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COVER PICTURE

This visualization features a common vision of a city of the future: a skyscraper megacity with the icons for Wi-Fi, Internet, public transport, etc., superimposed to symbolize information and networked technologies and digital data flows. Since the millennium, the idea of smart cities has been thriving, promising to solve urban development problems through digitalization, and thus make cities more efficient and sustainable. However, whether smart city strategies have a positive or negative impact on sustainability is highly debated. We need to ask ourselves why narratives of digitalization and sustainability are so often connected with smart megacities and skyscrapers. Is this a future we really wish for? We should keep in mind that with the projection of our ideas and hopes of the future we both open and close spaces of opportunities for a sustainable transformation of our societies.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: SUSTAINABLE DIGITALIZATION – FOSTERING THE TWIN TRANSFORMATION IN A TRANSDISCIPLINARY WAY

Modern societies are shaped by digitalization and challenged by sustainability transformations. The question of how digitalization can support a green transformation has become more and more common in public discourse, scientific research and political agendas. At the same time, direct environmental harm caused by digitalization, as well as its contribution to the promotion of unsustainable lifestyles, is critically discussed. Moreover, digitalization not only affects environmental sustainability. Issues of data governance and innovative forms of participation are controversial topics in digitalization and social sustainability. In this special issue, theoretical and empirical papers are presented that aim to address digitalization and sustainability in an integrated way. The collection connects scientific and political discourses and provides both analysis and recommendations for action.

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