



Most high schoolers know what they want to learn next about after high school, but not Rachel Domagalski. Rachel went to a community college after high school but didn't know what she wanted to study. After she read some popular science books, she decided to major in physics and astronomy. She worked in an astronomy lab after graduating but realized she wanted to go back to school. After getting her Master's degree, Rachel joined a robotics startup company.



Next, she joined Astranis as a software engineer. **Astranis is a company that makes small satellites that deliver internet access to places that currently don't have easy access to the internet.** For example, Astranis recently launched a satellite that gives internet access to Alaska.

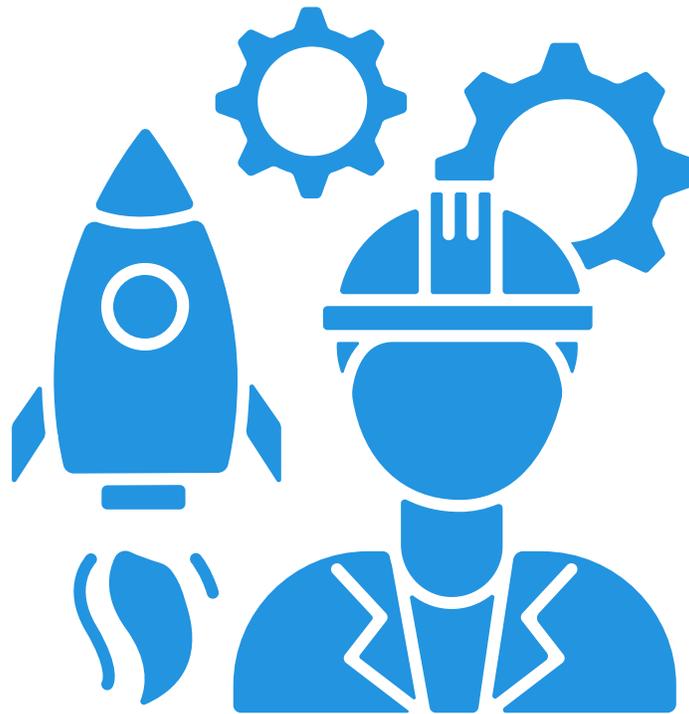
At Astranis, Rachel has written software programs that control spacecraft components and radios. She also has helped electrical engineers develop programs to make automatic testing procedures that would otherwise take a long time and be repetitive.

Rachel says, “**There's definitely been a bit of a learning curve, but it's been a blast so far.** Outside of work, I write software to control some appliances in my apartment, such as light bulbs, with some custom routines. When the California fires hit hard a few months ago, I picked up an air quality monitor and wrote some code to have a few of my light bulbs change colors based on the air quality, which has been really useful”.

Coding for Satellite Internet



For anyone interested in working in aerospace as a software engineer, Rachel recommends getting a feel for the software used to control hardware.



Even if you don't necessarily have a project in mind, grabbing some components (like a micro:bit®) and playing around with them can be fun. You don't have to know exactly the topics you want to study or the work you want to do after school. **Sometimes, exploring and changing paths like Rachel did leads you to new and exciting adventures!**