



APOPHIS AS THE DEMON SERPENT OF DARKNESS:

DESIGNING COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS FOR MISINFORMATION AND
CONSPIRACY THEORIES IN PLANETARY DEFENSE

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According to August Vernon, the Winston-Salem emergency management director, when it came to simulating an evacuation, “...20 percent of people would not leave because it was all fake news or the government was lying or some other reason”





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Reactance Theory

“Reactance is an unpleasant motivational arousal that emerges when people experience a threat to or loss of their free behaviors. It serves as a motivator to restore one’s freedom. The amount of reactance depends on the importance of the threatened freedom and the perceived magnitude of the threat.”



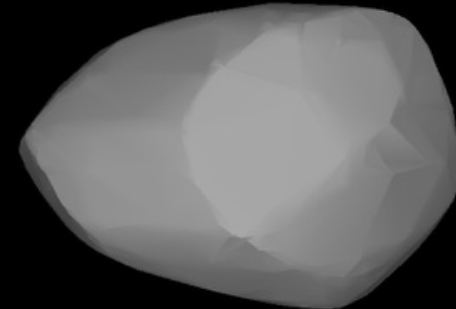
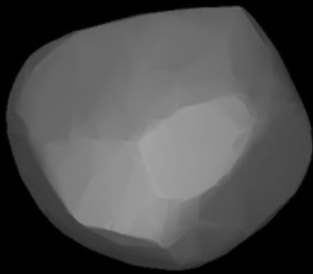
Steindl, C., Jonas, E., Sittenthaler, S., Traut-Mattausch, E., & Greenberg, J. (2014). Understanding Psychological Reactance: New Developments and Findings. *Zeitschrift Fur Psychologie*, 223(4), 205-214. <https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000222>



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Reactance Theory

“The unpleasant motivational state of reactance results in behavioral and cognitive efforts to reestablish one’s freedom, accompanied by the experience of emotion. People who are threatened usually feel uncomfortable, hostile, aggressive, and angry...On the cognitive side, people may derogate the source of threat...”



Steindl, C., Jonas, E., Sittenthaler, S., Traut-Mattausch, E., & Greenberg, J. (2014). Understanding Psychological Reactance: New Developments and Findings. *Zeitschrift Fur Psychologie*, 223(4), 205-214. <https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000222>

