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Sensible Cities: Digitally Augmented Urban Environments

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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.

Studying these changes from a critical point of view and anticipating them is the goal of the MIT SENSEable City Laboratory.

At the Conference I will discuss the lab's long-term Wiki City project, which is based on last year's Real Time Rome project.

Here, the lab used analysis of aggregate cell phone traffic to generate traffic maps. With cell-phone locations mapped anonymously at regular intervals, Roman city planners could see the pulse of the city in real time.

Wiki City builds upon this idea, envisioning an interactive, digitally augmented city that would also integrate location-based services, WiFi-based wikis and environmental sensor input. This with the ultimate aim of leading to an overall increased efficiency and sustainability in making use of the city environment.

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