
Subject: The Fermi Paradox

Posted by [u6795](#) on Thu, 19 Mar 2009 20:20:21 GMT

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"The extreme age of the universe and its vast number of stars suggest that if the Earth is typical, extraterrestrial life should be common.[1] In an informal discussion in 1950, the physicist Enrico Fermi questioned why, if a multitude of advanced extraterrestrial civilizations exist in the Milky Way galaxy, evidence such as spacecraft or probes are not seen. A more detailed examination of the implications of the topic began with a paper by Michael H. Hart in 1975, and it is sometimes referred to as the Fermi-Hart paradox.[2] Another closely related question is the Great Silence[3]—even if travel is hard, if life is common, why don't we detect their radio transmissions?"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermi_paradox

This came into my mind as I read a series of scifi books right now, and honestly after reading that entire article and a few other works on the subject it's a little scary.

With the universe as a whole being nearly 8 billion years old, one would assume that's plenty of time for a number of advanced civilizations far more great than our own to develop, rise and fall, millions of times over. Even with the impossible size of our universe, we should be bombarded by radio waves from other civilizations every time we turn on a radio receiver. The first radio waves sent out by humanity in the 1920s are more than 100 light years away by now, and there's no way to call them back. We have given ourselves away for sure if there is anyone out there.

And yet, there's silence. Absolutely nothing that indicates alien life has ever been discovered in the stars, and all the evidence on Earth is mostly speculative/circumstantial. Why can't we hear them?

As discussed in the Wiki there's many possible reasons for this, but just the fact that one of them is that some alien race annihilates any civilization it finds scares the hell out of me.

Opinions on this? Personally I'm excited for the future in that we'll inevitably be making contact with someone else, but whether it's for the better or for worse cannot be predicted.

Edit: Please don't turn this into anything religious related, and if it's your opinion that humans are alone in the universe that's wonderful, but keep it to yourself.
