

FOCUS WORK IN THE MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKPLACE

Focus Work in the Multigenerational Workplace

Research Findings

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Abstract

The world of work is in transition. Alternative workplaces, flexible employment contracts, technology and the workforce itself all influence how and where work gets done. Four generations are working in the office for the first time in history. This multigenerational trend is expected to continue as the population ages and remains in the workforce longer. Attracting, retaining and engaging workers of all ages will be increasingly significant considerations for employers. Generational, cultural and workplace trends will influence the interior designer's practice of office design.

Bridging design practice experience and the scholarly culture, this research explores the focus (concentration) work of mobile knowledge workers who gather, interpret and transform information for business purposes. Offered the choice (1) where are these mobile knowledge workers getting their focus work done? (2) Why, how and when are they selecting these locations? (3) What physical, operational or social attributes are important in selecting these locations? (4) Do these location decisions vary by generational cohort? This study seeks to identify patterns relating to how or where office workers do their focus work.

A survey was created and administered at two non-profit organizations in downtown Chicago, using a convenience sample of office workers (N=24). Participants represented four generational cohorts. The two sites offered a range of office and workstation configurations and a range of alternative work policies.

The findings revealed that the generation of employees has little bearing on how and where they chose to do their focus work. Rather, factors of personality and job description were more descriptive indicators of their focus work patterns. Participants desire the ability to do focus work from different locations, but prefer most their office or workstation. As expected, distractions and interruptions are an inhibitor; however the amount of participant self-inflicted distraction, largely in the form of email, further exacerbated the issue.

The primary factor in the selection of focus work locations is access to resources and technology. While participants wanted the “freedom of place” to conduct work, findings from the two research site locations show that remote work was often limited to emails. The use of technology is driven by the nature of the focus work, the same technology being used in different ways by different users depending on the circumstances. Similarly, access to technology, resources and place impact what work is done where. Together these findings suggest that personality and job description, rather than generation, influence how and where focus work is done.

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Introduction

Four Narratives

The following four stories are a composite of participant responses and describe the issues surrounding how and where mobile knowledge workers chose to do their focus work. These initiating narratives (Dohr & Portillo, 2011) provide a context, suggest the complexity and offer an interpretation of the overall study findings.

Marian is a Baby Boomer, but is quick to point out that she does not work like her peers. She is a big user of Face Book and Twitter and is an early adopter of technology. Her files are in the cloud and her music is on Spotify. She claims that while many of her friends are chained to their desks doing emails, she is mobile with everything on her Droid. She declares, “I work younger.” All this technology is instrumental in how she gets her focus work done. She does things like inserting audio for comments into PDF files; she uses video conferencing software for local and long distance meetings; and she integrates social media networks into her marketing strategies. She recalls, “Hey, I got one of the first Palm Pilots back in the day. I’ve always loved this stuff.”

Lou is forty years old and a member of Generation X. For the last fifteen years, he has been climbing the corporate ladder in a series of jobs. He recalls old timer’s talk about getting better carpet or a couch with every major promotion. However, Lou was perfectly delighted with his 150SF perimeter private office. And in reality, he was not in much anyway, with travel and meetings. So when this new job opportunity came up, Lou agreed to meet with the CEO at his offices. The exterior of the building seemed ordinary enough, but the interior was wild with bright colors, a pool table and NO offices. While he was being escorted through the space to a conference room, all he saw was cubicles. He figured that there must be an executive floor somewhere. How did these people get their work done? Lou took that job and now resides *in*

one of those cubicles. One year later, he cannot say that he is completely acclimated to this open environment, but he has to admit that his habits are pretty much the same as they have been everywhere else he has worked.

Joan is a Baby Boomer senior executive. She says she gets her best work done at the airport, the more chaos in the background the better, recalling a couple missed flights because she was so engrossed. She runs the customer service department for her organization. She has 10 direct reports locally and another 10 spread out in the regions. Joan does not get any of her focus work done in the day. She wonders, “How can I say to my IT director, don’t interrupt me, I’m trying to get something done here.” Or how can she tell one of her meeting planners with an east coast deadline to “put it in an email and she’ll get back to her *tomorrow*?” In all her previous jobs, even before the management roles, she needed to be readily available to her staff and to her clients. When asked about ducking into a conference room to get something done, she says she can, but will only rarely resort to that. This job demands access. Joan’s focus work of analysis and reporting has always been done after hours.

Roberto is a 26 year old Millennial with a knack for numbers. His accounting position is responsible for specific projects and he usually collaborates with his team only quarterly. For Roberto, technology is integrated into everything he does at work and at home. He works hard to stay focused on his projects in the day so he does not have to stay late. Actually, he can’t take work from home because he needs access to reports and databases that are only available at the office. Of course he uses email, but often he’ll use the phone to get a more immediate answer. This work is sequential and he cannot proceed to the next step until the current one is complete. Roberto likes things in order and organizes his workspace for maximum efficiency. He cites his

mentor, a Traditionalist senior auditor in the company, as the person who helped him to devise strategies to manage the distractions of emails and colleagues in the open office environment.

Statement of Purpose

Bridging practice experience and the scholarly culture, this research explores the focus (concentration) work of mobile knowledge workers; who gather, interpret and transform information for business purposes. Offered the choice: (1) where are these mobile knowledge workers getting their focus work done? (2) Why, how and when are they selecting these locations? (3) What physical, operational or social attributes are important in selecting these locations? (4) Do these location decisions vary by generational cohort? Study findings can inform interior design practitioners in their development of corporate office environments.

While expanding upon research in *The Welcoming Workplace: designing for ageing knowledge workers*, Erlich and Bichard (2008) discuss the implications of getting work done in the office. Open plan environments support “short attention span, multi-tasking and communicative types of work,” (p. 280). Their study findings suggest three categories of spaces: *collaboration*, dedicated project or team spaces, *contemplation*, spaces for relaxing or creating new ideas free from distraction and surveillance and *concentration*, spaces separated from noise and interruption for detailed tasks of analysis and interpretation. Examination of *The Welcoming Workplace* (TWW) framework of *spaces for concentration* has informed and serves as a model for this research. TWW study included only workers in the age range of 50-72, with 57 as the average age (Erlich & Bichard, 2008, p.277), did not investigate formalized or ad hoc alternative work options, commute distance or how technology impacts one’s focus work. The subject of this study will be dedicated to specifically examining TWW’s spaces for concentration across all generations expanding to include questions probing participant’s previous workspaces, commute time, work during commute, travel, work outside the office, isolation of focus work from other activities, time/day preferences, attributes of focus work locations, technology, perceptions about their focus work compared to others and satisfaction with locations for focus work.

Limitations and Assumptions

The survey method of 30 minute, semi-structured interviews, conducted over a four week period provided a snap shot of the participant’s view on focus work. The methodology did not include observation which could have supported or refuted participant’s verbal reports. How participant’s focus work may have changed over time is again only reported and not observed. Photography was used to document each participant’s workstation, when permission was granted. The photos of participant workstations and of the overall office spaces are reminders to the researcher and can add meaning when examined more fully.

The sample size of participants (N=24), while perhaps not statistically significant, serves as an indicator of the study methodology effectiveness. Demographics of the samples population, categorized by generation from both sites, are listed in Table 1.1

Table 1.1. Sample Demographics

	MILLEN- NIALS	%	GENERATION X	%	BABY BOOMERS	%	TRADITION- ALIST	%	TOTALS
SITE 1	3	12.5	4	16.6	5	20.8	1	4.16	13
SITE 2	3	12.5	1	4.16	6	25	1	4.16	11

A demographic analysis of the total office population by generation and gender was developed for Site 1, see Table 1.2. In addition, a floor plan identifying the locations of the research participant’s workplaces and the overall office population is found in Table 1.3, Site 1 Floor Plan. This data was not available for Site 2.

Table 1.2. Site 1 Demographics

	MILLENNIALS	%	GEN X	%	BB	%	TRAD	%	TOTALS
SITE 1	16	13%	65	54%	38	32%	1	1%	120
WOMEN	14	11%	40	33%	21	18%	1	1%	76
MEN	2	2%	25	21%	17	14%	0	0	44

Table 1.3. Site 1 Floor Plan



Graphic by Anonymous Design, 2011

The participants were recruited by a senior management representative at each of the study sites. While engaging in the study was voluntary, sample participants were not selected randomly. The sample included accountants, human resources, legal, real estate professionals, writers, a customer service rep, a designer and senior management. The convenience sample method supported the schedule demands of the project.

