



SMART CITIES: OVERVIEW AND LEGAL LANDSCAPE

Definitions

What is a smart city?

Simplistically, a smart city is an urban space where public and private sensors and other technology are layered either on top of, or underneath, existing infrastructure. These sensors connect, via the internet, the various components to which the sensors are attached.

See, e.g., Teena Maddox, *Smart cities: A cheat sheet*, TECHREPUBLIC (Jul. 16, 2018), <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/smart-cities-the-smart-persons-guide/>; Saraju P. Mohanty, Uma Choppali, & Elias Kougianos, *Everything You Wanted to Know About Smart Cities*, IEEE CONSUMER ELECTRONICS MAG. (Aug. 10, 2016), [https://cesoc.ieee.org/images/files/pdf/Mohanty_ IEEE-DL_Smart-Cities.pdf](https://cesoc.ieee.org/images/files/pdf/Mohanty_IEEE-DL_Smart-Cities.pdf) (lecture materials based off article).

What is the Internet of Things (“IoT”)?

The interconnectedness of sensors and components is “the Internet of Things” (IoT). Through the IoT, sensors communicate with each other, and produce massive amounts of data. Ostensibly, this data can be used by local governments to optimize public services for citizens of the smart city.

See, e.g., Margaret Rouse, *Internet of Things (IoT)*, IOT AGENDA (last visited Feb. 28, 2020), <https://internetofthingsagenda.techtarget.com/definition/Internet-of-Things-IoT>.

What is 5G?

This stands for Fifth Generation wireless technology. It will eventually be used to replace or in conjunction with 4G and LTE technology, currently the standards for cellphone data, but promises to vastly improve upload and download times, and decrease latency.

Christian de Looper, *What is 5G?*, DIGITAL TRENDS (Jan. 24, 2020), <https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/what-is-5g/>.

Examples

[Autonomous vehicles](#)

[Video surveillance](#)

[Smart Meters](#)

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Why does this matter?

- Law can't keep up with technology.

Brett Milano, *Big Tech's power growing at runaway speed*, HARVARD GAZETTE (Feb. 7, 2019), <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/02/government-cant-keep-up-with-technologys-growth/>.

- The people inventing are not the people regulating.

Alan Greenblatt, *What Government Gets Wrong About Technology*, GOVERNING (Jan. 22, 2020), <https://www.governing.com/now/What-Government-Gets-Wrong-About-Technology.html>.

- Businesses are begging for regulation.

Kim Hart, *Yes, some companies actually want to be regulated*, AXIOS (Dec. 28, 2018), <https://www.axios.com/why-some-companies-are-practically-begging-to-be-regulated-e09cd71e-4071-477b-9f8e-464b0f790d79.html>.