

53rd IAA SYMPOSIUM ON THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE (SETI) –
The Next Steps (A4)
Interactive Presentations - 53rd IAA SYMPOSIUM ON THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL
INTELLIGENCE (SETI) – The Next Steps (IP)

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ETHICAL FRONTIERS AND SOCIETAL ECHOES: NAVIGATING THE IMPLICATIONS OF SETI
RESEARCH

Abstract

One of the most ambitious projects in human scientific research is the ongoing search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) which has the potential to significantly advance our knowledge of life on Earth. But as the prospect of finding extraterrestrial intelligence grows, it is crucial to critically assess the moral issues and societal ramifications that come with such a significant finding. In order to fully address the intricate web of anticipation, preparation and possible repercussions that surrounds the search this paper will examine the multifaceted effects of SETI research on human society ethics and the environment.

At the heart of SETI research lies a plethora of ethical dilemmas ranging from the protocols for managing first contact to the moral responsibilities of sharing knowledge of extraterrestrial life with the global community. We examine the moral principles guiding SETI projects, assessing how well they manage to strike a balance between scientific inquiry and the significant ethical issues involved. We also look at the societal ramifications of finding extraterrestrial intelligence, such as possible cultural disruptions, changes in religious and philosophical viewpoints and environmental concerns associated with making contact.

This paper also addresses the critical role of international cooperation and global governance in managing the outcomes of SETI research, highlighting the need for a unified global approach to address the shared challenges and opportunities that discovery may bring. Through an interdisciplinary lens, we explore strategies for preparing society for the possible outcomes of SETI fostering a culture of ethical responsibility, and ensuring that the pursuit of extraterrestrial intelligence advances in harmony with the principles of equity, sustainability, and global solidarity.

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