An edited version of the definition of focus work from Kupritz (2003) was read during the interview.

Research has shown that people in the office environment tend to work in various work modes. The two most common are the mode of collaborating and the mode of focusing. This survey investigates focus, in other words, your work involving concentration and attention to a particular task or project.

Participants were asked to state the focus work for their position. No attempt was made to categorize or refine the types of focus work identified.

Participants were asked if they worked outside of the office. The version of questionnaire to complete was based on this reply: 1) Works Outside Office Questions, 2) Works Inside Office Questions. See Appendix B for complete questionnaires.

Definition of Terms

Algorithmic Work: A job with established guidelines and repetitive tasks

Alternative Work: When the workplace is not defined by a conventional office setting or standard office hours; factors also include flexible schedules and part time work

Cloud: The use of virtual computer servers over the internet to provide applications and storage to workers. The cloud functions as a utility of sorts accessed by computers, smart phones and tablet devices.

Focus Work: Tasks specific to one's job which requires concentration and attention

Generational Cohorts: Titles which identify age demarcations. The Pew Research Center (2010) participant ages were utilized for this study: (1) Traditionalists "T" +65 years old, born before 1946, (2) Baby Boomers "BB" 46-64 years old, born 1946 to 1964, (3) Generation X "X" 30-45 years old, born 1965 to 1981, (4) Millennials "M" < 29 years old, born 1982 to 1997, (5) Gen 2020 <14 years old, born after 1997, Meister & Willyerd (2011)

Heuristic Work: A job that requires investigation and problem solving, resulting in a creative outcome

Initiating Narrative: A story that introduces a research subject by representing a composite of reports from participants, also describes the project and provides context for interpretation

Likert Scale: A scale, generally 1 to 5 which measures responses positive to negative / agree to dis-agree

Mobile Knowledge Worker: Employee who works outside of office at least 20% of day, performing information based tasks

Spotify: An on-line music repository

Literature Review

The Literature Review for this project was completed in May 2010.

Research Methods

The Research Methods for this project was completed in November 2010.

Results

Seven open ended interview questions and three Likert style questions were selected for review based on depth and richness of responses and relevance to the prime study questions. The following techniques were employed to investigate data: narrative inquiry (initiating), pattern analysis, simple statistical analysis of the Likert questions, and coding of qualitative interview key phrase responses. In addition to the researcher's notes, 62.5% (n=15) of the interviews were digitally recorded.

Question 9: Can you isolate your focus work from your other daily activities?

This was the first open ended response question of the interview, coming immediately after the participant was asked to describe their focus work based on the operational definition provide by the researcher. Representative responses included:

No, I cannot separate my focus work from my collaboration.

No, at my workstation, I am switching back and forth.

No, I cannot isolate my focus work and it is frustrating.

The expectation embedded in this question from a practice perspective was for some relationship to emerge between isolating focus work and workplace type (e.g. office occupants would be more likely to isolate for focus work by closing their door or that Millennials would use headphones to tune out distractions.) These assumptions were not supported by the responses. Surprisingly, 100% of the participants with a private office did not isolate their focus work because (a) they needed others to do their focus work (n=2), or (b) were better when multitasking (n=1), or (c) were more distracted by email than by colleagues (n=1), or (d) had an open door policy with direct reports (n=1). Two Baby Boomers

surveyed, both in workstations, did not engage in any focus work from the office. They did all this type of work from home, stating that a project that would take two hours at the office can be done in half the time at home with no distractions. Overall 87% (n=21) of participants did not isolate their focus work, but switched back and forth between focus work and some other activities. The 13% (n=3) that did isolate for focus work did so by switching off the email alerts. The generation of respondents did not have an impact on isolating focus work, as all were represented in the distribution of replies. The nature of the job appeared to have more of an impact on isolating focus work than the age or workplace of respondents. Direct reports needing direction, phone or on-line customer support and the need for collaboration took priority over one's own focus work projects. One memorable reply came from a senior manager with many direct reports. When asked about isolating focus work the reply was "I have to be interrupted, I can't say go away I'm working..."

Question 14: In an average week, identify all the locations in which you currently do your focus work.

This question included locations prompts with specific places inside and outside the office from which the participants could select. They were then asked to prioritize the first three locations in terms of most frequent use. Most participants only had two locations and 16% (n=4) identified their workplace in the office as their only location for focus work. Participant responses included:

My focus work is in my head or with the people I am working with. It can be in any physical location.

I get some of my best focus work done on top of the files right outside my workstation.

My dining room table is where some of my best focus work gets done.

One of the research sites (Site 1) has a formalized alternative work policy, where after one year of service, with supervisor permission and exemplary work habits, one can apply to work outside the office on a regular basis, up to 3 days per week. None of the research participants indicated being a part of this program. The second research site (Site 2) specifically forbids working outside of the office, except on an overtime basis. "The company provides nice office space and the expectation is for people to work here,"

summed up their rationale. Interestingly despite the work at work policy, 55% of participants at Site 2 routinely worked outside of the office.

Overall, 91% (n=22) of the participants cited their assigned workplace in the office as their primary location for focus work. Of the secondary focus work locations cited, 25% indicated home and 25% indicated some other place in the office. No generational patterns could be discerned as the responses were distributed among all age groups.

Question 15: When choosing your locations to do focus work, what factors are most important?

Similar to the previous inquiry, this question included attributes associated with specific locations from which the participants could select. Again, they were asked to prioritize the three most important location factors. Participant responses included:

I need access to printed materials only available at the office to do my job.

With location it is a tradeoff between the ambience of the new open offices with the quiet of the old private offices.

At work, I am never free from the interruption of phone calls and emails.

The most popular factor for selecting locations to do focus work was access to printed or other resource materials. While the popular literature has all business working in the cloud, 29% (n=7) of respondents cited access to paper documents as the primary factor in selecting a location for focus work. This supports the previously stated 91% (n=22) response rate for the workplace in the office being the primary location for focus work. Being free from interruptions was the number two criteria for a location to do focus work, cited by 25% (n=6) of respondents; closely followed by a quiet space, which was indicated as the first priority by 21% (n=5) of the total. Generational cohorts were evenly distributed among the responses.

In evaluating the respondent's second most important factor in choosing a location for focus work, the replies were evenly distributed between quiet-21% (n=5), free from interruptions-21% (n=5), access to technology resources/printed materials-21% (n=5), and interior features-21% (n=5), which

included access to daylight/views, desk surface, adjustability of furniture and arrangement of furniture components.

Analyzing the factors listed as the third most important in choosing locations for focus work, issues like commute time -10% (n=2) and a location being too quiet -10% (n=2) arise. Even at this tertiary level, free from interrupts still scores 25% as an important factor. One respondent noted that they can control interruptions when working from home, but are less willing or able to do so when working from the office.

Two factors are worth comparing between research sites: the interrelated issues of quiet and interruptions. At Site 1, which has a mix of private offices and workstation, 22% (n=8) of the staff listed quiet as the first or second most important issue in selecting a location to do focus work. Half of those respondents (n=4) sat in a private office with a door. At Site 2 which is an all open workstation environment only 8% (n=3) cited quiet as an issue. The second factor for comparison, interruptions, was less of an issue at Site 2 where only 8% (n=3) of the total respondents listed this as determining factor for focus work. At Site 1 interruptions (of colleagues mainly) were a factor for 19% of respondents. These variations may be due to the collaborative nature of the work or the culture of the organizations. The salient point is that office design practice common sense would expect the quiet and privacy issues to occur more frequently in the all open plan environment. However, the data reveal just the opposite. Site 1 with private offices and conventional workstations caused more respondents to cite quiet and freedom from interruptions, by a margin over 2 to 1 when compared to Site 2 with the un-conventional open plan environment. Contributing factors may be the density of workstations occupied and the difference of algorithmic versus heuristic work of the staff. If Site 1's staff was engaged in more algorithmic tasks, there may be the tendency for more background chatter. These suppositions require further study to verify.

