

The BRITE-Constellation GBOT Database and Other Recent GBOT News

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The BRITE-Constellation GBOT database was set up to store ground-based observations of amateur and professional observers that are conducted for BRITE-Constellation targets. Other current GBOT news is reported, followed by a discussion on the future of GBOT.

1 Introduction

The BRITE-Constellation Ground-Based Observing Team (GBOT) was founded in 2012 to support collaborations between BRITE-Constellation¹ PIs and ground-based observers worldwide. GBOT provides a platform to exchange scientific information.

In a GBOT discussion during the first BRITE science conference in Gdansk, 2015, the idea for a database to host ground-based complementary observations to BRITE data came up. A dedicated database will provide an archive to BRITE-related ground-based observations and a motivation for amateur and professional observers. For the GBOT database, a similar approach to that of the BeSS database² operated and maintained at LESIA, Observatory of Paris-Meudon, France, was suggested.

2 The GBOT database

The BRITE-Constellation GBOT database is now hosted at the University of Innsbruck³ and was developed using MySQL and php. Users first need to register and wait for approval of one of the database administrators. Then up- and download of data in the FITS format are possible using the same compulsory keywords as for the BeSS database (for more information please see the instructions given on the database's website). Currently only a few test data sets are available, and we are seeking testers who report back to us any issues connected to the functionality of the database.

3 Other GBOT news

In the past year, the GBOT chair, K. Zwintz, provided regular tables and corresponding information for AAVSO observers every few months. There was no feedback or

¹see <http://www.brite-constellation.at>

²<http://basebe.obspm.fr/basebe/>

³<https://astro-brite.uibk.ac.at>

interaction with AAVSO members. Interactions with AAVSO members was also the topic of the following discussion (see Sec. 4).

In July 2017, David Mkrtichian reported on the 50-cm telescope at the Abastumani Astrophysical Observatory in Georgia which hosts a Polarization-Holographic Stokes Astropolarimeter for simultaneous measurements of all four Stokes parameters and for integral photometry. In fall 2017 they will conduct polarimetric observations of some bright targets with detectable polarimetric variability, including several Algol type and Ap stars and the δ Scuti star 1 Mon. David offers to use this instrument for observations of BRITE-Constellation targets. Interested colleagues should feel free to contact him directly.

4 Discussion

In the GBOT discussion following the presentation the following topics were addressed:

K. Zwintz reported on the lack of communication from AAVSO observers while at the same time S. Kafka, AAVSO Director, expressed the wish for an improved communication with her AAVSO observers. S. Kafka mentioned that the requirements BRITE PIs define for AAVSO observations are too strict, and a refinement is needed that would allow more amateurs to be interested to collaborate.

Experiences of BRITE scientists with AAVSO were discussed: (i) E. Zoclon-ska reports excellent communication with several ground-based amateur observers connected to their campaign on ϵ Persei, (ii) M. Ratajczak also has had positive experiences with a recent campaign involving AAVSO, (iii) K. Zwintz shared her negative example of the campaign on β Pictoris, which involved an AAVSO alert notice, and for which she never heard back from any AAVSO observer.

Ideas for improved communication between BRITE and AAVSO included setting up a forum on BRITE observations on the AAVSO webpages (suggested by S. Kafka) or a wiki platform where BRITE and AAVSO members can communicate more directly and easily than is possible now (suggested by E. Zoclon-ska).

T. Moffat, D. Baade and G. Handler have a lot of experience working with amateur observers and agreed to provide some guidelines on what to expect from amateurs. D. Baade also suggested to produce short videos in which the professional observers explain the science they are interested in to the amateurs.

The discussion concluded by confirming the interest to continue the collaboration between AAVSO and BRITE-Constellation, and affirming that both parties will work actively on improving communication.

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