and accurate positions are sent to the ground for distribution over the GCN. The XRT can also measure redshifts of GRBs for bursts with Fe line emission or other spectral features.

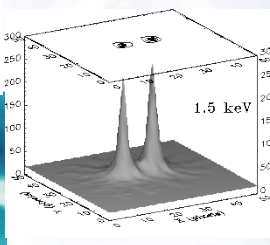


Above: Focal Plane Camera mounted on telescope tube.
Below: flight CCD mounted in flight package.



The Swift XRT has three key science goals:

- 1) Determine GRB position with 5 arcsecond accuracy and transmit position to the ground within 100 s of the burst.
- 2) Measure the afterglow lightcurve
- 3) Obtain X-ray spectroscopy of the afterglow



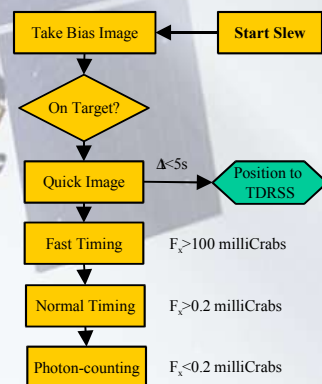
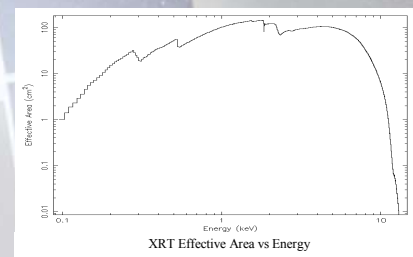
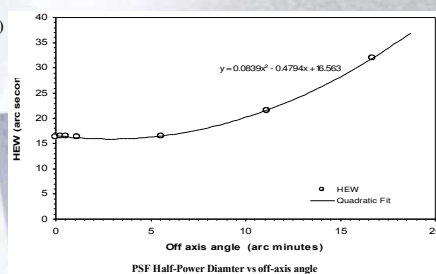
XRT mirror module design (top); XRT mirror (bottom); Measured PSF (right)

The table to the upper right summarizes the science performance of the XRT. The Swift XRT uses a 12 shell Wolter Type I grazing incidence mirror (shown above) developed for the JET-X telescope and an open electrode CCD detector (shown at left) developed for XMM-Newton. The mirror has been calibrated at the Panter facility in Munich (surface plot above shows PSF at 1.5 keV; figure to right shows the PSF vs. off-axis angle) and the flight detector has been calibrated at the University of Leicester. End-to-end calibration will be done in September 2002 at the Panter facility, and will measure the PSF as a function of off-axis angle and energy, timing characteristics, energy resolution, effective area (see figure at right for preliminary effective area curve), and dynamic range. We will also test the autonomous mode-switching software using a simulated GRB afterglow (see lower right flow chart).

The in-flight performance of the instrument will be monitored continuously using 55Fe calibration sources illuminating the corners of the CCD. An image collected during thermal vacuum testing in July 2002 is shown below left. The central circular region shows the circular field of view of the instrument (slightly truncated by the edges of the CCD), which is illuminated by Mn K- and K-β-rays at 5.9 and 6.4 keV (see spectrum below), produced by a 55Fe source located on the camera door. During flight this source is moved away when the camera door is opened, and this portion of the CCD views the sky. The four circular regions in the corners of the detector are the in-flight calibration sources, which permit us to measure resolution, gain, and charge transfer efficiency as a function of time during the mission.

The XRT instrument is shown schematically in the lower left figure, and is shown just before and during thermal vacuum testing at NASA/GSFC in the lower central and lower right photos, respectively.

Telescope	3.5m Wolter I
Telescope PSF	15 arcsec HPD @ 1.5 keV 20 arcsec HPD @ 8.1 keV
Detector	MAT CCD-22
Detector Format	600 x 600 pixels
Detector Readout Modes	Photon-counting, Imaging, & Timing
Field of View	23.6 x 23.6 arcmin
Pixel Scale	2.36 arcsec / pixel
Energy Range	0.2 - 10 keV
Effective Area	110 cm ² @ 1.5 keV
Sensitivity	2 x 10 ⁻¹⁴ ergs/cm ² /s in 10 ⁴ s
Position Accuracy	2.5 arcseconds
Operation	Autonomous



Automated XRT Observing Sequence