The final point to consider in this question is the one of self-distraction. Only two of the total respondents reported that their position demanded response to emails within a certain short time frame. Yet 25% of all respondents indicated email as a distraction to focus work. One BB and one Gen X even

reported being “addicted” to checking their emails. The Outlook email preview appearing momentarily at the bottom of the screen was cited as the culprit. Respondents indicate that they would be more likely to “turn off” the email alert option when working from home. Respondents of all ages reported allowing this email distraction, with only two people indicating they would “turn off” the email alert when engaging in focus work at the office.

Question 17: Has your use of technology influenced how/where you do your focus work?

The question immediately preceding this one asked the participant to identify all the technology hardware and software they routinely use in their focus work. The listing of technology types was not notable. However, in analyzing the responses to this inquiry about technology, the factors cited were never about the technology itself. They were about what the technology allowed them to do. Or where the technology allowed them to do it. Typical responses included:

I could work without a phone if I have email.

Technology allows me to be connected everywhere and do my work anywhere.

I prefer my files on a flash drive rather than in the cloud, so I can always access.

The literature suggested that the Digital Native Millennials would respond NO, that technology has always been a part of their lives and has not influenced “focus work,” but 66% (n=4) of the Millennials said YES technology has influenced how they get their focus work done. The responses included any time, any place, integrating work into life “blur the line” and that technology itself has changed how they do some aspects of their job. Only 34% of the respondents had the reply which was anticipated, that technology has always been a part of the Millennial life experience and has not influenced how focus work is done.

Overall, of the 24 respondents, 83% (n=20) said YES technology has influenced their focus work, more than half cited freedom of place as the biggest influencing factor. Interestingly, the only other NO responses came from Baby Boomers who said their focus work was not technology dependent.

This idea of freedom of place to do focus work was the most pervasive theme, specifically mentioned in 41% of interviews by all generations. Technology influencing or changing one's job description was the second most mentioned theme by 16% of those interviewed. The younger respondents were looking to the future with technological developments and the older respondents were looking back at how technology had changed their focus work methods.

Ideas supporting the freedom of place notion include: access anywhere, always connected, always available, and mobility. This access anywhere led to greater productivity, better efficiency and feelings of self-sufficiency to do one's work. Working any time as a factor separate from place was specified by only one respondent.

Investigating an inter-related question, if technology influences a participant's ability to do focus work anywhere, then do the participants of this study do focus work anywhere? Yes, overall 71% (n=17) reported that they worked outside of the office, either within or after the business day. Close to 70% of participants at both research sites have a smart phone: 69% Site 1, n=9 and 64% Site 2, n=7. At Site 1- 92% of participants have a laptop for work (n=12) in addition to their desktop computer. At Site 2 participants have either a desktop or a lap top computer, with only 18% (n=2) indicating both.

Question 18: Have you noticed or observed that those of similar ages work the same or differently than you do?

This open ended question was intended to elicit responses with participants comparing themselves to their peers. Representative quotes include:

People in similar jobs with similar experiences tend to work similarly, despite their age.

Everyone is different. Someone's personality and their job description impact more than their age.

Issues of work are dependent on the person, not the generation.

These responses were the first time participants specifically stated age was not a factor in how people get their focus work done. 20% (n=5) indicated that it was a person's job and 25% (n=7) indicated

that it was a person's personality that differentiated how they worked, more than their age. There is a good mix of ages in all respondent categories except for Baby Boomers. 73% (n=8) thought that they worked differently than their peers. Many in this group of respondents wanted to appear to *work younger* than their peers.

The wording of this question was convoluted. The analysis focused on the content of the responses, placing less emphasis on whether participants indicated that others *work similarly* or *work differently*: 29% work similarly; 54% works differently; 16% did not know. The large margin of *did not know* may be attributed to the quality of the question or that participants truly did not know how their peers worked compared to themselves.

One other item of interest, at Site 2 there were 10 responses, 90% thought they worked differently than their generational peers. While at Site 1 there was a more even split, 60% working similarly and 40% working differently. This variation may be a byproduct of organizational cultural differences.

Further exploring *it's the personality theme*, it was cited that some people are more distracted, or more intense, or less distracted or less techy at any age. One's personality was a contributing factor in one's career choice. One respondent said that "numbers folks are numbers folks" and they work similarly on *numbers work* at any age.

The demands of the job, where people of similar ages in similar jobs work the same, are in part, due to life circumstances. In the same way some respondents were motivated to work at the office or motivated to work at home was due to their personal situation: e.g. one participant lived with parents, had younger siblings and did not have a place at home to work. While another lived far, was dependent on the express train and favored working from home to finish up work.

Question 19: Have you noticed or observed that those of different ages work the same or differently than you do?

The opposite of the previous question, the expectation was for these responses to follow themes already established. However, on the surface it seemed easier for participants to elaborate on the

differences between generations, as if these responses were coming more from participant's exposure to media on this issue and less on their own experiences. Examples of participant quotes that appear more stereotypic include:

Other generations have a poor work ethic.

Younger generations collaborate less verbally and more electronically.

Older generation's communications are more formal.

Examining the responses more closely, the themes of different personalities and various job demands appear. Other participant quotes support this reasoning:

People are inept at technology at all ages.

How people work is a personality issue not an age issue.

It all boils down to your discipline. Numbers people, are numbers people, no matter their age.

Of the 19 respondents, 100% answered that those of different ages work differently from one another. The differences cited were (1) the job makes people work differently despite their age, 26%, (2) the use of technology, 21%, (3) different work ethics, 15%. The 21% (n=5) of respondents that did not know or did not perceive differences in how others work, can be attributed to a true lack of knowledge or perhaps this question was just too similar to the previous one.

Exploring the most common theme that the job makes people work differently, some jobs are more algorithmic and require less focus, while other jobs are heuristic and require more thinking and concentration, (Pink, 2005). The algorithmic and heuristic nature of jobs may contribute to the particular focus work strategies. Issues of formality, accountability and responsibility were also associated with the job theme.

Participants talked more about technology indicating that people use the same technology differently; technology makes work more efficient; technology use is job based not age based; people can be inept at technology at all ages and that the use of technology is a *matter of desire*. Older people are getting on the *technology bandwagon* was a re-occurring theme from older and younger respondents.

Responses regarding work ethic were unexpected. All these responses were from Millennials and Gen X, about one another’s work ethic, lack thereof or un-realistic expectations for. Confidence was also a theme regarding the differences in how people worked, older people having confidence in their decision making and younger people having confidence in easily getting another job. Notably, the notion of the work/life mix was largely absent in these responses.

Question 20: What is your perception about age as a factor in how and where you get your focus work done?

This was the final open ended question of the interview, which directly addressed the age issue. It was an opportunity for participants to share any other thoughts not expressed through earlier questions. Amazingly, all but one of the participants (n=23) had additional specific thoughts on this issue. Selected responses include:

Age is a factor.

Age is a small factor, but a bigger factor is one’s inclination for technology and inclination is not generational.

With focus work it is not what you do, but how you think.

While the question did not solicit a yes/no answer, all respondents took a yes or no position, with 47% (n=11) stating that yes, age is a factor and 53% (n=12) stating that no, age is not a factor. Specific factors cited to support participant’s perception are listed on Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Perceptions about Age as a Factor for Focus Work

Yes-(11) age is a factor	No-(12) age is not a factor
More tech savvy (BB)	Personality (1BB-3X)
Communicate differently (X)	Use of technology (2BB-2M)
Ability to tune out distractions (2BB-1M)	Project based (1BB-1X)
Experience in job (1T -1BB)	Job description (M)
Some need more training-mentoring (BB)	All ages like to work from home (T)
Older space protective (BB)	
Different generations space sensitive (BB)	
Timing of work (M)	

T=Traditionalist; BB=Baby Boomer; X=Generation X; M=Millennial

Interestingly, 64% of the respondents that cited age as a factor were Baby Boomers, while those that did not see age as a factor were more evenly distributed among the generations. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 chart the responses by generation. The Generations are along the X axis and quantity of respondents are along the Y axis.

