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SETI AND THE MEDIA

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The discovery of evidence of intelligent life elsewhere in the cosmos would be one of the greatest discoveries of all time. Between the scientists who will make the discovery and the public who will hear about it, will be the media. As a media professional and former astronomer, I will examine what the role of the media will be. I will outline the reality, and the lessons, of the EQ Peg incident (and others) and ask if there are lessons to be learned from other areas of science that are also trying to get a message across. ET contact will initiate the biggest scrum in media history that will involve not just scientists. If it happened tomorrow who would BBC news call? Is it possible to be prepared?