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Near Earth Objects: Threats and opportunities

~ *Philip Sharp* ~

Each year many asteroids fly by Earth. Most miss by millions of kilometres and go unnoticed by everyone except astronomers. However, a small percentage come considerably closer and a few of these hit, raising some obvious questions:

- what happens when an asteroid hits?
- can we predict hits well in advance?
- can we do anything to prevent a hit?

Answers to these questions will be given. A look will also be taken at the potential industry of mining Near Earth Objects for their minerals.

Philip Sharp is a senior lecturer in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Auckland. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Applied Mathematics and researches into the use of simulations methods to model the Solar System. Philip did his undergraduate studies at the University of Canterbury. His intent was to become a professional astronomer but he quickly decided the job opportunities were limited and changed to majoring in Mathematics and Physics. He went on to do a PhD in Applied Mathematics at Canterbury. There followed a nine year visit to Canada during which he held positions in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Toronto and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Queens University. He returned to New Zealand to take up his present position at Auckland.

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