

urbanist.org

Columbia university

Urban planning program

Online review

:proposal

Matias Echanove

Urban planning program

Columbia university

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Introduction

:keywords

online review

multimedia

multidisciplinary

knowledge & learning

urban planning

Columbia

New York City

ONLINE URBAN PLANNING REVIEW This is a proposal for an **online review** on cities and urban issues developed and powered by the **urban planning program** and **Columbia University**. The review takes full advantage of the strategic position of the urban planning program at Columbia University in the city of **New York** as well as of the extraordinary human resources of the university. The review will bring light on the work of the urban planning program, increasing its notoriety and academic **excellence**.

MULTIMEDIA The proposed review features texts, visual, and audio content. It uses the full capacities of new web-publishing softwares and the school's hardware facilities.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY The project is **multidisciplinary** in nature. urbanist.org publishes the work of urban planning faculty and students and a selection from other schools and departments at Columbia and beyond.

URBAN KNOWLEDGE The greater **public** is increasingly interested in urban issues but very few educational or commercial websites offers access to **urban knowledge**. The idea is to create a review that serves as an international reference in the city planning and urban studies fields.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE urbanist.org is also an **opportunity** for Columbia students to learn how to use new technologies of communication by participating in the development and maintenance of a **professional** project. This proposal lays out the concept and structure of "urbanist.org".



Proposal

:preview

urbanist.org an online review on cities, strategically based in the urban planning program at Columbia University in New York City. Contributions to the review will be provided not only by the urban planning faculty and students, but also by other schools and programs.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.urbanist.org>. The browser's toolbar includes buttons for Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, Home, AutoFill, Print, and Mail. Below the address bar, there are links to Live Home Page, Apple, Apple Support, Apple Store, .Mac, Mac OS X, and Microsoft MacTopia. The website header features the **urbanist.org** logo, followed by "Columbia university", "Urban planning program", and "Online review".

On the left side, there is a vertical sidebar with links: Favorites, History, Search, Scrapbook, and Page Holder.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Can We Make the Cities We Want?** by Susain Fainstein of the Urban Planning program at Columbia University. This section includes a circular diagram of a city plan and a photograph of a city street. The text discusses the profession of city planning and its response to the evils of the industrial city.
- Special photographic report from Paris.** Urbz correspondent Nadia Zimmerman explores the new urban cultures of emerging in the suburb of the city. Immigration and globalization of subcultures are changing the face of Paris... This section includes a photograph of a city street.
- Photos** section with two entries:
 - top: Diagram by Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, from <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda>
 - bottom: Le Corbusier, *Plan Voisin* pour Paris 1945, from <http://www.volker-goebel.de>
- A Plan for New York City** by Peter Marcuse of the Urban... (partially visible)
- Editorial** by Lisa Chamberlain

At the bottom right, there is a search bar with the text "search Urbz" and a button labeled "urban imagebase".

Strategic Location

Urban Planning Program at Columbia University in the city of New York.

WORLD With more than half of the world population now living in **urban** areas, the 21st century will be the century of urbanity. As new cities emerge and keep growing to unprecedented levels, decision makers and the **public** become increasingly interested in urban issues. Throughout the world, New York City remains the ultimate symbol of cosmopolitanism and urbanity.

NEW YORK CITY Never before have cities been as integrated in a **global** urban system. New technologies have made global communication, exchange, and cooperation common facts of life. New York is a primary node in the **network** of cities which produce and diffuse information. As the top academic institution of the city, Columbia strategically positioned in the networks of global knowledge.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY In today's **knowledge** economy, access to information is essential. Equally important for future urban planners and policy makers is the capacity to **communicate** ideas and present projects. Urbanist.org is a formidable learning tool for Columbia students as users, but also as producers of electronic information.

URBAN PLANNING PROGRAM The Urban Planning program at Columbia is strategically located in New York City, a **node** in the global network of urban knowledge. With urbanist.org Columbia University becomes a prime diffuser of urban planning knowledge. urbanist.org fills up a space of **opportunity** in the urban planning field.