Table 4.2. YES, age is a Factor

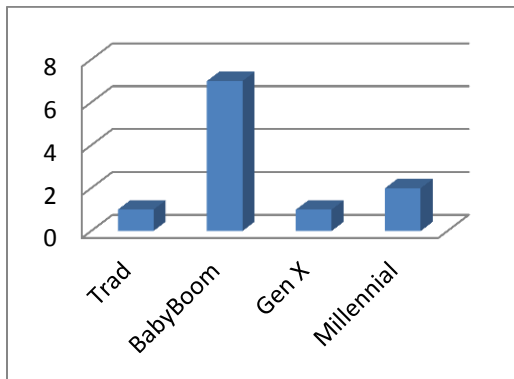
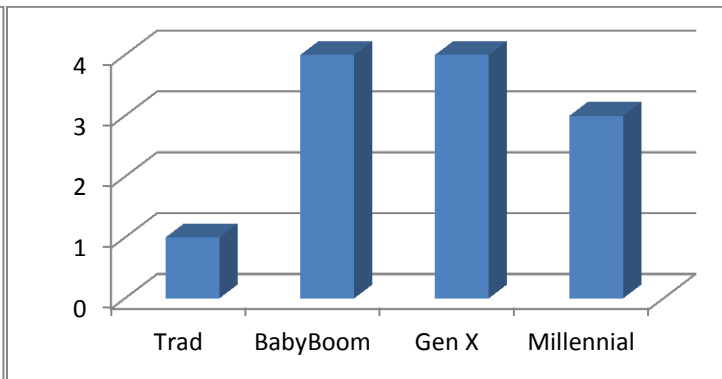
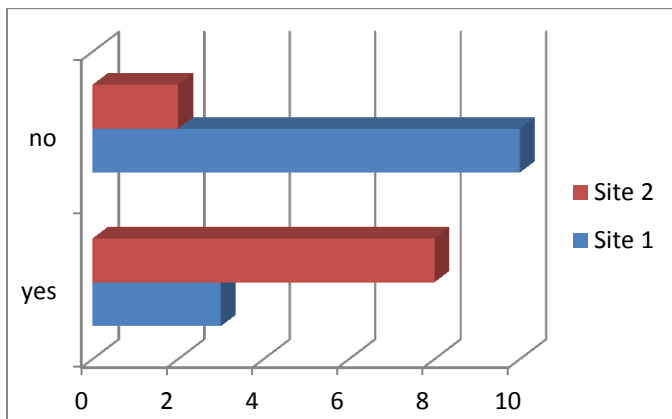


Table 4.3. NO, age is not a Factor



In comparing the distribution of replies from Site 1 to Site 2, one finds that 77% of those at Site 1 did not see age as a factor, while 80% of those at Site 2 did see age as a factor. Table 4.4 compares the differences in replies by Site. Further examination of each organization’s culture may provide insights into this dichotomy.

Table 4.4. Comparing Responses of Age as a Factor between Research Sites

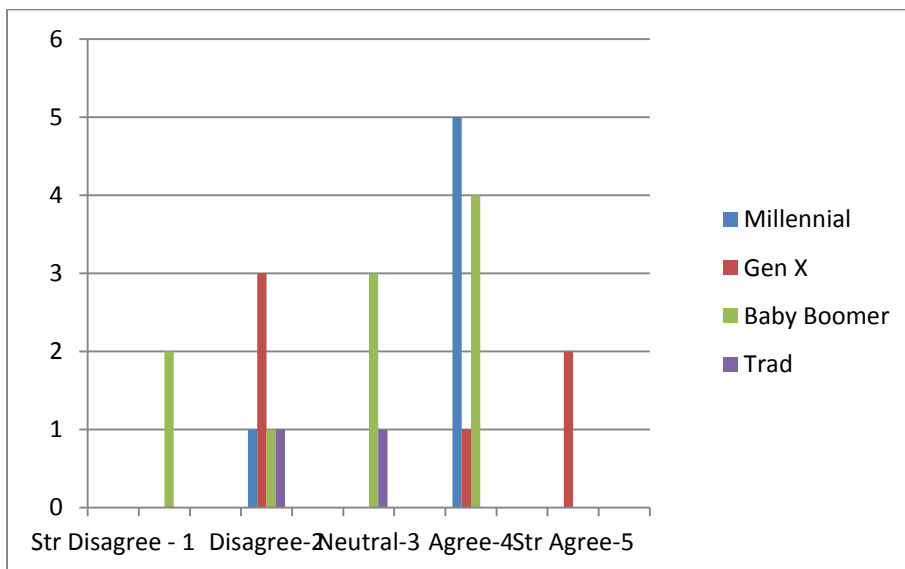


Three Likert style questions explored the design, location and flexibility of locations to conduct focus work. These questions were administered verbally with scores recorded by the researcher.

Question 21: My current office or workstation was designed with doing focus work in mind.

This question sought to explore whether there is a correlation between the participant’s perception of their workstation being designed with focus work in mind and whether that workspace is a workstation or a private office. Of the Agree and Strongly Agree respondents, 66% occupied open workstations, while 34% resided in private offices. At the other end of the scale not surprisingly, 100% of the respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed resided in workstations that they reported were not designed for focus work. The mean scores (\bar{x}) by generational cohort are: T \bar{x} =2.5, BB \bar{x} =2.9, X \bar{x} =3.33, M \bar{x} =3.66. Millennials were the most positive about the design of their workstations for focus work, with 83% scoring in the Agree category. However, note that these workplaces are the first in the participant’s short careers. 30% of Baby Boomers were neutral about their workplace being designed for focus work and 40% agreed that their workplace was designed for focus work. Table 4.5 summarized this question by generational cohort.

Table 4.5. My current workplace was designed with focus work in mind.

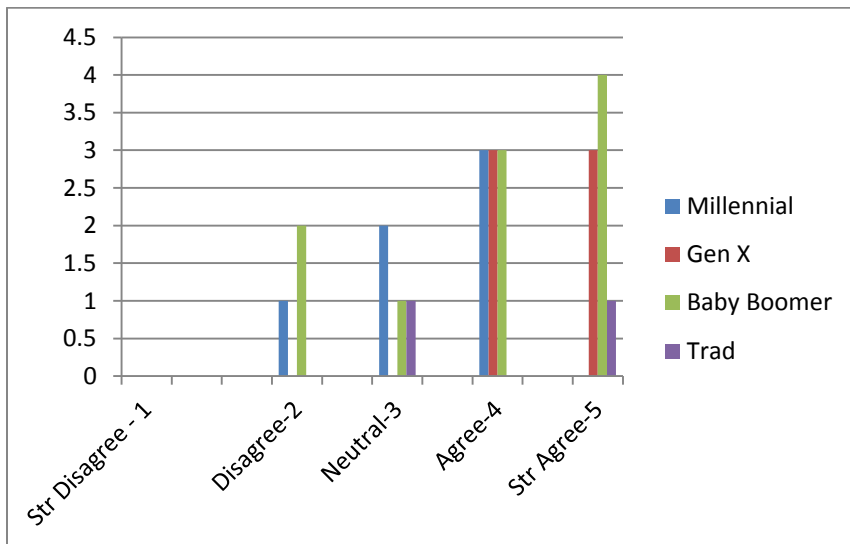


Scale of 1-5 (with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”)

Question 22: I am very satisfied with the locations I have to accomplish my focus work.

This question was investigating the relationship between access to alternative work policies and their influence a participant’s satisfaction with locations for focus work. The data do not support that relationship, as 62 % (n=5) of participants who strongly agreed that about their location satisfaction, did not have the choice to work outside the office during the business day. Overall 70% (n=17) of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their locations for focus work as this question was interpreted to include all focus work locations inside and outside the office. The mean scores (\bar{x}) by generational cohort are: T \bar{x} =4, BB \bar{x} =4, X \bar{x} =4.5, M \bar{x} =3.33. 77% (n=7) of Baby Boomers are satisfied or very satisfied with the locations to accomplish focus work. Of the 22% reporting dissatisfaction with locations, one cited the office’s design for collaboration and the second was comparing their current workstation to private offices at previous employers. Table 4.6 illustrates satisfaction levels by generational cohort.

Table 4.6. I am very satisfied my locations for focus work.

