

Urban studies

with Dr Philipp Rode and
Sudeep Bhargava

Talking points

Knowledge

1. What types of hybrid activities occur in a city?
2. What are the negative side effects of the increasing use of technology in cities?

Comprehension

3. How can technology help us tackle some of the big issues facing modern cities?

Application

4. If you were an urban studies researcher, what other topics, besides those mentioned in the article, would you like to study, and why?
5. Imagine that you are investigating whether smartphones have changed how people interact on public transport. What questions would you ask to help you study this issue?
6. When have you used technology in public? What did you use it for?

Analysis

7. Philipp explains that some academics do not take the issue of virtualisation seriously. Why do think that is? Why is this a problem?
8. How have the past few years changed our approach to technology? How have cities changed since the COVID-19 pandemic?

Synthesis

9. Philipp and Sudeep are trying to understand the effects of increased technology use by pedestrians on road safety. How would you study these effects and what data do you think would help you investigate this issue?

Evaluation

10. What is the value of engaging with politicians, policymakers and community leaders as an academic researcher? What do you think are some of the benefits and challenges associated with this?
11. How do you think social cohesion is affected by increasing technology use in cities? How can hybridity improve or diminish social interactions?

Creativity

12. Sudeep mentions that there is a lack of communication between researchers and engineers within the industry. Why is this a problem and how could it be overcome?

Activities

Debate the pros and cons of autonomous vehicles

One of the areas that Philipp and Sudeep are researching is the deployment of autonomous vehicles in cities.

Using the article and your own research, find out what types of autonomous vehicles exist, or could exist in the future. Then organise a class debate to discuss the pros and cons of autonomous vehicles in cities. Some of the aspects you might want to consider are:

- The replacement of human labour with autonomous vehicles
- The impact on transport opportunities
- The benefits and risks to health
- The possibility of accidents
- The enjoyment of using and interacting with autonomous vehicles

Create a hybrid city journal

The next time you visit a city, take note of all the times that you interact with digital devices or media. This could involve using your phone to pay for things or find directions, interacting with touch screens in food outlets and transport hubs, or looking at advertisements on digital billboards.

When you get home, reflect on how each interaction made you feel, and how it influenced the way you interacted with the people and spaces around you. Did these interactions help you to connect with your surroundings, or did they divert your attention? Write your thoughts down in a notebook or on your computer.

Repeat the activity, only this time do your best to avoid any interactions with digital devices or media. When you get home, reflect on your experiences. Did you feel more connected to your surroundings? Did you encounter any difficulties? What did you notice about how other people acted when interacting with digital devices or media?

Again, write your thoughts down in a notebook or on a computer. What are the differences between your two journal entries? Has this activity changed the way that you feel about technology use in cities?

More resources

- Discover more about the LSE cities programme (www.lse.ac.uk/cities)
- Explore the Urban Age Programme, an international investigation of the spatial and social dynamics of cities (www.lse.ac.uk/cities/urban-age).