

Preface

Cities have always served as foci for human connectivity and information transmission. Contemporarily, it has been for the Internet to become the ubiquitous urban communications and information technology, and at an unprecedented scale. The Internet connects people both locally and elsewhere. In addition, it connects people with all forms and types of information, as well as with their appliances. Soon the Internet will provide connectivity also for autonomous vehicles (AVs). The Internet connects companies with their customers, and it constitutes a major tool for local governmental actions. Furthermore, the Internet connects urban utilities and it connects devices with each other through the Internet of Things (IoT). As such, the Internet has become a leading element within growing local knowledge economies, specializing in the production and marketing of Internet-related products and services. Added together, then, all of these urban activities yield the Internet-based cities. Thus, the objectives of this book are to highlight and to interpret the Internet-based city, doing so by way of exposition of its numerous dimensions, side by side with attempted interpretations of the significances of this new phase of urban connectivity.

Generally, the Internet-based city consists of people, businesses, devices, systems, and governments, all connected and functioning through Internet communications and websites. In previous books, I have dealt separately with several of these numerous elements which jointly comprise the Internet-based city: the Internet (Kellerman 2002, 2016); people (Kellerman 2006, 2012, 2016); business (Wilson et al. 2013), and AVs (Kellerman 2018a). The leading motivation for the writing of this book is a strongly felt need to look at the role of the Internet from the rather unifying urban perspective, as compared to the more customary writings focused merely on specific Internet uses, such as individual uses or business use. The emerging extensive application of the Internet to all of the major dimensions of city life, invites its more comprehensive exposure, which is attempted by the following chapters of this book. Thus, this book will try to shed a fresh and updated light on connectivity and informational activities in cities, given that such activities are now broader than in pre-Internet times, including connected non-living entities, and that most of these activities are currently Internet-based.

To the best of my knowledge there does not yet exist any book that offers a comprehensive Internet framework for cities. Hence, this book may turn out to be helpful for both academics and practitioners in the fields of geography, urban studies, Internet studies, urban planning, and urban sociology. The book may be used for personal knowledge and future research, as well as for relevant courses. As such, the book may fit academic courses devoted to contemporary cities, and courses dealing specifically with the social and spatial dimensions of the Internet. I hope that academics who teach courses on a single urban dimension of the Internet will gain an opportunity, through this book, to examine any such specific dimension from wider urban and Internet perspectives. The book may further turn out useful for urban policy makers, since the planning of new urban projects, as well as the upgrading of existing urban systems, seem to require these days the incorporation of some form and level of Internet connectivity.

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