From Social Butterfly to Engaged Citizen

Reviewed by Titiana-Petra Ertiö, University of Turku, Finland

Marcus Foth, Laura Forlano, Christine Satchell & Martin Gibbs

From Social Butterfly to Engaged Citizen: Urban Informatics, Social Media, Ubiquitous Computing, and Mobile Technology to Support Citizen Engagement.

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The title of the book – *From Social Butterfly to Engaged Citizen: Urban Informatics, Social Media, Ubiquitous Computing, and Mobile Technology to Support Citizen Engagement* – is eye-catching and topical, and presents the reader with an intriguing glimpse of the book's central theme: engaging individuals and communities in cities and urban spaces mediated by digital technologies. The book is intended for those interested in facilitating citizen engagement in the context of urban informatics. Nonetheless, the book will certainly serve as an invitation to a collaborative effort aimed to define and shape ubiquitous computing not only in terms of practical matters, but also of scientific relevance: "Like butterflies themselves, we [the editors] believe that the research presented in this book will travel across great distances and pollinate minds, universities, and academic disciplines." (xiv). From Social Butterfly to Engaged Citizen is structured into five parts and 24 separately authored chapters that highlight complex relationships of people, technologies, and urban spaces. The first part (Chapters 1-4) serves as a theoretical background for addressing the issue of citizen engagement by employing complex sociotechnical concepts in urban informatics. The authors of this part address technological imaginaries of the city (termed "technourban imaginaries"); the moral economy of social media; the wireless city and its "protocological surround" linking people, data and places; and evaluations of mobile media applications that request participation, but are not always empowering.

Part two (Chapters 5-10) focuses on civic engagement. It tackles issues around global debates (like climate change, water consumption, air quality or political activism) and individual choices, e.g. for sustainable food, as well as connects grassroots initiatives with institutional forms of civic engagement. There is a strong emphasis on appropriating urban media technologies to facilitate awareness and action about and around such topics. Mobile phones, websites or public screens, to name but a few, represent interfaces for visualizing citizen engagement in solving some of the most challenging issues of our times.

Part three (Chapters 11-15) provides insight into creative engagement, both on novel ways to engage users as well as using the technology at hand creatively. Chapters in this section explore modern cities as "layered" environments. The physical spaces are enriched by media content such as archive audio broadcasts, interactive installations and 3D maps, in addition to narratives and augmented reality applications. This overlap spurs an interactive dialogue between the city and its citizens, allowing modern *flaneurs* to rediscover and loose themselves in the surrounding environment. On the other hand, personal technologies such as mobile phones are increasingly used creatively. These chapters describe how family members use mobile phones to coordinate daily tasks and share calendars as well as illustrate some of the ways in which individual and group behavior is affected by mobile usage in a sample of poor urban youths in Bangladesh.

Part four (Chapters 16-20) switches to technologies of engagement and how these impact our perceptions of our surroundings. One article discusses the social shaping of technology in the Korean New Songdo ubiquitous city. Digital identity issues are raised by investigating reactions to mobile phone Bluetooth names, while digital communities is argued, ought to be based on social commonalities like opinions on topics, for example. The way citizens experience the city and generate data to reveal such experiences is illustrated as a form of implicit engagement. Perceptions vis-à-vis interactions with ubiquitous hotspots (large touch screens) proved to be challenging to deploy and evaluate.

The fifth part (Chapters 21-24) deals with design engagement and instead of a closing to the book, informs future trends. Rather than entertainment content, one chapter argues that mediated presence by screens and portals has potential to create local publics. Next, a non-anthropocentric perspective to measuring noise is presented (as informed by Actor Network Theory); it is claimed that despite nonparticipation, humans can and do benefit from such interventions. The transformative and blurry interplay between public spaces and work is illustrated in a case about collaborative workspaces in an open-source city. The final chapter describes design personas use (a tool for integrating qualitative insights obtained in workshops with storytelling) in residential design.

This ambitious book offers numerous examples of how to design technologies for citizen engagement. The book has strong potential to become a reference point for studying citizen engagement through social media and digital technologies. It is rich in empirical evidence and draws on multiple disciplines, from science and technology over social and behavioral to sustainability and economic issues. The articles describe accurately and in detail features of the research carried out, a unique feature of the book. As it focuses on technology applications, among others, an inclination to jargon does exist at times. Overall, the readability is good and the writing style is simple and concise. One of the main strengths of the book is the balance between how to design technologies for engagement, how such technologies impact our behavior, and the array of factors shaping participation (e.g., such as nonhuman components derived from Actor Network Theory).

I also have a few concerns. First, zooming out, the boundaries between the book's parts are seldom that clear-cut but rather loose. Articles could be shuffled inside the book without major conflict. Given that the urban informatics field

of research is emerging and its boundaries are in continuous formation, this didn't quite come as a surprise. Second, a series of discrepancies in the data (timestamps, location-awareness, privacy issues, etc.) are not particularly convincing when making the case for ubiquitous computing in urban governance. A deeper reflection on the purposes citizen engagement through new media technologies serve is understated. What happens after citizens are engaged? This brings me to my third concern. Once digital interventions in urban areas gain momentum and organizations will be competing to attract attention, there may be potential danger that some citizens will feel tired and discontented (rather than engaged). When designing for engagement, striking the right balance between engagement and relaxation needs to be taken into account.

In perspective, the contents of the book are highly relevant to the current discussion on Government 2.0 and citizen involvement in decision-making processes. The authors deserve credit for unraveling the intricacies of citizen engagement. Most of materials available elsewhere focus on rather narrow topics but this book is both a comprehensive collection of articles as well as a contribution to framing urban informatics as an independent scientific discipline. The book offers great value for its price and overall I highly recommend it.

Titiana-Petra Ertiö, M.Soc.Sc., is a researcher and PhD candidate in economic sociology at the University of Turku, Finland. Her dissertation investigates citizen participation in urban planning using mobile technologies. She previously worked as project researcher in projects focusing on innovation in virtual worlds, science and technology policy between Europe and Africa, and participation in the Turku 2011 Capital of Culture. She received an M.Soc.Sc. (Institutions and Social Mechanisms) in 2011 from the University of Turku.