

Post

Smart Cities



Urban Labs – what they are and how they are boosted by m2m

Thursday, 28 November 2013



The term “urban lab” or “urban laboratory” has been quite in vogue since the latest edition of the Barcelona Smart City Expo. By relating it with the development of smart cities, sometimes it has even been presented as an evolution of the smart city concept.

But what is an urban lab exactly? What relationship does it have with the smart city? And what role can m2m technology play?

In the academic arena and in the field of urban development, the concept of urban labs has been present for quite some time already, referring to research environments for urban design and community planning.

However, with the development of new technologies, the Internet of things and the boom of smart cities, the term is back in the spotlight as a controlled framework for experimentation and learning.

In summary, urban labs are described as real spaces where innovative projects can be put to the test in urban environments. They are initiatives that contribute real benefits to the citizens of a certain city enhancing their lives, in areas such as urban development, mobility, tourism or education.

Many of these breakthroughs have m2m technologies at their foundations; therefore, urban labs stand out as perfect scenarios for the deployment, learning and validation of undertakings, as well as for the development of social capital.

The projects involved in urban labs must be directly tied to the city’s operation and solve issues or meet any unresolved needs of its citizens, according to priorities and objectives set by the location concerned.



Its aim is to enable entrepreneurs and innovative companies to test projects in a real environment in order to obtain feedback, streamline the projects and prove their suitability, to subsequently take them to a larger scale.

Urban labs do not replace smart cities; on the contrary, they facilitate and speed up the start-up of smart city projects. That is why urban labs are currently emerging in many cities around the world, especially in those cities that want to become smart cities, such as the ones mentioned during the Smart City Expo: Barcelona, Malaga and Santander.



Telefónica m2m Team



@m2mtelefonica