

# Nabil Abu el Ata

## 10 PEOPLE



FROM artificial intelligence and robotics to nanotechnology and quantum computing, the World is changing at an unprecedented rate — and the associated business and societal risks are growing exponentially.

Keeping a close eye on all this is mathematician, inventor and regular *BV* contributor Nabil Abu el Ata. He fears that governments and business leaders are not doing enough to manage the risks of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Citizens and consumers may suffer the consequences, he warns.

The author of *The Tyranny Of Uncertainty* is on a mission to expose the dangers of using historical data to guide critical decisions, and to manage new threats reactively. The “biggest crisis of our generation” will result, he says, from “unknown risks that cannot be anticipated using intuition or statistical analysis”.

According to El Ata, the 2007 economic crisis was just a preview of the problems that will come our way if we don’t properly manage the risks that come with disruptive innovations like mortgage-backed securities. The only way to prepare is to employ scientific methods to predict and track the complex web of associated risks.

“To thrive in the era of disruptive innovation, policymakers and businesses must create, and use, a wider domain of forward-looking risk intelligence,” he says. The mathematical innovations we need (already) exist; “our leaders just need to have the foresight to use them in this new context”.

In the late 1970s, El Ata’s mathematical discoveries provided predictive accuracy to put the first satellites in orbit. Since then, he has dedicated his career to helping experts harness the same mathematical principles to manage business and economic risks.

His stated goal is to ensure a more stable future for all — but to accomplish this, he will need the policymakers, economists, academics and tech experts to co-operate to build models that better reflect the dynamic nature of the modern world.