

IAA Study Group Status Report

Responsible Commission: 6

Study Number and Title: S 6.3 Interstellar Message Construction

Short Study Description (repeat from Study Group Proposal):

Overall Goal: To identify promising opportunities for expanded research in interstellar message construction, based on a review of extant methods as well as an exploration of innovative alternatives. In the process, new participants to the discussion will be identified, increasing the diversity of perspectives incorporated.

Intermediate Goals: Organize discussions in conjunction with meetings on interstellar message design sponsored by partner organizations, leading to recommendations for future research opportunities. Encourage participants in the discussion to publish on the topic.

Progress in past six months:

The study group has made significant progress in laying the foundation for peer-reviewed consensus recommendations on future directions for work in interstellar message construction. The scope of the project is approximately three times as great as originally anticipated, as reflected in our recommendations being based on input from experts who are contributors to three books to be published by 2010 (publishers: The MIT Press; NASA History Series; Berghahn Books). Specifically, over thirty scholars from a range of disciplines in the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities have written essays on interstellar message construction that will be published by these three publishers. A full peer review of all essays for one of these volumes has already been completed, and peer review of the other two volumes is expected in the next nine months.

Website Study Information up to date? (Study Group Membership, Study Plan and Schedule): Yes

Issues requiring resolution? (recommend approach):

To address the expanded scope of the study, we propose the following process for generating recommendations to be included in the final report of the study group, based on the scholarship generated in the first phase of the project (described above in “Progress in past six months”). We are in the midst of getting specific recommendations for future research from each of the scholars noted above, justifying the importance of these proposed lines of research by making reference to the research literature to date. The organizational structure we propose to facilitate this process is to identify two committee members to coordinate the recommendations of contributors to each of these three volumes. These six recommendation coordinators will work with the study group's chair and co-chair to draft integrated recommendations reflecting a general consensus of the study group. These recommendations will then be sent out for a final round of peer review, and this peer-reviewed document of consensus recommendations will be the final product of the study group, presented to the Board of the IAA.

Product Deliveries on Schedule? (If modified explain rationale):

The three-fold expansion of the scope of the study has resulted in a delay in project completion. We request an extension of completion date to the time of the Prague IAC in 2010.

Study Team Member Changes? (List any Study Team Members that you wish to discontinue, and provide names plus contact coordinates of any Members you wish to add on the second page of this Study Update form.) Note: Complete contact information including email, tel. and fax must be provided for all additions. Only Members with complete contact information will be listed and receive formal appointment letters from the IAA Secretariat.)

No changes.

Name of person providing Study Group Status (Study Group Chair or Co-Chair):

Douglas Vakoch, Study Group Co-Chair

Status Report Date:

7 March 2009