Academic articles on open-plan: General


**Academic articles on open-plan: Universities**


**Online newspaper and magazine articles/Websites: General**


As more employers adopt an open design plan with few private offices — or even cubicles — Pankaj Arora and his young information technology innovation team at Microsoft are bucking the trend.


Remi Ayako, UQ “Most employees these days find themselves in an open plan space where it is hard for them to be themselves,” says Ayoko. “While open plan offices can promote collaboration and communication, they can also produce conflict and negative emotions, poor productivity and poor well being.”


Evans, C. (2014, November 3). The importance of giving staff their space. ilm [Website]. Retrieved from https://www.i-lm.com/Insight/Edge/2014/November/Giving-staff-their-space
A staggering 85% of office workers around the world are unhappy in an open-plan office, according to a recent survey. The most common problems cited are lack of privacy, and its spin offs; noise distraction, being too approachable and the spreading of illness.


The 2013 US Workplace Survey found that workplace effectiveness in America has fallen by 6% since 2008, when the firm carried out its first survey.

It’s not surprising that many people don’t like cubicle life. But recently we’ve noticed a particular amount of disgust directed toward the once-revolutionary open-office layout. What was supposed to be the ultimate space for collaboration and office culture was having the opposite effect.


Microsoft’s corporate campus in suburban Seattle is inhabited by unrepentant cave dwellers. The company’s private-office bias stems from the belief of its founders, William H. Gates and Paul Allen, that software programmers work best in the solitude of individual offices. No one has disagreed since. “Every time we revisit the issue of having open-plan offices, it is roundly rejected,” said Nick MacPhee, the general manager of real estate and facilities. “The reaction borders between horror and hysteria.”


There is something of a backlash underway against open plan working, with research and surveys beginning to show that both employees and managers are unconvinced of the benefits. A study in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* questioned 42,000 US office workers from 303 buildings, some based in open plan and others in smaller private offices. Researchers concluded that open plan layouts that are disruptive due to “uncontrollable noise and loss of privacy” were outperformed by enclosed private offices. Another study found extreme antipathy to the noise and distraction of open plan. What people valued was the ability to focus on their jobs with as few distractions as possible.

Our results categorically contradict the industry-accepted wisdom that open-plan layout enhances communication between colleagues and improves occupants’ overall work environmental satisfaction,” the study’s authors write in the Journal of Environmental Psychology, adding that “the open-plan proponents’ argument that open-plan improves morale and productivity appears to have no basis in the research literature. Kim and deDear


Tom Wright, a Sydney architect and an expert in office design, says the days of the off-the-shelf office plan may be numbered. “There has been some movement back to more defined, enclosed spaces,” Wright says.


IBM’s Santa Teresa Laboratory—Architectural design for program development; McCue, Gerald M.; *IBM Systems Journal*, 1978, Volume: 17, Issue: 1.


“Would it be smart to save $5,000 over the course of a year by putting a highly valued, expensive employee in open space, where that person won’t do the best possible job? We don’t think so.” — Nick MacPhee, Microsoft.


The report follows on from research published in September by office furniture specialists Steelcase and research company IPSOS, which found that insufficient privacy in the workplace was a worldwide problem. The survey of 10,500 workers in Europe, North America and Asia found that over 85 per cent of employees were dissatisfied with their office environment and were struggling to concentrate. Respondents were losing up to 86 minutes per day to distractions, and 31 per cent reported they had to leave their offices to complete their work due to lack of private space. The 11 per cent of workers who had more privacy and were more satisfied with their workplace overall were also the most engaged.
Online newspaper and magazine articles/Websites: Universities


From research conducted into the effectiveness of these spaces it is apparent that one solution does not work for every institution, nor every staff member. At Loughborough University and MIT they have opted for a Combi office solution for their Department of Civil and Building Engineering and Stata Centre respectively. Although positively received by most staff at both institutions, there has also been some criticism by staff at the Stata Centre, where particular staff now chose to work from home.


This has been tried at my Russell Group University business school. The results however have not been good. Staff choose to work at home as much as they can which means they are even less accessible to students and/or each other. So much for student experience or collegiality. Students don't have access to the open plan for security and confidentiality reasons so lecturers can only be met by appointment in a formal meeting room setting. No more informal chats with staff or knocking on their doors! It also contradicts our research culture as I doubt many papers are written in the open plan. Curiously, managers have managed to keep offices while your average academics have been squeezed into rooms with 25 desks.


**The history of open-plan office design**


**Articles/Websites on the ‘combi-office’**


**Sick building syndrome**


SBS seems to be associated with certain types of buildings. Most cases occur in open plan offices.


**Audio-visual**


The monotonous two-by-two cubicles of the open-plan office have been with us since the middle of last century. But new research suggests it may be time to rethink our workplaces.


**Books**