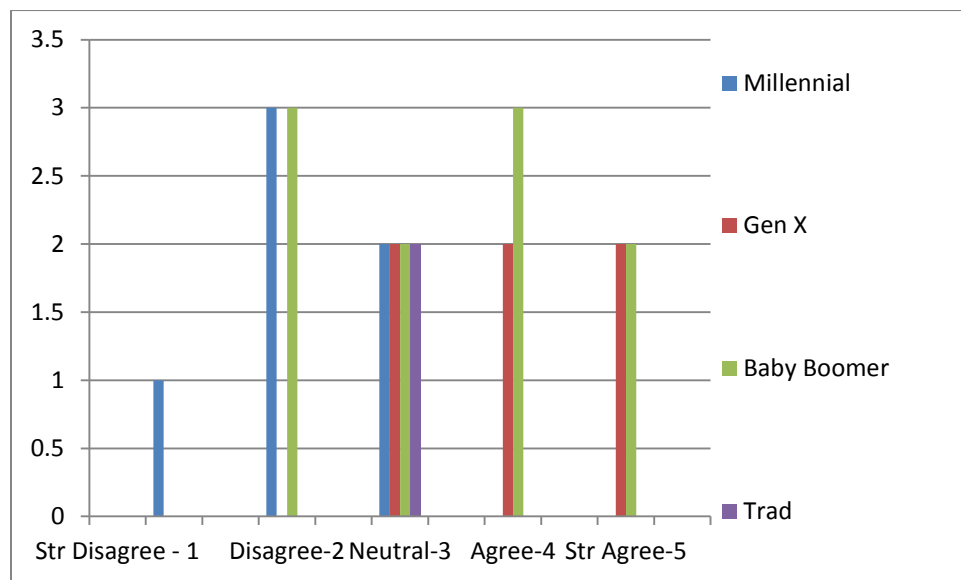


Scale of 1-5 (with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”)

Question 23: I have complete flexibility in selecting the locations to accomplish my focus work.

Based on the high scores of the previous question regarding satisfaction on locations, it was assumed that participants would have had a great degree of flexibility in selecting their locations to accomplish focus work. The results of this question do not support that hypothesis. 62% (n=15) of respondents were either neutral or disagreed about their flexibility in selecting locations to accomplish their focus work. The mean scores (\bar{x}) by generational cohort are: T \bar{x} =3, BB \bar{x} =3.4, X \bar{x} =4, M \bar{x} =1.8. Not one Millennial reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they had flexibility in selecting their locations for focus work. Reasons cited for the lack of flexibility included departmental policy forbidding work outside the office and job demands. Site 1 and 2 faired similarly with a distribution among all categories. Table 4.7 summarizes the question by generational cohort.

Table 4.7. I have complete flexibility in selecting the locations to accomplish my focus work.



Scale of 1-5 (with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”)

Table 4.8 Mean and Standard Deviation for Questions 21-23

	MILLENNIALS (n=6)		GEN X (n=6)		BOOMERS (n=10)		TRADITIONAL (n=2)	
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.
Q21	3.66	.81	3.33	1.38	2.9	1.19	2.5	.70
Q22	3.33	.81	4.5	.54	3.9	1.19	4.0	1.4
Q23	2.16	.75	4	.89	3.4	.74	3.0	0

Scale of 1-5 (with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”)

Discussion and Implications

Generations at work are the topic of much discussion in the popular press and in academic writing. This research investigated if age is a factor in how and where office workers do their focus work. The results of this study indicate three major findings:

1. The age of the participant is not a significant factor in how and where their focus work is done. The job description and personality of a worker are found to be stronger indicators of patterns for performing focus work.
2. Participants desire the ability to work from different locations, referred to as freedom of place in these findings. While alternative work options are available, most participants' preference for focus work location is their workplace in the office for ready access to resources.
3. Not surprisingly, distractions and interruptions are inhibitors to getting focus work done. In addition, reports of frequently switching between work which requires concentration and work which requires collaboration impaired focus work productivity. Finally, an unexpected amount of self-distraction was reported by participants. They allowed interruptions to invade even when not mandated by dictates of the job description,

Major Findings

The age of the participant is not a significant factor in how and where their focus work is done.

Participant's perspective on age and focus work was investigated in three questions. The first two indirectly compared the participants' work style to their own age cohort and to other age cohorts. The results from the first two questions solidly indicate that one's personality (25%, n=7) and one's job description (20%, n=5) contribute most significantly to methods for focus work. When participants were asked to indicate factors for focus work unique to their generational cohort, age was never listed as a factor.

While technology has an influence on focus work, as cited by 66% of participants across all ages, how technology was utilized related to job type over generational cohort. Technology is a touch point.

Baby Boomer participants want to appear technologically savvy, expressed as “working younger,” more like younger generations than their own cohort. One participant described focus work as *task formatted rather than age formatted*. In another example, one participant referred to the string of open documents minimized at the bottom of the screen, *previously these files would be piles of paper around my office, now the job demands PDFs instead of paper*. Another participant explained that *the job and the person become intertwined*.

In this study, a person’s personality, work habits and preferences are minimally impacted by the workplace in which they are seated. The participant in Figure 5.1 has personalized their workstation to match their working style. In a story illustrating how one Millennial participant dealt with working in a distracting environment, they described their open plan pod-like middle school design. There were many distractions and one had to learn how to concentrate on their own classroom activities. Some students and teachers eventually “learned” how to focus on their work, while others students *and* teachers continued to struggle with the open environment. This participant learned in 5th grade, how to tune out distractions, a technique employed in their daily office setting.

At Site 1, new employees take a personality assessment to assist with team placement and for their personal edification. One participant argued that if your personality profile indicates that you are conscientious at 25 years of age, you will still test as conscientious at 55 years of age. *It is how you are hard wired*. Relating this notion to focus work, how one thinks or approaches problems transcends age.

Figure 5.1 Photo of Working Style



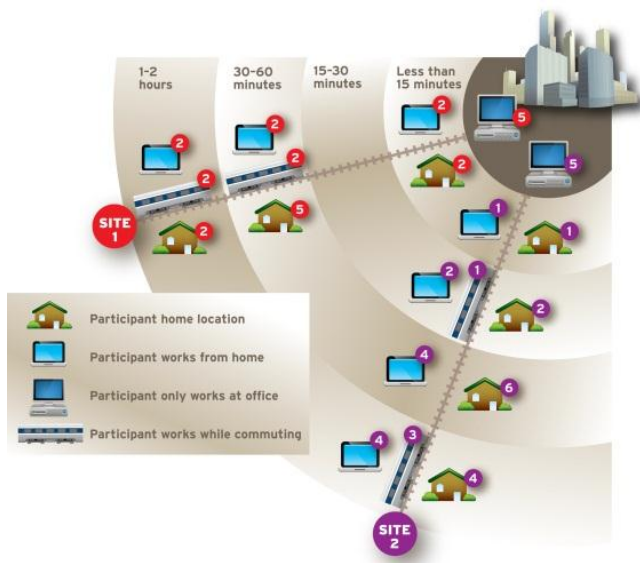
Site 2. Photo by Cynthia Milota, 2011

Participants desire the ability to work from different locations, referred to as freedom of place.

The relationship of participants to their focus work comes down to three factors: (1) when they did their focus work; (2) where they did their focus work; and (3) what focus work they did at these specific times and locations. The ability to choose locations was desirable, however, the type of focus work was constrained by factors including, ancillary documents required, collaboration with colleagues and access to technology. The use and impact of cloud computing has not yet impacted work at these two research site locations. Participants reported access to resources (printed materials) and technology (programs only available at work) more than any other factors (33%, n=8) as the primary reason for focus work to be done at the office.

The *bracketed 9-5 business day* was less of an issue for some and very much an issue for others. Those with an express train to catch maintained a hard stop at a certain hour and continued their work during the commute, while others who walked to work, might leave for dinner and return later to the office or might log on from home. Table 4.9 illustrates the participant’s commute distance measured in minutes and whether they “work” while commuting. Participants commuting the farthest distances were more likely to work while commuting, but not in all circumstances.

Figure 4.9. Commute Map



Participants preferred their workstation in the office as their primary location for focus work by a wide factor, 91% (n=22). This finding is echoed by a recent Steelcase CoreNet Global research study (Steelcase, 2011) which indicates that 86% of surveyed companies have alternative workplace strategies, with half of those reporting less than 10% of their employees using them. While some restrictions apply when it comes to Alternative Work Programs, one year service, demonstrated performance and position applicability; the trend appears to be moving away from Alternative Work as a reward and toward just another way of getting the job done. No generational parallels were uncovered regarding freedom of place. It was a mandate, even for those who reported that they rarely worked outside the office.

