People in Space

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Born in 1973 I just missed the Apollo era of moon landings, but I was around on April 12 in 1981 for the future that was the Space Shuttle. The Space Shuttle is the iconic part of space flight of the 80s, with the local hero Wubbo thrusting interest to insane levels.

So a couple of months ago I was a bit surprised I didn't have a clue about what was actually happening in space. Visually I could see Iridium flares and the ISS pass regularly, but if there were people on the ISS and how much I didn't know; could be none or two dozen, both probably uninteresting enough nowadays to not make the headlines if it all just goes according to plan. Frightened by this deterioration of interest in such an interesting part of civilization I decided to wipe of the dust and find out.

There is of course a site that answers questions like "How many people are in space right now?": http://www.howmanypeopleareinspacerightnow.com/. Based on that I created a widget that displays the information from that site and now I have that information on my OS X Dashboard. And as part of debugging that widget I closely follow anything that has to do with getting people into space. Just like in the 80s.

by Roland van Ipenburg http://www.xs4all.nl/~ipenburg/blog/posts/play/2010/11/25/people–in–space/