

# SETI: Past, Present, and Future

## Finding Aliens and Finding Ourselves

Are we alone? This question, perhaps more than any other, has endured throughout human history. Is life on earth an astronomical anomaly, or is the universe teeming with life – possibly other intelligent life? With new exoplanets being discovered practically every day, the existence of an “Earth 2.0” seems ever more likely, and the search for our cosmic cousins ever more worthwhile. The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) has, for decades, been scanning the sky and listening for messages from other civilizations.

In her Aug. 5 Public Lecture, longtime SETI Director Jill Tarter will explore the program’s past and future. Whereas the search has largely concentrated on detecting signals in electromagnetic radiation from space, Tarter will discuss new collaborations and ideas, such as detecting information-carrying photons, or developing a “genomic SETI.” She will also explore why, in a world of instant communication and short-term thinking, it’s more crucial than ever to undertake and support decades-spanning research into history’s most tantalizing question. It is, she argues, one of the most profound human undertakings imaginable, with the most important possible outcomes.