Distractions and interruptions are inhibitors to getting focus work done; however, there was a large amount of self-distraction reported by participants.

Being interrupted and distracted while engaged in focus work was universally reported. Some participants were as concerned about being a distraction themselves, as they were concerned about being distracted. Within the same research site location, participants reported that some departments were more *well-mannered*. One of my interviews had to be suspended temporarily as “happy birthday” was sung to a colleague two workstations over. *Imagine if I was on the phone during that*, the participant mused. The culture of the organization varied at the team level which accounted for these different distraction levels. One participant indicated that their current workstation is almost *too quiet* when compared to being seated with another *more active* team.

Several participants mentioned the culture of the organization in relation to distractions. One Millennial participant described a previous job where everyone sat at large tables (benching). Every word of every conversation was heard. Eye contact and facial expression replaced some conversation. That setting supported the culture of that organization. When this participant started work at Site 2 which would be described by most as a very open plan, see Figure 5.2, they experienced a sense of isolation from the partial panels enclosing the workstation. It took them 3 or 4 months to get used to the new

setting. Another participant also speaking about Site 2, suggested that the office move 10 years ago to this completely open plan transformed the cultural identity of the organization.

Figure 5.2 Photo of Site 2 Open Plan



Photo by Cynthia Milota, 2011

The culture of the organization may also contribute to the methods and speed of communications of its employees. Of the 24 participants, 8% (n=2) had a job description which demanded an immediate reply to email communications; yet 25% (n=6) reported email as a significant interruption of focus work. Some participants acknowledged that they could or should turn off the email alert and only check for messages periodically, but only one described this technique as a strategy for getting focus work done. The discipline of staying on task for focus work is an issue for all generational cohorts, despite their workplace or job description.

While the Site 1 office environment is a mix of private offices and more conventional workstations, see Figures 5.3 and 5.4, a significantly larger percentage of participants (16%, n=4) reported reducing interruptions as a primary factor in selecting locations for focus work. One participant anecdotally mentioned that Site 1 had recently been engaged in a project to increase inter-departmental collaboration and that this undertaking is a success. If one of the measures for increased collaboration could be the increase in colleague interruptions, then these research findings can support this claim. Other factors may include the workstation orientation in plan, a greater percentage of workstations open onto major circulation ways by virtue of the floor plate at Site 1 than at Site 2. While deserving further

investigation, this planning issue may offer another factor to explain the interruption discrepancy. See Figure 5.5 Site 1 Floor Plan and Figure 5.6 Site 2 Floor Plan.

Figure 5.3 Site 1 Offices



Photos © ISI International
Used with permission.

Figure 5.4 Site 1 Workstations

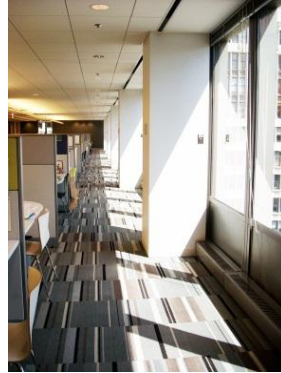


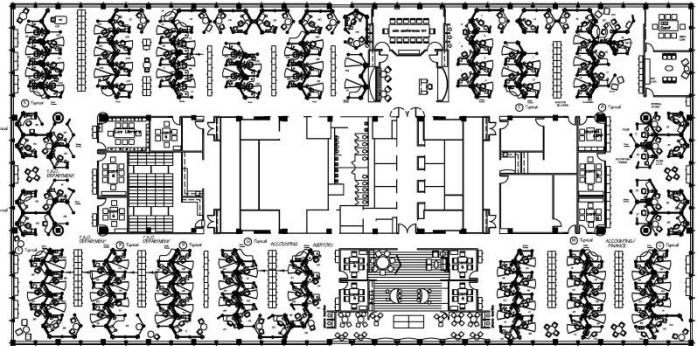
Photo by Cynthia Milota, 2011

Figure 5.5 Site 1 Floor Plan



Plan © ISI International
Used with permission

Figure 5.6 Site 2 Floor Plan



Plan provided by Site 2
Used with permission

A final point to consider regarding distractions is an examination of how the business day often unfolds. One has a plan of what to accomplish, but emails, meetings and phone call derail the original intentions. One is continually switching back and forth between types of work, concentration, to collaboration, to contemplation, (Erlich & Bichard, 2008). Focus work is often complex and interrelated, which may account for why participants did not pick up their lap tops and go into a conference to work

for a couple hours. The interruptions by colleagues, sometimes called collaboration and the self-distraction of email, impacted participants' focus work and were cited as factors to avoid when selecting focus work friendly locations. The value of focus work research can be found in establishing a link between work environments and productivity, ultimately leading to greater employee engagement.

Practical Implications

In preparing for this research, the expectation was that many of the interview responses would relate to the specific design of the workstations or the design of the overall office. The original intention for a final work product was to design a workplace template which informed by research, would solve for generational issues related to focus work. That intention was abandoned at the end of day two of interviewing. How then, can this research inform the practice of office design? Categorizing findings into their social, physical and operational implications can re-frame the myriad of ambiguous details into a few salient points.

Social Implications - *to a man with a hammer, every problem is a nail.*

All office focus dilemmas cannot be solved by stellar interior design. Like *a man with a hammer*, to an interior designer, every workplace issue can be resolved by a more insightful plan or a more intuitive workstation design. The experience of conducting this research suggests that these social issues are bigger than interior design. To impact a significant level of change, interior designers must partner with clients for game changing strategic corporate real estate, technology and alternative work initiatives. An illustration of this synergistic partnership between real estate, human resources and technology can be found in SCAN Health's new workplace. Teams of employees are given a kit of mobile furniture parts to configure and re-configure as the work demands within a fixed SF framework. (D. Coles, personal communication, April 23, 2010).

However, if your client's corporate culture does not mesh with wholesale reinvention of the office environment, a series of small issues can contribute to the quality of the "user experience:"

examples include access to daylight/views, adequate worksurface, or even a hinged marker board that when closed can signal, “I’m working here.” See Figures 5.8 and 5.9. Workstation and office design in the 1980’s included detailed questions about filing, storage, equipment and the eventual spaces were outfitted more or less to these specific standards. The trend to the universal plan and dramatic reduction in design fees has swung the pendulum in the other direction, where every workplace is identical despite the job function. Seeking a medium that complies with the corporate need for consistency and the social need for customization is a first step.

Figure 5.7. Site 2 Marker Board Closed



Photo by Cynthia Milota, 2011

Figure 5.8. Site 2 Marker Board Open



Photo by Cynthia Milota, 2011

Physical Implications - A huddle room will never look the same.

The freedom of place notion is technology dependent. It is a question of what you do where. The majority of participants endeavored to do their on-going focus projects at work: responding to email when working on the go, and larger projects or those with a deadline from home. Close to 70% of participants reported having a smart phone. Large numbers of participants at both sites had laptops, yet their dependence on access to resources only available at the office for focus projects kept them largely moored to their office workplace. Engaging in focus work at the coffee shop across the street, a huddle room if provided or even the office’s café was not done by these study participants.

Operational Implications-*giving permission to interrupt at will*

Cultures of collaboration engender team, open communication and behaviors supportive of this corporate identity. Not limited to physical interruptions, the self-distracting email issue also contributes to the interruption cycle. The WWP study (Erlich & Bichard, 2008) offered the noise masking options of a water curtain and desk top white noise with some positive results. These are great options for the background noise distractions, but not helpful for colleagues coming to visit your workstation.

A culture of collaboration combined with respect, embodied the interiors studio of a large architectural firm in the 1980's. Benching, before benching was defined, the firm's Associate Partners sat out in the open with the designers and draftsmen. It was understood that one should duck into a conference room to take a personal call and one asked the senior staff members if they could be interrupted, even when they sat 60" inches from your workspace. Ideas like etiquette training for staff, four hours of no talk the first Thursday afternoon of the month (Fried, 2010) or email free Fridays are a few radical ideas to carve out un-interrupted time for focus work,

Research Implications

The study of focus work in the office is complex and deserves further investigation. This list, not in order or priority, summarizes questions for future research.

- Examine how/if changes in job description impact the how and where of participants focus work choices.
- Provide video cameras to participants to record and describe their focus work locations at work and elsewhere.
- Further define focus work for a particular job description across multiple case study locations.
- Investigate survey questions specific to the time and duration for focus work outside the office.
- Analyze the inter-relationship of technology/focus work and time/place.

