



***Special Session (SS05) on:  
Participatory Planning in the Digital Age***

**Organizers:**

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**The aim and scope:**

People's direct participation in the Area Development Planning is a well-appreciated approach for sustainable development from the grass-root level. If data collection is the first step of plan preparation, face to face interaction, as is involved in participatory planning, produces the most reliable and need based information. It also moves up the planning design from normative to comprehensive fashion. But the participatory planning approach faces several challenges like slowness, power politics, bluntness, conflict of interest, etc. On the other hand, electronic communication media (internet, mobile phone, different app. based media including Facebook, what's app, etc.) are capable of fastening the data collection, even hiding the identity of the respondent. It can also improve the comprehensiveness of the database. But the mechanisation of the planning process may miss the underlying ideologies of participatory planning like people's subjectivity in planning, community solidarity, empowerment and transparency. Besides, there is also the chance of opening up of personal information through linking and exchanging computerised data among different private and public departments. Although electronic media helps citizens to utilize the urban space but its use is comparatively limited in rural areas. It may also favour the state to use the data storage to tighten its control over 'below' that reverses the process of decentralised planning. The documentation of continuous adaptation of community, changing societal conditions and addressing various conflicts are lacking in electronic media. Under this dilemma, the question arises on how and to what extent we will avail the advantages of information technologies in participatory planning. It now calls to analyse:

- a) Different approaches towards participatory planning and their applications
- b) Challenges of participatory planning
- c) Applicability of electronic media in different levels of participatory planning: its forms and extent of permissibility.

**SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT**