

# VOYAGER 1 is stuck in an unknown and unimagined 'magnetic highway' 12 BILLION miles from earth

Written by Colin Tyler

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**THE NASA spacecraft Voyager 1, which was launched in 1977 and is now 12 billion miles from earth has discovered a new and unexpected cosmic zone on the edge of interstellar space where normal space time rules don't seem to apply.**

Voyager 1 was expected to have passed the heliopause – the very end of the heliosphere where plasma streaming outward from our sun finally runs out of steam – and crossed over into deep space or the interstellar medium.

But mission scientists have now discovered the Voyager probe now seems to be in a strange place between the two environments a sort of magnetic highway linking the heliosphere to what lies beyond.

Voyager project scientist Ed Stone of the California Institute of Technology said: “Voyager has discovered a new region of the heliosphere that we had not realized was there. “We’re still inside, apparently. But the magnetic field now is connected to the outside. So it’s like a highway letting particles in and out.”

Voyager 1 crossed into the new region in August, suddenly registering a huge drop in the number of low-speed solar particles in its environment and a corresponding jump in the number of higher-energy cosmic-ray particles arriving from outside the solar system.

But there was no change in magnetic field direction, as would be expected when crossing the

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boundary from the sun's plasma to the interstellar medium.

Tom Krimigis of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, said: "If we had only looked at particle data alone, we would have said, 'Well, we are out. Goodbye to the solar system,'" Krimigis said. "But nature is very imaginative, and Lucy pulled up the football again."

Voyager 1 is now 18.3 billion kilometers from the sun, farther out than any man-made object has ever travelled.

Radio signals from NASA travelling at 186,000-miles-per second take 16 hours hours to reach Voyager 1.