



Existential Risk Observatory

AI EXISTENTIAL RISK COMMUNICATION INTERNSHIP

Full time, preferably Amsterdam, 650 E/month

EXISTENTIAL RISK OBSERVATORY
HAVIKSLAAN 8A
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THE NETHERLANDS

EXISTENTIALRISKOBSERVATORY.ORG

THE ORGANIZATION

The Existential Risk Observatory is an NGO aiming to reduce human extinction risks by informing the public debate.

Human extinction risk has an estimated likelihood of one in six in the next hundred years according to research¹. Roughly one in ten is presumably due to AGI existential risk. We think this likelihood is unacceptably high.

We focus mostly on the largest source of existential risk, namely AGI, and believe that it can roughly be reduced in two ways:

1. By building safe AGI (AI Safety).
2. By robustly pausing AGI development for as long as existential safety cannot be guaranteed (robust AI regulation).

We think that AI Safety research is severely restricted in talent, funding, number of institutes, diversity, and priority, because of a general lack of public existential risk awareness. We also think that public awareness of AGI existential risk is much too low to implement sufficiently robust AI regulation (such as hardware regulation). Mostly for these two reasons, we think raising existential risk awareness, especially related to AGI, is of the utmost importance. Therefore, we try to reduce human extinction risk by informing the public debate.

We have been founded last year, and in our first year we have:

- Published five articles in leading Dutch newspapers, reaching ~1.8 M people.
- Organized the first Existential Risk Conference in Europe.
- Obtained funding from the Survival and Flourishing Fund (Jaan Tallinn) and The Dreamery Foundation (Steven Schuurman).

One of our main remaining challenges is to measure and improve the effectiveness of our communication methods. We have already proven that we can reach an audience at scale, but not that we can raise AGI existential risk awareness effectively. In this internship, you will help us change that.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

So far, we have mainly used op-eds in traditional media to raise AGI existential risk awareness. We have, however, not thoroughly investigated the effectiveness of our print articles, and this will be your first task. Additionally, there is a reasonably long list of existing media articles, books, youtube videos, TED talks, a documentary, blog posts, in-person or online events, etc., all aiming to raise AGI existential risk awareness (mostly from outside the Observatory). Your second task will be, insofar this is possible within the internship period, to investigate the effectiveness of these communication methods in raising awareness about this topic. Your third task will be to make recommendations on how to improve our communication effectiveness, based on your existing communication expertise, academic literature, the results of your investigations, and input from those who have practical experience in communicating AI existential risk, both from inside and outside our organization. You

¹ Ord, Toby, Oxford University. *The precipice: existential risk and the future of humanity*. Hachette Books, 2020.

will report the results of your work in the form of a report or a paper.

Practically, we are looking for a full time (40 hrs/week) intern for a 3-6 month period. The starting date is preferably no later than 1 October 2022. At this moment, we are mostly an online organization, but it would be preferred if you could co-work in Amsterdam, the Netherlands for one or two days per week. A monthly compensation of 650 euros before tax is provided.

We are a young start-up NGO with a small team and an informal culture. You will report to the director. You can and are expected to take a high degree of ownership for your own tasks. You will be performing a key task within our organization, meaning that we expect to see actionable results at the end of the internship period.

REQUIREMENTS

An ideal candidate would possess all requirements below, however, if you are motivated but lack some of these requirements, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

- An academic background in the social sciences, such as communication, psychology, or sociology. Bachelor-level candidates will be considered, but we prefer Master-level candidates.
- Quantitative expertise, such as having followed courses in statistics or having done quantitative research before.
- Ideally, 1-2 years of working/research experience.
- A hands-on, self-starting attitude (for example, you will need to independently recruit participants for your experiments, and work with limited supervision in general).
- (AI) existential risk expertise, such as having read e.g. *The Precipice*, *Superintelligence*, or comparable literature. We think it will help to be convinced yourself that AI development harbours existential risks.
- Good writing and reporting skills in English.
- Speaking Dutch is a plus.
- Being located at commuting distance from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, or being willing and able to temporarily relocate is a plus.

If you recognize yourself in this profile and are motivated to do crucial work in reducing human extinction risks, we are looking forward to getting to know you!

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Please send your CV and motivation letter to info@existentialriskobservatory.org before 5 September 2022. If you are interested but not sure yet, please contact us at the same address, and we can first meet and have a (digital) coffee. After shortlisting the most promising candidates, we will aim to make a decision after a single one-hour interview.