



Urban Systems

Monthly Newsletter N. 9 – 06/2012 edited by [colin Harrison](#)

This is the monthly newsletter of the [Urban Systems Collaborative \(USC\)](#). To receive the newsletters simply join the [USC mailing list](#).

[The Berkeley Symposium: Urban Information Flow-Mapping](#)

Moving on from the Chicago seminar in April 2012, the USC core team is now focused on planning the symposium to be held on September 11-12, 2012 on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley, California. This will be our major event for 2012 and we are looking for a big crowd, so please take note of the dates now. We are also looking for your guidance on many aspects of the agenda; please consider the drafts below and send feedback to the Editor.



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Here is a draft abstract for the symposium:

The strong trends of Internet of Things, Social Media, and Open Data are providing a flood of valuable information about how our cities work. At the USC's opening symposium in May 2012 we established through a series of panels that information is playing an ever increasingly important role in planning, design, finance, construction, management, and operation of urban systems. At our mini-event with the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council in April 2012 we began work to understand how the flows of information among the multiple parties involved in planning can be leveraged to produce better

outcomes. Our major 2012 event is a symposium to be held on September 11-12, 2012 on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley and this will continue our exploration by examining the flows of information in the operation of urban systems. We will focus on three important areas - public safety, water, and transportation - and will feature leading keynote speakers on the role of information in these domains. The first day will set up these ideas and frame the real work on the second day in which we will conduct three parallel workshops on these topics. As with the Chicago event, our goal here is to produce first sketches of the flows of operational information in these three domains. The work will be far from complete, but we will be laying the foundations for an Urban Systems methodology that we intend to further develop and to apply in the coming years.

Here is a draft agenda for the symposium:

Tuesday, September 11, 2012	
08:30	Coffee and buns
09:00	Welcome and introduction to the symposium
09:15	Keynote speaker*
10:00	Break
10:15	Lightning Talks no. 1**
11:00	Lightning Talks no. 2**
11:45	Lightning Talks no. 3**
12:30	Set up for the afternoon panels
1:00	Lunch
2:00	Panel no. 1 - <i>Information governance and the relationship between city administration and citizens (draft topic)**</i>
3:15	Panel no. 2 - <i>Information flow among responders in emergency management (draft topic)***</i>
4:15	Break
4:30	Panel no. 3- <i>Operational information flow among major infrastructure agencies e.g. Traffic, Water, Highway***</i>
5:30	Set up for second day
6:00	Reception
Day 2: Wednesday, September 12, 2012	
08:00	Coffee and buns
09:00	Welcome and introduction to Day 2
09:15	Parallel workshops****
11:45	Workshop readout****
1:00	Lunch
2:00	Lessons learned
3:00	Tour of.....*****

First we would like to hear your thoughts on this draft agenda. Second, assuming we go with something like this draft agenda, we want your views on the following:

* Candidates for the main keynote speaker. Clearly this should be someone in the Urban Systems space. It would be preferable to invite a west coast figure.

** The Lightning Talks are three sessions each of 45 minutes in which a lead speaker introduces a topic in 10 minutes and is then followed by several speakers who have five minutes each to make one key point. 5-10 minutes is allocated for questions at the end of each session. We invite suggestions for topics and speakers for these three panels.

*** The afternoon panels will consist of a moderator and four panelists. The moderator will lead a structured discussion for 30 minutes and then open the discussion to the larger audience. We intend

these panels to be the preparation for the workshops to be held on the second day. We show above draft topics in the information flow space, but invite your thoughts on the topic, the panelists, and the moderator.

**** The workshops on the second day will consist of 2 ½ hours of sketching maps of the information flows involved in the three areas covered by the panels on the first day. Probably we will ask the moderators of the panels to also moderate the workshops. The workshop teams will then present their findings at the close of the morning. After lunch we will reflect on the learning from these information flow mapping exercises and consider how to continue their development and application.

***** We may conclude the afternoon with tours of one or more local features. One destination that comes to mind is the Lawrence Berkeley Labs center for intelligent buildings up the hill. Please suggest other destinations reachable on foot or by public transportation from the UC Berkeley campus.

We are beginning to hold a weekly planning call on Friday afternoon at 3:00-3:20 pm EDT. If you would like to help in planning this event please let Jurij Paraszczak or the [Editor](#) know and we will send you the invitation information.

[News](#)

[Two new institutes in London](#)

On May 24, 2012, the UK Chancellor, George Osborne announced that Imperial College London, University College London and the computer firm Intel have launched a research institute they hope will help to shape the way cities work in the future. The [Intel Collaborative Research Institute for Sustainable Connected Cities](#) will use data from a variety of sources, including the government and users on the ground, to investigate how to make cities function more smoothly and efficiently. For example, applications could be developed to monitor weather conditions, traffic flow or water supplies and deliver real-time information to customers. London will be the test bed for the research, which could potentially be applied across the world. (Times Educational Supplement)

May 22, 2012 had already seen the announcement of the UK government-funded [Open Data Institute](#). This will focus on incubating and nurturing new businesses wanting to harness open data, training and promoting standards, according to co-director Professor Nigel Shadbolt, who is heading up the £10 million project with Tim Berners-Lee. First announced by George Osborne in his Autumn Statement, the Open Data Institute has been developed with help from the Technology Strategy Board. It aims to become a centre of excellence to drive economic growth through the application of open data. Launched with government funding as a private company limited by guarantee (i.e. not focused on profit), the Institute will solicit match funding from private companies to ensure that it is sustainable. (Wired)

[Meanwhile in the USA.... Celebrating Our Apps for Energy Developers](#)

The [Green Button](#) program, launched by President Barack Obama, makes energy data freely available in a standardized format. This program is taking off like wildfire - 25 million homes are now covered by utilities that have signed up. The brilliance of this is that developers can now innovate and create great Apps that will change the way we use energy. The US Department of Energy launched a competition – [“Apps for Energy”](#) - to see who could come up with the best App that will make effective use of this data for consumers. The first round results were announced on May 22, 2012 and the winner is [Leafully](#), an App that expresses energy consumption on Facebook pages in terms of “trees saved”.

