

2023 REPORT

THE EDGELANDS INSTITUTE 2023 REPORT

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In an era of increasing urbanization, technological advancement, and interconnectedness, the Edgelands Institute recognizes the need to understand and address the complex challenges and opportunities that arise at the intersection of society and technology. The proliferation of digital tools, surveillance systems, and data-driven decision-making has profound implications for urban spaces and the social fabric of communities.

The Edgelands Institute seeks to navigate this context by critically examining the social, ethical, and political dimensions of technology in urban environments. By fostering interdisciplinary collaborations and engaging with diverse perspectives, the Institute aims to curate spaces for conversation that help redefine the new urban social contract in cities around the world.

In its third year, the Edgelands Institute was present in four cities: Medellín, Cúcuta, Geneva, and Nairobi. It also hosted its second cohort of fellows, published its first art book, and engaged with new and existing partners to advance its mission.

This annual report provides a comprehensive overview of Edgelands' initiatives, research, and partnerships that have facilitated a fruitful dialogue on the intersections of digital technology, surveillance, and urban security with diverse stakeholders in each Edgelands city, and outlines the Institute's plans for 2024.

2023 KEY MILESTONES:

EDGELANDS MEDELLÍN

- The project of Edgelands Medellín came to an end with a closing report that provided reflections on the impact of surveillance technologies on urban security, urging public discourse on the digitization of security in Medellín.
- As part of its second, and final, pop-up in Medellín, the Edgelands Institute hosted the first local Fellowship which engaged young researchers in independent projects on digitalization and security, fostering an interdisciplinary cohort guided by local community members and research associates.

- The team partnered with Hablemos Medellín to create a forum for dialogue and citizen advocacy, enabling conversations among civil society to influence policy design and the election of the city government.

EDGELANDS CÚCUTA

- Through participatory research and community engagement, the Edgelands team in Cúcuta managed to set in motion relevant conversations for the security and tech governance of the city.
- The Institute's efforts included a research sprint and a Lab Social. These initiatives underscored the importance of community-driven approaches for effective urban security solutions.
- The project finished with a final report highlighting the outcomes and milestones of each of the initiatives and partnerships undertaken during Edgelands Cúcuta.

EDGELANDS GENEVA

- As we concluded our initial pop-up in Geneva, we celebrated a landmark achievement: 98% of Geneva's citizens voted to include the new right to digital integrity in their constitution, following

a year of debate shaped partly by Edgelands' work. This vote underscores the evolving urban social contract in the digital age.

- Spaces like "Watching Me, Watching You" and "Dropping the Pin on Surveillance," highlighted the lack of transparency around the use of technologies in Geneva, and raised awareness about citizen engagement in surveillance discussions.

EDGELANDS NAIROBI

- The Institute launched its diagnostic report which unveils Nairobi's historical ties to contemporary surveillance practices and sheds light on critical themes like terrorism, cybercrimes, and the use of CCTV cameras. This was followed by hosting spaces for further analysis and discussion of the report such as the research sprint and a close collaboration with Magnum Photography.
- Key learnings from Nairobi emphasized the need for robust frameworks for the governance of surveillance technologies and the importance of transparency and public accountability in the implementation of security measures.

OTHER PROJECTS

- Using a combination of photography and text, Edgelands has produced and published its first art book to document the Institute's initiatives and their impact in different cities. This publication serves as a visual and narrative record of the Institute's work, reflecting on the highlights in each city and their interconnections.
- The Institute hosted its second cohort of international fellows, extending Edgelands' reach and expertise beyond the Edgelands cities. Researchers and artists from a range of backgrounds contributed to the Edgelands body of knowledge through blog posts and academic manuscripts or working papers.
- We strengthened our substantive research with two key projects. The first developed a best practice framework for algorithmic surveillance technologies in cities. The second explored AI localism in the context of security technologies, providing valuable lessons for implementing these technologies without comprehensive policy instruments.

LOOKING AHEAD

- The Edgelands Institute will continue to develop its projects and foster its partnerships in Nairobi and Geneva, while expanding to its fifth city, Houston.
- The Institute will curate spaces for collaboration across cities and networks, continuing its mission to address the complexities of urban security in the digital age.
- It will also expand its internal research by studying the use of Open Source Software and cyber vulnerabilities by city governments, funded by a grant from the Digital Infrastructure Insights Fund.

The following is a report on the activities carried out by the Edgelands Institute in 2023 in each of the cities we have studied. It also includes key learnings from each city and the plans for future activities as we look ahead.

INTRODUCTION

The year 2023 was an exciting and eventful year for the Edgelands Institute. We completed our work in two cities, completed the first iteration in another, became active in a fourth, and began preparations for a fifth. Throughout the year we continued to build and support local and international networks of partners. These efforts have strengthened the Edgelands Institute's commitment to addressing the complexities of urban security in the digital age, fostering dialogue and developing innovative, community-driven solutions.

