

Summary



New Working Environments in Libraries / Factors in Designing and Planning Up-to-Date Workplaces for Library Staff (Olaf Eigenbrodt)

(pp. 396 – 401)

Recently there has been considerable discussion about new styles and methods of work in libraries. Not only technological changes due to digitalization of the workplace but also the transformation of the culture of work into an agile, process-driven workday have led to new approaches in staff management, personnel development and the technical equipping of workplaces within libraries. It is also necessary to provide space, quite literally, for creativity, teamwork and a flexible workflow. However, difficulties are encountered within both existing buildings and recently designed facilities because the appropriate spatial structure is often lacking.

The noticeable gap, which constitutes the spatial manifestation of modern work culture in the area of the library staff's workplaces, should not blind us to the idea that our future work surroundings are inextricably linked with the question of how we want to work. The design and organization of our work world, regardless of type of library, have an immediate influence upon the innovativeness and the corporate culture of a library.

It is obvious that when changes are made to organizational culture it is necessary to take a participative approach to the planning of staff members' working spaces, a method already known from user participation. In the course of the planning process, the funding organization and the building authorities must be won over to the idea that new working environments – even while conforming to the legal regulations for employee safety – will lead to unavoidable deviations from the previously well-worn paths of office planning and KPI-based space optimization, without necessarily requiring more space or financial investment.

University as Workplace / A Little »New Work« Is Not Bad (Cornelia Vonhof)

(pp. 408 – 410)

Instructors of the Faculty for Information and Communication at Stuttgart's Hochschule der Medien (Stuttgart Media University) have been working since 2014 in shared office spaces. Though originally not entirely voluntarily, the response of the teaching staff after four years is on the whole positive. The goal that prompted this choice has been achieved. By moving closer together, space was freed up for meeting rooms, for telephone and teleconference rooms, and for quiet spaces needed for very intensive, concentrated work.

Happily, the claims by proponents of shared office space have proven true: communication within teams has been noticeably more intensive and appreciably improved. The work life of a professor is in fact a very lonely business and surprisingly low on interactive situations. This is changed by being in a shared office space. Many times it is possible to clarify questions, to initiate discussions and to exchange collegial information more easily from one desk to another. In previous times it would have been necessary to convene a formal meeting.

Even with this positive balance it must also, of course, be recognized that we, as teachers at university level, have special working conditions. None of us sit every day from morning to evening at a desk in the university. When we are there we hold lectures and seminars, sit on committees, or hold talks with students, colleagues and visitors. For the most part we can freely choose our place of work and for intensive periods of work -- such as writing an article, doing research, preparing teaching sessions, etc. -- we can elect freely whether to work at home, in a shared working space, or in the library. This new form of cooperation requires everyone to bring along a certain amount of consideration and self-discipline, as well as, from time to time, a proper measure of tolerance and a spirit of compromise.

A Spectacular Library Facility in China / Tianjin-Binhai Attracted Over One Million Visitors in Five Months (Xiufeng Liu)

(pp. 416 – 420)

The new Tianjin-Binhai Library is considered the most important public library in the newly developed municipal district of Binhai in the metropolis of Tianjin in eastern China. Construction began in March 2015 and the library celebrated its inaugural opening on October 1, 2017. In the next five months more than one million people visited the library, and books in the library collection were borrowed more than 600,000 times.

The library is located in the Tianjin-Binhai Cultural Center. With five upper floors and a lower level, the building is 29.6 meters (97 feet) high. The ground floor has two main entrances and marks a point of intersection between the cultural promenade to the west and a city park to the east. The library can hold up to 1.2 million books and offers 1,200 seats and desks for readers. It is open eleven hours per day, closing only on Monday mornings for maintenance work. At present the library holds 300,000 books and subscribes to over 1,400 Chinese magazines and 40 Chinese newspapers. In addition, it offers a collection of foreign-language books, magazines and newspapers. In the first half-year of 2018 the library planned to expand its collection to between 500,000 and 600,000 books and make a considerable addition to its foreign-language collection. Furthermore, the databases, which currently require 18 terabytes of storage, are being expanded step-by-step.

The Tianjin-Binhai Cultural Center is an extensive complex with a total surface area of 312,000 m² (3,358,340 sq.ft.) and houses, alongside the library, an art gallery, a museum of technology, a hall for public events and a recreational center – all connected by a glass-roofed promenade. The library was the first part to be opened to the public and has been a major attraction from the beginning.

Translated by Martha Baker