

RT-70 radar telescope in Evpatoria, Ukraine

[/caption]

The powerful opening scene of the movie “Contact” portrays radio and television signals from Earth heading out into space. Then later in the film, shockingly, one of those signals — a televised speech by Adolf Hitler — is beamed back as a reply. Could that really happen? Could an alien civilization “find” us from our inherent noise? Or, if we want other intelligent life to know we’re here, will we have to take a more proactive or aggressive approach? Perhaps we’ll find out. Today, messages from Earth were beamed specifically at an alien world considered capable of supporting life, the planet [Gliese 581c](#), a “super-Earth” located approximately 20 light years from us. The social networking site [Bebo](#) sponsored a competition for young people to share their views and concerns of life on Earth, and the winners’ messages were transmitted this morning from a radio telescope in Ukraine. Bebo was assisted by Dr. Alexander Zaitsev, who says the only way alien civilizations might find us is if we specifically make ourselves known.

501 photos, drawings and text messages were translated into binary format and beamed through space in a four and a half hour transmission by the huge RT-70 radar telescope in Evpatoria, Ukraine, normally used to track asteroids.

The transmission started at 0600 GMT on October 9. Oli Madgett, from the media company RDF Digital who came up with the idea, said the message “passed the Moon in 1.7 seconds, Mars in just four minutes and will leave our Solar System before breakfast tomorrow”. The media company footed the \$40,000 (£20,000) bill for the transmission.

The message should reach the Gliese system by about 2029. Any reply to the messages probably wouldn’t reach Earth for 40 years.

Bebo’s intent was to raise awareness for the concerns that young people have for the future of Earth, and to generate interest in space exploration. Bebo spokesman Mark Charkin said, “A ‘Message From Earth’ presents an opportunity for the digital natives of today... to reconnect with science and the wider universe in a simple, fun and immersive way.”

Dr. Zaitsev was a consultant for the project, and is one of the world’s experts in interstellar radio communication and is Chief Scientist of the Radio Engineering and Electronics Institute, at the Russian Academy of Science. His early work helped design and implement radar devices to study Mercury, Venus and Mars and Near-Earth asteroid radar research. Lately, he has focused on interstellar radio messaging, and what he calls METI – Messaging to Extra Terrestrial Intelligence.

“The leakage of commercial television radio is much weaker than coherent sounding radar signals, such as the Arecibo Radio Telescope or the Goldstone Solar System Radar,” Zaitsev told Universe Today. “The leakage is weakly detectable against a background of solar radio emissions. I do not say that any imaginable super-aggressive and powerful civilization cannot detect our leakage, however.”

Update 10/10: Zaitsev added that the idea of the A Message From Earth internet project was developed in 2002 from his abstract [Project METI@home: Messages to ETI from](#)

[home](#),
(in English), and [\(in Russian\)](#). **End of update.**

As opposed to SETI, the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence, METI takes a more proactive approach. In his paper "[Making the Case for METI](#)," Zaitsev and two colleagues wrote, "It is possible we live in a galaxy where everyone is listening and no one is speaking. In order to learn of each others' existence – and science – someone has to make the first move."

Zaitsev has been involved in [several deliberate transmissions](#) to space in hopes of making contact. "Otherwise," he said, "centers of intelligence are doomed to remain lonely, unobserved civilizations."

METI, as well as the Bebo project, takes a complete opposite approach from the recently formed [WETI](#) – Wait for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence.

Source: [BBC](#)

EXTRASOLAR PLANETS, SETI

32 Replies to "Messages From Earth Beamed to Alien World"

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