- Track Millennial participants at regular intervals to determine if their method of focus work changes as their job descriptions change and they advance in responsibility.
- Categorize whether participant's focus work is heuristic or algorithmic, specifically investigating heuristic thought which does not have a physical work product.

Conclusions

This study investigated if age was a factor in how and where office workers conduct their focus work. Findings reveal that the generation of workers has little bearing. Factors of personality and job description are better indicators of focus work patterns. Distractions and interruptions are key inhibitors, some involuntary such as colleagues coming to your workplace and some voluntary such as constantly checking email.

Strategies for improving the focus work experience at the office include (1) training in what behavior will be culturally acceptable in a particular organization; (2) radical ways of re-inventing work such as no talk or no email Thursdays; (3) planning issues relating to workstation orientation keeping workstations off major circulation paths; and (4) enabling freedom of place with technology and access to resources. The implementation of these concepts requires a strategic partnership between the design team and client co-influencing real estate, human resources and technology demands.

Epilogue

Cynthia is a corporate office designer with a few decades of experience. Teaching as an adjunct at a local community college, she was interested in teaching more. After some wise council she enrolled in a master's program with a research topic on the multigenerational workplace. One of her first tasks was to investigate the literature on this topic. For someone with a practice background, it was eye opening: narrowly focused questions, complex statistical analysis of data, conclusions difficult to translate into the practice world and very few photos or plans. Yet, somehow it made sense from an academic perspective. First understanding what a framework is and then finding one that suited her topic was challenging and yet engaging.

She learned that one cannot determine their research method, until a properly phrased question has been established. Finally she settled on “are there patterns to suggest that age might be a factor in how and where office workers do their focus work?” Interior designers are pros at interviewing she thought, conducting them at the start of every project. Research interviews are the same in that data is collected, some quantitative, like how long is your commute to the office and some qualitative, like how has technology influenced your focus work. The difference comes in the analysis. For a typical interiors project, the programming phase is short, intended to establish the overall requirements and parameters. In the case of research interviews, they are just the first step in the analysis process. There are many ways to slice and dice the data: content, narrative, pattern analysis to name a few, each with a set of protocols and parameters. With the help of her advisors, Cynthia went for a mixed approach, synthesizing data from seven of her thirty questions.

Throughout this process, she would straddle the divide of practice and scholarship: thinking, okay this is interesting, but how will it help me in design or with a client or with trying to secure a new client? She completely loved the notion of asking questions of the data. Sometimes the answer was in there and other times it went on the list of items for future research. Looking to academic and popular literature for analysis direction and even a web site to learn standard deviation, she glacially moved through the process. The data did not support her initial hypothesis. Was that bad? The data was sometimes ambiguous. How do you report that? There was too just much data. Can you leave some out?

Thankfully, the wisdom of her advisors prevailed and she was able to report her findings. Tentative at first, growing more confident with each explanation, her voice will translate this pile of words and numbers into meaning for her practice. Her venues for sharing will be writing, videos, presentations and dialogue with the practice audience.

Cynthia has come to understand that one’s research question is not bound by universities or degrees; they can be lifelong quests. At the master’s level, one learns how to ask the questions and a little about methods to find the answers. In that context then, this project has achieved that end. Now moving more freely between the practice and academic worlds, research will be in her future.

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Personal Interviews with Thought Leaders

Barnish, M.E. (personal communications, October 2009 - present)

Mary Elin has served many roles relating to my graduate school endeavors including topic & learning plan advisor, applying for teaching positions and determining the scope of study. In this series of conversations, we discussed analysis and reporting of research data.

Coles, D. (personal communication, April 23, 2010)

Diane is the Director of Workplace Services for SCAN Health Plan in Long Beach, CA. She aligned their corporate real estate strategy with her company's overall business objectives. The results of that process lead her team to institute a flexible work program which enables employees to work from home or from other locations. In addition, she spearheaded an aggressive redesign of their corporate headquarters facility. Implementing a "neighborhood concept," using moveable furniture, employees can create and revise their workplaces based on team/project/work style.

Dohr, J. (personal communications, June – November 2011)

Joy, Professor Emerita from UW-Madison, she has been an advocate and mentor since October 2009. She has guided my research methods work and providing guidance on every aspect of this study, analysis and documentation. In the most recent conversations, Joy provided specific direction on initiating narrative guidelines, coding/content analysis, simple statistics and report organization.

Evans, B. (personal communication, November 2011)

Principle of Anonymous Design, Brad designs corporate communications, from annual reports to quarterly newsletters, even executive presentations. He transformed my rudimentary idea of a grid of faces into the generational graphic for my poster and post cards. He also produced the research findings graphics of Table 1.3 and Table 4.9 in this document.

Grantham, C. (personal communication, February 2010 to present)

The co-founder of the Work Design Collaborative, lecturer, educator, author and blogger, Charlie is an applied researcher on the future of work. As my Professional Advisor and Assessor for this document, he provided direction on analysis methods, assistance on statistical reporting, review of early drafts and insightful commentary on research findings/implications.

Kitcheos, J. (personal communication, April 2011)

An electrical engineer by education and a field application engineer by profession, Jeff participated in the interview pilot study. He works virtually about 80% of the time, going into the office about once a week or less for meetings and lab work.

Kuelb, J. (personal communication, April 2011)

An interior designer experienced in residential and corporate design, Jane participated in the pilot study by completing the questionnaire digitally. Her practice is conducted from one level of her home. She has traveled extensively for projects around the Midwest.

Marienau, C. (personal communication, March to present)

A professor in DePaul's School for New Learning and my Academic Advisor, for this research project Catherine assisted in the refinement of the questionnaire, piloted an early version to her Educating Adults students, helped navigate the IRB process and provided insight and encouragement along the way.

Mertes, K. (personal communication, November 2009 to present)

Kathy has served as an academic advisor to numerous School for New Learning master's candidates. She is an ordained minister and a licensed clinical professional counselor. Providing council throughout my DePaul experience, in this most recent series of conversations we discussed methods for synthesizing data.

Mirrielees, M. (personal communication, April 2011)

A resource specialist skilled in color, finishes and sustainable products/processes Michelle participated in the interview pilot study. She works part time at a large architectural firm and also has an interiors consulting practice. At the architectural firm, her focus work is conducted from her workstation as well as in the resource lab.

Rendin, E. (personal communication, April 2011)

A finance executive in the real estate division, Elaine participated in the interview pilot study. With a thirty-year history at IBM working on assignments at headquarters, overseas and in the regions, her comments and suggestions on the interview questions significantly refined the final version.

Sedjo, A. (personal communication, April 2011)

Anna is a client services coordinator for a large commercial real estate firm. She participated in the interview pilot study. Anna supports a large diverse team and is out of the office frequently visiting properties.

Walsh, M.B. (personal communication, October 2009-present)

Mary is an assistant professor of political science at Elmhurst College. Her honest insights, realistic assessments, quick wit and willingness to be involved in the minutia of my work make her my academic safety net. In the most recent series of calls we discussed analysis methods, report organization, abstracts, and narratives.

Weiner, M. (personal communication, April 2011)

Michelle is VP Marketing/Business Development at a large furniture dealership. She was the first to participate in the pilot research study, providing invaluable commentary on the content, order and structure of the questions. Subsequently, she has provided impromptu feedback on numerous research issues.

Weidemann, S. (personal communication, July 26, 2011)

In her work with BOSTI, Sue has studied and conducted research on many workplace issues. An environmental psychologist by education, she served as my mentor at the EDRA graduate student workshop. In this conversation in Buffalo, NY we discussed methods for analyzing data and for disseminating research findings.

Appendix

Appendix A-Research Summary

The Summary for this research was completed in June 2010.

Appendix B1

SCRIPT FOR INTERVIEW

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my study on generations at work. As a requirement to receive my master's degree from DePaul University, I am conducting a research study. The topic is investigating how and where different ages of office workers do their focus and concentration work. I will provide more specifics as we get into the questionnaire.

Before we begin, may I remind you:

- that your identity will remain anonymous
- that your responses will be held confidential
- that your participation is voluntary
- that you can stop this interview at any time.

The 30 questions for this study will take approximately thirty minutes to complete.

