

## **The Case of EQ Peg: Challenge and Response**

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In late October, 1998, the BBC in London ran a story that a possible SETI signal from the nearby star EQ Pegasi had been found by an UK amateur astronomer using his company's 10 metre satellite tracking dish. The BBC is routinely monitored by the world's media for news and interesting pieces, creating the potential for the EQ Peg story to be published more widely.

Events unfolded quickly, revealing no signal, no amateur and no prior deliberations on how to deal with a hoax quickly and effectively.

This paper addresses four basic areas. First it records the sequence of events and responses to the EQ Peg hoax. Second it examines appropriate strategies, used in several fields, that have provided the best possible outcome in the public arena when rapid response is demanded. Third it combines the EQ Peg experience with those strategies to gain insight into what we might learn. Finally, and based on the first three steps, it offers possible SETI-specific planning for similar hoax and genuine mistake cases in the future.