

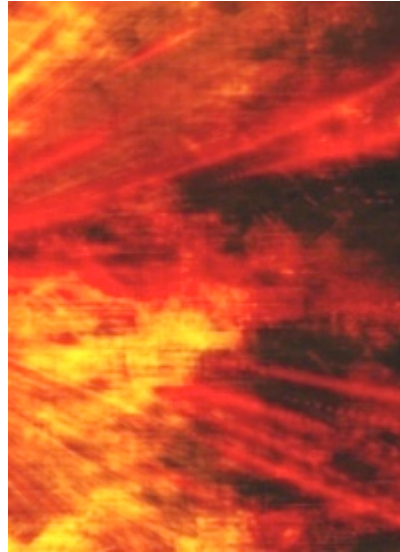


Written by [Christian Gomez](#) on August 30, 2010

## 2012 — Global Blackout or Another Y2K?

When the year 2012 is mentioned, one usually assumes the worst. Dave Reneke, an Australian astronomy lecturer and columnist, may have just given reason to vindicate some fears — but not as bad as the movie 2012 would have one suspect.

Following up on “Severe Space Weather Events: Understanding Economic and Societal Impact,” a 2008 [report](#) from the National Research Council that was funded by NASA and issued by the National Academy of Sciences that forecast the intensification of solar storm activity in 2012 along the same magnitude to that of the 1859 and 1921 storms that neutralized the nation’s telegraph lines and other electrical circuits, NASA now predicts that a geomagnetic storm of that same level of activity will likely result in a complete planetary power outage for months, in 2012.



[News.com.au](#) quotes Reneke: “The general consensus among general astronomers (and certainly solar astronomers) is that this coming Solar maximum (2012 but possibly later into 2013) will be the most violent in 100 years.”

Unless the proper precautions are taken now, claims Reneke, this solar storm has the potential to “even trip circuit breakers and knock out orbiting satellites,” severely impairing the national security and defense systems of the U.S. Reneke notes that some satellites have already been knocked out, but the worst could be yet to come.

Having technologically evolved far beyond telegraph lines since 1859, nearly all aspects of society today are dependent on electricity, including water pumps supplying whole cities and towns. Under Reneke’s scenario, land- and cellular-based phones would become non-operational, affecting emergency response services such as 911. Traffic lights would malfunction, causing severe road problems, especially in major cities. Airline services would nearly come to a standstill, as would electronic banking services and other transfer payments.

The Obama Administration has not publically addressed this issue yet, and neither did the preceding Bush Administration. NASA has been warning of increased solar activity since [2006](#), with the start of the Solar minimum. Then and now, the federal government has remained silent about whether any action has been taken to prepare for the solar event. However, there are steps that can be taken now to perhaps prevent or at least minimize the negative effects to our telecommunications and power grid systems.

Dr. Michio Kaku, professor of Theoretical Physics and author of the book *Physics of the Impossible*, in a [2009 appearance on FOX News](#) explained that “we have to think about reinforcing our satellites;



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building redundant systems because it means that GPS, the power grids, weather satellites, communication satellites, satellite television, all of that could get disrupted — peaking around 2012.”

Neither Kaku nor Reneke expects the world to end on 2012, as predicted by many who have noted that the Mayan calendar’s current cycle ends on December 21, 2012. However, some scientists are warning that even more will happen beyond a positional planetary blackout.

Scientific researcher and author Lawrence Joseph and Patrick Geryl, Belgium astronomer and author of the book *How to Survive 2012*, both of whom have appeared on [Jesse Ventura Conspiracy Theory](#), have made the case for the end of civilization, based on a [NASA report](#) of December 16, 2008 which stated that the “Earth’s magnetic field, which shields our planet from particles streaming outward from the Sun, often develops two holes that allow the largest leaks.”

This information, which came from researchers sponsored by NASA and the National Science Foundation, was first discovered by NASA’s [THEMIS satellites](#). These holes or breaches mean that a greater number of solar particles, about 20 times more plasma particles, can penetrate the magnetosphere, reaching our planet.

This has a greater probably of happening when the magnetic fields from the sun and Earth align, as demonstrated in this [slideshow presentation](#) or [video](#) from NASA.

Although debated, there is no one definitive answer as to what *would* happen if such solar flare particles did make their way to the earth, with speculations ranging from only power outages to (a worst-case scenario) burning up much of the atmosphere and surface of the planet, causing global firestorms and radioactive contamination.

One will have to wait and see what really will happen come 2012. But those who recall the Y2K non-event will likely not lose any sleep waiting.

If Dave Reneke is correct, then we need worry only about possible power outages. He and Dr. Michio Kaku do not buy into the Joseph and Geryl doomsday prophecies, and until irrefutable evidence comes to support such prophecies, we need not concern ourselves with the apocalypse, but rather with stocking up on batteries, flashlights, and water bottles — sensible preparations for any disaster, natural or manmade.

So pack up your bags wisely in case you find yourself on vacation from technology come 2012.



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