

AI-Generated Sketch of the Week

January 27, 2023

The scene opens with Toby Ord standing at a podium in front of a large audience in the Lecture Room. He is deep in thought as he prepares to begin his lecture.

Toby: Good evening, everyone. I'm thrilled to be here today to talk about my new book "The Precipice" and the various different types of existential risks that threaten our very existence as a species.

Actuary: Excuse me, Toby, but before you get into that, I just wanted to let you know about my company's Existential Risk Insurance policy. It's a new product that we've developed to protect against the potential disasters you'll be discussing today. In the event of existential catastrophe like human extinction or the permanent breakdown of technologically advanced society, we can offer financial compensation.

Toby Ord: Thank you for the offer, but I'm afraid that's not relevant to my talk. An existential risk is a potential catastrophe that could result in the extinction of human civilization or even the destruction of Earth itself. It's a topic that requires serious consideration and attention.

Actuary: Of course, but don't you think it would be wise to protect against these risks? My company's Existential Risk Insurance policy can help you financially provide for your loved ones in the event of an existential disaster. Better safe than sorry!

Toby Ord: The problem with insurance in this case is that it can only provide compensation after the fact. It cannot prevent or mitigate an existential risk. That's why it's important for us to focus on understanding and addressing these risks, rather than just trying to insure against them.

Actuary: I see your point, but my company's policy also includes provisions for funding research and development into preventing or mitigating existential risks.

Toby Ord: That's an interesting proposition, but I still don't think it's appropriate to discuss insurance during this lecture. Let's save that for another time and focus on the topic at hand.

Audience member: Toby, could you give some examples of existential risks?

Toby Ord: Yes, of course. Some examples of existential risks include asteroid impacts, nuclear war, runaway artificial intelligence, and global pandemics. These are just a few examples, but there are many potential risks that could threaten human civilization.

Actuary: By the way, my company's Existential Risk Insurance policy covers all of those scenarios.

Audience member: Can you please be quiet and let Toby continue?

Actuary: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. Please continue, Toby.

Toby Ord: Thank you. As I was saying, it's important for us to consider these risks and work to prevent or mitigate them. We need to invest in research and development, and we need to have open and honest discussions about the potential consequences of our actions.

Audience member: What can individuals do to help reduce the likelihood of existential risks?

Toby Ord: There are many things that individuals can do. For example, we can support organizations that are working on preventing or mitigating existential risks. We can also educate ourselves and others about these risks, and we can make informed decisions in our personal and professional lives.

Actuary: I just wanted to mention that my own company's Existential Risk Unit contributes to these efforts. It's best both for us and our customers if nobody needs to make a claim in the first place!

Audience member: Can you please stop interrupting and let Toby finish his talk?

Actuary: Sorry, I didn't mean to cause any disruption.

Toby Ord: Thank you. As I was saying, it's important for us to take existential risks seriously and to work together to prevent or mitigate them. We must consider the potential consequences of our actions and make informed decisions to protect the future of human civilization.