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Ubiquity: Why Catastrophes Happen

By Mark Buchanan

Random House USA Inc, United States, 2002. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Reprint. 201 x 132 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Why do catastrophes happen? What sets off earthquakes, for example? What about mass extinctions of species? The outbreak of major wars? Massive traffic jams that seem to appear out of nowhere? Why does the stock market periodically suffer dramatic crashes? Why do some forest fires become superheated infernos that rage totally out of control? Experts have never been able to explain the causes of any of these disasters. Now scientists have discovered that these seemingly unrelated cataclysms, both natural and human, almost certainly all happen for one fundamental reason. More than that, there is not and never will be any way to predict them. Critically acclaimed science journalist Mark Buchanan tells the fascinating story of the discovery that there is a natural structure of instability woven into the fabric of our world. From humble beginnings studying the physics of sandpiles, scientists have learned that an astonishing range of things-Earth s crust, cars on a highway, the market for stocks, and the tightly woven networks of human society-have a natural tendency to organize themselves into what s called the...



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