



Building Smart Cities with Citizens and for the Public Good: A Symposium

Monday 9th March 2020
9am to 4pm, Sensor City, Liverpool

Overview

In this age of the ‘smart city’, municipal leaders must develop and harness a new generation of smart technology – comprising ever more autonomous and intelligent machines guided by ever more complex algorithms, engaging ever greater volumes of granular and real-time data with ever more powerful data analytic artillery – if they are to tackle effectively the most pressing economic, social and environmental problems that face their cities. In *lingua formal*, the cities which will prosper in future will be those that are most adept at innovating and adopting a constellation of emerging smart technologies predicated upon AI and reflexive autonomous systems/machine learning, digital innovation and the Internet of Things (IoT) (enhanced by 5G and new sensor technologies), and quantum leaps in data infrastructure and capacities.

Yet, whilst the idea of the ‘smart city’ is one full of possibility, the ownership, stewardship and deployment of smart technology have equally provided cause for concern and caution. In particular, the origins and development of smart technology within a framework of what Shoshana Zuboff calls ‘surveillance capitalism’ has given rise to technology that it is not only configured primarily to serve the interests of a predatory ‘big other’, but which is also substantially (and manifestly) under-regulated – as highlighted by long-standing concerns over unaccountable corporate monopolies and power, privacy and the security of personal data, (unconscious) bias in algorithms, and digital inequalities and addictions. The problem is not smart technology per se; it is that this technology is being enabled and constrained by a very particular politico-institutional dynamic, a new mode of capital accumulation whose business model is the extraction of value from personal data with little juridical, regulatory or ethical oversight. For Zuboff, surveillance capitalism is propelling smart technology and over-determining its trajectory and in so doing is colonising and compromising other alternative politico-institutional logics.

This symposium aims to inform and advance scholarly debates, public conversation and policy development in Liverpool City Region centred upon the performance, perils, and untapped potentialities of embracing further a smart city agenda.

We will explore whether and how metropolitan areas can build smart cities – in collaboration with citizens and for citizens. Our core supposition is that to reclaim smart technology for public good, there is a need to interrogate prevailing structures of ownership and stewardship and to better understand how smart technology markets might be rendered subservient to national and local democratic institutions and processes and constituted, disciplined and incentivised (configured (designed), governed (regulated) and performed (enacted ethically)) such that they serve the commonweal.

We will explore:

- Why city leaders need to take public concerns over surveillance capitalism seriously
- What ‘data sovereignty’ means and why it matters
- How city leaders might build smart cities with and for local citizens
- The meaning and implications of principles such as ‘tech for good’ and ‘tech for public good’ for smart city strategies
- The lessons which can be learned from international examples and experiments in applying smart technology to solve public problems
- What a citizens-centred ‘Smart Liverpool City Region’ might look like and how we might build same.

We will emphasise the need to ‘place’ the politico-institutional logics of ‘tech for public good’ experiments, and whilst not the sole focus of attention, will heighten awareness in particular of the opportunities and challenges faced in deindustrialised and rustbelt cities where smart technology has become imbricated in urban regeneration strategies. Also, whilst not our only policy foci, we will consider in detail the issues which arise from the turn towards ‘smart mobility’ and efforts to build a health focussed ‘civic data trust’.

The symposium will be of value to anyone with an interest in ‘smart cities’ and the application of smart technology for the public good, and in particular those with an interest in building a smart Liverpool City Region. Accordingly, the organisers welcome interest not only from academic colleagues but also, more broadly, from the domains of policy and practice, consultancy, journalism, think tanks, activism and beyond.

Register for the symposium through the dedicated Eventbrite webpage [here](#).

