

Preface to the Journal of Smart Cities and Society issue 3(1)

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of our third volume of the *Journal of Smart Cities and Society*. Here we consider three contributions to the field: how technology can support citizens with special needs, managing domestic food stock and waste, and also on Virtual Reality as a facilitator of social interactions:

“*Handling sensory disabilities in a smart society*”, by J. Pivin-Bachler, E. van den Broek and R. Gomez, focuses on technology that can help the sector of the population with visual and/or hearing impairments. This article introduces a simulated social robot that adapts to users’ sensory abilities. The three modes of interaction considered were: where the user is able to see and hear, only see, or only hear. There is also a description of the process followed to reduce variance among participants in the iterative design of the system, which provides interesting learning points for future developers in this area.

“*Using IoT and AI to replenish household food supplies: A systematic review*”, by K. Almassar and M. Khasawneh, provides a systematic literature review focused on the use of technology to manage household food stock and supply, with emphasis on preventing food waste. Products such as smart fridges have been offered for a long time, however, have yet to become popular and adopted by the masses. Thus, this article is valuable in studying the household replenishment processes, revisiting some design features and has potential to link it to the wider contexts of smart shops, industries, and eventually smart cities.

“*Exploring motivations for social games in virtual reality for smart cities*”, by K. Meksumphun and C. Kerdvibulvech, considers the use of virtual reality as a tool to connect people in smart cities, including research on the motivations and needs for gamified virtual reality experiences. The article also reports on an experiment conducted with 40 individuals in Thailand via a free asset the authors created using Unity. The study provides insights not only in the behaviour of the participants, but also on the motivations. There is also a related analysis on business opportunities arising from such systems.

The Editorial Team of this journal expects the contributions included in this issue will provide new tools to address some of the many challenges ahead to realize this societal paradigm shift and inspire and guide other colleagues in this developing community to further innovate in this sector.

We encourage all sectors of society to engage in this technical conversation as our view of this area as a multidisciplinary one which will require the input of various different professions and different levels of involvement within urban environments to produce effective innovation.