

Professor William John Mitchell

The degree of Doctor of Science in Architecture (honoris causa) was conferred upon Professor William John Mitchell at the Education & Social Work graduation ceremony held at 4.00pm on 23 March 2007.



The Chancellor the Hon Kim Santow with Professor Mitchell at the conferring ceremony, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present William John Mitchell for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science in Architecture, *honoris causa*.

Professor Mitchell is the Alexander W Dreyfus Professor of Architecture and Media Arts and Sciences, and Director of the Design Laboratory, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Visiting Professor of Design Computing and Architecture in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at this University. Prior to this he was Head of the Media Arts and Science Program at MIT; Dean, School of Architecture and Planning at MIT; Travelstead Professor of Architecture at Harvard University; Professor and Head of Architecture / Urban Design at UCLA.

He graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1967 with a Bachelor of Architecture and completed a Master of Environmental Design at Yale and a Master of Arts at Cambridge in quick succession becoming a lecturer in the Department of Architecture at Cambridge in 1978. He moved to UCLA in 1980 and to Harvard as Professor of Architecture in 1986. He was appointed Professor and Dean at MIT in 1992, where he still holds a chair, directs the Design Lab and is the architectural advisor to the President of MIT. He is also on the editorial boards of leading journals in architecture and urbanism as well as on that of The MIT Press.

Professor Mitchell has had a long relationship with this University's Faculty of Architecture, principally through its Key Centre for Design Computing and was a Visiting Professor in the Faculty in 1985.

Professor Mitchell has made seminal contributions that have changed the landscape of architecture and urban design and planning, architectural and urban design research and architectural and urban design teaching worldwide. They have had significant impacts on related domains of computer-aided design, planning, and planning policy.

In three books (*City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn.*; *e-topia: Urban Life, Jim, But Not as We Know It*; and *. Me++: The Cyborg Self and the Networked City*) that build on his research over three decades, Professor Mitchell redefines the world within which designers and planners operate from the physical to the virtual. He demonstrates how the internet, the world wide web, the telecommunications networks and the continual and continuing digitization of human knowledge and activity have created a new world that has destroyed geography as we knew it and changed our perception of what our world could be like.

In *City of Bits* he wrote:

“The texts that follow reimagine architecture and urbanism in the new context suggested by these observations - that of the digital telecommunications revolution, the ongoing miniaturization of electronics, the commodification of bits, and the growing domination of software over materialized form. They adumbrate the emergent but still invisible cities of the twenty-first century. And they argue that the most crucial task before us is not one of putting in place the digital plumbing of broadband communications links and associated electronic appliances (which we will certainly get anyway), nor even of producing electronically deliverable "content," but rather one of imagining and creating digitally mediated environments for the kinds of lives that we will want to lead and the sorts of communities that we will want to have.”

The ideas in these books have laid the foundations for a paradigm change in the perception of space and self in relation to space and will have a profound impact on the way we produce our environments and equally importantly what they are and can become and consequentially on the way we will live.

Chancellor, for this outstanding contribution to architecture and urbanism I have great pleasure in presenting to you William John Mitchell admission to the degree of Doctor of Science in Architecture, honoris causa.