Earth at Night



New York City



Columbia University

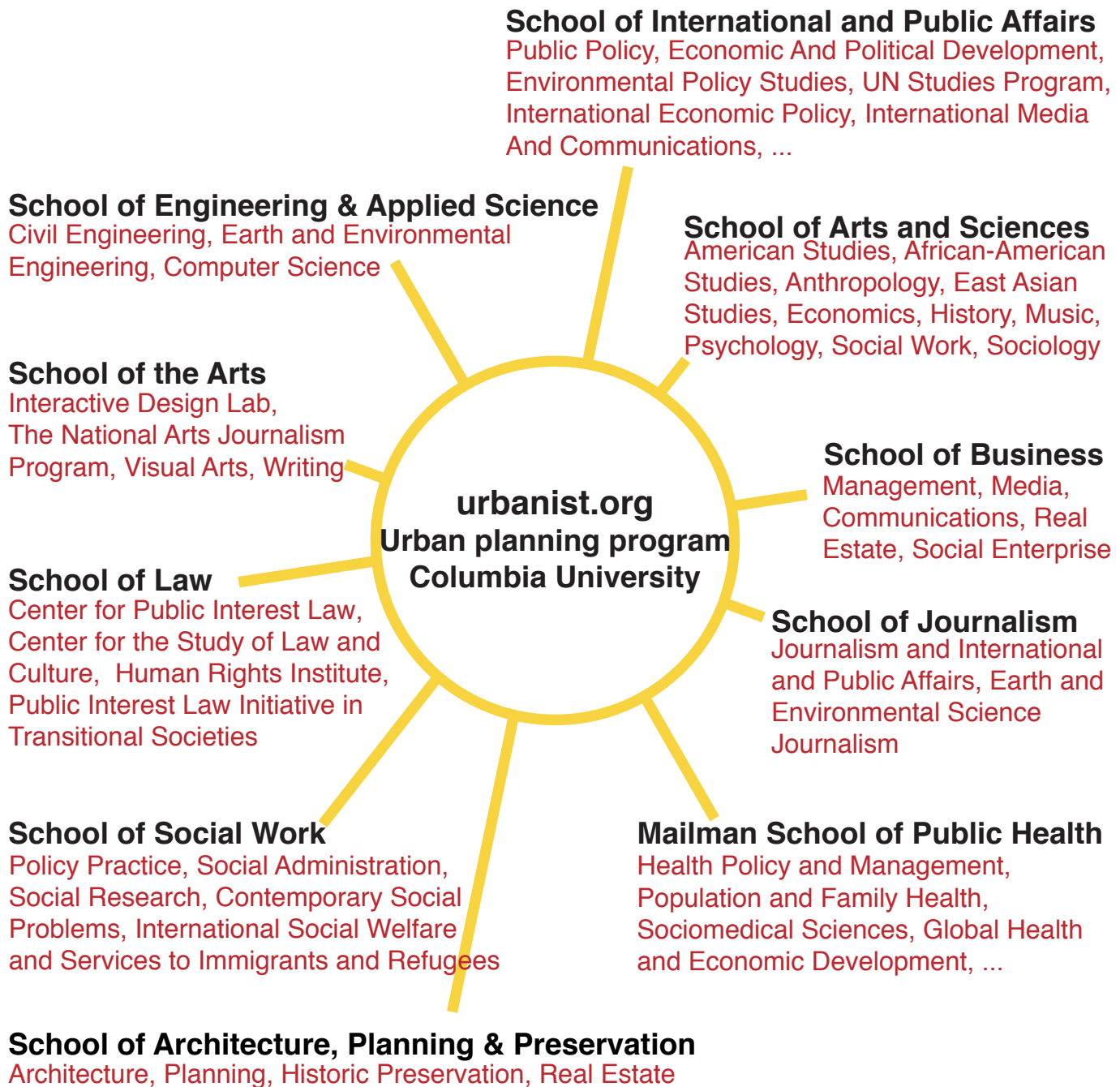


Avery Hall

Multidisciplinary linkages

Urban planning as a nodal and multidisciplinary field links together different schools, disciplines, and people. The focus of urbanist.org is the city under all its forms. Different disciplines all uncover a particular aspect of the city.

:keywords
multidisciplinary
global
nodal
links
partnerships



Objectives

:keywords

research
communication
notoriety
recruitment
exchange
events

ACADEMIC Not only do students benefit from urbanist.org as a **research** database, but they also learn how to **communicate** their ideas and plans electronically using cutting edge communication technology and techniques which maximize the reach of their work.

NETWORKING urbanist.org is more than an online review. It is also a networking device. Authors of articles and multimedia presentations are directly contactable via email. urbanist.org can also work as a **recruitment** tool for employers seeking specific expertise. Moreover, urbanist.org **features** a selection of outstanding multimedia work produced outside of Columbia such as GIS maps made by NGOs, public agencies, or other schools. Within Columbia, urbanist.org is a platform for the **exchange** of information and ideas on cities from different academic and professional perspectives. In addition, urbanist.org organizes punctual networking events and multidisciplinary **conferences** on current urban issues.

