

# Copenhagen Compliance

## Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

### AI Risk Management, GRC Integration and Regulatory Readiness

#### Issues and Questions for Directors and Boards

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May

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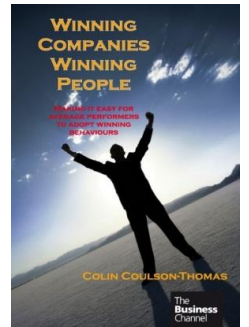
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# Environmental Risks and Existential Threats

- Consequences of collective human activity, population growth and contemporary aspirations and lifestyles
- Our planet and its eco-systems are struggling to cope with and feed a human population of 8 billion as average global temperatures rise.
- We face shared and inter-related existential threats:
  - Biological (incl. pandemics & biodiversity)
  - Nuclear
  - Global warming and climate change
  - Collapse of eco-systems
  - **AI is an existential threat in its own right. It exacerbates the others and consumes resources needed to confront them**





# Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

## WEF 2-year Global Risk Ranking (Severity of Impact)

- **1 Geoeconomic confrontation (Geopolitical)**
- **2 Misinformation and disinformation (Tech)**
- **3 Societal polarization (Societal)**
- **4 Extreme weather events (Environ.)**
- **5 State-based armed conflict (Geopolitical)**
- **6 Cyber insecurity (Tech)**
- **7 Inequality (Societal)**
- **8 Erosion of human rights and/or civic freedoms (Societal)**
- **9 Pollution (Environ.)**
- **10 Involuntary migration or displacement (Societal)**

WEF (2026), *Global Risks Report 2026*,  
Cologne/Geneva, WEF (World Economic  
Forum), 14<sup>th</sup> January  
[<https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2026/>]



# Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

## WEF 10-year Global Risk Ranking (Severity of Impact)

- **1 Extreme weather events (Environ.)**
- **2 Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse (Environ.)**
- **3 Critical change to Earth systems (Environ.)**
- **4 Misinformation and disinformation (Tech)**
- **5 Adverse outcomes of AI technologies (Tech)**
- **6 Natural resource shortages (Environ.)**
- **7 Inequality (Societal)**
- **8 Cyber insecurity (Tech)**
- **9 Societal polarization (Societal)**
- **10 Pollution (Environ.)**

WEF (2026), *Global Risks Report 2026*,  
Cologne/Geneva, WEF (World Economic  
Forum), 14<sup>th</sup> January  
[<https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2026/>]

# Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

## Existential Challenges and Threats

- Global Warming and Climate Change
- Biosecurity Threats (Pandemics & Weapons)
- Biodiversity (Monocultures/food security)
- Nuclear Weapons and Threats
- **Artificial Intelligence and its Regulation:**
  - **Various Malevolent / hostile uses of AI, biologicals, nuclear, etc**
  - **AI weaponizes and accelerates other threats**
  - **AI exacerbates environmental challenges**
- **How many people, organisations and societies could cope with a combination of existential events occurring simultaneously**



# Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

## AI Risk Management, GRC Integration and Regulatory Readiness

### Agenda

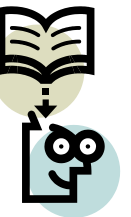
- Understanding AI risks and threats
  - Management, Direction and Ownership perspectives
  - Changing AI and Digital Technologies
  - Implications, consequences and contending interests
- Interrelationships, alignment and integration
  - Networks and informal meetings
- Assessing regulatory readiness
  - Following or influencing and coping with diversity of requirements



# Confronting Evolving Risks and Existential Threats

## Boards and Governance Context

- Uncertain, unpredictable, volatile, insecure and complex
- Multiple environmental, geopolitical and technological challenges
- Pace of developments exceeds speed of corporate and government responses
- **Existence of malevolent and bad actors (Re use of AI)**
- Pressure, stress, overworked, lack of bandwidth, struggling to cope
- Distracted, unprepared, lacking resilience and forethought
- Unwellness, early retirement, mental health issues
- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2025), Boardroom Pressures and Directorial and Corporate Resilience, Addressing Performance and Wellbeing Consequences of Increasing Workloads, *Director Today*, Vol. XI Issue VIII, August, pp 15-19
- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2025), Coping with Complexity and Overload, *Management Services*, Vol. 69 No. 3, Autumn, pp 37-42



# Directors, Boards and AI

## Navigating contending pressures and interests

- Duties and responsibilities of directors
- Liabilities for impacts, outputs, consequences
- Act in the best long-term interests of a company and its stakeholders
- Long-term implications of AI concern resources, individuals, organisations, communities and societies
- Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence and individual judgement
- Economic, environmental and social impacts of AI
- AI leadership, governance, management and skills requirements (People rather than Technology issue)
- **What is AI to be used for, by whom, when and for what purpose?**
- **What are the advantages, disadvantages, resource requirements, externalities and opportunity costs?**
- **Who pays, benefits, loses and/or is compensated and by what means?**
- The large energy demand of the mega data centres required by AI is resulting in a rapid hike in US energy prices which affects affordability and competitiveness (Bowring, 2026).
- Overall, technology and AI adoptions and developments are consuming scarce water, energy, metal and critical mineral resources and generating growing amounts of e-waste (WEF and Oliver Wyman, 2025).