In our third year, the Edgelands network expanded its reach and impact through increased collaboration, youth empowerment, and knowledge dissemination.

A notable highlight of 2023 was the expansion of our team. We launched our pop-up in Nairobi, Kenya, and welcomed the second cohort of Edgelands Fellows - researchers and artists from a range of countries including Italy, the Netherlands, the USA, India, Kenya and Brazil. We also hosted the first local fellowship in Medellín, bringing together four researchers from the city to work on different projects related to digitalisation and urban security.

The year also marked the completion of our work in Medellín and Cúcuta, two cities where our initiatives highlighted the need for a citizen-centered perspective on surveillance technology and the importance of community-driven approaches. In Geneva, as we

concluded our first iteration, we celebrated a milestone: the citizens of Geneva voted to modify their constitution to include the right to digital integrity. This vote was a good example of the renegotiation of the urban social contract in the digital age, demonstrating that individuals are demanding a new set of rules that are better equipped to meet the challenges of increasing digitisation.

To provide another layer of reflection on our work in different cities, we launched the first Edgelands Art Book. This publication brings together key reflections from each city through a mix of photography and text, providing a visual and narrative account of our initiatives and their impact.

Looking ahead, we began preparations to welcome our fifth city: Houston.

We also continued to strengthen our substantive research work, with the aim of making our in-city findings available to the wider research and policy community, and to better engage with and support our local stakeholders. We did this both internally and in collaboration with our partners at the Graduate Institute.

This report summarizes the activities and milestones of the Edgelands Institute in 2023 and provides an overview of the activities planned for 2024. It begins with an introduction to our worldview, work and goals, and then presents some key findings from our research and projects in each city.

ABOUT US

The Edgelands Institute is a multi-disciplinary organization that uses academic research, data, and art to explore how the digitalization of urban security is changing the urban social contract — the often-unseen rules that govern our cities. We create pop-up spaces that bring citizens, policy makers, academics, and other stakeholders into dialogue about the way that digital tools are being used by city governments and transforming urban social fabric.

The Institute is also a global movement. We set up temporary residence in select cities across the globe that have made innovative strides in their use of digital technologies, particularly in application to security, and we create connections and networks to put the cities in dialogue of their stories and experiences.

Our pop-up model breaks barriers of exclusivity often found in policymaking, where important decisions about security and surveillance are left to the “experts” and not open to all. We employ a variety of creative events that bring together different stakeholders, curating and facilitating open conversations to co-design solutions for security in their cities. Our method and activities produce a snowball effect which extends our work through our networks and partnerships, enabling local organizations ownership of the movement, making it scalable and replicable.

At the Edgelands Institute, we view our role as that of a facilitator: working within spaces that just need the tools or nudges to connect and co-design.

We create the connective structure for self-sustaining movements within each city that can continue long after our Institute has dissolved. In 2022 we continued our work in Medellín and we set up temporary residences in Cúcuta and Geneva, and started preparing for Nairobi. Following our work cycle, the Edgelands pop-up in each city follows this structure:

- **Research:** We conduct research including stakeholder interviews on each city's security landscape. We repeat and refine this process during our academic workshops, where we work with young adults on questions related to digitalization, surveillance, and governance.

- **Public Art:** Interventions in physical spaces are just as important as those within the world of ideas. This is particularly true within cities, where sharing of spaces is intrinsic to the environment. We direct creative activities that help citizens re-imagine urban co-existence.

- **Participatory Workshops:** The question of surveillance technology and digital governance policies requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders: the public, the government, and the private sector. We create opportunities for representatives from these groups to work together.

While events in each city are locally focused, in 2023 we continued to facilitate and strengthen strategic exchanges between the networks of partners and governments of each city we work in.

EDGE LANDS CITIES

MEDELLÍN

Medellín, Colombia, was the site of our first pop-up in 2021, which ended in 2022. We returned to the city in 2023 for a second pop-up to reflect on what has changed and what has remained since we started our movement and conversations there. This second pop-up, which marked the conclusion of our presence in Medellín, wrapped up at the end of 2023. Here is an overview of the research, events, and insights we gained during our time in the city.

KEY LEARNINGS

- In Medellín, young people are more likely to be involved in the dynamics of insecurity - both in interactions with combos and as victims of different crimes. This in a context of high youth unemployment and institutions that are still weak in maintaining order and guaranteeing security to its inhabitants.
- Medellín has been adopting surveillance technologies to address security challenges in the city since around 2015. Technologies implemented in the city include monitoring and data analysis systems, such as CCTV cameras.
- There is still little use of artificial intelligence to analyze images or security patterns.



- Tools such as security cameras can work in the short term to reduce the number of crimes in the areas where they are installed and show results.
- Data analysis to understand the dynamics of security in the city is more promising for understanding and addressing the causes of insecurity, but requires more time, and is less visible, than other strategies.

