

WETI: Wait for Extraterrestrial Intelligence



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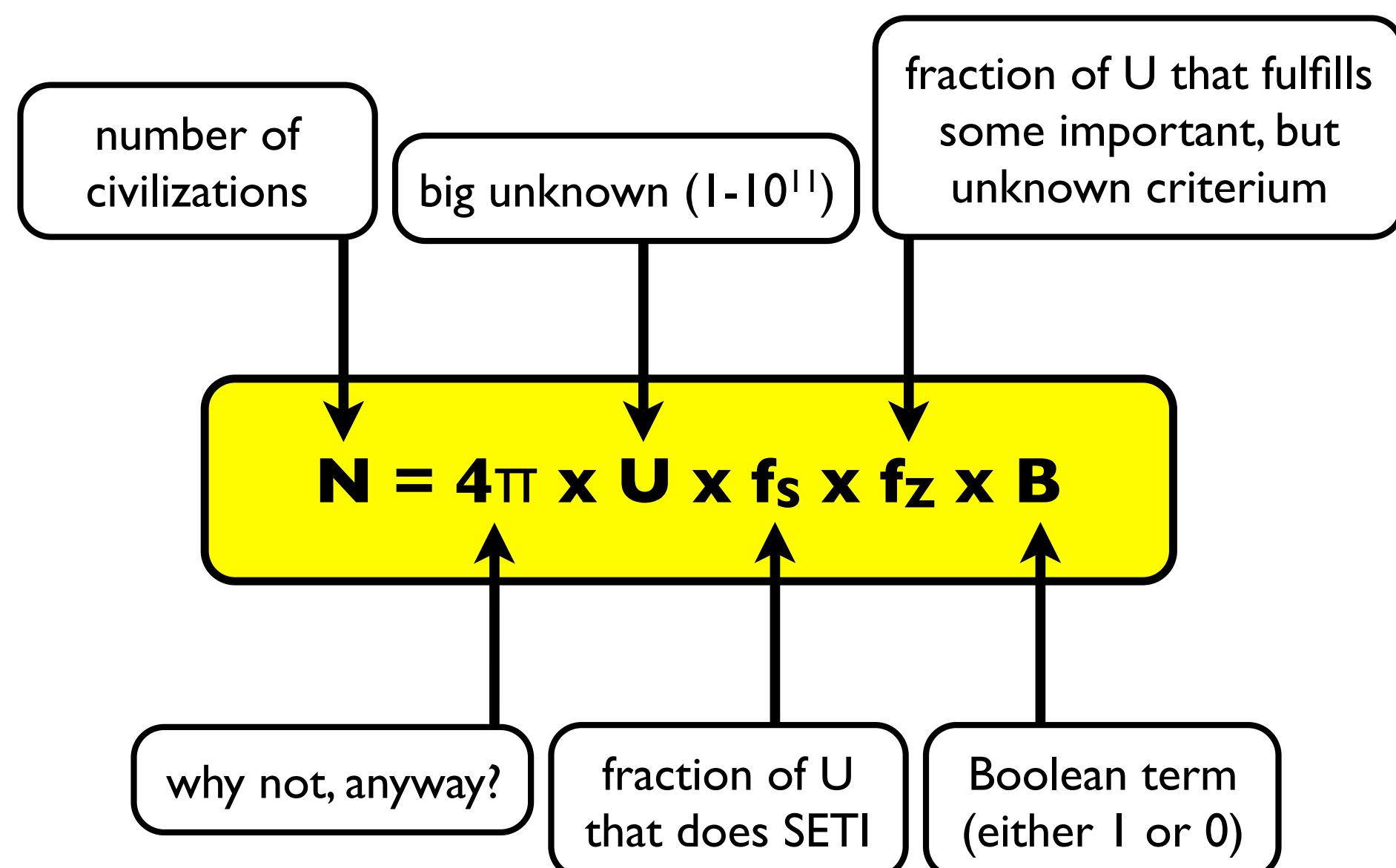
weti-institute.org

1) WETI is the new SETI

To find our place in the universe has been an underlying theme of scientific exploration for more than 5000 years or thereabouts. A critical part of this endeavour is to determine whether life and intelligence are rare commodities or rather the ubiquitous and unavoidable result of cosmic evolution. In more popular terms: Are we a freak of Nature or is the Galaxy teeming with smart, bug-eyed creatures with lots of tentacles? There are only two ways to obtain an unambiguous answer to the question: We can either actively search our galactic environment and find intelligent beings, or such beings could conduct a search and find us. The first approach is already being used in a wide variety of large-scale and well-funded projects. The second approach, on the other hand, has hitherto been left to amateurs, and has never been attempted in a rigorously controlled scientific setup. Naturally, this is goal of the newly founded WETI Institute.



Whale lice never made any attempt to contact aliens on other whales.
Image: Vicky Rowntree, University of Utah.



2) The Brake equation, and other ideas about absolute truth

The Drake equation, first given by Franke Drake 1960, is widely used as a tool to quantify the odds of finding intelligent life in our Galaxy. Much less famous, but significantly more sophisticated is the Brake equation, developed in the 1970s by the Danisch cyberneticist Michael F. Brake (1903-1984), who also invented the popular deceleration apparatus.

