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Latest Landscape Of Smart Cities In The West 2017: An Observation Through The Eyes Of A Japanese Smart City Visionary



Latest landscape of smart cities in the West 2017

An observation through the eyes of a Japanese smart city visionary

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Synopsis

The author has been engaged in “smart cities” since 2006, when he started an internal project of Hitachi Ltd., called “Next City Project”, which aimed to propose new concept of cities enhanced by the cutting-edge technologies, not necessarily limited to information and telecommunication technologies, to municipalities and real estate developers in Japan and abroad. Sooner or later, the “eco-city” boom in China flourished and “Smarter City” was advocated by IBM, which triggered the smart city fad all over the world. Ever since, the author has been observing and directly feeling the first rise of the buzz word, the fall of trust on this word resulting from the disappointments of municipal leaders about the hypes by industry, and, then, the revival of the word onto the mouths of the people with metamorphosed concepts and the roles of stakeholders. This book describes the latest landscapes of smart cities in US and Europe, and they are the results of the first-hand looks at them and the interviews with the stakeholders. The points of view of the author in visiting the smart cities in the West stay on the quest for the success factors of these cities in comparison to the attempts in Japan, where the word “smart city” has become out of date and has not regain the attention so far. The author, then, has found the changes in the roles of such stakeholders as central/federal governments, municipalities, and industry as well as the rise of start-ups and grass-root activists into key players, which were not seen in the smart city games five years ago. This book is an English edition of a Japanese book, which was edited from a series of monthly articles about overseas smart cities, published in the newsletters of Japan Smart Community Alliance, one of the most influential publication in this area in Japan. While the original monthly articles aimed to sound an alarm to Japanese readers and stakeholders on the gap between the smart cities in US and Europe and those in Japan, the author believes that the contents of this book are also useful for the Western readers in understanding how a Japanese visionary sees the metamorphosis of the Western smart cities from external points of view, and in finding the structural and institutional problems lying under Japanese smart city projects, where overseas professionals may find their business opportunities.

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