- While the District of Medellín boasts a relatively robust institutional framework, the governance processes concerning security and coexistence are intricately tied to the coordination of various agencies and the articulation of public policies at national, regional, and local levels.
- There's a pressing need to shift the conversation on technologies and surveillance used in the city towards a citizen-centered perspective.
- There are calls from some sectors for greater transparency and openness in discussing the impacts of implementing these technologies and the accountability of the responsible institutions.

“HABLEMOS DE LA DIGITALIZACIÓN DE LA SEGURIDAD” | PARTNERSHIP WITH “HABLEMOS MEDELLÍN”

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/hablemos-medellin-report>

In 2023, Edgelands partnered with *Hablemos Medellín* to foster and implement a forum for dialogue and citizen advocacy for conversations among civil society of Medellín. It seeks to obtain citizens' opinions for deliberations leading to the election of the next city government.

This participatory survey is based on participatory dialogue designs aimed at providing citizen input for policy design.

MEDELLÍN FELLOWSHIP

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/portfolio/mini-fellowship-medellin>

As part of the Fellowship program offered by the Edgelands Institute, taking place between August and October 2023 in the city of Medellín, the Medellín Fellowship offers an opportunity for young researchers to engage in independent projects centered around the impacts of digitalization on security and the social contract within the context of Medellín. Over the course of three months, the fellows will become part of an interdisciplinary cohort of international fellows from the Edgelands Institute. Guided by our local community members and research associates, the participants developed an independent research project.

“MEDELLÍN: REFLECTIONS ON THE INTENSIVE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR URBAN SECURITY” | CLOSING RECOMMENDATIONS OF EDGELANDS MEDELLÍN

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/medellin-reflections-on-the-intensive-use-of-technology-on-urban-security>

Three years after the first Medellín Diagnostic Report we developed a new report where compile a series of reflections and conclusions on security, surveillance and technology for the city in the coming years. Reflections and Report for Edgelands 2nd pop-up and departure of the City. In view of the new municipal Administration term that began in 2024, we hope they will provide an opportunity to bring to the public conversation the importance of reflecting on the impact of the massive deployment of digital and surveillance technologies in the urban social contract. We also developed new questions that arose and that we consider fundamental to deepen this discussion. Enabling this debate in Medellín can have an impact on reflections around the digitization of security and surveillance in the country, and generate a precedent in this regard in Latin America and the global south.

The report includes a reflection on security and coexistence as we observe these elements in Medellín's social contract; an inventory of surveillance technologies that exist or are in the process of being designed or implemented by the city's local administration. It also incorporates a summary of the planning and governance ecosystem that surround the surveillance technologies used by the local administration.



CÚCUTA

At the start of 2022 we launched our work in Cúcuta, a medium-sized Colombian city on the border with Venezuela. Our aim for Cúcuta in 2023 was to carry out a smaller-scale pop up with the goal of comparing and contrasting how the border/immigration context influenced security and governance decisions and implications for the city's social contract. Through our research sprint program, community workshops and strengthening our local partnerships, we managed to set in motion relevant conversations for the security and tech governance of the city.

KEY LEARNINGS

- Cúcuta still experiences a complex political and security environment. Due to its proximity to the Venezuela border, it has been affected by various socio-political and economic challenges.
- In recent years, Cúcuta has witnessed significant migratory flows as Venezuelans seek refuge and better opportunities. This has posed both opportunities and challenges for the city in terms of managing resources, social integration, and economic stability.
- In terms of security, Cúcuta has experienced instances of criminal activities, including drug trafficking, contraband and transnational criminal bands involved in human trafficking and border activities. The city has made efforts to strengthen its security measures, collaborating with national authorities to combat organized crime and improve public safety.
- Politically, Cúcuta has been a focal point for discussions on border policies and regional development. The city's strategic location has positioned it as an important player in shaping cross-border relations and influencing regional dynamics.
- Local authorities, civil society organizations, and international actors have been actively engaged in addressing the challenges faced by Cúcuta. Efforts are being made to promote economic growth, social cohesion, and the protection of human rights for both the local population and Venezuelan migrants.
- An important lesson from humanitarian efforts and projects is that locals are included as beneficiaries and recipients of international aid. By including the local population in assistance projects, perceptions and inclusion of migrants improves.



“WE ARE RECORDING YOU CÚCUTA” | RESEARCH SPRINT

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/report-we-are-recording-you-cucuta>

Our participatory program is an educational initiative that gathers experts and emerging scholars to address current social, ethical, and policy concerns in digital technology. We partnered with Universidad de Santander to implement our program on the challenges of digitization of security in physical and digital spaces in Cucuta. Around 30 students from the law, architecture and social work schools participated in this initiative that brought them together with international and local experts to explore and reflect about the pressing and urgent challenges of security, surveillance and digitalization in the city of Cucuta.