By introducing the factor f_s , the Brake equation puts limits on research efficiency: For all $f_s > 1/N$, WETI is more efficient than SETI. The Brake equation is also much more transparent regarding the inherent uncertainties in the task at hand. Finally, by adding the term B , the equation ingeniously allows for its own non-existence.

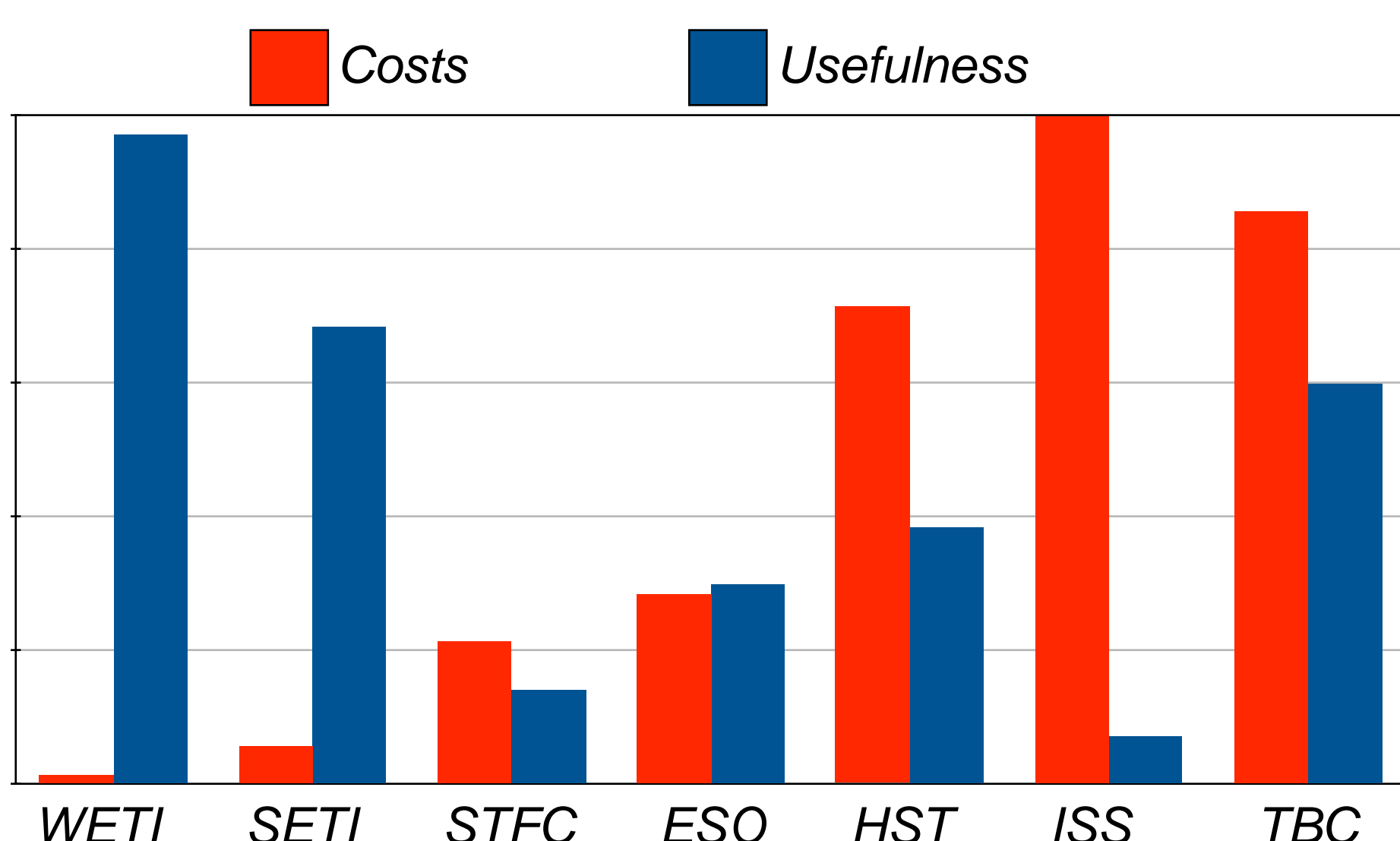
3) Not quite a joke

It seems appropriate to ponder the actual usefulness of WETI. Where do we come from? Where do we go? Can we have coffee in between? Thanks to the WETI Institute, the process of answering these questions turns into a social experience - a global, conscious waiting process.

You can think of WETI as an interstellar bus stop. Without it, most people do not even know why they spend their time at this stupendously boring place. With WETI, everyone at least knows that they are waiting. This gives their seemingly eternal standing-around new purpose, and with fierce determination they continue the long wait.



The Galilean moons of Jupiter: Io, Europa, Ganymede, Callisto. Before their discovery in 1610, they were content to wait. Image: NASA/JPL/DLR



4) Our plan to rule the world

Distributed computing and community interaction are vital parts of our activities. We will offer a free computer program for download that will make use of the idle time of your computer to very efficiently wait in the background. Modern computers can wait several million times each second. By exploiting this currently unused waiting potential, we will collectively create the biggest waiting power ever applied to any problem on Earth. Furthermore, to establish a strong scientific foundation for the waiting process, we invite experts of all disciplines to join the Effortless Action Committee (EAC) - our think tank to provide guidance and substance. Membership is free and does not come with any obligations. Further information is available on our website: weti-institute.org