

A sense of place

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Cyberspace is widely considered to be lacking geography, rendering borders and distances irrelevant in a globalizing world. As a result, few have focused on how the very technologies that created the virtual space of the internet are also used to delineate physical locales.

A new study in the forthcoming issue of *Current Anthropology* focuses on how information and communications technologies (ICTs) are used heavily in "place-making"--that is, in establishing the importance and reputation of particular places. By focusing on the promotion of ICTs throughout the public sector in Europe, author Sarah Green (University of Manchester) shows how ICTs have become as much a part of political place-making projects as did many other transportation and communication technologies in the past, including telegraph, rail, and fiber optics.

Specifically, the research charts how a range of publicly funded organizations and projects sought to realize ideals and hopes for their regions through ICT development projects. As Green explains: "Attempts to forge these new kinds of connections (networked connections) were based on the desire to overcome existing social, economic, and political problems, rather than on the belief that these technologies might create some new, space-less, place."

Source: University of Chicago

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