



## MIT e-Planning Seminar, Fall 2023

### Program \*

#### Introduction

In 2003, MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) offered the first e-Planning Seminar. Its rationale emerged from the need to study in-depth the impacts of a new generation of information and communication technologies (ICT) on urban planning and local governance. The intent was to improve our multi-disciplinary understanding of ICT-driven changes in our daily lives and the ways in which we construct and regulate our communities. These interests were reflected in formulating the original agenda:

*e-infrastructures, e-government, e-governance, e-city & territory, e-citizenship.*

20 years later, the concept of e-Planning has matured. At MIT-DUSP, the cross-disciplinary PhD area "Planning Support Systems" in the 1990's became "Urban Information Systems". More recently, DUSP worked with MIT's computer science department to construct an "urban planning with computer science undergraduate" degree. This "urban science" initiative was a precursor to the new multi-disciplinary MIT Schwarzman College of Computing. In Portugal, it gave birth to a Joint PhD Program on e-Planning offered by 4 Universities, within an e-Planning Consortium ([www.e-planning.org](http://www.e-planning.org)) that included other countries such as Brasil.

The post-covid world has highlighted the centrality of a Digital Transition Agenda. This implies we understand not only the "Digital" facet, but also the "Transition" itself. In other words, besides the engineering and "hard" science of technology, we need also social sciences and humanities to understand both where we stand, and where the transition will lead us.

Technology, with its malleability and ubiquitous presence, favors dissemination, accessibility, participation, and empowerment. Yet, social inequalities are increasing and imbalances in society's relationship with nature are accentuated, even putting the sustainability of human life at risk. Today, we have evidence of more and more serious abuses of this ubiquity, side by side with its benefits (and the covid-19 crisis is no exception). UN Strategic Report on Technology states: "New and rapidly developing technologies... hold incredible promise for advancement of human welfare. They also hold the potential to generate more inequality and more violence" (UN General Secretary Guterres, 2018). So what makes the difference?

The Fall 2023 Seminar will be a good opportunity to reflect on our framing of e-Planning issues two decades ago and engage a cross-section of our community in further discussion about next steps in the digital transformation of urban planning and local governance, social inequality and participatory planning.



## Structure

- 1) Seminar Speaker Series on "*Urban Science & Digital Transition: e-Planning twenty years later*", weekly session, 1.5h, as a "lunch guest speaker series" with MIT faculty discussants;
- 2) "*International Conference on Public Participation & Information Technologies*", international symposium co-organized with CITIDEP – Research Center on Information Technologies and Participatory Democracy;
- 3) "*e-Planning and Digital Transition*", joint undergrad/graduate course, 1.5hr / week.

## Location:

Dept of Urban Studies & Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT-DUSP), USA

## Dates & Schedule:

11 September - 4 December 2023 (Seminar and Course)

9-10 November 2023 - International Symposium

Monday lunch, 12h30-2 PM (Seminar Speaker Sessions);

Thursday 2h15-4 PM \* (for-credit course)

## Participation:

- Open for MIT students & faculty (no fee)
- Fee-based participation for external participants, by invitation. Interested prospective participants may contact Seminar / Symposium moderators ([jf@mit.edu](mailto:jf@mit.edu), [pfa@mit.edu](mailto:pfa@mit.edu))

## Fees:

Attending International symposium and seminar sessions, plus additional meetings:

Registration before 30 August 2023: \$ 2000 ; A Late fee may apply, after this date.

*Fees are non-refundable.*

Please be advised that fees do not cover anything other than your participation and meetings with the moderators. Foreign participants will need an adequate VISA to enter the USA for this activity, which may require an MIT invitation letter. Be sure to include in your plans the time required for this process, both with MIT and with the VISA processing in your country. For payment processing and further VISA information, please contact Margaret Bryan <[mlbryan@mit.edu](mailto:mlbryan@mit.edu)>. Thank you.

MIT e-Planning Seminar, Fall 2023



Seminar & Course & Symposium Topics:

Moderators: Joseph Ferreira Jr. (jf@mit.edu) & Pedro Ferraz de Abreu (pfa@mit.edu)  
(*dates for session topics to be confirmed*)  
*ICT - Information and Communication Technologies*

e-Planning Research Agenda, Roots and Boundaries

Urban Science & Computing in Planning

The Qualitative Leap of modern ICT and its Impacts

Geopolitics of Development in the Information Society

Geography of Inequality and Spatial Analysis in Planning

Digital Sovereignty, Technology Innovation, and Property Rights

Public Policy, Institutions and Regulation in the context of new ICT

Public Participation and Decision in Planning in the context of new ICT

The Cost of Free: new models of Politics and Business

ICT Ubiquity and the Challenges of new Digital Social Media

The Challenge of Privacy & Liberties vs. Efficiency & Security

Digital Charter for Human Rights & Social Justice

Digital Inclusion, Local Government and Citizen Empowerment

Urban Mobility and Smart Cities

Climate Change and Energy & Digital Transitions

The Challenges of Transdisciplinarity in Academia

Teaching and Research Agenda for the Future

*\* TBC Preliminary Program as of July 14, 2023.*

MIT e-Planning Seminar, Fall 2023