

Sean Sacks

New Century Cities Background and Interest

Background:

I guess I could say that my background started with my first computer as a kid back in the mid 1980s, the Timex Sinclair 1000 and the 16K game cassette I had to load for thirty minutes through my tape player, but that is probably a bit of a stretch. More appropriately my true interest in technologies and cities goes back to my first IT job in 1997. At that time I worked on large-scale SAP projects and began to see first hand how global enterprise applications truly change how people work and information technology creates real-time business processes across time zones, cultures, and places.

My first couple of IT jobs (consulting for the likes of Siebel, UTC, and 3Com) got me charmed by the technology and the innovation culture. However, it was my most recent position and lifestyle that got me captivated by the impact of technology on cities and the interplay between technology, planning, and the development of build space for the “new century”. With Supportsoft, as IBM Technical Relationship Manager I traveled the world and worked in such places as IBM’s Pervasive Lab in La Gaude France and with Telefonica in Madrid, Spain. If you include a four-month stint in Tokyo, Japan, a multitude of work trips all over the US, and a personal seven-month jaunt around Australia, China, SE Asia, and Europe I really had a unique opportunity to visit, experience, and learn from so many cities and see firsthand just how technology was impacting each place in extraordinary ways.

From farmers checking weather reports on the Internet in Laos, to Japanese teenagers text message flirting as they traverse Shibuya crossing, to playing with the first 3G phones at 3GSM World in Cannes, I have become enthralled by how technology affects the way we live, work, play, shop, and learn. And although ICT is a double-edged sword like many things, I truly believe that it is one of our

best tools for making the most innovative, exciting, competitive, and most importantly livable cities for the 21st Century.

Interest:

Although I have many interests, for the research paper I think I would like to investigate is the location premium that ICT firms are willing to pay to have a physical presence or at a minimum a product presence in the formal holistic New Century City projects. This is not just a study of clustering or labor pools but a good close investigation of the question if the early NCC projects act as living learning labs for ICT firms and if corollary how much technology, financial, and social capital they are willing to expend to be part of these projects. The ease and issues of partnerships between ICT firms, cities, and developers might be a side question or even possibly become the primary research question if this initial question becomes too broad or burdensome for a short paper.