
Preface

The first edition of this book was published in 1998 by the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company. The book, four radio tapes, and six TV programs were the framework of a Swedish Open University academic course. This Swedish edition was used frequently in engineering education and in courses for professionals, until the book was sold out in 2002. In 2003 an updated and restructured Swedish edition was published. It is now a course book in Swedish engineering education and it is frequently used in the education of professionals in industrial risk management.

The present English edition is based on the experience of using the two previous editions in both university and professional environments. In addition, many sections with references to specific Swedish circumstances have now been replaced by international data and outlooks.

The book provides an introduction to basic technology risks. It also aims at placing these risks in a wider interdisciplinary and global framework than is customary, and seeks to show both their social importance and their intellectually challenging character. Two of its main purposes are to stimulate critical reflection on the issue of technology risks and to provide the conceptual tools necessary for grasping them. Further, it seeks to serve the reader by clarifying key concepts, outlining alternative views, and providing both rich references and exercises for in-depth studies.

The editors, who have worked closely with the contributors, take an overall responsibility for the content of the book, but the ultimate responsibility for each chapter lies with its contributors. Finally, the editors want to thank Anthony Bristow for his linguistic corrections and improvements.

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