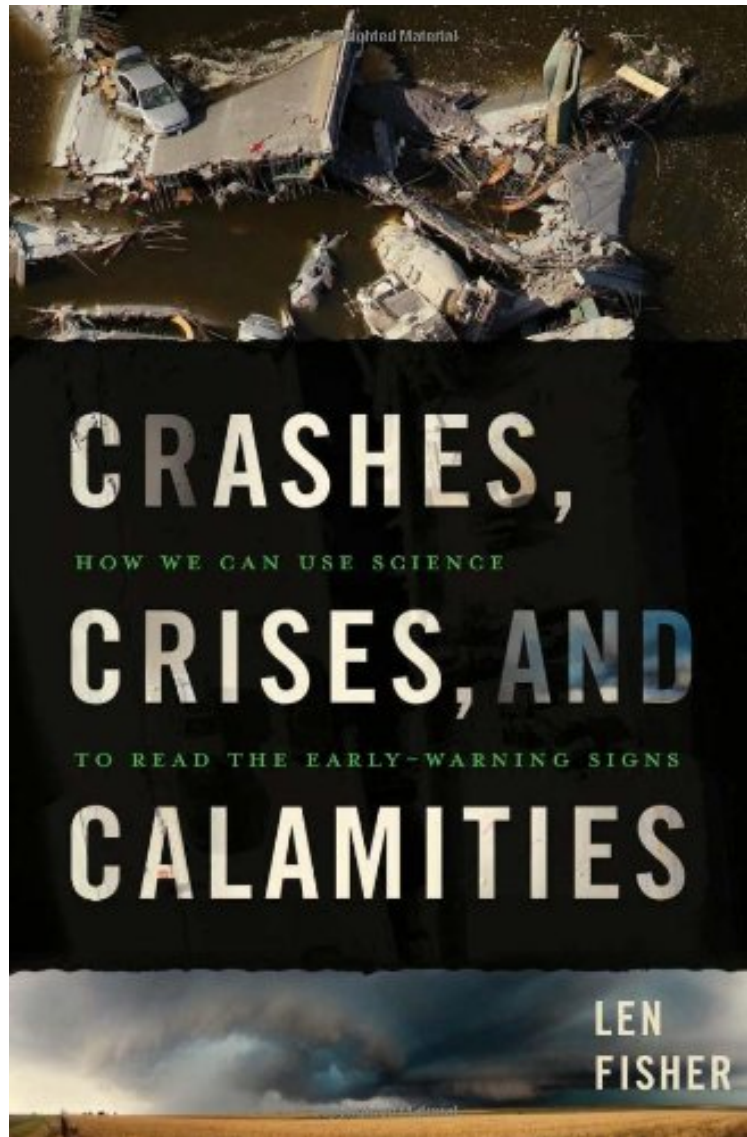


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Crashes, Crises, and Calamities: How We Can Use Science to Read the Early-Warning Signs

Len Fisher

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Len Fisher : Crashes, Crises, and Calamities: How We Can Use Science to Read the Early-Warning Signs
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crashes, Crises, and Calamities: How We Can Use Science to Read the Early-Warning Signs:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Olaya UribeGreat book for science lovers.0 of 1 people

found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Gustavo CaillauxVery interesting tools to understand human behavior5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. How math can help us avoid disastersBy C. GriffithCrashes, Crises, and Calamities is a account for the general reader of how mathematics might be used to predict disasters both natural and societal. The presentation relies on words and graphs to make its point (I both listened to the audio edition and bought the Kindle edition)with only a few equations, none of which require more than algebra. Fisher's point is that the same techniques, such as catastrophe and chaos theory, are applicable to predicting a wide variety of disasters.Fisher's presentation is well done, with entertaining diversions into other methods of prediction, such as consulting oracles. The book is not for those who want a rigorous introduction to the mathematics, but the extensive notes should be helpful for those interested in the details. My main criticism is that business forecast economists, who would seem (next to weather forecasters) our closest modern parallel to soothsayers, were oddly absent from the discussion. Are they so bad they have nothing to contribute ? Are their techniques that different? I also wondered about his discussion of how managers in large organizations should be sensitive to weak signals of impending disaster. As I work for a large bureaucracy myself, I find it highly unlikely that high-ranking managers will take the risk of advocating policies based upon ambiguous information.

Why do certain civilizations, societies, and ecosystems collapse? How does the domino effect relate to the credit crunch? When can mathematics help explain marriage? And how on earth do toads predict earthquakes? The future is uncertain. But science can help foretell what lies ahead.Drawing on ecology and biology, math and physics, Crashes, Crises, and Calamities offers four fundamental tools that scientists and engineers use to forecast the likelihood of sudden change: stability, catastrophe, complexity, and game theories. In accessible prose, Len Fisher demonstrates how we can foresee and manage events that might otherwise catch us by surprise.At the cutting edge of science, Fisher helps us find ways to act before a full-fledged catastrophe is upon us. Crashes, Crises, and Calamities is a witty and informative exploration of the chaos, complexity, and patterns of our daily lives.

Scott M. Cooper, MIT Research Affiliate, co-author ofCoolhuntingWith this third book in his trilogy of exploration into how to address some of societys most complex and vexing problems, Len Fisher challenges us to rethink how science and mathematics is used in what might be called crisis prediction and management. This book is getting me to rethink some of my own work.Simon A. Levin, Moffett Professor of Biology, Princeton University; author ofFragile DominionFisher is a master story-teller, making difficult scientific concepts seem simple through elegant exposition. Crashes, Crises, and Calamities addresses the challenge of disaster prediction in socio-economic, ecological, and physical systems by a brilliant and engaging integration of diverse scientific perspectives.Ian Stewart, author ofProfessor Stewarts Cabinet of Mathematical CuriositiesLen Fisher is a natural storyteller, and his tales about the mathematics of crashes, crises, and calamities keep the pages turning. A great way to find out what the worlds mathematicians are doing to forecast and prevent disasters of all kinds.Yaneer Bar-Yam, Professor and President, New England Complex Systems Institute Excellent discussion of the most important problem of our time.