

Book review

Landslide Risk Assessment

E. Mark Lee and D. K. C. Jones, 2nd edn, ICE Publishing, London, UK, 2013, ISBN 9780727758019, £56.00 (hard bound), 524 pp.

The second edition of this book reflects changes, updates and the authors' additional experiences over the 10 years that have passed since the original publication. The book is an excellently written guide to landslide risk assessment, covering multiple aspects of importance to both practitioners and researchers in this field. The authors begin with a robust and useful set of definitions and define the context of the risk covered in the book as being the risk that landslides present to human society.

The clear and engaging style of the book lends itself well to the subject and avoids the tendency for literature relating to geotechnical risk to be detailed, technically complex discussions of statistical and probabilistic approaches, which can be somewhat inaccessible to many of us. What this book provides is a clear understanding of the context in which these methods should be used and numerous real case histories where different techniques of differing complexity have been used. The definition of context, and of why a risk assessment is required, are both essential for geotechnical engineers or geologists to be successful in

effectively managing these risks. Communication is an important component of risk management and the book itself is an example of good communication.

The true value of the book is in the many worked examples, drawn from the authors' own extensive experience and bibliographies as well as other publications. Many of the case studies are new or updated in this second edition. For readers who are users of risk methodologies as part of a range of tools, as opposed to risk specialists or purists, these worked examples effectively move the theory into a space in which we are more comfortable.

The changes since the first edition are relevant and useful. The introductory chapters are longer and touch on a number of recent events and newly published literature. The layout and formatting are also updated and improved. A key improvement in this edition is the expansion of the discursive chapters, such as the new chapter 5 'Introduction to probability and quantitative assessment', which – although containing some repeat material – is much clearer through being a shorter stand-alone section. As much today as 10 years ago, there is space for a work such as this, which presents the theory behind probability and statistics firmly in context rather than in the abstract. This book will remain one of the 'go to' references on my bookshelf.

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