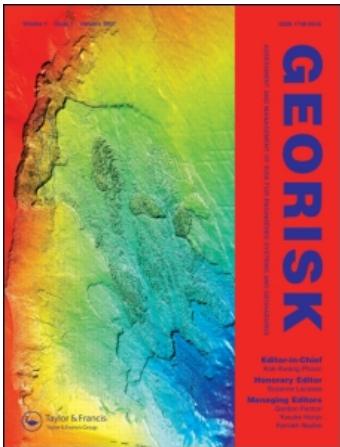


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# Georisk: Assessment and Management of Risk for Engineered Systems and Geohazards

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BOOK REVIEW

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Catalogue of Risks**, by Dirk Proske, Springer, 2008, 510 pp., £79 (hardcover), ISBN 978-3-540-79554-4

Dirk Proske (University of Life Sciences, Institute for Mountain Risk Engineering in Vienna, Austria) has written a comprehensive treatise (510 pages) of all possible forms of risk in our current society. It is one of the first books in literature which contains a detailed analysis and extensive comparison of any type of risk which human mankind encounters nowadays. The risks range from natural hazards to health risks and from social risks, such as war and drug abuse to technical risks, such as dam failure and fire.

Each risk type is treated in the book by presenting the corresponding disasters which have happened in the past. This results in very interesting and important overviews which can be used to put the risk types in perspective with respect to other risk types. Many details about the disasters are presented qualitatively and quantitatively in the form of fatalities, economic damage, probabilities, volumes, etc. Many figures of the data and photos of the accidents are included in the book, which makes the text attractive and easy to read.

Risk measures are treated heavily in the book as an important topic to allow the objective description of risks. The author starts by discussing simple measures (such as the risk matrix) and continues until the most complex measures, such as FN curves, lost life years and the Quality of Life measure. The last parameter permits the comparison of the efficiency of all safety measures over the whole of human society, but also some limitations of this concept are addressed by the author. In the explanation of all risk measures, a whole range of interesting databases are

presented with mortality rates of hundreds of causes of death.

The author also includes a chapter on subjective risk judgement, in which he investigates factors which influence decisions concerning risk behaviour of individuals and groups. The work of psychologists such as Paul Slovic is reviewed and put in perspective with other work on risk perception. The book clearly shows the interdependence of risk. Safety and risks cannot be discussed only by looking at specific problems, since increasing safety in individual fields might lead to a decrease of safety over the whole of society.

A separate chapter on law and risk discusses the development of regulations concerning safety as well as examples of codes of practice dealing with risk assessment, and an extensive case study regarding risk of ship impacts against bridges illustrates the application of theory of risk assessment methods to an actual problem.

The book is embedded with up to 1000 references from historical to very recent references of 2008. This book is a must for all scientists, practitioners, academicians, lecturers, and graduates who like to know more about risk and safety in society. The book is very suitable to be used as lecture material for academic or post-academic courses, but the catalogue of risks is also suitable as a self study guide or reference work with all important information on risk and safety present in one compact book.

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