



17 APR 2019 COLD CALL PODCAST

Would You Live in a Smart City Where Government Controls Privacy?

Toronto is experimenting with smart-city concepts envisioned by Google spinoff Sidewalk Labs. Harvard Business School Professors Leslie John and Mitch Weiss discuss the tradeoffs of using technology to improve modern city life at potential costs to digital privacy from their case, “Sidewalk Labs: Privacy in a City Built from the Internet Up.” Is it worth it?

HBR PRESENTS
Cold Call
Inside a Case Study

Would You Live in a Smart City Where Government Controls Privacy?
Cold Call

SHARE SUBSCRIBE DETAILS

DOWNLOAD (https://audio.hbr.org/cold-call/20190409114033-092_WouldYouLiveinaSmartCityWhereGovernmentControlsPrivacy__mp3)

00:00 24:50

Brian Kenny: “I have recently seen the silliest film. I do not believe it would be possible to make one sillier,” so sayeth HG Wells in his New York Times review of the 1927 film, *Metropolis*, and he wasn't alone. At just over two and a half hours, this German behemoth set in a dystopian future was widely panned by critics for its length and cliché take on social justice. But setting the plot aside, many people were impressed by director of Fritz Lang's vision of the city of the future and the groundbreaking visual effects he used to bring it to life. *Metropolis* is a place with towering skyscrapers where robots and slave workers at the direction of wealthy industrialists, who of course live in the towering skyscrapers. The film set the standard for a genre that has been riffed on by directors ever since. When it comes to cities of the future, Hollywood has taken a decidedly cynical view. In the real world, the future looks a lot brighter. Smart technologies, robotics and artificial intelligence have the potential to vastly improve the quality of life for city dwellers, but like everything worthwhile, the future will come at a cost.

Today we'll hear from professors Leslie John and Mitch Weiss about their case entitled, *Sidewalk Labs, Privacy in a City built from the Internet Up*. I'm your host Brian Kenny and you're listening to Cold Call, part of the HBR Presets network.

Professor Leslie John's research centers on how consumer's behavior in lives are influenced by their interaction with firms and with public policy. Professor Mitch Weiss's research interests include digital transformation, pure production, and innovation ecosystems. He was formerly chief of staff to Boston Mayor Tom Menino where he helped shaped Boston's innovation strategy. So that's really relevant today. Thank you both for joining me.

READ MORE

BROWSE POPULAR TOPICS

LEADERSHIP

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

GENDER

NEGOTIATION

POST A COMMENT

In order to be published, comments must be on-topic and civil in tone, with no name calling or personal attacks. Your comment may be edited for clarity and length.



Write a comment

COMMENTS



Surge

312 days ago

Being a Torontonion, I am embarrassed by how we've let uninformed left-wing bureaucrats dominate the conversation about Sidewalk Labs. I would not be surprised if Google pulls-out. As a city, we took a project that could have vaulted us on the global tech stage, and buried it in nonsensical whining about privacy. This is supposed to be a "Pilot" project. Any privacy concerns can be discussed at its conclusion, not at the outset. Sadly, this explains why certain cities will never truly be world-class.

Like · Reply

0