“SOCIAL LAB: UNITE TO BUILD” | PARTNERSHIP WITH FUNDACIÓN MI SANGRE

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/portfolio/social-lab-cucuta>

With our implementing partner Fundacion Mi Sangre took place in March-April 2023 given grantees and implementing partners joint planning and scheduling. The participatory workshop created important engagement connections among diverse stakeholders and created dialogue and collaboration for common preoccupations regarding digitisation of security and concerns over surveillance.

“EDGELANDS CUCUTA: LEARNINGS FROM A FIRST POP-UP” | FINAL REPORT

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/final-report-cucuta>

This final report highlights the activities, outcomes and milestones of each of the initiatives and partnerships undertaken during Edgelands Cucuta. It concludes with a series of recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness and impact of future projects. Key recommendations include the need for a comprehensive communication strategy to bridge the gap between institutions and the public, and the need to understand the power of digital media to incite hatred and xenophobia.

GENEVA

Building on our work from 2022, we continued our efforts throughout 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland. We focused on hosting a series of multi-stakeholder discussion forums. These conversations aimed to reflect on the use of digital technologies for security in Geneva, the importance of transparency and trust, and to explore the role of digital integrity as an effective response to citizens' concerns. We concluded our first pop-up in Geneva in mid-2023, coinciding with an important milestone: 98% of Geneva's citizens voted to include the new right to digital integrity in their constitution.



KEY LEARNINGS

- Understanding perceptions and preferences about security and trust is critical to designing effective security policies. Factors such as gender, age and location influence how safe individuals feel, while trust in the government's ability to provide digital security varies across demographic groups.
- The presence of security cameras does not have a uniform effect on people's sense of security; for many, they act as evidence rather than a deterrent. What's more, the heavy reliance on technology by the police and government doesn't inherently make people feel safer.
- Younger people, in particular, show a heightened awareness of the risks of social media and emphasize personal responsibility in mitigating such threats.
- The lack of transparency and awareness of surveillance technologies exacerbates trust issues. Access to information about these technologies is proving difficult, leaving the public largely uninformed about their specifics and data processing. In addition, the lack of a comprehensive list of CCTV cameras in Geneva, coupled with limited signage, further obscures public awareness.

- Urgent action is needed to increase transparency, education and awareness of surveillance technologies in order to rebuild trust and promote informed decision-making.
- The challenges posed by increasing reliance on digital technologies are many and varied. A balance between individual responsibility, government action and private sector practices is essential to address these complex issues and calls for open and inclusive conversations to inform decision-making and protect human rights in our digitally connected world.

“WATCHING ME, WATCHING YOU” | PARTNERSHIP WITH MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHY

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/portfolio/magnum-x-edgelands-geneva>

For the second chapter of the Magnum Photos x Edgelands Institute initiative, photographer Thomas Dworzak documented the people of Geneva and their digital imprint. Based on Edgelands' diagnostic report on Geneva, Dworzak set out to use photography to tell the story of how the digitization of our daily lives affects our (in)security.

He followed ordinary Geneva citizens as they went about their daily lives, recording the digital traces they left behind, mostly unintentionally, and then researched and photographed the places where our digital lives are stored - an investigation that proved to be quite difficult and revealed the lack of transparency in data management.

At the end of his project, Thomas sent the research participants a "postcard" of the location where their digital double lives: a way to make us all aware of the physical distance that separates us from our digital integrity.

“WATCHING ME, WATCHING YOU: WHEN MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHERS OBSERVE WHAT IS OBSERVING US” | PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MUSEUM

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/blog/photographing-the-invisible-with-the-magnum-agency>

In February, at the International Museum of the Red Cross in Geneva, we had a panel discussion with the first two photographers involved in the Edgelands and Magnum Photographer partnership: Peter van Atgmael, who worked in Medellín, Colombia last spring, and Thomas Dworzak, who worked in Geneva.



“DROPPING THE PIN ON SURVEILLANCE” | PARTICIPATORY DATA INTERVENTION

Link: <https://www.edgeland.institute/portfolio/dropping-the-pin-on-surveillance-capturing-security-cameras-in-geneva>

“Dropping the Pin on Surveillance” was Edgeland’s first take on participatory data interventions. Its objective was to provide an entry point for a conversation around transparency and surveillance technologies in Geneva, and to start filling a gap in the lack of available information.

We invited people to photograph, geolocate, and register security cameras in Geneva. What happens when we watch what is watching us?

To catalog these cameras, we tested a participatory process that involved residents in the identification and recording of surveillance technologies. The result of this process was an initial map and photographic catalogue of security cameras in Geneva. These are inherently collaborative, and invite people to see the urban spaces where they move daily with different eyes.

The discussion revealed two different approaches to the medium of photography used in Edgeland’s research. It was observed that documentary photography is an artistic process that reveals hidden aspects of our environment, especially in relation to the digital surveillance system. This process highlights the tensions between surveillance technology and privacy.

