The Participatory Design of Work Space

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ABSTRACT
There has been a long tradition of participatory land use planning, architecture, and space planning. This panel will draw on the experiences of theoreticians and practitioners working directly with users in the design of their own work spaces. Focusing on space planning, office layout, and design standards, the panelists will compare their experiences using different methods and how they approach issues such as who participates, whose interests are served, how design quality can be evaluated, and why these practices are not more widely adopted.

Keywords
space planning, interior planning, architecture, participatory analysis, panel

INTRODUCTION
While the Participatory Design Conferences have tracked and encouraged the development of participatory methods in the design of work place technology, much less attention has been paid to the participatory methods for the design of work places. In fact, there has been a long tradition of participatory land use planning, architecture, and space planning. This panel will draw on the experiences of theoreticians and practitioners working directly with users in the design of their own work spaces.

Most of the design of the built environment (whether its housing, offices, or retail space) is the result of collaboration between clients (with money) and designers. While these two major players often interact with regulatory bodies (such as planning commissions and building codes), clients and designers usually engage the interests of occupants only when the occupant is also the client. In planning and architecture, various methods have

evolved to address design situations with greater and lesser degrees of participation.

Some of the methods are:

- Workshops (often referred to as "charrettes")
- Direct observation of daily work
- Extensive individual interviews
- Surveys

Some of the circumstances where they have been applied are:

- Community / land use planning
- Transportation planning
- Siting and design of low-income housing
- Development of design standards for offices and office systems
- Space planning and office layout

One of the characteristics of the design of workspace that differs from the design of software is the very concrete reality of decisions and the persistence of those concrete realities. Offices and furniture are long-lived, often outlasting the people and enterprises for whom they are designed: most of us sit in offices that pre-date workstations; our computers sit on desks that are older than our operating systems; and to the extent that most office workers have control over their workspace, that control is mostly exerted in the daily accommodations of existing infrastructure to new technology.

In the face of change, how have participatory strategies been applied and what are the most salient issues? Focusing on space planning, office layout, and design standards, the panelists will compare their experiences using different methods and take on one or two key issues as time permits.

ISSUES
Since their experience ranges from working at large corporate sites with thousands of employees through more

intimate settings with just a few people, they have developed a variety of methods.

Who participates?
Among the key issues in design of the built environment is the number of interests that are part of the participatory process. While most at issue in planning contexts, the "official" occupants of workplaces are often not the only ones who are users of spaces. So, does "participation" include the cleaning crew or customers? What does it mean to do participatory design of a hotel? And how can future occupants' interests be fully and legitimately represented years in advance?

Analysis and design
Another issue is, what is the relationship between analysis and design -- and how does participation work across them? There is a lot of talk about "needs assessment" in office and space planning, but no one provides the primary occupants with ways of talking about what they do, with tools to inform the research. One method to address this is participatory analysis where occupants collaborate on explication of their work as well as the formulation and evaluation of new designs. Within this approach are all the issues of the representations of work which should be familiar to the participatory design of systems community.

Impediments
Lastly, with all this experience, why are these participatory methods not more widely used? Since it often comes down to the very pedestrian concerns of adding time and money to a process that is already low priority, how can participation be seen as adding value? What are the terms of that added value: effectiveness, productivity, moral imperative?

THE PANELISTS
To get a handle on this, our panelists will draw on years of theoretical and applied research as well as real projects.

Turid Horgen
Turid Horgen is a Norwegian architect and town planner, currently Research Associate and Visiting Lecturer at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning, and Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Building Research Institute, who is an expert on action research strategies in participatory design and environmental programming. She has worked successfully with housing organizations, governmental offices, transportation agencies, research and educational institutions, in their efforts to change their environments to accommodate new functions, to adjust to new technologies, or simply to better the working conditions. Her current work focuses on innovative workplace design and on research into the relationship between design processes and work practices. Her research emphasizes an understanding of the interdependencies of spatial, organizational, technological, and financial aspects of the workplace, in relation to the changing nature of work itself. She is concerned with design and work as collaborative activities, and with action research as a means of intervention and organizational learning as well as a means for organizational change.

Joe Ouye
Joe Ouye is principal of Facility Technics, a planning and management consulting firm for corporate real estate and facilities. Facility Technics is known for its strategic real estate/facilities planning and workplace planning expertise. Clients include Hewlett Packard, Coca-cola, Sun Microsystems, Citibank, USWest, 3Com, Cadence, Netscape, Charles Schwab, and other Fortune 500 companies. He received his Bachelor of Science degree with honors in Engineering from UCLA, his M.S. in Product Design from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and his Ph.D. in Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley. He has taught at the University of California and University of Stuttgart. His dissertation (1976) was "On the Choice of a Participatory Model", an exploration of fundamental models of participation.

Rick Robinson
Rick is a co-founder and principal of E-Lab, Inc. a Chicago-based research and planning firm. He develops innovative research methods for understanding people and specializes in ethnographic methods that are of particular value to the design process. At the Institute of Design, he teaches courses in the areas of human-centered design, design theory, and research methodology.