# Hawking says book your flat in space!

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THIS is cool stuff man! These guys are talking about booking your flats on another planet because our good old Earth might go kaput any day! Man, these guys are serious about it. And just listen to the dude called Stephen Hawking! He seems to be in a hurry to go on Mars or somewhere. He just does not have any faith on our very own Earth anymore.

Well, since it seems you don't believe me, please read the article below and get your own goose bumps. I have only reproduced part of it from www.space.com.

The name of the original article is: "Why we must flee the planet: The geometry of Earth is all wrong" and it is written by Seth Shostak of SETI Institute.

"Stephen Hawking is best known for thinking about time, space, and those teratoid trash mashers known as black holes. But in a recent talk in Hong Kong, the famous physicist digressed from his usual subject matter to tell the audience that they'd better get off the island, and he didn't mean Kowloon. Instead, the Cambridge don was urging the crowd to get off the whole, gosh-darn *planet*. Hawking was hawking space colonization.



"Life on Earth is at the ever-increasing risk of being wiped out by a disaster, such as sudden global warming, nuclear war, a genetically engineered virus or other dangers," Hawking disclosed.

"Well, if you're a space buff, your reaction to this pronouncement is probably half-closed eyelids and a big "duh." Moving out into the solar system to save our precious, hominid skins is hardly a new idea. What makes these statements print-worthy is that they come from a luminous source. "But news or not, Hawking's observation is correct, primarily and fundamentally because our planetary home is the wrong shape. A sphere has less surface area than any other form of the same volume. Less than a cube, an ellipsoid, or any polyhedron you can still recall from seventh grade geometry. What this means is that there's precious little surface acreage to live on, despite Earth's goodly heft.

"Consider the Tonnage-to-Terran ratio, an index of how efficiently we use the planet: With the human population at six billion, the T-to-T ratio works out to about a trillion. In other words, for every lout strutting Earth's stage, there are about a trillion tons of Earth!

"That's right: each of us is backed up by a trillion tons of natural infrastructure, a mostly useless collection of crushed iron core and creamy, hot magma, topped by a delicate continental crust. This, as you can easily surmise, is wasteful. It's possible to live the good life with 100 tons of housing (including some office space and a car or two), which is 10 billion times more efficient.

"So while moving some of our descendants to Mars or the moons of Jupiter, as Hawking suggests, will help it won't help much. The problem is that these worlds are also spheres. The amount of increased real estate they offer for human settlement is unimpressive.

"For example, let's ignore for a moment the environmental problems, the nukes and the pandemics, and consider population growth alone. The current doubling time for the number of humanoids is 50 years (that's a growth rate of 1.4 percent per year). In other words, even if we began colonizing the Red Planet this week, we'd have it littered with critters by mid-century. This is only marginally helpful. Taking Malthus to the max, if we naively assume that the present doubling rate will continue well into the future, the mass of ever-reproducing humans will reach the moon in the year 4810 a.d.