

HOW ALTIMETRY WORKS

Satellite altimetry is a technique for observing the Earth and its ocean from space. The method precisely measures a satellite's altitude and the distance between the satellite and the target surface. By calculating the difference between the two, and applying a number of corrections, 'sea-surface height' is obtained.

This sea-surface height, and in particular its variations, can be used to deduce a vast amount of information about the ocean and its movements. With systems such as DORIS, which measures the satellite's position extremely accurately, sea-surface height can be calculated to within just a few centimetres.