In addition, photography can be used to reflect on our relationship with technology and privacy, drawing attention to the ethical implications of digital surveillance. Photographers challenge us to consider the limits of surveillance in a free and democratic society by capturing the tools of digital surveillance and the digital traces we leave behind.

“UNDER THE RADAR” | PARTNERSHIP WITH MATZA

Link: <https://www.edgeland.institute/portfolio/matza-edgeland>

UNDER THE RADAR was a MATZA Edgeland Geneva project that aimed to explore the interplay between security, identity, and digital interconnectedness within the context of minorities and collectives in Geneva. Local and international artists were invited to reflect on these themes, shedding light on the effects of digitalization on the social fabric of the city. The project culminated in an exhibition that provided a thought-provoking exploration of urban identities, collective spaces, and the power of digital networks.



Through engaging with the local community and international perspectives, the project fostered critical discussions and enriched our understanding of the intricate dynamics shaping contemporary society.

With the artists Félicien Goguet (FR), Lorca Devanne-Langlais (FR), Maxime Bondu (FR), Myriam Dalal (LB), Sabrina Fernandez Casas (CH-ESP), Shabu Mwangi (KEN), Tanguy Benoit (FR), Zulkifle Mahmud (SG) and Thomas Dworzak (DE).

“EDGELANDS, FOR SYNERGIE BETWEEN ART AND SCIENCE” | PARTNERSHIP WITH MATZA AND MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHY

During the UNDER THE RADAR exhibition, the Edgeland Institute held an expert panel in collaboration with Matza, with Laura Garcia (Edgeland Institute), Thomas Dworzak (Magnum Photography) and Séverin Guelpa (MATZA) and moderated by Yves Daccord (Edgeland Institute).

As well as reflecting on the lessons learnt from the different Edgeland cities, including the unique attitudes towards security that they have observed, the panelists also explored the need for interdisciplinarity to engage people in the issues surrounding the digitalisation of security, as well as the various challenges involved in combining

academic research and art. One of the biggest challenges highlighted was that these issues do not have a strong visual element, making it harder for artists to find ways to create an emotional connection with the public through their storytelling.

“DÉBAT EDGELANDS: L’INTÉGRITÉ NUMÉRIQUE ET LA SÉCURITÉ” | PARTNERSHIP WITH LIBRAIRIE L’OLIVER

Link: <https://vimeo.com/827558511>

As Geneva prepared to vote on the inclusion of the right to digital integrity in the Constitution, the Edgelands Institute invited Grégoire Barbey (Heidi News) and Solange Ghernaouti (UNIL) to talk about the challenges of "digital integrity", especially from the point of view of digital in/security, as our recent Edgelands survey showed that more than 80% of Genevois are concerned about this issue.

We then moved the discussion to the political sphere with Marie-Claude Sawerschel (Vert'libéraux Genevois), Dilara Bayrak (Les Vert. e. s) and Yacine Rezki (Le Centre Genève). During this debate, moderated by Bernard Rappaz (Edgelands Institute), experts, politicians and the public reflected on the potential of digital integrity as a constitutional right as an effective response to citizens' concerns.

Some of the reflections that emerged from this panel were:

- It is important for the state to take small actions that can help create a context in which digital technologies are used with respect for human rights (e.g. not using cameras with facial recognition).
- The increased use of digital technologies for security purposes is not a technical question, but a social and political one.
- Currently, one of the biggest threats (and challenges) is that private companies have a "legitimate" financial interest in collecting large amounts of data.
- This is an issue that is difficult to talk to people about because it is complex, and the solution will probably require individuals to sacrifice some of the goods they are used to.
- It is important to look at this issue in a transversal way, for example by thinking about the ecological impact of the increased use of digital technologies.

EDGELANDS MAPS WORKSHOP AT CFP SHR

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/blog/edgelands-maps-at-the-cfp-shr-in-geneva>

Edgelands Mapping Workshops are a methodology of the Edgelands Institute that seeks answers to people's understanding of concepts such as surveillance, security, coexistence, and general social contracts. We also analyze spaces that are considered safe or dangerous, both in physical and digital experiences.

On June 8, we held another edition of this workshop in Geneva, in a class at the Centre de Formation Professionnelle Services et Hôtellerie / Restauration (CFPSHR). Sophie Zermatten and Angel Tames De Sousa animated this workshop for twelve students aged between 16 and 21, from different backgrounds and districts of the city. The discussions were very interesting, both for us and for the participants.

The main results of the workshop show that, despite what we learned at the beginning of the Geneva project, there are indeed some populations that are more concerned about their physical security than their digital security.