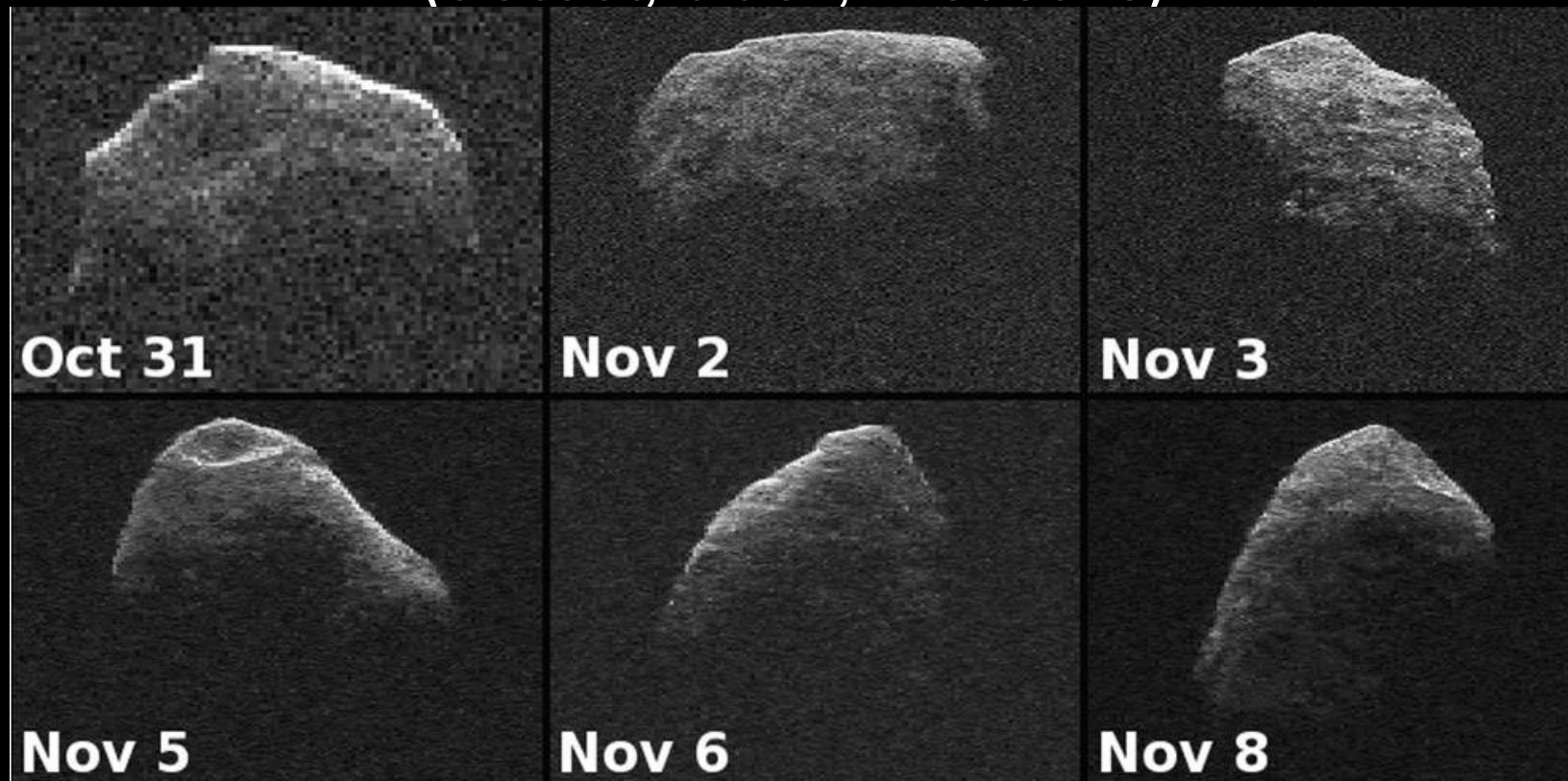


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Potential Communication Protocols for Planetary Defense

1- Emphasize Audience's Agency to Act

(detect, track, measure)

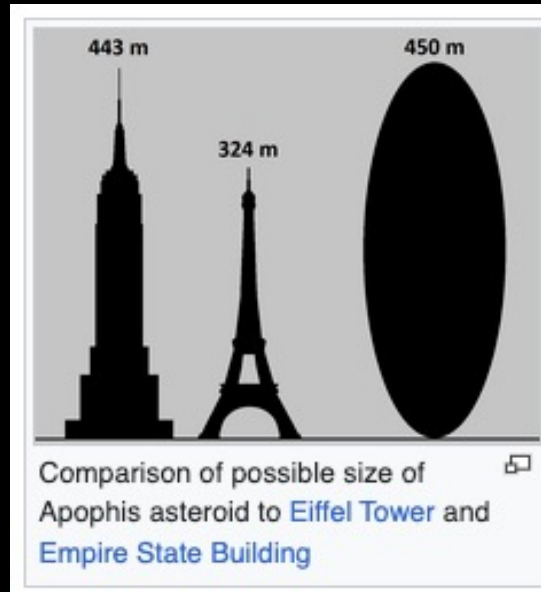




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2- Validate the Anger & Fear

“...counterarguing and anger affect, leads to more negative attitudes toward the message and consequently to less intention to behave according to the message.”



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3- Adjust official messaging to reduce reactance:

“Changes presented as avoidance of negative outcomes aroused more experience of reactance, which mediated the effect of avoidance on people’s lower agreement with the change. Avoidance resulted in more counterarguing and less positive perceptions of the communicator and the change message.”

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Thank You!

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Images

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