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Jan. 30, 2015

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Cal Poly Professor Reports Tech Trends in Urban Planning

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly City & Regional Planning Professor William Riggs recently released the findings from the study “Technology Use by City Planning Departments,” published by Planetizen.com.

The study tracked Internet use in 523 cities across the U.S. to predict how technology trends will impact planning departments in 2015-16. The report found emerging technologies are fundamentally changing how urban areas are planned, developed and managed.

Students in Riggs’ Planning Information Systems class conducted some of the preliminary data.

“It is exciting to see the creative ways that many planning agencies are using technology, but there is still room for growth — especially in the areas of social media, basic readability, and mobile compatibility,” said Riggs.

Some of the findings include:

- 15 percent of city planning department websites are optimized for smartphones.
- 21 percent of cities offer online permitting.
- 10 percent of city planning departments have dedicated social media channels.
- 21 percent of city planning departments do not offer their general plan online.
- 40 percent of cities offer online property lookups using geographic information systems (GIS) software.

“The study allows us to benchmark how planners across our country are using these technologies to plan, communicate planning concepts, and engage citizens in the planning process,” said Chris Steins, chief executive officer of Urban Insight, and study co-author.

To view the study, go to <http://www.planetizen.com/node/73480>.

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