MARKETING urbanist.org increases the **notoriety** and improves the **image** of the Urban planning program at Columbia. This increases the number of applications and grants to the program. More applications means more and students and better selection. Moreover, urbanist.org gives an opportunity to students and faculty to market themselves by publishing their best work online, which increases their notoriety and their chances of getting published elsewhere.



Content of the review

urbanist.org's is a review on cities proposing articles, multimedia features, planning events agenda, and an extensive list of urban planning websites worldwide.

REVIEW Multidisciplinary in character, the review features texts, talks, images, animations and videos on urban themes produced by the urban planning program, Columbia University, and guests. Most existing urban planning websites use a narrow conception of the field. urbanist.org is about city planning, but also city culture, architecture, policies, economics, health, and so on. An open approach attracts a broader public.

DATABASE urbanist.org features interesting articles or multimedia productions published in other magazines. urbanist.org proposes a selection of the most interesting works available on the web. Users can either scroll through a selection of recent articles or search urbanist.org for specific information on particular cities or urban themes.

NYC / WORLD AGENDA urbanist.org is the ultimate reference for urban planning events anywhere in the city. Conferences, charrettes, symposiums, community councils, public hearings are all listed on the website. The international agenda section offers a selection of the most important urban planning events in other cities around the world.

LINKS urbanist.org is a node in the network of urban information and knowledge available online and relies on the principle that the more links it has to other websites the more nodal and central it becomes. True to the planning ethos, urbanist.org's relationship to other urban planning institutions and websites is not one of competition, but rather one of collaboration and partnership.



Synergies & Partnerships

Student organizations and networks are integrated to urbanist.org. urbanist.org provides an opportunity for students to publish their works for a wider audience. Active involvement of student insures the creativeness, dynamism, and innovativeness of urbanist.org.

TRADING PLACES Trading Places is an international network of urban planning students which started at Columbia University. Trading Places organizes traveling conferences around the world (Latin America this year). These conferences generate a large amount of written and photographic data, which is published on paper and online. Trading Places last project is an online urban image database called URBZ financed by a grant from the Fannie Mae Foundation.

URBZ URBZ has a central role in urbanist.org. URBZ provides images and photographic reports from all around the world for urbanist.org.

URBAN MAGAZINE Urban Magazine is the journal of the urban planning students at Columbia. urbanist.org publishes a selection of articles from Urban Magazine. Potentially, the online version of Urban Magazine could be integrated to urbanist.org. Alternatively, Urban Magazine could maintain some sections of urbanist.org. The two entities are complementary and mutually beneficial.

OTHER STUDENT PAPERS SIPA's *Communique* and *Slant*, for instance, are good sources for articles. urbanist.org also publishes a selection of articles from other programs, for instance, the School of Journalism and the School of Public Health. The website of the School of Journalism features articles on the city in a section called Cityscape. urbanist.org showcase a selection of the best articles, increasing exponentially their reach.



Team

The team is made of students or interns, teaching assistants, permanent staff, and faculty.

FACULTY PEER

15 hours/week

- Supervision of the review & team
- Strategic planning & consulting
- Administrative liason
- Editorial

PROJECT COORDINATOR (staff)

30 hours/week

- Supervision of the site
- Strategic planning
- Training & coordinating team
- Liason with faculty & program

EDITOR (staff)

40 hours/week

- Search, selection & supervision of content
- Edition
- Coordination of students / interns
- Editorial

WEB DEVELOPER (T.A.)

15 hours/week

- Development & maintainance of website
- Programing & database management
- Email & computer maintainance

AGENDA PLANNER (T.A.)

20 hours/week

- Maintaining & updating comprehensive planning events agenda
- Maintaining links page
- Keeping the agenda of urbanist.org
- Planning & organizing teamwork

INTERNS / STUDENTS X3

20 hours/week

- Searching content for review, database, and agenda
- Contributing to strategic planning & collective brainstorming
- Learning by doing

Academic training

Students are the main productive and inovative resource of urbanist.org. The project coordinator and editor are recent Columbia grads hired for a year. The Web developer and agenda planner are “Teaching Assistants”. Three or more students contribute to the review and get academic credits. A professor supervises review and the class.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP urbanist.org represents a learning opportunity for urban planning students. Students “learn by doing” how to create multimedia information. The mastering of new technologies of information, communication, and data gathering represents a definitive advantage in the job market.

HYBRID TEAM The team of urbanist.org is composed of students, teaching assistants, staff, and faculty. Interns can also be hired.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE Students learn how to develop and manage projects using the new technologies of communication available. Students are given an opportunity to learn new technologies and develop projects. These skills will be particularly useful in their professional life when they will have to present projects to partners, employers, communities, policy makers, investors, and the public. The staff and faculty coordinate and supervise the work of the students.