"GENEVA IN THE DIGITAL AGE: EXPLORING EMERGING QUESTIONS FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF EDGELANDS GENEVA" | PARTNERSHIP WITH MAISON ROUSSEAU AND LITTÉRATURE

Link: <https://m-r-l.ch/tous-les-podcasts/contrat-social-numerique-geneve>

This event was an opportunity to reflect together on the journey we have been on with our various partners in Geneva, focusing on three central themes:

- Residents' perspectives and expectations regarding surveillance and security in Geneva.
- Transparency and the use of surveillance technologies for security purposes, the case of CCTV cameras.
- Digital security and the urban social contract

As part of this collective reflection, we also had a panel discussion, moderated by Bernard Rappaz (Edgelands Institute), with Laura Garcia (Edgelands Institute) and three esteemed guests who enriched our exploration: Nicolas Nova(HEAD), Grégoire Barbey (Heidi.News) and Donatella Bernardi (Maison Rousseau et Littérature). The different areas of expertise of the panelists led to complementary discussions on the topics. Some of the observations of this panel were:

1. Due to the increasing use of AI in various technologies, the need for discussion and education on AI, especially in surveillance and security, is becoming more and more important.
2. The abstract nature of technological advances such as AI makes it difficult for people to fully grasp and understand them. However, this should not prevent individuals from having a say in how they are used.
3. A common observation was the difficulty in having comprehensive discussions about the impact of the digitalization of security and its consequences for society.
4. The reference to Rousseau's "social contract" served as a historical reminder that educating citizens about new issues can be challenging, but not impossible. It also pointed to the need for a new social contract in the digital age.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/annotated-bibliography>

The annotated bibliography is an ongoing list of sources that will evolve over time.

The aim is to create a compilation of academic

studies, recent reports, news articles and regulations that deal with the digitization of surveillance in Geneva and Switzerland in general. Its purpose is to serve as a resource, providing easy access to a variety of materials related to the digitization of surveillance. It is divided into nine sections, each dealing with different aspects of the topic.

The collection includes a wide variety of resources, including laws, academic articles, reports, news articles, and blog posts.

NAIROBI

In October 2022, we began our research in Nairobi, a city at the heart of the East African region. Throughout 2023, we launched our pop-up initiative in the city, followed by artistic collaborations and the publication of a diagnostic report. We also organized conversation spaces to share and discuss some of our findings. These activities fostered engagement with local stakeholders and provided valuable insights into the city's unique challenges and opportunities.

KEY LEARNINGS

- There is a need to socialize/share the report with different stakeholders when it's still prime and contextualized so people can fully engage with us and open for discussion.
- Security and surveillance is a very sensitive topic in Nairobi that is not well understood by people outside of the space and the conversation is very guarded.
- When triggered, people are willing and keen to have the conversation and find solutions to best surveillance practices and keeping everyone safe.
- The conversation needs to be nuanced and contextualized, it's different from each part of the city.



NAIROBI DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

Link: <https://www.edgelandsinstitute/outcomes/nairobi-diagnostic-report>

Released the Nairobi Diagnostic Report which unveils Nairobi's historical ties to contemporary surveillance practices and sheds light on critical themes like terrorism, cybercrimes, and the use of CCTV cameras, analyzing surveillance technologies through regulatory, capability, and privacy lenses.

The report follows a chronology of events from pre-colonial Nairobi, with the use of analogue identification systems, *kipande*, used to monitor Kenyan laborers under the British imperialist system. This law mandated that domestic laborers had to carry a passbook that would carry records of workers' movements, wages, employment histories and criminal records using their biometric and identification details.

Nairobi's urban population expands rapidly over the years, resulting in the adoption of digitalised security tools deployed to complement the growing urban planning needs of Kenya's capital.

The report draws insights from experts in the security, law tech, public policy and governance sectors, highlighting the need for regulatory frameworks that interrogate the impacts of digital securities, subsequent ethical implications and the protection of fundamental human rights, with the goal of renegotiating Nairobi's social contract.

NAIROBI TWITTER SPACE | PARTNERSHIP WITH IDEATE POLICY

Link: <https://www.edgelandsinstitute.com/portfolio/nairobi-twitter-space-with-ideate-policy>

In collaboration with Ideate Policy, Edgeland Nairobi organized a twitter space to discuss the findings of the diagnostic report, and explore areas of interest for stakeholders in the digital security sector. The Twitter space moderated by Sumaiyah Omar, an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a Data Protection Officer included industry experts; Nanjira Sambuli, Policy Analyst and Strategist in gendered impacts of digitization and ICT adoption in Africa; Mugambi Laibuta, Advocate of the High

Court of Kenya, Policy Analyst and Privacy and Data Protection Specialist; and Njeri Wangari, poet, writer, communications specialist, and cultural practitioner.

The virtual panel discussion explored topics such as digital surveillance, the gendered impacts of security digitization, data privacy, transparency in procurement processes, socio-economic influences on surveillance technology deployment, and their effects on the social contract in Nairobi.

