

Constructing and Using Virtual Cities: The Virtual London Project

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Brickyard Orchid House, Room 175
21 E. 6th St., Suite 126B, Tempe

We are on the edge of a revolution in the way we visualize and query digital data about our environment. Common visualization methods such as three-dimensional computer-aided design (CAD) and two-dimensional geographical information systems (GIS) are limited in practicality. The current innovation wave is based on the development and dissemination of three-dimensional GIS (3-D GIS) which allows data to be visualized and queried on an x, y and z axis plane.

The move toward 3-D GIS in standard packages has been rather hit and miss, with the third dimension often only used as a substitute for basic CAD-like visualization. Batty argues that 3-D GIS will only become a reality when it is directly linked with CAD models; and that the Internet is the most appropriate medium through which this is likely to occur. Batty will illustrate these arguments in an overview of research into the virtual city in general and 'Virtual London' in particular.

Techniques to engage the public in issues relating to their environment have been developed by CASA over the last 6 years. This project is the largest of its kind to openly encourage participation in three dimensions via the Internet. Using these techniques, which support all stakeholders in the urban planning process, public participation in shaping our environment is on the edge of a revolution.

Batty is the former Director of the U.S. National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA), and was awarded a Commander of the Order of the British Empire last year by the Queen of England for services to geography.

This lecture is presented by Arizona State University, the Decision Center for a Desert City, and the department of Geography. For more information, please contact Michelle Schwartz at (480) 965-3367 or Michelle.Schwartz@asu.edu.



The Virtual London model, designed to stimulate public participation in London government, uses GIS, CAD, and a variety of new photo-realistic imaging techniques and photogrammetric methods of data capture.

Virtual London will be distributed via the Internet through a multi-user environment. Citizens will be able to roam around a virtual gallery as avatars (digital representations of themselves) and explore the issues relating to London in a game-like space.



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