

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Participatory Mapping, Urban Land Registry, Disability Issues and MOOC in Planning Education: Lessons for e-Planning

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In this third issue of 2014, the International Journal of E-Planning Research (IJEPR) addresses four key subjects in e-planning: participatory mapping in emergency situations, the use of information and communication technologies in urban land registry, the way disability is dealt with in planning education and how to learn about e-planning through massive open online courses (MOOC).

In the first of these articles “Participatory Mapping Approaches to Coordinate the Emergency Response of Spontaneous Volunteers after Hurricane Sandy”, Pamela Wridt, John E. Seley, Scott Fisher, and Bryce DuBois demonstrate the potential of participatory mapping to coordinate spontaneous volunteers and assist government agencies and humanitarian organizations in emergency contexts. The evidence presented is based on one case study of a volunteer mapping project in New York City whose aim was to help

communicate the needs reported by community members to outsiders after Hurricane Sandy, confirming the relevance and importance of volunteered geographic information for urban planning and urban management. In the second article, “Understanding the Weak Performance of Technology in Urban management: Insights from the Urban Land Registry in Benin”, Claire Simonneau questions the appropriation of existing urban planning and urban management tools in Sub-Saharan Africa, based on a case study in three cities in Benin and focused on the implementation of a land information system. The research finds and highlights numerous paradoxes, obstacles, and conflicts in the implementation of a planning tool that is crucial for urban planning, which according to the author is the result of social, political and economic factors that were unanticipated by the creators of this urban land registry technology.

The following two articles deal with issues related to planning education. In the first of these two articles, “Disability Issues and Planning Education Findings from a Longitudinal Survey of Planning Programs and Lessons for Urban e-Planning”, Nathan W. Moon, Paul M.A. Baker, Rob G.B. Roy, and Ariyana Bozzorg explore how frequently, in the United States, planning education is concerned with problems and solutions associated with the physical environment rather than socioeconomic barriers. For that they conducted a longitudinal survey of selected university planning programs in the United States, in 2005 and in 2013. Among other aspects, the authors examine the role and importance of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, and discuss how the lack of attention to disability issues in planning literature may be linked to the education of planners and planning curricula. They conclude that the American legal framework tend to put more emphasis on accessibility in the physical landscape than on social and economic barriers faced by people with disabilities, and found out, in the survey conducted in those two moments, evidence that suggests possible areas of progress as an emerging group of urban planners are clearly

interested in the role of new information technologies in facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities into the social environment. In the last of these research articles, “Learning about E-Planning: The Results of a Massive Open Online Course Experiment”, Jennifer S. Evans Cowley, Thomas W. Sanchez, Nader Afzalan, Abel Silva Lizcano, Zachary Kenitzer, and Thomas Evans explore the role of massive open online courses (MOOC) in the field of urban e-planning and conclude by suggesting several topics for further research. The article critically describes the MOOC the authors organized in 2013 (TechniCity - Technology and Cities), which had more than 21,000 students registered, examines from different angles the application of this new pedagogical approach and discuss how to improve future course offerings in this field.

We trust these articles, focused as they are on cutting-edge issues confronting the planning community, will enhance the discussion of new approaches in urban e-planning.

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