

DIGITAL HARMONISATION IN THE WORKPLACE



“Just as early humans learned to create and work with tools to solve problems, emerging technologies combined with the places that support them can offer people the same opportunity today.

Creativity defines us as human beings, working together with other people helps fuel better ideas, faster. And embracing technology-enabled spaces as tools to support creative work offers all of us the possibility to solve big, wicked problems...and a few everyday issues too.”

Christine Congdon | Editor, 360 Magazine



DIGITAL NATIVES LOVE TO BE CONTINUALLY CONNECTED. DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS DO NOT.

The terms *Digital Natives* and *Digital Immigrants* were created to differentiate society's digital saturation and generation gaps.

Those who have been predisposed to a highly digitally and technologically saturated world are considered 'Digital Natives'. For Digital Natives, isolation from technology results in a dulling of their inner self, while exposure to the continuous progression of technology provides invigoration, creativity and flexibility.

Those who have only encountered digital technology in a limited capacity or well into their adult lives are considered 'Digital Immigrants'. Despite often being very experienced employees in the workforce, digital immigrants are now in need of the most workplace support of all.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WORKPLACES?

By the year 2020, Generation Y (those born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s) will comprise 42% of the Australian workforce. Therefore, the design of digital technologies in the workplace, together with corresponding work processes, must be predominantly skewed toward the innate sensibilities of Digital Natives.

This is even more critical as Generation Z (those born between the late-1990s and mid-2010s), the most technologically literate generation ever, have already begun graduating Year 12 and will soon come to represent much of the Australian workforce.

IPP aims to design workplace technology that works for the people using it and is accessible to all. Instead of simply saturating workplaces with technology for technology's sake, we aim to understand when it strengthens us and when it hinders our personal and organisational resilience.





IMPACTS ON THE WORKFORCE

TECHNO STRESS

With technological advances happening at a never seen before pace, society is facing Technostress, defined as '*a modern disease of adaptation caused by an inability to cope with new computer technologies in a healthy manner*'.

Technostress results in a collective of individuals whose innate human instincts are bombarded by internal stimuli and / or who become intensely stressed if not feeling connected to the stimuli.

INTERRUPTION ERA

We now exist in what is termed the *Interruption Era* in which workplaces are overloaded with various Technostress interruptions.

Messages, notifications, emails, calendar reminders and appointments, video-conferencing, and advertising, as well as the internet and social media are all competing for the present-day worker's attention.

It is now estimated that technology-mediated interruptions consume approximately a third of the work day.

These digital interruptions distract individuals from tasks, ultimately reducing productivity.



HOW CAN WORKPLACES ADAPT?

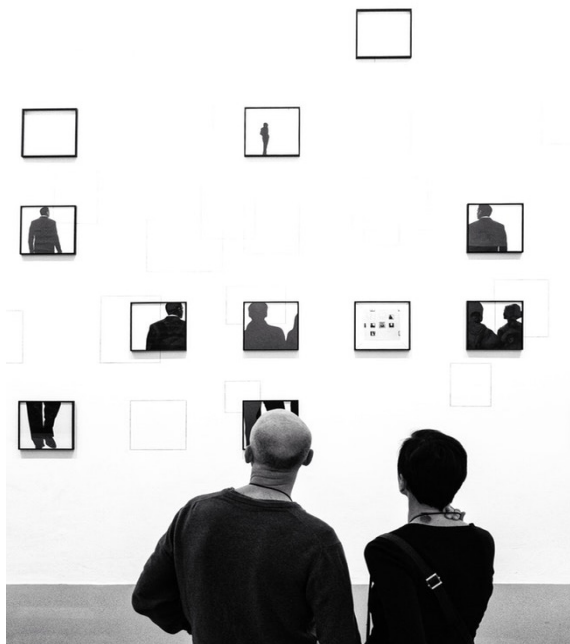
THE POWER OF ART

Studies have found that the use of artworks in corporate environments promotes social interactions, elicits emotional responses, facilitates personal connections and fosters learning.

In addition to this, the use of art therapy or engagement with art has been shown to result in statistically significant decreases in burnout of employees due to the reduction in stress, anxiety and experiences of anger, and consequently can assist in increasing daily productivity.

The further saturation of the visual workplace with digital media screens could amplify the effects of Technostress as no space is retained for digital respite, and therefore, where possible, artwork should not be displayed digitally.

