

The Promise of Smart Cities in the Era of Digital Utopia

In a rapidly urbanising world there is critical need for more evidenced based decision-making to plan for more liveable, productive, resilient and sustainable cities. Recently we have witnessed the rise of digital disruption, smart cities, big data, data science, machine learning, artificial intelligence etc. Such data and technology innovations offer possibilities to accelerate data supported city solutions. Also, with the advent of open data, IoT and co-design methodologies we can begin to see and analyse our precincts and cities as living laboratories. These technology inspired solutions promise pathways to a digital utopia but are such solutions resulting in better planned cities and communities?

In this presentation I will focus on data and technology supported solutions to urban challenges through the lens of cities as living laboratories using both Australian and International case studies. I will reflect on why there remains a significant gap in the development of such techno toolkits and their adoption in planning practice and policy-making and what needs to be done to harness the power of smart cities and digital disruption to realise more liveable, equitable and inclusive cities.