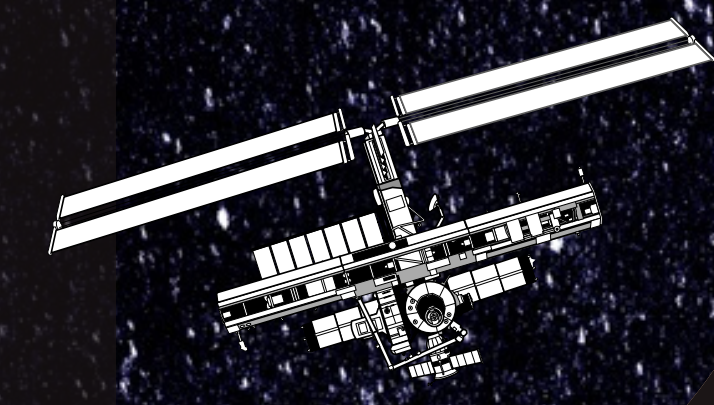


## The remarkable orbital mission of John Glenn by NASA (1962)

The complexity of the orbital flight had required the construction of a **worldwide communications network**, linking tracking stations around the world to IBM computers in Washington, Cape Canaveral in Florida, and Bermuda. **The computers had been programmed with the orbital equations that would control the trajectory of the capsule** in Glenn's Friendship 7 mission from liftoff to splashdown, but the astronauts were wary of putting their lives in the care of the electronic calculating machines, which were prone to hiccups and blackouts. As a part of the preflight checklist, Glenn asked engineers to "get the girl"—Johnson—to **run the same numbers through the same equations that had been programmed into the computer, but by hand, on her desktop mechanical calculating machine.** Katherine Johnson remembers the astronaut saying,

**"If she says they're good, then I'm ready to go."**

A stylized, high-contrast portrait of Katherine Johnson, an African American woman with short, dark, wavy hair, wearing glasses and a dark jacket over a light-colored collared shirt. The portrait is set against a circular background with dashed lines, suggesting a globe or orbital path.

# Katherine Johnson