# Confronting Evolving Risks and Existential Threats

## Changing AI and Digital Technology

- Evolving more quickly than regulations
- AI impact on white collar/professional work & jobs (Future monitoring)
- AI as an existential threat/loss of control
- Energy/water use impact of large mega data centres
- Weaponisation of AI & other threats by malicious and bad actors
- Physical AI: Autonomous devices, robots, drones (NB: Impact on war)
- Persistence of Big Tech influence/control and barriers to competitors
- Innovation & new entrants?
- Decentralisation models using local data for specific purposes
- Individualised AI on personal devices
- **Algorithms as source of power / Autonomous actors**

# Confronting Evolving Risks and Existential Threats

## Changing International Context 1

- Geopolitical Shifts. Bipolar > Multipolar system
- Fragmentation and polarisation
- Decline of liberal democracy
- Authoritarian expansion and collaboration (AI for control)
- Shared rules & norms > deals & transactional
- Ethics / values & common good > hard power & self / vested interests
- Suppression and ignoring of scientific evidence
- **Challenge of achieving collective responses**

# Confronting Evolving Risks and Existential Threats

## Changing International Context 2

- Countries seeking AI leadership and self-sufficiency
- AI dependences and vulnerabilities
- Hybrid warfare > hot wars. Malicious and bad actors
- Weaponisation and military applications of AI
- Increasing inter-relation of multiple risks and threats
- Growing complexity and pressures on decision makers
- Challenge of obtaining independent and objective counsel
- Regulatory diversity. Lack of trust
- **Increasing fragility and politicisation of international bodies**

# Confronting Evolving Risks and Existential Threats

## Changing AI and Risk Management Context 1

- Volatile
- Uncertain
- Unpredictable
- Insecure
- Discontinuity
- Disruption and disruptors
- Fragile
- Vulnerability
- Sustainability?
- Responsible?
- **Manageable and/or Controllable?**

# Confronting Evolving Risks and Existential Threats

## Changing AI and Risk Management Context 2

- Unforeseen events + irrational and inconsistent actors
- Dramatic shifts of policy and priorities
- Misinformation, disinformation and fake news
- Past assumptions / relationships may no longer apply
- Old risk data and/or training data might be biased, irrelevant and possibly counter-productive
- Relevance, value and potential impacts of use can change in real time as algorithms / code written or learns
- Complexity, Diversity, Perpetual change & Increasing pressure > resilience and responsible governance? (**Is Compliance Sufficient?**)



# Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

## AI Governance Challenges

- Government and CEO (?) pressure for accelerated AI adoption
- Perceived regulatory constraints to AI innovation / adoption eased or removed
- Lure of AI claims and hype. Fear of being left behind
- Pressure from vested interests (vendors, consultants, big tech) in AI adoption
- Lack of understanding, evidence, critical thinking > directors going with the flow
- Self, vested and national interests taking priority over collective survival
- Values and policies abandoned or changed to accommodate power shifts
- Focus on corporate and national AI self-sufficiency and competitiveness
- **Retreat from the common good and distrust of institutions / relationships**



## Global Artificial Intelligence Day 2026

# GRC Integration and Regulatory Readiness Challenges

- Push back / Backlash against AI impacts / consequences
- Stakeholder engagement and fragmentation
- Pressure to accommodate / back source of political power/gain contracts
- Lack of informal networking across those impacted concerned with AI
- Coordination to embed GRC at earlier stages of developments and transitions
- Steps to increase shared AI understanding
- Identifying and addressing external, hidden and evolving AI risks
- Regulation takers rather than influencers and co-creators
- Aligning and consolidating evolving AI frameworks (Is Compliance Sufficient?)



