Scheda sintetica descrittiva
Premio INU Letteratura Urbanistica 2015
articolo su rivista

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Titolo articolo Urban Magnetism Through the Lens of Geotagged Photography

Rivista EPJ Data Science

Anno 2015 Vol. 4 n. 1 ISSN 2193-1127 Pagine 1-17

Immagine copertina:

Abstract:

There is an increasing trend of people leaving digital traces through social media. This reality opens new horizons for urban studies. With this kind of data, researchers and urban planners can detect many aspects of how people live in cities and can also suggest how to transform cities into more efficient and smarter places to live in. In particular, their digital trails can be used to investigate tastes of individuals, and what attracts them to live in a particular city or to spend their vacation there. In this paper we propose an unconventional way to study how people experience the city, using information from geotagged photographs that people take at different locations. We compare the spatial behavior of residents and tourists in 10 most photographed cities all around the world. The study was conducted on both a global and local level. On the global scale we analyze the 10 most photographed cities and measure how attractive each city is for people visiting it from other cities within the same country or from abroad. For the purpose of our analysis we construct the users' mobility network and measure the strength of the links between each pair of cities as a level of attraction of people living in one city (i.e., origin) to the other city (i.e., destination). On the local level we study the spatial distribution of user activity and identify the photographed hotspots inside each city. The proposed methodology and the results of our study are a low cost mean to characterize touristic activity within a certain location and can help cities strengthening their touristic potential.

***Key words**: city attractiveness, big data, human mobility, urban planning, tourism study, smart city, complex systems, collective sensing, geo-tagged Flickr*