How planetary resource's asteroid search could help find exoplanets

August 24 2012, By Nancy Atkinson

Planetary Resources is the private company that wants to eventually mine asteroids for profit. But initially, the group will focus on developing Earth orbiting telescopes to scan for the best asteroids, and then later, create low-cost robotic spacecraft for surveying missions and then actual spacecraft to do the mining.

But in the meantime, Planetary Resources has opened up the option of allowing access to their Arkyd-100 space telescope to others, and put out the question: "What would you do if you had access to our Arkyd-100 space telescopes?"

An MIT Researcher said he could use the Arkyd telescope to find alien planets.

Dr. Vlada Stamenkovic, a post-doctoral researcher at MIT who searches for exoplanets—distant alien worlds beyond our solar system—sent in this video to Planetary Resources with his explanation:

"It's inspiring to think that the Arkyd can help researchers like Vlada discover Earth-like planets, and perhaps, someday, even life out there among the stars," Planetary Resources said on their website. "We're excited to see such enthusiasm around our projects."

Another of the aims of Planetary Resources is to open deep-space exploration to private industry, much like the $10 million Ansari X Prize competition, which Planetary Resources member Peter Diamandis

created. In previous talks, Diamandis has estimated that a small asteroid is worth about "20 trillion dollars in the platinum group metal marketplace."

More information: If you have something smaller in mind, perhaps similar to the proposal by Stamenkovic, Planetary Resources has opened up the possibility for anyone to submit a request for using their telescopes. If you have an idea, record a 90-second video on how you'd like to use the Arkyd-100, and share it with Planetary Resources. That can be done by creating a video response to this You Tube video or adding a link to your video on PRI's website.

Provided by Universe Today