

TECHNOCRACY

News and Trends

Australia's First Smart City Promises To Be Anathema To Privacy And Liberty



Adelaide Convention

Centre (Wikipedia)

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TN Note: Welcome to the future of total information awareness and smart cities. Adelaide is the first Smart City that will employ everything that the Internet of Things has to offer, from camera surveillance to control over energy via smart grid. This is the beginning of Scientific Dictatorship, or Technocracy.

Stepping into the elevator at the school for computer sciences hub at **Adelaide**University, Prof Ali Babar shakes his head in exasperation.

As the doors close the head of the Australian centre for smart cities mentions **the woman recently found dead** in China 30 days after technicians attempting to fix a glitch cut power to the lift she was in and left her stranded inside.

“That’s the kind of thing that wouldn’t happen in a smart city,” he says.

Babar has just finished another day coordinating with a coalition of government, business and academia about his mission to turn Adelaide into a trial site for such innovations that could one day be rolled out across the rest of Australia and around the world.

The goal is to identify ways in which emerging digital technologies can improve how a city functions, whether traffic congestion, reducing carbon emissions or – as in the case of the elevator in Xi’an – personal safety.

“Adelaide is small enough to use as a laboratory but large enough to undertake ambitious initiatives,” he says.

“A proof of concept can be developed and tested here.”

Central to the idea of a smart city is the internet of things – everyday objects that feature online connectivity, such as elevators that actively communicate data to technicians about malfunctions and the number of passengers on board.

Other prospective technologies being looked at in the realm of safety include biometric readers that allow paramedics to obtain the medical records of an incapacitated patient via a fingerprint scan, or video recognition techniques capable of identifying suspects of a crime even if they are wearing a mask.

Initiated eight months ago, key players in the project include the University of Adelaide, the South Australian Department of State Development, Adelaide City council and companies including Ernst and Young, Cisco, Microsoft, Oracle, Fuji and Xerox.

Most recently, on 3 March, Babar secured a memorandum of understanding with tech giants NEC Australia.

“We will try to brainstorm suitable projects for Adelaide by partnering with [NEC Australia], sharing findings and making those findings available to the general public,” he says.

“That in turn will stimulate further collaboration with industry partners and government.”

NEC Australia’s South Australian state manager, Milan Djuricic, says NEC was involved in a similar initiative in Britain as part of the **Bristol Is Open project**, to which the company contributed software-defined networking (SDN) compatible switches, LTE small cells and iPasolink ultra-compact microwave systems.

“It was a similar arrangement to Adelaide in that a major university [Bristol University] was involved and there was a joint effort,” he says.

He says Adelaide was attractive for NEC because it offered a solid foundation of infrastructure to build upon, a receptive political environment, and particular challenges that Bristol did not present.

“We can take things further in Adelaide in relation to energy management and water management, given South Australia is the driest state in the driest country,” he says.

“NEC has leading global technologies in relation to water leakage detection which help identify failures before they fail.

“That means investment can be made in the right areas to prevent water leakage.”

NEC also has plenty to offer when it comes to public safety, with the company’s biometric identification technologies already being used on the smartphones of South Australian and Northern Territory police to enable immediate identification of members of the public.

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