

# work|spaces

examining where individuals and  
occupations intersect

senior design studio graduate project  
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# contents

- 3 context
- 4 motivations
- 5 research goals
- 6 design objectives
- 7 deliverables

# context

Spaces. We all inhabit different ones. We have spaces that are private, ones that are public, and ones that we share with a select few. Sometimes we hold the responsibility for defining these spaces, and in other cases they are defined for us. We work somewhere, play somewhere, and rest somewhere.

On average, a bit less than a third of our lives are spent working. There have been innumerable texts on the psychology of the workplace. Governments have crafted regulations and standards on everything from the number and placement of windows, to the width of spaces between desks. People, however, do not often neatly fall into standard definitions.

One of the questions that we can ask ourselves is, "How do we intersect with these spaces in which we spend so much of our time?" There is an invisible line between how we shape the spaces where we work, and how they shape us. This line, and the different places where it falls for different people is the subject of this project.

# motivations

4

Having struggled to define and shape my own working area into a space which supports and encourages my work, I have become increasingly interested in how other people define their spaces. Looking at the studios of artists and designers has always been fascinating for me. They seem to hold so much of the creative process laid out throughout them in physical form.

The impact that the design and organization (or lack thereof) of these spaces have on the people working in them is often quite interesting. This has led me to wonder further about how people shape and define their spaces on a wider scale. From the person covering the walls of a tiny cubicle with stuffed animals, to the person who chooses to work only in the deepest caves accessible to man, they all play a role in making their working space, and they all are faced by constraints.

I think every workplace has a story to tell about the person to whom it belongs, and I want to help tell those stories.

# research goals

In order to complete the project to its fullest potential, substantial research will be required in a couple primary areas:

## Personal Interviews

Since I am not writing a textbook on workplace organizational guidelines, and wish to provide a personal, individual, and intimate understanding of how people relate to their working spaces, first-hand accounts will be required. I plan to conduct a series of initial interviews, some of which have been completed, in which I will engage in informal, but directed, conversation on the nature of the individual's working space and how they feel about it.

The individuals selected for these interviews will be people occupying a range of occupations, ranging from creative professionals and academics to sales people and tradesmen. Through this I hope to gain a broad view of the issues which arise when people and spaces intersect.

This will allow me to distill my thesis further, and choose the most salient points for examination in the final project deliverable.

## State of the Art Research

In order to avoid drawing unsupported conclusions from the information gained through the interviews, I will need to achieve an understanding of how people have been found to relate to workspaces.

By reviewing a selection of the wide range of material available on the topic of workplace psychology, I will attempt to formulate a basic awareness of the previous scientific research in the area. In order to better evaluate and understand people's physical reactions to their spaces, I will be consulting with accredited professionals in the field of occupational health and therapy.

# design objectives

6

1. To determine and illustrate commonalities and differences in how individuals relate to their working spaces throughout a range of occupations.
2. Provide an insight for the audience on a variety of ways in which they can shape and influence their working spaces to help improve their lives.
3. To satisfy the voyeuristic desire to see and better understand aspects of other people's lives in a visually engaging manner.

# deliverables

7

The end result of this project has yet to be determined. It will likely take the form of a printed publication, in order to reach a diverse, yet selective, audience. The current intention is to have a highly photo-based deliverable that will engage the viewer through a series of polished portraits of individuals and their workspaces.

The principle task of the images will be to reinforce the ideas and thoughts expressed by the individuals. The hope is to generate enough content for a complete book, ranging from 100-200 pages, including both text and image content.

While it is likely out of the scope of this project, the potential also exists for the creation of a supporting web-based component, serving either as an alternative platform for the content, or solely as a tool for promotion of the main print deliverable.