

NASA scientist: No Doomsday in 2012

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The Mayan calendar, which ends in 2012, was based on astronomical cycles.

According to NASA scientist David Morrison, the widespread Internet rumor that the world will end in 2012 due to some astronomical event is a hoax. Dr. Morrison attributes the hype to 'cosmophobia' fueled by fake science websites and people trying to cash in on public lack of knowledge.

The widespread Internet belief that Dec. 21, 2012, will be doomsday for planet Earth because some astronomical event will destroy or decimate our planet is a complete hoax, according to [NASA](#) scientist David Morrison. His concise summary of the claims and the scientific response is being published by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific as a public

service at: www.astrosociety.org/2012

For several months, NASA and many astronomers have received increasingly worried letters and e-mails from members of the public about the possibility, widely touted on the Internet, that the world will end in 2012. Many mechanisms for doomsday are being proposed, including a collision with a fictional planet called Nibiru, deadly activity on the surface of the sun that lashes out at Earth, alignments with the center of our galaxy, etc. David Morrison has coined the term “cosmophobia” -- fear of the cosmos -- for these concerns, and has seen a huge increase in the phenomenon this year.

Dr. Morrison, a world-renowned expert on the solar system (and asteroid impacts), also serves as the public scientist for NASA’s “Ask an Astrobiologist” service, where he answers questions for the public. He has received so many questions about 2012 and the end of the world, that he felt he had to investigate and set the record straight.

One of his most interesting findings is that the distributors of the science fiction motion picture “2012”, to be released this November, are purposely feeding the flames of the Internet panic (in what is called a viral marketing campaign) by creating fake science websites and encouraging people to search for “2012” on the Web. Most of the sites such searches encounter are full of nonsense and misunderstanding, often by people who have written books on coming disaster that they are trying to sell.

Morrison’s article is in the form of questions and answers, and is followed by a resource guide that allows readers to find even more scientific information about why no 2012 disaster is in the cards. There are many reasons to worry about the future of planet Earth, of course, but absolutely no reason to single out the winter solstice of 2012 as a special time to be concerned.

More information: For an annotated guide of resources for responding to claims of astronomical pseudo-science, from astrology to crop circles, and ancient astronauts to moon-landing denial, see:

www.astrosociety.org/education...urces/pseudobib.html

Provided by Astronomical Society of the Pacific

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