

## Editorial Preface

# Online Indicator Tools, Social Media, and the Gamification of Citizen Participation in Urban Planning

Carlos Nunes Silva, Universidade de Lisboa, Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, Lisbon, Portugal

The fourth issue of volume six of the International Journal of E-Planning Research explores new and important topics that emerged in recent debates in the field of urban planning: the implementation of online indicator tools for the operationalisation of sustainable development, the development of methods for the analysis of social media data for planning purposes, the use of serious geo games in participatory urban planning, and the employment of information and communication technologies to enhance citizen participation in the planning decision-making.

In the first article, *'Operationalising Sustainability - Towards an Online Sustainability Indicator Tool'* by Conor Mark Dowling, Stephen D Walsh, Stephen M Purcell, and William M Hynes, all from Future Analytics Consulting, and Mary Lee Rhodes from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, present and discuss an important contribution for the development of a decision support framework able to consider a more holistic view of sustainable development than that usually present in frameworks based on economic measures. The article deals with the initial step of this process presenting the framework of sustainable energy indicators which the author intended to be flexible enough to address the vast extent of urban sustainable processes and to reflect the broad range of data sources available.

In the following article - *'Social Media Data Analysis in Urban e-Planning'*, Pilvi Nummi from Aalto University, Finland, explores computational methods that can be used to analyze social media data with the aim to inform the planning process. Based on a literature review of recent case studies, the author shows that these methods have been applied mainly to location based social media data, such as geo-tagged Tweets, photographs and check-in data, with only few studies focused on the use of non-place-based data. On the other side, the evidence collected reveals that integration of this knowledge in the planning and decision making processes has not been fully successful in the cases included in the literature reviewed by Pilvi Nummi.

In the third article, *'City Makers – Insights on the Development of a Serious Game to Support Collective Reflection and Knowledge Transfer in Participatory Processes'*, written by Teodora Iulia Constantinescu and Oswald Devisch, both from Hasselt University, Belgium, and Georgi Kostov, from Playful Interactive Environments Research Center, Austria, the authors explore and discuss the potential and actual role of serious geo games in participatory processes, based on the hypothesis that framing the participatory process in a game format facilitates the generation of ideas and dialogue, as well as knowledge transfer. The study presented in this article focuses in particular the case of the City Makers game prototype and its development process.

In *'Improving Urban Planning Information, Transparency and Participation in Spanish Administrations'* by Beatriz Santos, from the Technical University of Madrid and Urban Planning Department in the Government of Aragon, in Spain, explores and discusses the changes introduced in the Spanish Public Administration, in particular the different instruments and web-based participation systems implemented with the aim to get urban and spatial planning closer to the citizen, concluding that there is still room for improvements in the use of information and communication technologies to enhance citizen participation in urban planning in Spain.

The book reviewed in this issue, *'Geomedia - Networked Cities and the Future of Public Space,'* authored by Scott McQuire, explores the changes associated with the new conditions facing urban public space due to the expansion of networked digital media throughout the city.

With this issue, volume six of the International Journal of E-Planning Research (IJEPR) is complete. I would like to express my esteem to all colleagues engaged in this process: the authors of the articles submitted for publication in the IJEPR, members of the editorial board and the external ad-hoc reviewers. The contribution of reviewers, ad-hoc reviewers and members of the editorial board, is acknowledged in the list of IJEPR reviewers included below in this preface. I also wish to express once again my gratitude to the IGI editorial staff for their cooperation in the publication process.

*Carlos Nunes Silva*  
*Editor-in-Chief,*  
*IJEPR*

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*Carlos Nunes Silva, PhD, Professor Auxiliar at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, University of Lisbon, Portugal. His research interests are mainly focused on urban and metropolitan governance, history and theory of urban planning, urban planning in Africa, urban e-planning, urban planning ethics, local government policies, local e-government, and research methods. He is Chair of the International Geographical Union Commission 'Geography of Governance,' and the founding Editor-in-Chief of the 'International Journal of E-Planning Research' (IJEPR).*