

Tens of Thousands of World Citizens Unite Online to Debate Urban Sustainability

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Experts and ordinary people from around the world will address problems of urban habitat without leaving their homes or offices, thanks to IBM technology. The 72-hour Habitat JAM will bring together academics and students, planners and builders, politicians, governments, the private sector and ordinary citizens from across the globe. They will contribute ideas and expertise in real time during a global problem-solving session to be held December 1-3, 2005.

The Habitat JAM, in turn, will lead to the third session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in June 2006. An initiative of the United Nations Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) held every two years, the forum debates ideas and issues about sustainable development amid rapid urbanization. Topics include improving the lives of people living in slums, access to water, environmental sustainability, safety and security, finance and governance, and the future of cities.

"At the heart of the urban crisis is a failure to consult and to allow the full participation of ordinary people in the development of the city. It is my hope that innovative technologies associated with Habitat JAM will help bring people closer together to plan and develop truly human settlements," said Dr. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT.

Over the past few years, IBM has successfully used JAM technology among its employees around the world. By participating in a single JAM, more than 50,000 employees provided some 6,000 ideas.

"IBM has used JAMs internally to enable employees in over 75 countries to collaborate in real time on the company's values and then to develop pragmatic solutions and best practices around growth and innovation," said Irving Wladawsky-Berger, Vice President of Technical Strategy and Innovation, IBM. "JAMs enable a kind of mass collaboration and problem-solving that has simply never before been possible on a global scale. This is innovation that matters for the world."

Source: IBM

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