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Timely forecasts of solar energetic particles (SEPs) at various locations are crucial to improve the protection of astronauts from radiation hazards during deep space missions.

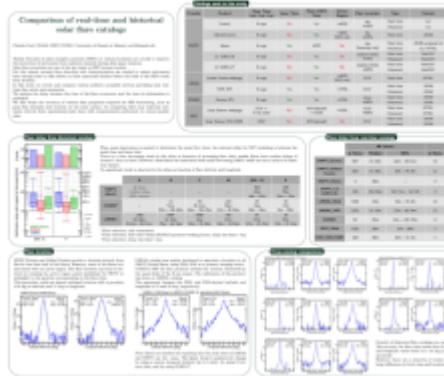
Solar flare properties are one of the key input to SEP forecast models.

For this reason, prompt flare detection and characterization are needed to ensure astronauts have enough time to take shelter in their spacecraft/habitat before the bulk of the SEPs reach their location.

In this work, we review and compare various publicly accessible services providing near real-time flare alerts and summaries.

We analyze the delay between the time of the flare occurrence and the time its information is published.

We also study the accuracy of various flare properties required for SEP forecasting, such as peak flux intensity and location on the solar surface, by comparing their near real-time estimates derived from operational-ready data with measurements performed on science-quality data.



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