The popular vote continues through May 31, 2012. One of the contenders is VELObill, which was submitted by Zerofootprint. VELObill placed in the Top 3 for Best Overall App in the first stage of the competition. VELObill - "the energy bill of the future" - gives utility customers their usage and billing information in a form that is actually helpful and usable. With just a few clicks, for the first time, consumers can view their utility usage, measure whether it is high or low, compare it to that of their peers and examine ways to save money

Events

On June 5, 2012 there will be a conference in New York on "[Energizing Our Cities: Battery and Energy Storage Technologies for Urban Settings](#)".

A major event coming up on June 20-22, 2012 is [Rio+20](#), the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This covers the broad field of sustainable development and that includes sustainable cities. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research together with IBM Corporation will hold two half-day parallel event workshops on [sustainable cities](#) in collaboration with IBM during the lead up to the United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro on 18-19 June. The workshops' agenda will draw upon the expertise from the United Nations—including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—as well as IBM Smarter Cities subject matter experts. Another event at Rio+20 will be the launch of [Sustainable Cities 2012](#)

On October 9-11, 2012 [Meeting of the Minds 2012](#) convenes in San Francisco. This is a chance to join up with urban systems innovators -- including city leaders and their partners: companies, NGOs, government agencies, and universities. The [sponsors](#) include Toyota, Philips, Schneider, IBM, Qualcomm, WSP, CH2 M Hill, Lincoln Institute, Casey Foundation, ULI, and SPUR. The [program](#) has now been finalized. As with [Meeting of the Minds 2011](#), this is more a forum for discussion. It's a platform for introducing new initiatives and services. Existing innovations are offered for replication, scaling, transfer. An impressive [speaker line-up](#) features innovators working at the cutting edge of urban systems; economic, environmental and energy sustainability; transformational design/planning; strategic investments; smart policies; breakthrough technology innovations.

Your Event Here Please let the [Editor](#) know of future events relevant to the urban systems community.

Publications

- "[Dawn of the Municipal Chief Innovation Officer](#)", a fascinating article on the emergence of this role that complements the hacker community in exploiting Open Data, The Atlantic, March 2012
- "[Governmental Access to Data](#)", a worldwide survey about government access to data in the cloud with a surprising conclusion, HoganLovells, May 2012-05-31
- "[Circumventing the iceberg](#)" an opinion piece by David Pickeral, IBM's leader for Smarter Transportation solutions, on congestion management May 2012
- "[The Conundrum](#)" "How scientific innovation increased efficiency and good intentions can make our energy and climate problems worse", David, Owen, Riverhead Trade, ISBN 1594485615, 2012
- "[The Future of the High Street](#)", a UK view of the transformation of smaller cities, The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), May 2012
- "[Sheltering a City With Data: The Rio de Janeiro Story](#)"

- [“IBM CityPulse Smarter Cities Demo”](#)
- “The Senseable Cities Newsletter”, a monthly update on the imaginative work on at MIT. Contact Prudence Robinson pru@mit.edu for your subscription

Your Article Here Please let the [Editor](#) know of future events relevant to the urban systems community.

Webinar Series for June 2012

- June 1 “Building traffic simulation with crowd sourcing in Mega-cities in order to reduce 15% of commuting time in transport networks”, Prof. Victor Larios, Information Systems department, University of Guadalajara
- June 8 “Privacy Risks of Open Government”, Prof. Thomas Keenan, University of Calgary
- June 15
- June 22
- June 29 “Report on the Transit Leadership Summit”, Tom Wright, Regional Plan Association

Your Webinar Here We are looking for speakers in the Urban Systems space for continuing the popular Webinar series through the summer. Please send suggestions to [the Editor](#), preferably of people whom you know and who know you, together with their likely topics.

Calls for Papers and Proposals

The [IBM Journal of Research and Development](#) is calling for papers for a special edition on “Disaster Recovery and Resilient Computing”. The growing complexity and interconnection of systems has caused business, physical, and information technology (IT) infrastructures to become vulnerable to large-scale and cascading failures in an often unpredictable manner. These failures can be triggered by natural disasters -- such as floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and wildfires -- and also failures associated with IT infrastructures, cyber-attacks, human errors, and combinations of these challenges. The guest editors of this special edition are [Peter Williams](#), [Hideo Watanabe](#), and [Jurij Paraszczak](#). [Cliff Pickover](#) is the journal editor. Abstracts are invited by June 5, 2012. See the journal web site for details on [manuscript preparation](#).

Useful Information about the Urban Systems Collaborative

- The Urban Systems Collaborative grew out of the [2011 Urban Systems Symposium](#).
- The Collaborative holds a biweekly Webinar. See the [Webinar meeting details](#).
- The USC has a [Web site](#) with a curated [blog](#).
- Membership in the Urban Systems Collaborative is open to anyone interested in the rapidly transforming field of Urban Systems. To join follow these links:
 - o Webinar announcement and general mailing list: join [here](#).
 - o [Add our public Calendar](#) to keep track of upcoming events. Please see additional info for non Google users [here](#).

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