"WE ARE RECORDING YOU NAIROBI" | RESEARCH SPRINT

Link: <https://www.edgelandsinstitute.com/portfolio/we-are-recording-you-nairobi>

The 2023 Edgeland Research Sprint was held in Nairobi, carried out in partnership with the Lawyers Hub, a Pan-African digital law and data governance think-tank, exploring the challenges and opportunities of the increasing digitalization of Nairobi's security systems.

The sprint had 12 participants drawn from Legal, Social Sciences, Arts and Journalism field, interrogating the historical and current context of security, coexistence, and surveillance; privatization of security; approaches to public security policy in urban spaces; digital surveillance's pivotal role in

detering crime, identifying suspects, and collecting evidence; citizen surveillance, Digital IDs in Africa, and the use of biometrics in surveillance for safety and security and among other topics at the intersection of data, democracy, and digital life.

The early career research professionals received talks from experts in security interventions and surveillance around the continent, hands-on research support and guidance from Researchers in the area of law tech policy and governance.

Outcomes from this 8-week program were in two Edgeland Institute Podcast episodes:

- ‘Unintended consequences of tech-assisted surveillance’ where the researchers discussed their findings from a perception survey and desktop research, examining existing security legislation, surveillance technology as a deterrent to crime and the subsequent legal and ethical issues.
- ‘Digitised Nyumba Kumi’ an exchange of views on how Nairobi’s community policing leverages social media such as the use of Whatsapp, Twitter and Meta platforms to monitor, report and intervene in various security challenges, complementing the work of law enforcement.

MAGNUM X EDGELANDS PROJECT

Link: <https://www.edgelandsinstitute/portfolio/magnum-x-edgeland-nairobi-2>

Worked with Magnum photographer, Lindo to show surveillance in some parts of Nairobo through photography. Lindo explored different ways of showcasing surveillance on busy streets in Nairobi and in the informal settlement of Mukuru. To best showcase this, Lindo used a camera obscura to best depict how surveillance works in Nairobi.

Workshop with photographers in Mukuru

As part of the partnership with Magnum, we held a workshop with young photographers from Mukuru to train them on how best to cover surveillance, what it means to them and how they can be effective photo storytellers on surveillance and security in their neighborhoods.



“DIGITAL INFORMALITIES” | PARTNERSHIP WITH MATZA

Link: <https://www.edgeland.institute/portfolio/matza-edgeland-nairobi>

DIGITAL INFORMALITIES was a complete immersion in the informal settlement of Lunga-Lunga. Our aim was to explore and understand how and if digital technologies have contributed to the emergence of new social/economic reciprocities within the community. While digital tools contribute to increasing state control or surveillance within the population, we aim to explore how they can also foster opportunities and creative strategies among residents, ultimately leading to increased security and empowerment.



In addition to our work in cities, the Edgelands Institute carried out a series of research, academic, and art projects that complemented and advanced our work in cities.

“GOVERNING AND SURVEILLING: TOWARDS AN AUDITING FRAMEWORK FOR ALGORITHMIC ACCOUNTABILITY IN URBAN SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY”

Link to report: <https://www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/governing-and-surveilling-2>

Researchers: Alexandre Hünenberger, Iris Raith, Samuel Smith

For the past two years, the Edgelands Institute has been a partner organization of the Geneva Graduate Institute's Applied Research Project (ARP), in which small groups of researchers conduct policy-relevant research on various topics, including conflict and security.

In 2023, Edgelands worked with three researchers to investigate the use of algorithmic surveillance in cities, examining the increasing use of computing power in urban surveillance. While algorithmic surveillance promises to be cost-effective and improve public safety, it also raises concerns about

individual rights and privacy due to its pervasive and intrusive nature.

The final report explored the components needed for an effective algorithmic oversight framework to ensure the responsible use of algorithmic tools in urban surveillance. The researchers analyzed and compared 17 existing auditing frameworks related to surveillance, algorithms and artificial intelligence, and ultimately developed a best practice framework for algorithmic surveillance technologies (AST).

“SECURITY TECHNOLOGY: APPROACHES TO ITS GOVERNANCE”

Link to report: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UFVNB_QHVRSI8SOOXkH-mn7Oym2lc9Qt/view

Cities are increasingly utilizing technological innovations, particularly Smart City technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to address pressing challenges and enhance municipal efficiency. Despite slow progress in national and regional AI governance frameworks, some cities have embraced AI Localism, taking the lead in developing and implementing policies more directly and contextually. AI Localism examples include New York and Oakland's municipal ordinances on surveillance technology and high-speed internet projects in cities like Hong Kong and Seoul.

However, there's limited focus on AI governance in developing country cities.

This project explores AI Localism in the context of security technologies, using Medellín, Colombia, as a case study. Medellín's unique approach to AI and security technology governance, observed through its public procurement practices, highlights challenges and limitations without comprehensive policy instruments. The city, known for fostering technology and innovation, especially in urban security operations, serves as a valuable case study for similar cities in the Global South, offering lessons for implementing security technologies.