INOVATINEVESS Students directly contribute to the strategic planning of the project during weekly brainstorming workshops. They are crucial creative forces in the team.

TEACHING The faculty peer and the project coordinator are responsible for teaching students the techniques they need, and for supervising their work. The other members of the team help coaching the students.

:keywords

learning by doing

hybrid team

creativity

inovativeness



Electronic Communication Workshops

:quote
“the medium is the message”
(Marshall McLuhan)

Title

“Electronic Communication for Urbanists”

Format

3 credits per semester / Practical workshop /
Technical - professional class

Method

Learning by doing. Students are professional partners. They actively participate to the collective work. The best ones consequently become TA and staff on the same project. Therefore the class also works as a recruitment tool.

Objective

Learning by doing: Producing and broadcasting urban information; Present plans, concepts, projects & design models; Team working

Instructors

- Content / Academic supervision:
Faculty peer (ex: Thomas Vietorisz)
- Technical / Design guidance:
Project manager + guests (ex: Cory Clark)
- Daily work / Assessment:
Web developer, agenda planner (Teaching Assistants)

Softwares & Techniques

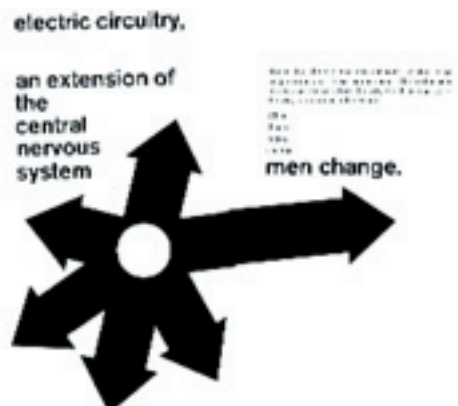
Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash, Php, Quicktime pro, MP3, Illustrators, InDesign, Photoshop, FTP, Video editing.

Educational Benefits

- Learning how to produce multimedia information using new technologies of communication
- Researching & learning cutting edge urban planning news
- Organizing / creating informational spaces
- Networking & working in multidisciplinary team (class not limited to Urban Planning students -SIPA, School of Journalism, etc.)

Class participants can work on different projects

- urbanist.org
- trading places
- urbz
- urban planning website
- other approved project



Design & Techniques

The design is simple and functional, 'urban planning style'. The structure of the website is a grid, simple, functional, and flexible. urbanist.org is made to be maintained by shifting teams. The website is easy to operate and navigate.

:keywords

simple
modulable
functional
universal
graphic
multimedia
cutting edge
learning

ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLE The review is a grid. Each cell can be modulated and merged in function of the content. The proportion of each cell (4/3) corresponds to these of a standard digital picture, so they can be easily inserted.

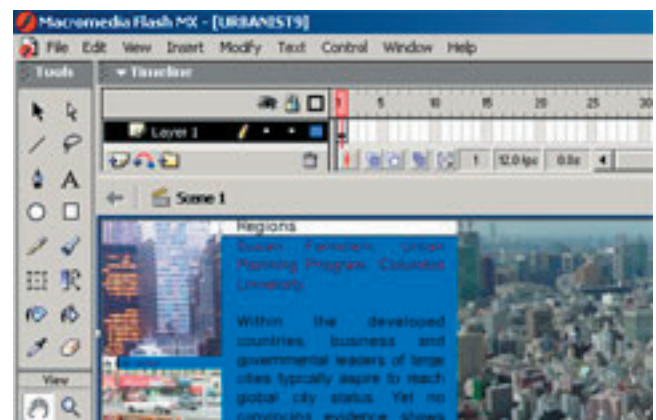
PRESENTATION urbanist.org is composed of one main page with links to articles and subsections. Articles themselves have a minimalist and functional layout and are downloadable in universal formats.

GRAPHICS URBZ, the urban imagebase created by Trading Places and financed by the Fannie Mae Foundation, provides most of the visual content of urbanist.org. URBZ and urbanist.org are partners. URBZ provides the pictures for urbanist.org and urbanist.org publishes photographic reports from Trading Places and URBZ.

MEDIA Information is carried through text, images, video, and sound. urbanist.org fully uses the multimedia capacities of the internet. All texts are available in simple printable and downloadable format.

SOFTWARES The team uses the latest technological tools available. The review is first published on Illustrator 10, and then exported to Flash and formatted in html. These softwares allow an ever expanding range of innovations only limited by imagination.

