

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Smart City, Participatory Planning, Ethics and New Urbanism

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In this last issue of 2014, the International Journal of E-Planning Research (IJEPR) addresses important themes in the field of urban e-planning, some for the first time in the journal: the government of smart cities; the role new information and communication technologies can play in the design review process in order to improve participatory communication in planning; and ethics in urban e-planning.

In the first article “Building Sound Foundations for Smart City Government: The Case of Munich, Germany”, Hans Jochen Scholl, Marlen Jurisch, Helmut Krcmar, and Margit C. Scholl, examine smart city initiatives with a specific focus in the case of Munich and compare it to Seattle. As the authors show, the widespread use of information and communication technologies under the label of ‘smart city’ can have different meanings for different stakeholders. In the case of Munich, although the meaning differs from that commonly employed in the academy, the research shows that the practitioners’ definitions were closely related to the definitions adopted by the

smart city program at Munich city government. The article describes and discusses the new institutional architecture in Munich and the expected and realized benefits, and compares the results to those of an earlier study on the City of Seattle. The comparison shows that these two cities adopted different approaches whose effectiveness can only be fully evaluated in the future. In the second article, “Design Review Process: Can New Technology Improve the Art of Participatory Communication?”, Rojin S. Vishkaie and Richard M. Levy aim to propose a set of design recommendations to create an interactive communication medium to support the participatory activities of the design review process. For that the authors investigate the communication challenges around the design review process and explore the tools and techniques that are used. This is followed in the third article “Municipal Websites: Linking Democratic Theory and Citizen Participation”, written by Lamar Vernon Bennett and Aroon Manoharan, by a discussion of how governments engage their citizens online. Based on data

from American local government, the authors examine two research questions with the aim to identify the basis for future research on the links between democratic theory and e-government: What factors drive governments to employ each theory? Which theory predominates in the implementation of e-government?

The following three articles deal with issues related to ethics in e-planning and citizen participation. In the first of these articles, “Ethical E-Participation: Reasons for Introducing a ‘Qualitative Turn’ for PPGIS”, Marco Picone and Francesco Lo Piccolo discuss the new issues that result from most forms of e-participation. As the authors argue, one such discussion involves the role of GIS, and for that reason the article is focused on these two key questions: Can an ethically aware GIS be conceived? What does it mean for a GIS to be ethical at all? Based on an experiment in Palermo, Italy, the authors discuss the opportunities qualitative PPGIS may grant, and argue that only a qualitative turn can enhance their importance in decision-making processes. In the last article, “Can e-Planning Make for Better Communities? The Parallel Case of Architecture, Ethics and New Urbanism”, Michael Levine and William Taylor examine problematic aspects of New Urbanism’s assumptions about the relation between architecture, planning and social justice and consider the e-planning’s position in these relations, arguing that the goal of efficiency in planning and design through electronic, digital or web-based practices may serve to confuse essential ethical concerns. The theme ethics and planning of the built environment is also addressed in the book review included in this issue.

With this fourth issue, the third volume of the International Journal of E-Planning Research (IJEPR) is complete. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the authors of the articles published during 2014, to the members of the editorial board, and to the external reviewers invited to participate in the double-blind peer-review. This important contribution of the reviewers and members of the editorial board is acknowledged in the list of IJEPR reviewers for 2014 included in this

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Editor-in-Chief
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