

Space as a Service: How the Urban Tech Sector is Shaping Working, Learning, and Living



Drawing from WeWork Global Impact Report 2019

Where space was considered permanent, it now feels transitory - on its way to becoming. The words and ideas of architecture, once the official language of space, no longer seem capable of describing this proliferation of new conditions. But even as its utility is questioned in the real world, architectural language survives, its repertoire of concepts and metaphors resurrected to create clarity and definition in new, unfamiliar domains (think chatrooms, Web sites, and firewalls). Words that die in the real are reborn in the virtual." - Rem Koolhaas, Wired Magazine, June 2003

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar focuses on the spread of Silicon Valley's interests beyond the space of bytes and bits, into the physical world of feet and inches. Historically the medium of architects, engineers, and planners, these professions now share the domain of physical space with cloud architects, data engineers, and network planners. Space has become a platform for hosting software. The tech sector is defined both by the ever-expanding reach of FAANG (Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google) as well as the VC-fueled quest to scale startups into the next unicorn. Through case studies, weekly readings, and guest lecturers, we will examine the impact of companies such as WeWork, 2U, and Airbnb on the activities of working, learning, and living. We will explore how tech-culture is influencing traditional spatial practices and probe for opportunities to incubate new forms of professional agency. The course will conclude by looking at how the confluence of these forces is transforming the design of our cities.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course: Arch 409/509 Space as a Service: How the Urban Tech Sector is Shaping Working, Learning, and Living 3 credits
When: Wednesdays 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Fall 2019
Where: Room 1360; Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning University of Michigan
Who: Adam Koogler & Jesse Ganes, WeWork