The Role of ICTS in Improving the Quality of Public Spaces in Large Cities of the Third World

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Abstract : Nowadays, ICTs have spread extensively in everyday life in an unprecedented way. A great attention is paid to the ICTs while ignoring the social aspect. With the immersive invasion of internet as well as smart phones' applications and digital social networking, people become more socially connected through virtual spaces instead of meeting in physical public spaces. Thus, this paper aims to find the ways of implementing ICTs in public spaces to regain their status as attractive places for people, incite meetings in real life and create sustainable lively city centers. One selected example of urban space in the city center of Alexandria is selected for the study. Alexandria represents a large metropolitan city subjected to rapid transformation. Improving the quality of its public spaces will have great effects on the whole well-being of the city. The major roles that ICTs can play in the public space are: culture and art, education, planning and design, games and entertainment, and information and communication. Based on this classification various examples and proposals of ICTs interventions in public spaces are presented and analyzed to encourage good old fashioned social interaction by creating the New Social Public Place of this Digital Era. The paper will adopt methods such as questionnaire for evaluating the people's willingness to accept the idea of using ICTs in public spaces, their needs and their proposals for an attractive place; the technique of observation to understand the people behavior and their movement through the space and finally will present an experimental design proposal for the selected urban space. Accordingly, this study will help to find design principles that can be adopted in the design of future public spaces to meet the needs of the digital era's users with the new concepts of social life respecting the rules of place-making.