Call for abstracts: Urban technologies

Proposal for closed panel at EASST 2016 (August 31st to September 3rd 2016, Barcelona, Spain)

Content (first draft)

Technology is no stranger to the city. Cities are shaped by technologies and via versa. Our panel will focus on the conceptional challenge to identify those technologies that need to be taken into account for understanding the current and future shape of city life and/or can only be understood in the context of their use by urban dwellers.

In their paper on "STS and the city" (2007) Olivier Coutard and Simon Guy pointed to the lack of "a substantial literature on STS and the City". The city has certainly become a less neglected object in technology studies in recent years as the regained interests in Urban STS indicates. However, we also need to be aware of a bias towards what can be called the "Urban machinery" (Mikael Hård and Thomas J. Misa 2010), the technological infrastructures that make city life happening (communication, energy, industrial, transportation systems, etc.). This specific focus comes with little surprise, given the prominence of infrastructures as an object of inquiry in STS and related fields.

In our panel, we will therefore focus on individual artifacts and their interplay with the urban environment. For example, we may discuss the role of…

- Cars
- Elevators
- Enabling technologies
- Mobile phones
- Robots
- Street lights

Please note, that the examples are presented in alphabetic order and that the list is not meant to be expensive.

Organization

Proposals for "closed sessions" need to be submitted by

February 21st, 2016

I therefore propose Feb 8th, 2016, an internal deadline for the session. Please, let me know ASAP, if you would be interested in submitting an abstract for the session by email to m.h.nagenborg@utwente.nl.

Please, feel also free to comment on the content of this proposal, which first of all is a draft, which hopefully captures my ideas.

For more information on the conference, please refer to

http://easst.net/current-conference/