Abstract

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The Increasing Use of the Internet and its Potential Impact on the Future of the City – With Special Reference to Cairo, Egypt.

Rapid advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the increased accessibility and use of the Internet have fueled academic debates about the future of urban design and city planning. These debates have discussed such issues as the future of relations and distinctions between residential, work, shopping, the future of urban public spaces, and the importance of distance proximity in the future. However these debates have tended to remain speculative lacking sufficient empirical background. This study investigates the potential impact of the increased accessibility and use of the Internet on the future of the city in general and more particularly in the context of Cairo, Egypt. Based on a model that considers the city dweller, rather than the city itself, as the unit of analysis, the study attempts to identify changes in individual daily activity patterns that can aggregate to affect the way we will need to rethink urban design and city planning. The study relies on a survey questionnaire administrated in November and December 2015 to samples of professionals (n=81) and university students (n=65) all residing in Cairo. The questionnaire was designed to inquire about patterns of access and use of the Internet. Also, the questionnaire asked the participants about patterns of daily activities and patterns of social interaction, and how those are being affected by the use of information and communication technology. Implications for urban design and city planning are discussed.