EDGELANDS FELLOWSHIP

Meet the fellows here: <https://www.edgelands.institute/blog/welcome-to-our-new-edgelands-fellows>

During the second half of 2023 we hosted a cohort of 10 fellows from equally diverse backgrounds: lawyers, writers, urban planners, engineers, artists etc. Fellows developed an ongoing research project and contributed to the Edgelands body of knowledge through blog post entries and long-format (publishable) academic manuscripts or working papers during the second semester of 2023.

Our Fellowship Program offers an opportunity for early-career and advanced-career scholars, artists, and researchers to contribute to our research agenda. Throughout the program, fellows embark on independent research projects that align with our research interests. The projects are designed to make meaningful contributions to our understanding of the complex intersection between digitalization, urban security, and society.

To foster collaboration and exchange of ideas, fellows participate in monthly meetings with their peers. These gatherings provide a supportive environment where fellows can discuss their progress, share discoveries, and learn from one another's experiences. During these meetings, fellows engage in constructive feedback sessions and receive guidance from a dedicated mentor, who provides valuable insights and support throughout the program.

EDGELANDS INSTITUTE ARTBOOK

Link to report: <https://www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/art-book>

Through a collection of stunning photographs and thoughtful texts, the authors of this art book have documented their experiences and perspectives

on the various projects in four Edgelands cities, providing a unique insight into the cultural, social and political landscapes of the four different cities. The book's photographs capture the social urban contract of each city, showcasing its architecture, people and urban landscapes. From the vibrant street art of Medellín to the bustling markets of Cúcuta, from the lively neighborhoods of Nairobi to the quiet streets of Geneva, each image tells a story and offers a glimpse into the lives of the people who call these cities home.

The book's text explores themes such as the urban social contract, the digitalisation of security, surveillance and technology. The authors' perspectives on each project provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that arise at the intersection of these issues in each city. Together, the photographs and texts create a powerful narrative that challenges our perceptions of what it means to live in an urban environment. The Edgelands Institute art book is a testament to the power of art and photography to tell compelling stories and inspire us to see the world in new and exciting ways.

INTRODUCING "EDGAR" | PARTNERSHIP WITH HESTIA.AI

Link: <https://www.edgelands.institute/blog/announcing-our-partnership-with-hestia-ai-digital-integrity-conversational-chatbot>

In an exciting collaboration, Edgelands has partnered with Hestia.ai, the developers and creators of Argo - an artificial intelligence platform that enables users to create intelligent agents tailored to their unique needs.

Using Argo, we will curate the knowledge of an agent with expertise in digital integrity and security, drawing on both Edgelands' knowledge base and relevant academic and legal sources. With each conversation, we will refine this agent's knowledge base, incorporating insights and conclusions from these inter-cities discussions.

This agent aims to catalyze discussion and inspire innovative approaches to the challenges of digitizing security and its impact on coexistence.

LOOKING AHEAD: PLANS FOR 2024

2024 promises to be an exciting year as our work expands to Nairobi and Houston, while fostering collaboration between the various Edgelands cities and networks.

In Nairobi, our focus remains on bringing Edgelands research and thinking to the forefront. Through platforms such as podcasts and op-eds, we'll engage stakeholders and foster dialogue on critical issues such as digital security and surveillance, with a particular focus on AI and privacy. Stakeholder events and discussions will serve as avenues to deepen our understanding and refine our approaches.

Meanwhile, our expansion into Houston, our fifth Edgelands city, marks an exciting new chapter. Here we will turn our attention to exploring the digitalisation of security within the public education system. The launch of our diagnostic report in fall 2024 will mark the beginning of our presence in the city, complemented by a series of events integrating art and research to stimulate stakeholder dialogue.

It is worth mentioning that at the end of 2023 we were awarded a grant of one hundred thousand dollars by the Digital Infrastructure Insights Fund (funded by the Ford and Sloan Foundations) to conduct a research project on the use of Open Source Software and cyber-vulnerabilities by city governments. This project will be executed throughout 2024.

Beyond our endeavors in Nairobi and Houston, our fourth-year strategy underscores the importance of connectivity among the Edgelands cities and networks. We'll curate spaces for sharing experiences, insights and solutions, fostering collaboration and cross-pollination of ideas among stakeholders.

At the heart of this collaborative effort is the Edgelands Symposium, which will provide a platform for Fellows and Edgelanders from different regions to showcase their work and engage in collective reflection on relevant issues. In addition, as the second iteration of Edgelands Geneva, a series of six inter-city conversations on the right to digital integrity will refine our understanding and explore implications across Edgelands cities, enriching our collective insights on digital security and urban coexistence.

We will also continue to build on the foundations laid in the Art Book, using it as a tool for reflection and connection. This approach will allow us to synthesize our findings and reflections across the Edgelands cities, fostering a cohesive approach to our work.

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