

Optical SETI: The Next Search Frontier

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Just as the 20th century growth of radio communications technology spurred radio SETI, the advent of infrared and optical communications technology is now making IR/optical ETI searches feasible. The theory of photon-limited photometry and spectroscopy is briefly reviewed. The rapid growth in IR/optical technology is outlined; these advances include lasers, optics, image sensors, and data processing, all of which bear on issues of detection and communication. Ongoing IR/optical search techniques are described, and prospects for future work are presented.