



“NEW WAYS OF WORKING”

The « 3Bs »: Bricks, Bytes, and Behaviors

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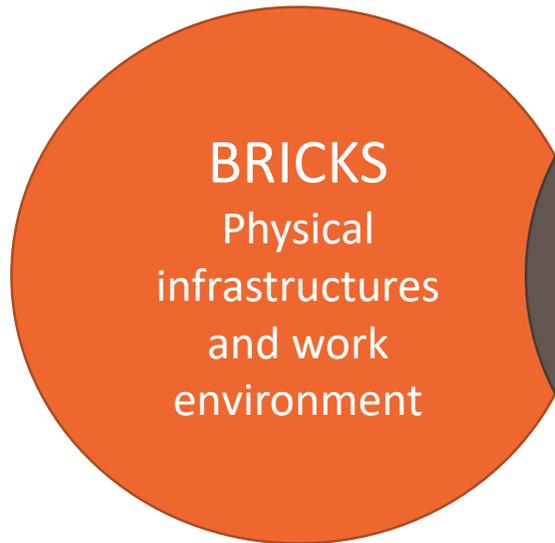
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REMINDER: THE « 3Bs »

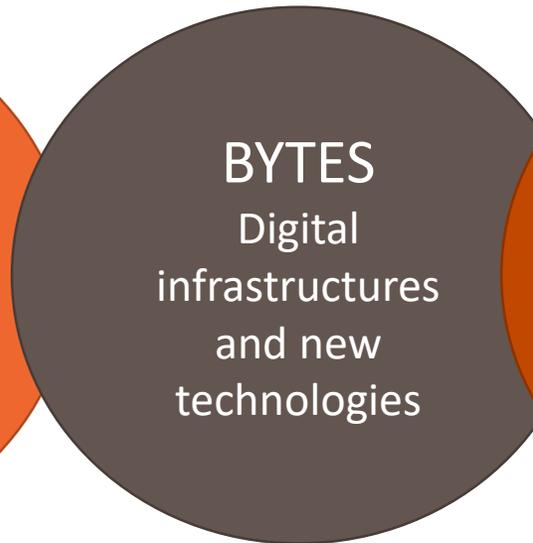
1996: The Dutch Experience:
“Het Nieuwe Werken”

2005: The Microsoft
Example: “New World
of Work”

2009: The dissemination
of NWoW: “New Way of
Working”



Open spaces
Hot-desking, flex desk
Activity-based working



Remote working
New ICT tools
Paperless working



Autonomy, trust, responsibility,
objective-based management,
participative governance...

- Reminder: multiple firms claim to do many different things, but all use the “NWoW” label to designate their project
- What “NWoW” means has become increasingly complex! The “3Bs” is an effective way of “making sense” of what is going on and a powerful rhetoric device to enrol and convince organizational members.

THE BRICKS

The ideal-type of space of NWoW projects

“New Ways of Working” workspaces usually differ from “traditional” workspaces on several points:

OPENNESS

Closed spaces



Open spaces

ATTRIBUTION

Assigned desk



Flex desk

HETEROGENEITY

Individual-based



Activity-based

SYMBOLIC MEANING

Stratified



Neutral



Move from traditional spaces to NWoW: this is what the “Bricks” team has to do

THE BRICKS

Benefits and drawbacks

CAUTION: Even if it is common sense, reasoning in terms of “benefits” and “drawbacks” is, from a research perspective, of little value... Importance of teams arrangements, individual preferences, etc.

Open spaces	Flex desk	Activity-based working	Neutral workspaces
Increased interaction and teamwork	Proximity of workers and managers Free choice of workplace Variability Facilitates knowledge sharing	Improved ergonomics and office design Adequacy between workstations and tasks	Increased sense of equality and fairness Increased project acceptance from employees
Loss of intimacy Loss of satisfaction at work Acoustic privacy lacking Increased stress generation No direct control over work environment (heat, light, etc.)	Territoriality issues “War” for the places Privatization and customization issues Clean desk and rules enforcement issues Team distance	Underused spaces Mobility injunction	Increase line managers’ resistance Fear of working “near the manager” Tasks that require confidentiality are harder to organize (e.g. recruitment, dismissal, union action...)

