

40th SYMPOSIUM ON THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE (SETI) – The  
Next Steps (A4)  
SETI II : SETI and Society (2)

Author: Prof. Douglas Vakoch  
SETI Institute and California Institute of Integral Studies, United States, dvakoch@seti.org

Prof. Timothy Lower  
United States, talower@alaska.edu  
Dr. B.A. Niles  
United States, baniles@alaska.edu

LA TIERRA HABLA (EARTH SPEAKS): AN ONLINE SPANISH LANGUAGE SURVEY ABOUT  
INTERSTELLAR COMMUNICATION

**Abstract**

If scientists engaged in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) detect a signal from an extraterrestrial civilization, one of the most pressing issues facing humankind will be “Should we reply, and if so, what should we say?” Building on an infrastructure that the SETI Institute used to gather English-language messages through its Earth Speaks website, La Tierra Habla invites Spanish-speaking people to submit online their text messages, pictures, and sounds, as they ponder what they would want to say to an extraterrestrial civilization. This study examines the content of messages submitted by over 500 participants to La Tierra Habla. By tracking demographic variables for each person submitting a message, we have examined commonalities and differences in message content that are related to such factors as age and gender. Furthermore, we have explored similarities and differences between the themes identified by Spanish-speaking participants as compared to English-speaking participants of Earth Speaks. Of particular interest in the messages submitted to La Tierra Habla is that many of the responses come from children, allowing an understanding of the development of conceptualizations of the nature of extraterrestrial intelligence and of communication with other species.