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AN EXPLORATION OF THE “ET HACKER” CONCEPT

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Recently, a scenario has been suggested in which malevolent(?) extraterrestrials play the role of computer hacker, embedding malicious code in an otherwise innocuous signal. This code may elicit undesirable effects at various points in the reception and/or analysis of the signal in which it was contained.

This paper will explore the hacker mentality and method with respect to the “ET Hacker” proposal. Earthly hacking techniques will be assessed from an ET point of view. The various attack scenarios will be analyzed. Strengths and weaknesses of each approach will be outlined, and the most plausible attack vectors will be highlighted.

The paper will conclude with an assessment of the current vulnerability of SETI technology with respect to the ET Hacker scenario.