Issue 22: AI, Digitalization, and the Next Frontier of Regional Development



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Regions e-zine in 2025

In 2025, *we're* excited to focus the Regions e-zine on "Transforming Regional Economies," aligning perfectly with the Regional Studies Association's research priorities. The dynamic landscape of regional development is shifting due to technology, economic changes, and new policies. Our 2025 issues will explore this fascinating transformation through three engaging sub-themes: resilience, technological change, and place-based development. We can't wait to dive into these vital topics together!

Regions e-zine is committed to engaging policymakers and early-career researchers. We welcome diverse perspectives from academics, practitioners, and policymakers who can contribute insights into past experiences and future directions in regional economic transformation.

Regions e-zine priority target groups for contributors in 2025:

1. **Policymakers** – Translating cutting-edge research into actionable insights that inform regional policy and governance.
2. **Early Career Researchers** – Providing a platform to showcase innovative research and contribute to academic and policy discussions.

Issue 22: Embracing AI, Digitalization, and the Future of Regional Development

Exciting advancements in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and automation are transforming our regional economies, job markets, and governance systems. This issue explores the profound impact of AI and digital transformation on shaping economic landscapes, policymaking, and regional innovation.

The accelerating wave of digital transformation—driven by advances in artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and big data—has begun to reconfigure the landscape of regional development profoundly. This issue of *Regional Insights* explores the emerging dynamics at the intersection of AI and regional policy, examining both the disruptive potentials and the transformative opportunities presented by digitalization across diverse territorial contexts.

We critically investigate how AI is reshaping regional economies, from redefining value chains and labour markets to influencing the governance of innovation systems. Particular attention is given to the role of smart cities, data-driven policymaking, and digital infrastructure as engines of place-based development. Simultaneously, the issue raises concerns about the risks of digital divides and the imperative of ensuring inclusive transitions for remote, peripheral, and cross-border regions.

Our key areas of exploration include:

- The exciting potential of AI-driven economic growth across industries.
- The significance of smart cities, modern digital infrastructure, and informed data-driven policymaking.
- Addressing the vital challenges of digital inclusion and effectively adapting our workforce to new technologies.
- Understanding the impacts of AI and digitalization on remote, peripheral, and cross-border regions.

This issue is closely aligned with RSA topics like Digitalization, AI Impact, Innovation, Workforce Trends, and Spatial Economy. Let’s embark on this journey together!

If you are interested in submitting something ,then contact us at office@regionalstudies.org and we will work closely with you to help your article appear in a way most interesting to our readership.

Focus Areas

We welcome contributions that address (but are not limited to) the following topics:

- **AI-driven regional economic development**: sectoral transformations, productivity shifts, and regional competitiveness.
- **Smart cities and digital infrastructure**: their evolving roles in spatial planning, urban-rural integration, and governance.
- **Data-driven policymaking**: opportunities and tensions in algorithmic regulation and real-time regional intelligence.
- **Digital inclusion and workforce adaptation**: skill transitions, remote work, and strategies to prevent digital marginalization.
- **Peripheral, remote, and cross-border regions**: challenges and innovations in achieving digital equity.
- **AI’s role in reshaping innovation ecosystems**: entrepreneurial dynamics, knowledge spillovers, and regional innovation policies.

Relevance to RSA Themes

This issue connects with core topics of the **Regional Studies Association (RSA)**, including:

- Digitalization and AI
- Innovation and Technological Change

- Labour Markets and Demographic Change
- Spatial Economy and Governance

Timeline

- **Abstract submission deadline:** *15 August 2025*
- **Full contribution deadline:** *15 September 2025*
- **Publication date:** *Late September 2025*

Submission Guidelines

We encourage accessible, research-informed pieces between **1,200–2,000 words**, including:

- Short essays or commentaries
- Case study insights
- Practitioner reflections
- Policy briefs
- Visual data narratives

Contributions should aim to engage a broad, international readership of scholars, policymakers, and regional development professionals.

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Theme	***Transforming Regional Economies***

Issue 21	**Reflecting on the Past, Shaping the Future – Lessons from 60 Years of the Regional Studies Association**	**Published**
Issue 22 September 2025	**AI, Digitalization, and the Next Frontier of Regional Development**	**Submission deadline: August 25th Publication date: The first week of September 2025**
Issue 23 December 2025	**Building Resilient and Sustainable Regional Economies – The Role of Place-Based Strategies**	Submission deadline: December 8th Publication date: The second week of December 2025

Regions is the voice of the membership of the Regional Studies Association.

Best regards,

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