

Virtual Worlds as Support Tools for Public Engagement in Urban Design

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Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to show how important it is to use visualization techniques for enhancing public participation in creating smart cities. The chapter focuses on exploring people's opinions with regard to urban design, and on exploring new media and digital tools for public engagement. More specifically, it focuses on exploring the potential of using virtual worlds in the process of urban design from the first stages of the design process to the construction and maintenance phases. Quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used for the purposes of this chapter. The Terf virtual world is explored as a laboratory for interdisciplinary collaboration in urban design as well as an interface allowing involvement of different actors within a public participatory process. The final part of this chapter offers guidelines for future development of support tools for public engagement, especially concerning the Terf virtual world, and their potential use by municipalities.

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