COMPLETED CONSENT FORM

Thank you returning the CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH form. To confirm your understanding of this study, can you please tell me your interpretation of the purpose of this study?

IF AUTHORIZED: This interview is being recorded for research purposes. Please let me know now if you do not agree to being recorded. You may request that the recording stop at any time. We can proceed with the interview without it being recorded.

IF AUTHORIZED: At the end of the interview I will request to take a photograph of your workplace or the workplace that you do your focus work. The photographs are voluntary and we can proceed with the interview if you would prefer me not to photograph your space.

DID NOT COMPLETE CONSENT FORM

Have you had the opportunity to review the CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH form? Let's review together now. To confirm your understanding of this study, can you please tell me your interpretation of the purpose of this study?

IF AUTHORIZED: This interview is being recorded for research purposes. Please let me know now if you do not agree to being recorded. You may request that the recording stop at any time. We can proceed with the interview without it being recorded.

IF AUTHORIZED: At the end of the interview I will request to take a photograph of your workplace or the workplace that you do your focus work. The photographs are voluntary and we can proceed with the interview if you would prefer me not to photograph your space.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Some of these questions require simple responses and some are open ended.
Let's begin with a description of your workspace.....

Again, I would like to thank you for your time and interest in completing this interview. Your participation is greatly appreciated. If any additional questions arise, please feel to contact me.

I will be making the results of this research available at the end of the year and will send you an email with details when it is available. Findings will be published on www.multigenworkplace.com

Appendix B2 – Questionnaire Page 1/2

Let's first establish some parameters of your workspace. (page 1)

1. Please check which of the following most closely matches your designated workspace at your company office?

Private Office with full height walls and a door

Private Office shared with at least one other person

Cubicle with high panels (cannot see out when standing)

Cubicle with low panels (can see out when standing)

Desk in open office with no panels

Other (please describe) _____

1a. How long have you worked in this workspace?

Length of time

1b. What sort of workspace did you have before this one?

Please describe

2. How long does it take you to get from home to work?

Less than 15 minutes

About 15-30 minutes

Between 30-60 minutes

Between 1 and 2 hours

More than 2 hours

3. Do you work while you are commuting to and from work?

Yes

No

If yes, what sorts of work do you do while commuting?

4. Aside from commuting, do you ever work from locations other than the office?

Yes

No

5. During a typical month or week, do you travel as a part of your work?

Yes

No

Average amount of days/month out of the office for travel?

Sketch Workstation/Comments: (page 2)

Blank area for sketching workstation or providing comments.

Appendix B3-Questionnaire-Works Outside the Office, 1/4

6. Not counting travel for work, how long have you been working from multiple locations?
 _____ year(s) _____ months

7. Did anyone orient or assist you in adjusting to your multiple work locations? (when you first started at this company or in this job?)

_____ My boss/supervisor	_____ A colleague/coworker/mentor
_____ An architect or designer	_____ IT person from my company
_____ A facility manager	_____ Other (please specify)
_____ A family member/friend/husband	_____ No one

Research has shown that people in the office environment tend to work in various **work modes**. The two most common are the mode of collaborating and the mode of focusing. This survey investigates **focus**, in other words, your work involving concentration and attention to a particular task or project.

8. With this definition in mind, what tasks do you consider focus work within your job?

9. Can you isolate your focus work from your other daily activities?
 _____ If yes, in what ways do you accomplish your focus work?
 _____ If no, are you switching back & forth from focus work to collaborative work throughout the day?

10. Do you think your current overall offices were designed with spaces dedicated for focus work?
 _____ Yes
 _____ No
 If yes, in what manner and how do you use these spaces for doing focus work?
 Who else in the company do you see using these spaces for doing focus work?

11a. In an average week, about how many hours do you work? _____

11b. Acknowledging that you will be involved in various work modes, in an average week, how much of your work time is spent on focus work? (Please list percentage of time.)
 _____%

Appendix B3-Questionnaire-Works Outside the Office, 2/4

12. Have your methods of doing focus work changed over time?
 No, methods of doing focus work have remained constant despite other changes
 Yes, methods of doing focus work have changed due to :
 different job requirements/responsibilities
 different technologies
 different workspaces
 with age
 other ways your methods of doing focus work have changed over time?

Please elaborate on how these changes have impacted your method of doing focus work?

13a. In an average week, is there a particular time **or** day that you prefer for your focus work?
 Whenever, it completely varies
 Mon-Fri
 Sat-Sun

13b. And during what time of day? (select as many as apply)
 5am-8am 6-9pm
 9am-noon 9-midnight
 Noon-3pm midnight to 5am
 3pm-6pm

14. In an average week, identify all the locations in which you **currently do** your focus work. Please check all that apply. Then go back and prioritize locations most used: 1st, 2nd, 3rd (e.g. X1;X2)

In the Office
 At my designated workspace in company office
 In a conference room in company office
 At another location in the office (please specify) _____

Outside the Office
 At a third place (like a public coffee shop or library)
 At my client's office
 At my home office
 While I'm commuting
 At another location outside of the office (please specify) _____

15. When choosing your location to do focus work, what factors are most important? Identify/prioritize the 3 most important factors. (See Location Factor Suggestions, if required)

Appendix B3-Questionnaire-Works Outside the Office, 3/4

16a. What technology do you routinely use to get your focus work done?

<input type="checkbox"/> pc-desk top	<input type="checkbox"/> iPad
<input type="checkbox"/> pc-lap top	<input type="checkbox"/> printer
<input type="checkbox"/> cell phone	<input type="checkbox"/> fax
<input type="checkbox"/> land line phone	<input type="checkbox"/> copier
<input type="checkbox"/> smart phone	<input type="checkbox"/> scanner/PDF
<input type="checkbox"/> camera	<input type="checkbox"/> wireless broadband air card
<input type="checkbox"/> postage machine	<input type="checkbox"/> others, please specify

16b. What access do you require to get your focus work done?

<input type="checkbox"/> access to internet	<input type="checkbox"/> access to specific software
<input type="checkbox"/> access to company intranet	<input type="checkbox"/> others, please specify

17. Has your use of technology influenced how/where you do your focus work?

No.

If yes, how so?

18. Have you noticed or observed that those of **similar ages** work the same or differently than you do?

No

If yes, what differences do you notice?

19. Have you noticed or observed that those of **different ages** work the same or differently than you do?

No

If yes, what differences do you notice?

20. What is your perception about age as a factor in how & where you get your focus work done?

Appendix B3-Questionnaire-Works Outside the Office 4/4

21. My current office/workstation was designed with doing focus work in mind.
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1.....2.....3.....4.....5

22. I am very satisfied with the locations I have to accomplish focus work.
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1.....2.....3.....4.....5

23. I have complete flexibility in selecting the location to accomplish my focus work.
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
 1.....2.....3.....4.....5

24. How long have you been employed by your company?
 _____year(s) _____months

25. How would you describe your position:
 _____ Full Time (+40 hours/week)
 _____ Part Time (<40 hours/week)
 _____ Special Assignment (consultant, temporary, project based)

26. What is the name of your position/job title? _____

27. How long have you been in your current role?
 _____year(s) _____months

28. Gender
 _____ Male
 _____ Female

29. Age
 _____ 29 and Under
 _____ 30-45
 _____ 46-64
 _____ 65+

30. If you have any ideas you want to share or general comments?

31a. IF AUTHORIZED: May we photograph your designated workplace?
 31b. IF AUTHORIZED: May we photograph the location where you do your focus work?

Appendix B4- Questionnaire –Factors for Choosing Locations**Geographic**

- Commute time
- Closer to home for family issues

Interior Features

- Ability to control lighting, ventilation, temperature
- Ability to control music
- Access to window views or daylight
- Access to more desk surface to spread out
- Arrangement of furniture components
- Adjustability of furniture
- Ambiance
- Access to food & beverage

Social**Free from Interruptions**

- Free from interruptions of colleagues _____
- Free from interruptions of phone calls _____
- Free from interruptions of emails _____
- Free from other interruptions
- Please specify other type of interruptions _____

Free from Distractions

- Please specify other type of distractions
- audio
- visual
- technological

Others

- Access to colleagues
- Quiet
- Privacy (to prevent others from viewing your work)
- Free to dress more comfortably

Operational

- Access to printed or other material resources
- Access to technology resources
- Access to technology support