# Collective Responses to Existential Threats

## Common features of current risks and existential threats

- They are inter-related and/or inter-dependent and complex
- Many of them have a common cause: Collective human aspirations, activities and lifestyles
- Timing and tipping points are uncertain. Some are ‘slow burn’
- Life-forms and infrastructures are increasingly vulnerable. A mass extinction of species is underway.
- Resilience is reducing. Potential impacts and costs are increasing
- There are potentially catastrophic outcomes
- Human responses and interventions can have unintended consequences



# Collective Responses to Existential Threats

## Requirements for effective responses

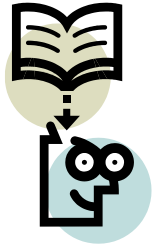
- Collaboration and collective action
- Cooperation across supply and value chains
- Engagement with communities and stakeholders
- Recognition of common and shared interests (e.g. collective survival)
- Cross-functional, inter-disciplinary and wider working together
- Corporate, community and public-private partnerships
- Flexibility, adaptation, intelligent steering and greater speed
- Quicker adoption and scaling up of sustainable innovations and solutions



# Collective Responses to Existential Threats

## Common obstacles to effective responses

- Fragmentation and polarisation. Groupthink and lack of challenge
- Self and vested interests in the status quo. Advocacy and lobbying to protect their interests
- Distractions, complexity and short-term pressures
- Denial and delaying strategies and tactics. Bias, misinformation and disinformation
- Increasing population and unsustainable lifestyle aspirations
- Limited natural capital and persistent negative externalities
- Retreat into virtual worlds and preoccupation with social media
- Organisational boundaries, departmental structures and a focus on individual disciplines rather than holistic solutions
- Differing public and private sector remits, approval processes and budgeting practices



# Background Reading 1

## Cyber-security challenges, risks and threats

- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2025), Directors, Boards and Cyber Security – Understanding and Preparing for Evolving Threats, <https://blog.iodglobal.com/> [<https://www.iodglobal.com/blog/details/directors-boards-and-cyber-security-understanding-and-preparing-for-evolving-threats>, 12<sup>th</sup> September]
- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2025), Directors, Boards and Cyber Security – Understanding and Preparing for Evolving Threats, *Director Today*, Vol XI Issue 9, September, pp 13-17
- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2025), Cyber Security, Risks, Challenges and Threats, *Management Services*, Vol. 69 No. 4, Winter, pp 34-40

## AI challenges, risks and threats

- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2025), [Theme Paper] 2025 London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability, Boards in an Unpredictable World: Navigating Geopolitical Shifts, Climate Crises & Technological Disruptions [[https://www.iodglobal.com/front\\_assets/images/events/2025/LGC-2025-theme-paper.pdf](https://www.iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2025/LGC-2025-theme-paper.pdf), 15<sup>th</sup> September]
- Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2026), [Theme Paper] 20<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility, Making CSR Work: Integrating ESG into Board Strategy and Governance [[https://www.iodglobal.com/front\\_assets/images/events/2026/theme-paper-20th-csr2026.pdf](https://www.iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2026/theme-paper-20th-csr2026.pdf), 5<sup>th</sup> January]



# Background Reading 2

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2026), [Theme Paper] 27<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change, Board Strategy for Securing the Future: Risk and Resilience in Nature and Climate Governance  
[[https://www.iodglobal.com/front\\_assets/images/events/2026/theme-paper-environment-management-and-climate-change-2026.pdf](https://www.iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2026/theme-paper-environment-management-and-climate-change-2026.pdf), 27<sup>th</sup> April]

## Governance and Directorial challenges

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2026), Global Corporate Governance in an Uncertain and Insecure World, Recognising Realities and Providing Future Strategic Direction, *Director Today*, Vol. XII Issue I, January, pp 73-79

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2026), Rethinking Expectations of Company Directors, Coping with Changing Contexts and Pressures, *Director Today*, Vol. XII Issue 2, February, pp 43-49

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2026), Women Directors, Changing Contexts and Board Diversity, Reviewing Boardroom and Business Requirements for a New Era, *Director Today*, Vol. XII Issue 3, March, pp 13-19

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2026), Confronting Social, Environmental and Technological Irresponsibility, Initiating Greater Stakeholder and Collective Responsibility, *Director Today*, Vol. XII Issue 4, April, pp 101-105

# Locating publications by Colin Coulson-Thomas

- Blog versions of Director Today articles by Colin Coulson-Thomas can be obtained from <https://www.iodglobal.com/blog>
- Director Today can be obtained and downloaded from <https://iodglobal.com/director-today>
- Management Services which contains regular articles by Colin Coulson-Thomas and details of membership of the Institute of Management Services of which he is President can be obtained from: <https://www.ims-productivity.com/>
- Details of the most recent published outputs of Colin Coulson-Thomas also appear on <https://www.waps.info/fellows-corner>
- Details of books, reports and articles by Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas can be obtained from: <http://www.academia.edu> and [www.policypublications.com](http://www.policypublications.com)

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