Smart Cities and Elderly Access to Information

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Abstract (300 words):

So-called smart cities propose to use information technology to track and improve many aspects of a city’s operations. Unfortunately, the aging are left out of important conversations involving the development and implementation of these initiatives and their technologies. Smart cities focus on three important characteristics: economic competitiveness, sustainability, and quality of life, with proposed innovations within six domains: economy, environment & energy, government & education, living & health, mobility, safety & security. In this paper, we examine two domains aimed at improving quality of life: mobility and safety & security.

The elderly make up 18% of drivers and are involved in over 65% of fatal accidents. Smart cities aim to reduce accidents through technology such as smartphones and traffic sensors. Only 42% of U.S. residents 65 and over use a smartphone, and the facility of the remaining 58% varies widely. Smart cities’ strategies to improve mobility (through ride-share apps and public transit tracking, for example) fails to consider the elderly with
minimal access to technology. In short, the elderly who lack access to these technologies are invisible to smart cities.

Other important conversations such as safety, exclude geriatric people. The smart cities literature focuses heavily on law enforcement, tapping into many streams of data to maintain public safety: social media, criminal records, and crowdsourcing. Citizens may be able to track crime in their city live using their mobile phone, giving only half of the elderly awareness of their general surroundings. The technology overlooks some of their basic human needs: the elderly are at risk for wandering away, starving, falling inside their home, being scammed, and becoming socially isolated. Elders who cannot afford to own smart technology are seemingly irrelevant to smart city developers. It is important, however, to address elderly needs and their accessibility to technology as we contemplate the cities of the future. –

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

_**Desiree Scething** is a 2018 honors graduate from The Business Institute of Westchester’s (CW) BBA program. She is from New York and was raised by her great grandmother. A 23 year old business assistant, She recently enrolled in Syracuse University’s Information Sciences and Technology PhD Program. Desiree is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, Sigma Beta Delta, and the iSchool Inclusion Institute. Her interest in Smart Cities was sparked by discovering there is very little research in the United States on the elderly aging in place, especially those without access to information technologies.