



THE SENSEABLE CITY

The real-time city is now real! The increasing deployment of sensors and hand-held electronics in recent years is allowing a new approach to the study of the built environment. The way we describe and understand cities is being radically transformed - alongside the tools we use to design them and impact on their physical structure.

MIT SENSEABLE CITY LAB

The digital revolution is changing the way we live today as radically as the Industrial Revolution did almost two centuries ago. The SENSEable City Lab aims to investigate and anticipate these changes and their implications at the urban scale. In just a few years, the Lab has become a leader in creatively investigating and intervening in the interface between people, technologies and the city. Their work draws on diverse fields such as urban planning, architecture, design, engineering, computer science and social science to capture the multi-disciplinary nature of urban problems. They seek to deliver research and applications that empower citizens to make choices that result in a more livable urban condition.

The method of approach begins with a vision for an urban future, or “urban demo”. This vision is tailored to a particular city’s needs, and can be motivated by the challenges a place may be confronting, or by opportunities for providing new experiences or services due to advances in digital technologies. The urban demos are designed to be showcased at large public events and exhibitions in order to stimulate debate between citizens, public administrators, and industry representatives. Following the urban demo there is further engagement in more traditional academic research – analyzing the data that has been collected and addressing all the engineering challenges needed to advance the vision for sustainable urban future.

Since 2004, the Lab’s activities have grown rapidly, reaching 35 completed projects by 2009, with a turnover of 63 researchers. 166 scientific publications have been produced, while the work has been covered over 1,000 times by global media and press outlets, with feature stories appearing in The New York Times, Financial Times, Newsweek, The Economist, National Geographic, Boston Globe, NPR, CBC, BBC, CNN, New Scientist, Seed, Wired, Metropolis, and many more.

The work of the Lab has been exhibited globally, including the Graz Kunsthaus (2005), the Venice Biennale (2006 and 2010), MoMA The Museum of Modern Art (2008), the Design Museum Barcelona (2009).

One project has also resulted in a spin-off start-up. Today, 28 researchers are working on research activities sponsored by the Lab’s industrial partners, cities and foundations.

For more information on Senseable City Lab projects, please visit: <http://senseable.mit.edu>