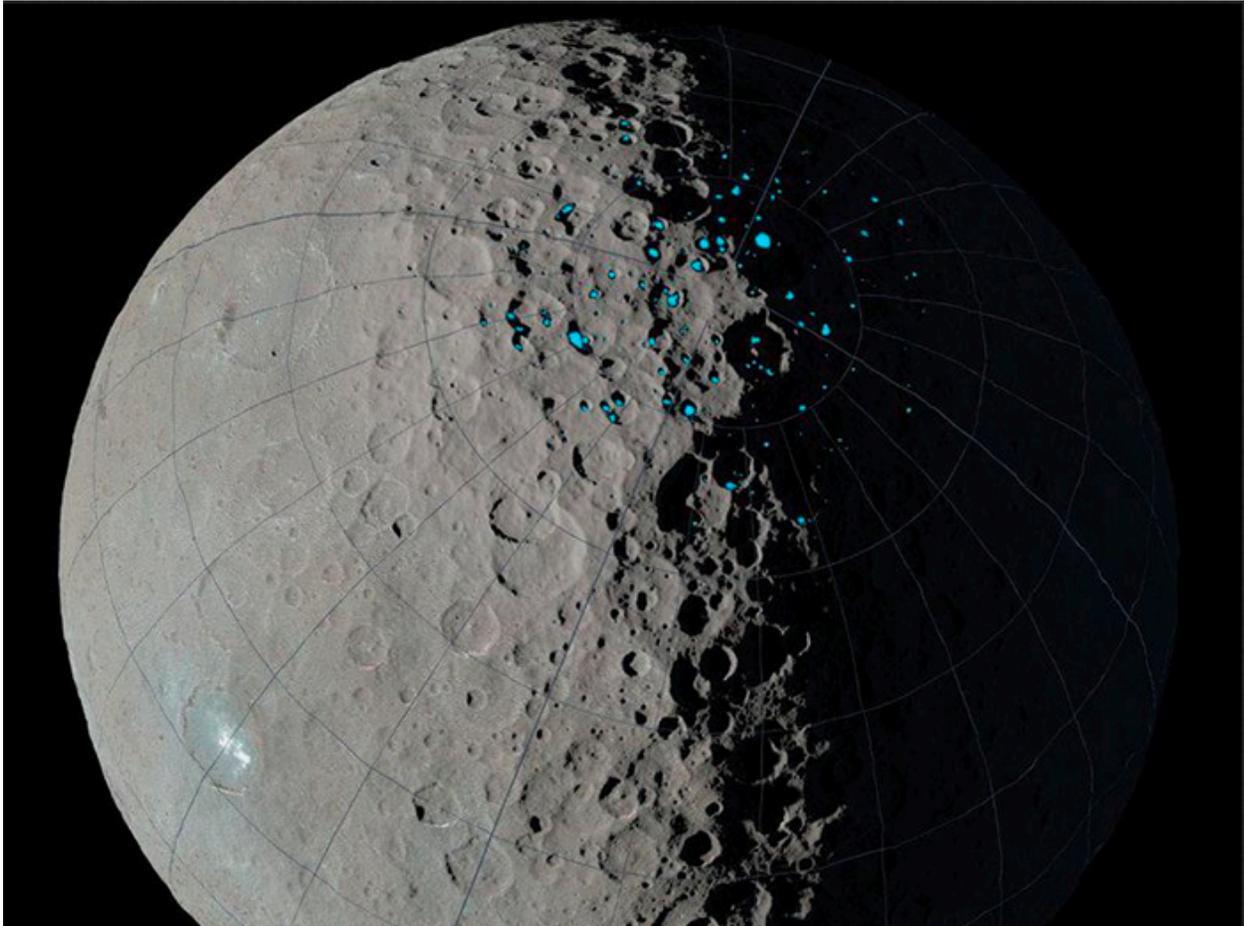


How many moons are there in space?

September 1, 2016



How many moons are there in space?

Space is a really big place. There are billions of galaxies, and each one has billions of stars. Recent discoveries suggest that planetary systems are the rule and not the exception around stars. So the number of moons in space is uncountable.

I suspect you meant to ask how many moons there are in our solar system. When I was young, a long time ago, books about the solar system gave precise numbers for the moons of each planet. Then came the Pioneer and Voyager spacecrafts and vastly better telescopes. The answer is, "No one knows." It seems every time we get a closer look at the distant planets, like Saturn, Uranus, or Neptune, we discover they have more moons than we previously thought. Even Pluto is now known to have at least two moons.

The dwarf planet Ceres, the largest body in the Asteroid Belt, currently has an artificial moon. [NASA's Dawn spacecraft](#) has been orbiting this fascinating body since

December 2014. The Lab even has instrumentation on Dawn in the form of its gamma-ray and neutron detectors.

Gordon McDonough, Museum science evangelist

1350 Central Avenue
Los Alamos, NM 87545



BRADBURY **SCIENCE** museum

(505) 667-4444
www.lanl.gov/museum

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