As well as traditional art to create respite from technology, workplaces should be designed with consideration of colour theory, indoor gardens, sensory landscapes, integrated lighting, acoustic design and with the intention of creating an office layout which encourages physical movement throughout the work day.



WORKSPACE FLEXIBILITY

Technology in the workplace can be effectively used to promote spaces of collaboration and flexible technological engagement.

Workspace flexibility needs to be considered in relation to work practices, work spaces, comfort and continual digital progression in order to attract the best of the Digital Natives.

Flexibility in design, rather than the implementation of 'obligatory

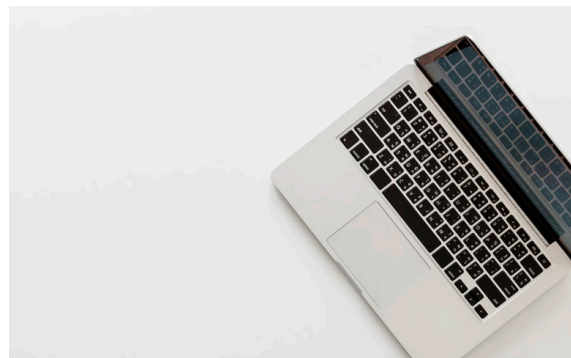
technologies', is critical to accommodate the present Digital Immigrant whilst not stunting the creativity and development of the Digital Native as they come to represent more and more of the employee population over the coming years.

DRIVE ACCEPTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

To improve employee perception and drive acceptance of technology within organisations, the Technology Acceptance Model (or TAM) was developed in the US in the early 1990s and is still valid today.

The TAM indicates that any technologies that are implemented in the workplace design process must be analysed in terms of their perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness prior to implementation. Otherwise, a decrease in either of these may result in an overall decrease in the acceptance of the technology and extend the periods of time between acceptance phases.

The TAM is most effectively applied today to all technology considering the demographic factors and attitudes of each business unit. For example, for a business unit comprised mostly of Digital Natives, the perceived ease of use will be generally high for most technologies, and perceived risk is generally lower. Perceived usefulness is a factor that must be analysed on a system by system basis.



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN WORKPLACE DESIGN

1. Overall, technology should be used where required to facilitate work practices, and not merely for its own sake;
2. Generally, digital screens should only be placed throughout the dedicated workspace areas when doing so will achieve improved outcomes;
3. Separated spaces such as meeting rooms and workshops should be provided with technology including appropriately sized screens and Video-Conferencing capabilities designed to optimise work practices;
4. Focus spaces should be provided with minimal digital saturation to provide employees with dedicated spaces to seek digital respite and increase task-specific productivity;
5. Breakout spaces and social spaces should be provided with minimal digital saturation to provide employees with dedicated spaces for human interaction without digital distractions; and
6. Spaces which encourage digital work-life balance should be created.

**“WHERE DOES OUR MODERN
WORLD BELONG -
TO EXHAUSTION OR
ASCENT?”**

FREDERICK NIETSCHE 1968 (1888)

GERMAN PHILOSOPHER



Although his time was well before the digital revolution, Nietzsche's philosophy can still be used to summarise the main issues for the design of workplaces of the future, in summary:

- Harmonising the delicate balance between the provision of cutting-edge, work-specific technologies that enable greater productivity and attract the best Digital Native employees, whilst not inundating employees with too much 'obligatory technology'; and
- Tailoring training for Digital Immigrants that builds upon their current methods of work and takes into account the technology changes that are diametrically opposed to their nature.



JANINE MAHONEY
IMPACT ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

With extensive experience in leadership roles across Government, the community and corporate sector for over three decades, Janine and her IPP team ensure that people remain at the centre of everything we do, bridging the gap between our customers, innovation and technology to create positive and lasting change. Janine was recently announced as one of the 2018 Australian Financial Review 100 Women of Influence in the Innovation category.



KYLIE MARTIN
TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

A leader in the field of Risk, Security and Technology Transformation, Kylie's key drivers for success are connecting people to purpose, over-delivering on promises and executing projects with excellence. Working with her IPP team of multi-talented consultants, Kylie's skills in operational leadership and project management ensure IPP diligently and methodically delivers transform solutions to customers and really make a difference.