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'Big Wave' Theory Offers

Alternative to Dark Energy

<http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/0908...>



Mathematicians have proposed an alternative explanation for the accelerating expansion of the universe that does not rely on the mystifying idea of dark energy.

According to the new proposition, the universe is not accelerating, as observations suggest. Instead, an expanding wave flowing throughout space-time causes distant galaxies to appear to be accelerating away from us. This big wave, initiated by the Big Bang that is thought to have sparked the universe, could explain why objects appear to be farther away from us than they should be according to the Standard Model of cosmology.

"We're saying that maybe these expanding waves are actually causing the anomalous acceleration," said Blake Temple of the University of California, Davis. "We're saying dark energy is not really the correct explanation."

The researchers derived a set of equations describing expanding waves that fit Einstein's theory of general relativity, and which could also account for the apparent acceleration. Temple outlines the new idea with Joel Smoller of the University of Michigan in the Aug. 17 issue of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

While more research will be needed to see if the idea holds up, "the research could change the way astronomers view the composition of our universe," according to a summary from

the journal.

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