A Robotic Mission of Inspiration

The launch of Sputnik energized an entire generation of scientists, engineers and teachers. We need a new Sputnik to excite the youth of today and energize a new global generation of students in the science and technology fields. Our European partners have said that crossing the Atlantic with an autonomous underwater robot is Oceanography’s new Sputnik.

On April 27, 2009, scientists and students from Rutgers University launched “The Scarlet Knight”, an 8 foot long underwater glider on a mission to be the first robot to cross the Atlantic. Today the Scarlet Knight continues heading east to a planned recovery off the European mainland before the end of the year. The mission has already demonstrated a new capability for sustained ocean monitoring and forecasting, supporting international climate & earth system studies. It is the pathfinder for future robotic fleets designed for routine flights across the Atlantic and around the world.

Outcomes:
- Developed an international community of students, scientists and engineers.
- Engaged K-12 & undergraduate students in all aspects of the mission.
- Proposed a vision for expansion to a global scale.