TEAM urbanist.org is developed and maintained by a hybrid team of academic staff and students. Students learn how to produce and publish multimedia information by doing.



Raw budget

INITIAL COSTS

Computers

- 1 Macintosh G4 with large screen
 - 4 PCs
 - + Extra memory ram
 - + Extra hard drives
 - + Networking device
- \$10,000

Peripherals

- Printer
 - Fax
 - Phones
 - Scanner
- \$1,000

Technical assistance

- Setting up server
 - Activating domain name
 - Setting computers, lines & network
- \$7,000

TOTAL INITIAL: \$18,000

RUNNING COSTS / MONTHLY

Staff

- Academic supervisor, 60 hours
 - Project coordinator, 120 hours
 - Web developer, 60 hours
 - Editor, 160 hours
 - Agenda Planner, 80 hours
- \$15,500

Other

- Technical maintainance
 - Office costs
 - Copyrights
 - Domain name renewal
- \$750

Extraordinary expenses

- Events
 - Conferences & Seminar fees
- \$100

TOTAL MONTHLY: \$16,350

Urban planning schools websites

urbanist.org is the first website of its kind. No other urban planning program in a top school and a global city has an online review.

NEW YORK CITY

NYU

<http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/urban.planning>
Newsletter in PDF format. Poor design.

Pratt

<http://www.pratt.edu/arch/gcpe>
No newsletter. Poor design.

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BOSTON

MIT

<http://dusp.mit.edu>
News of the program. Elegant design.

Harvard

<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/academic/upd/>
Harvard Design Magazine has some articles available online. Very good design (looks like MIT).

SAN FRANCISCO

Berkeley

<http://www-dcrp.ced.berkeley.edu/>
Student newsletter half html, half PDF. Few but interesting articles. Poor design.

LOS ANGELES

UCLA

<http://www.sppsr.ucla.edu/dup>
Some news. Links to some interesting research institute such as the 'Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies':
<http://www.sppsr.ucla.edu/lewis> . Poor design. Hard to find.

LONDON

London School of Economics

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/cities>
Interesting summaries of projects. Some PDF files available. Smart, simple design. Uneasy to find.

University College of London / Bartlett

<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/planning/>
Excellent site of the Planning Research Unit at <http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/research/planning/overview.htm> . Very clean and functional design.

PARIS

Sciences Politiques / Urbanisme

<http://www.sciences-po-urbanisme.com>
No news. Bad design.

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TOKYO

University of Tokyo / Urban Engineering

<http://www.due.t.u-tokyo.ac.jp>
Fairly comprehensive English version. Links to some projects and good links resource. Unimpressive design.

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Urban planning portals

Existing urban planning portals differ substantially from urbanist.org. They are usually not visually attractive and limited to written content, making little use of the internet's interactive potential. Moreover most of them narrowly focus on 'planning' issues, failing to acknowledge the multidisciplinary nature of urbanism.

<http://www.cyburbia.org>

Hierarchical directory with links to thousands of planning and urbanism related websites. Powered by the Department of Urban Planning of the University of Buffalo. Interesting picture gallery.

<http://www.planetizen.com>

Probably the most authoritative urban planning portal on the web. It has an extensive database of urban planning related articles that can be search by theme and city. Visual content and design are pretty poor.

<http://www.knowledgeplex.org>

Comprehensive database of housing and community news articles & papers. Powered by Fannie Mae Foundation. Functional design.

<http://www.urbanplanningnow.com>

Urban planning jobs. Pretty flat design.

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<http://www.urbanism.org>

Fine selection of urban planning related articles.

<http://www.gothamgazette.com>

Excellent New York City news. Functional design.

<http://www.plannersnetwork.org>

Association of planning professionals, activists, academics, and students getting together to create a critical mass and using the internet to publish their views. Interesting papers and case studies.

<http://citistates.com>

The Citistates Group is a network of journalists, speakers and civic leaders using the internet to make themselves heard and advertise their services.

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<http://www.urban.nyu.edu>

The Taub Urban Research Center at NYU publishes the work and research of NYU faculty and PhD students. Narrow focuses and unattractive design.

**

<http://www.gothamgazette.com>

Excellent digest of news about New York City.

<http://www.planning.org>

The official website of the American Planning Association is an excellent resource. It features a monthly magazine called 'planning' which is only accessible to APA members.

<http://www.smartcityradio.com>

Excellent radio show from Memphis broadcasted and archived online. Very interesting use of audio as a format to store and diffuse information on the net.

<http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0211/feature3>

Special multimedia report on megacities by National Geographic, which includes text, photo, maps, sound, and video. An excellent use of the internet.