Programme

Registration and refreshments : 09.00 – 09.45

Welcome and introduction : 09.45 – 10.00

Formal welcome to the symposium	Dr Aileen Jones (Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Commissioning – Liverpool City Region Combined Authority)
The purpose and structure of the symposium	Professor Mark Boyle (Chair of Urban Studies & Director of the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place – University of Liverpool)

Reclaiming smart cities from surveillance capitalism I : 10.00 – 11.00

Chair : **Professor Katie Atkinson** (Professor of Computer Science & Dean of the School of Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Computer Science – University of Liverpool)

The controversy over Google’s smart city plans for Toronto’s waterfront	Professor Guy Baeten (Professor of Urban Studies & Director of the Institute for Urban Research – Malmö University)
Urban analytics: maximising the value of big data for enhanced urban policy making	Dr Daniel Arribas-Bel (Senior Lecturer in Geographic Data Science – University of Liverpool)

Reclaiming smart cities from surveillance capitalism II : 11.00 – 12.00

Chair : **Charlotte Ducuing** (Research Unit KU Leuven Centre for IT & IP Law – University of Leuven)

Ethics and smart cities	Professor Rob Kitchin (ERC Advanced Investigator on Programmable Cities – Maynooth University Ireland)
The new municipalism: imagining a ‘people’s smart city’	Dr Matt Thompson (Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place – University of Liverpool)

Lunch : 12.00 – 13.00

Policy focus: the challenges and opportunities presented by smart technology : 13.00 – 14.00

Smart mobility		Tackling health inequalities	
Chair : Susan Jarvis (Deputy Director of the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place – University of Liverpool)		Chair : John Whaling (Lead Officer, Digital & Innovation – Liverpool City Region Combined Authority)	
The governance of smart mobility: why public values matter	Professor Iain Docherty (Dean of the Institute for Advanced Studies – University of Stirling, Scotland)	Civic Data Cooperatives for Health	Professor Iain Buchan (Professor of Public Health and Clinical Informatics & Executive Dean for the Institute of Population Health Sciences – University of Liverpool)
Panel discussion: rolling out smart mobility <i>with</i> Huw Jenkins (Lead Officer, Transport – Liverpool City Region Combined Authority) Charlotte Ducuing (Research Unit KU Leuven Centre for IT & IP Law – University of Leuven)		Panel discussion: sharing health data ethically <i>with</i> Professor Rachel Franklin (Professor of Geographical Analysis at the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies – Newcastle University) Dr Mark Green (Senior Lecturer in Health Geography – University of Liverpool)	

International and local experiments in applying smart tech to solve public problems : 14.00 – 15.30Chair : **Professor Alex Singleton** (Professor of Geographic Information Science – University of Liverpool)

Data science for public good: lessons from Mansueto Chicago and Metrolab	Anne Dodge (Executive Director, Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation – University of Chicago)
Lessons from European cities	Alanus von Radecki (Chief Innovation Officer, BABLE)
Towards a smart Liverpool City Region	Dr Joanne Phoenix (Interim Executive Director, Sensor City)
A tour of ‘smart city’ experiments in Liverpool city	Tris Brown (Head of the Mayor’s Office – Liverpool City Council)

Building urban data ecosystems: priorities for Liverpool City Region : 15.30 – 16.00Chair : **Professor Mark Boyle** (Chair of Urban Studies & Director of the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy Practice and Place – University of Liverpool)

(Launch of Good Practices Guide) Building an urban data ecosystem: what Liverpool City Region can learn from international experiments	Gretel Schaj (Data Governance Consultant, BABLE) Alanus von Radecki (Chief Innovation Officer, BABLE)
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Closing remarks : 16:00**Event organiser**

This event is being convened by the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place at the University of Liverpool and is being organised by: Professor Mark Boyle (Chair of Urban Studies, Director of Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, University of Liverpool), Dr Aileen Jones (Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Commissioning at Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), Professor Alex Singleton (Professor of Geographic Information Science at the University of Liverpool), and Susan Jarvis (Deputy Director of the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, University of Liverpool).

About the Heseltine Institute

The Heseltine Institute’s mission is to be a non-partisan, internationally recognised research institute and thought leader, bringing together expertise from across the University and policy communities, to co-create, impact and influence public policies for tomorrow’s cities. <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute/>