

## **DEBUNKING THE PANIC MYTH** AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR NEO COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

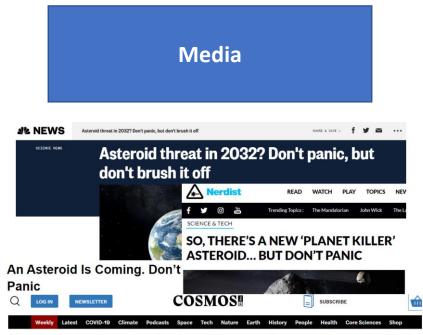
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## The Panic Myth

### Hollywood





Don't Panic: Despite the headlines, we're not about to die in Armageddon

Decision Makers (Delay warnings)

### Academic literature

#### asteroid warning panic

#### Scholar About 5,600 results (0.07 sec)

The Duty to Expect the Unexpected: Mitigating Extreme Natural Threats to the Global Commons Such as **Asteroid** and Comet Impacts with the Earth ER Seamone - Colum. J. Transnati L., 2002 - HeinOnline ... have criticized these imprecise **warnings** on the grounds that governments are accomplishing little more than the creation of mass panic. 3 Others admit that these **warnings** are the best ...  $\$  Save 90 Cite Cited by 27 Related articles All 3 versions

[PDF] The comet/**asteroid** impact hazard: A systems approach <u>CR Chapman</u>, DD Durda... - Office of Space Studies ..., 2001 - boundarycondition.com ... an **asteroid** or comet, while of very low probability, has the potential to create public **panic** and ... (>1 km diameter) near-Earth **asteroids** and space-operations approaches to deflecting any ... ☆ Save 90 Cite Cited by 32 Related articles All 12 versions &

#### The Chicken Littles of Big Science; or, Here Come the Killer Asteroids!

<u>JT Bennett</u>, JT Bennett - ... Lobby: Hype and Panic from Sputniks, Martians ..., 2010 - Springer ... But the man who **panicked** the world looked at the bright ... on **asteroid** searches — from \$15 million a year to \$3 million. Perhaps that decision is the result of the public interest in **asteroid** ... ☆ Save 99 Cite Related articles All 3 versions

#### [воок] The Martians have landed!: A history of media-driven **panics** and hoaxes RE Bartholomew, <u>B Radford</u> - 2011 - books.google.com

... An asteroid scare prompted by a TV movie is the subject of Chapter 7. In October 1994, ... Warning resulted in numerous phone calls to station affiliates by viewers fearful that an asteroid ... ☆ Save 99 Cite Cited by 32 Related articles

#### [HTML] It's behind you!

D Shiga - New Scientist, 2009 - Elsevier ... asteroids pose. Not only is there no plan for what to do when an asteroid hits, but our early-warning ... handled properly, panic and lack of coordination could lead to chaos on the roads. ... \$\frac{1}{3}\$ Save 90 Cite Cited by 1 Related articles

[HTML] When It Strikes, Are We Ready? Lessons Identified at the 7th Planetary Defense Conference in Preparing for a Near-Earth Object Impact Scenario S Ravan, <u>TDe Greve</u>, <u>LMani</u>, B jorgo... - International Journal of ..., 2022 - Springer ... realistic **asteroid** threat scenario illustrated how such a short-**warning** ... impacts are a global threat and the right early **warning** ... are powerful tools to counter irrational responses and **panic**..... ☆ Save 59 Cite Cited by 3 Related articles All 12 versions

# The Facts

### on Panic & Public Behavior during disasters

- Panic & Chaos
- Panic is very rare, and has never resulted from issuing disaster warnings
- Pre-event looting is an indication of social issues
- Fear of looting has consequences: people refusing to evacuate, disruption of traffic and diverting law enforcement personnel.

### People

- · Seek the proximity of familiar persons and places
- Separation from attachment figures is a greater stressor than physical danger.
- Learn about disaster risks and how to adjust to them as much via informal networks as via official risk communications.
- During disasters expressions of mutual aid are common and tend to predominate.
- Reaction To Warnings
- Search and confirm response (social phenomenon)
- Uncertainty leads to stockpiling
- the problem in disasters is that people typically delay or fail to take appropriate evasive action when it is needed



# **Disaster Warning Communication Strategies**

Myths	<ol> <li>Public warnings will not lead to panic,</li> <li>do not have to be short,</li> <li>won't lead to cry wolf if explained why event does not occur as announced.</li> </ol>
Source	Mixed panel: group of people and organisations
Content	Protective action recommendations: guidance what should be done, timing, who takes action and who doesn't, consequences and how taking action will mitigate, explain why, provide sufficient information to fill information vaccum
Style	Clarity, Specific, Certainty, Accuracy, Consistency
Channels	Number & type of communications channel and frequency

Highly recommended reference: White paper by Dennis Mileti: Public Response to Disaster Warnings

# Summary & Recommendations



Warnings will NOT lead to panic, chaos, looting, etc.

Building trust is key. Entrust public with information.



Adhere to best practices: communicate early, clear, open, often, via different sources, prevent and fill any information vacuum



Warnings have to be adapted to specific events, nations and cultures.



Involve people with social science background and that understand public warning responses to draft messages and strategies