

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:

Background

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 four times as great as originally anticipated, as reflected in our recommendations being based on input from experts who are contributors to four books to be published in next two years (publishers: The MIT Press; NASA History Series; State University of New York (SUNY) Press; 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 four publishers, with the latest publisher added in response to papers presented in sessions on the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) held in April 2010 at NASA's biennial Astrobiology Science Conference.

Recent progress

During the past six months, a full peer review of all essays for the third of three volumes undergoing peer review has been completed (*Archaeology, Anthropology, and Interstellar Communication*, to be published by the NASA History Series in approximately 2013). (Peer review had already been completed for *Civilizations beyond Earth: Extraterrestrial Life and Society*).

One of these three volumes is now shipping from the publisher: [Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence \(CETI\)](#). Another volume will be published in September 2011: [Civilizations beyond Earth: Extraterrestrial Life and Society](#).

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

Request following change to the document posted at
http://www.iaaweb.org/iaa/Restricted_%28R%29/iaasg.pdf “IAA Study Groups as of 15 March 2011”:

- a. Please change order of chairs to read “Vakoch / Tarter” (see “Study Team Member Changes” below)

Issues requiring resolution? (recommend approach):

The peer review process involves two stages. In the first stage, essays from three of the books undergo peer review coordinated by publishers, with the fourth book (to be published by SUNY Press) having peer review at the level of acceptance for conference presentation. In the second stage, the recommendations based on these essays form the foundation of the Study Group’s final report, which also undergoes peer review. Because of delays in the first stage, the final draft based on recommendations of contributors is also delayed by one year.

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

At requested during March 2010 Paris Commission 6 meeting and the Commission 6 meeting at the 2010 IAC, to address delays detailed in “Issues requiring resolution?” the Study Group requests an extension of completion date for the final draft to October 2011. By this date the final draft will be ready to distribute for peer review within the IAA.

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.)

When the Study Group was originally constituted, Jill Tarter agreed to serve as Chair until Douglas A. Vakoch became a Corresponding Member of the Academy. With Douglas A. Vakoch becoming a Corresponding Member of the Academy at the 2009 IAC, the Officers of the Study Group request a reordering of Chair and Co-chair, to now be as follows:

Chair: Douglas A. Vakoch
Co-Chair: Jill Tarter

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

Douglas A. Vakoch

Status Report Date: 15 March 2011