THE BRICKS

The ideal-type of space of NWoW projects

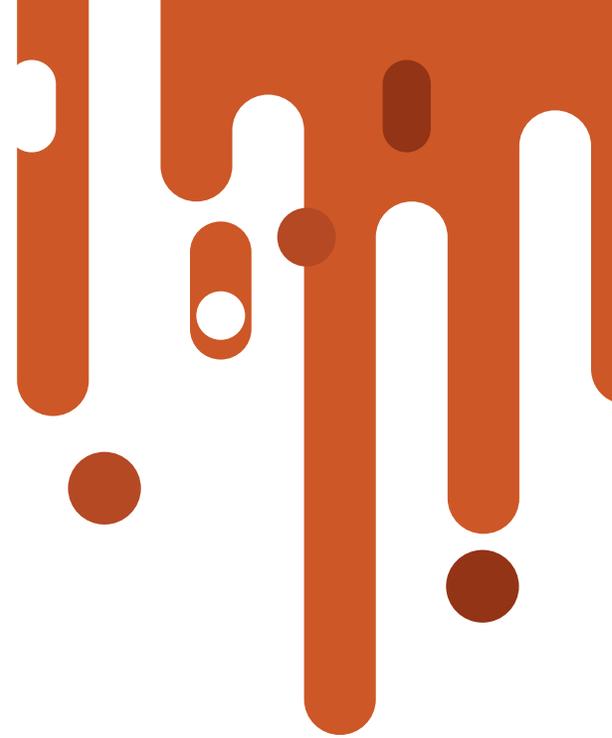
NWoW discourses generally entail homogenous (and normative) elements on how the workspace should be designed:

- Space makes it possible for users to be “flexible” and “mobile” (fluidity);
- Space is separated in zones which serve a different purpose (activity-based);
- Space does not belong to specific users or teams (deterritorialized);
- Space is devoid of hierarchical symbols (horizontalized)

BUT space as it is “described” (conceived space) can largely differ from how space is then understood by the users (perceived space) and what they ultimately do with it! (lived space)

To know more about that topic:

Jemine, G., Fauconneau-Dufresne, S., Pichault, F., & Rondeaux, G. (2021). *Beyond flexibility: confronting conceived and lived spaces of New Ways of Working* (Available upon request)



THE BRICKS

A recurrent concern: hypervisibility and the lack of acoustic privacy

“The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unites that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately” (Foucault, 2012)

Interviews excerpts

“Very often you hear conversations even if you do not want to”

“The guy coming from the corridor, he can see everything you do on your computer”

“You always have some noise nuisance, this is oppressing”

“People are monitoring their own colleagues. The first leaving the office will be the slacker”

“The manager is always listening. He has an ear and an eye on everything”



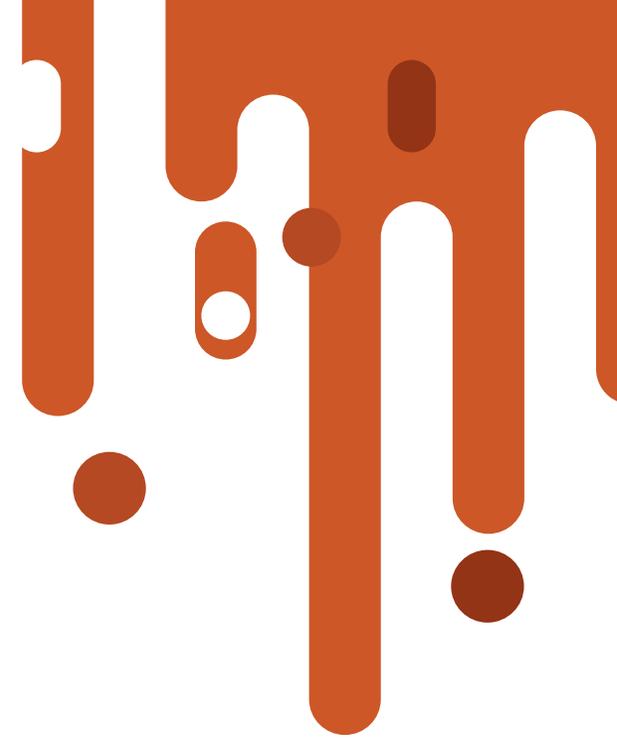
“The building’s material capacity to enable total vision and control”
(Simon, 2005)

THE BYTES

The technological backbone of NWoW projects

To make it possible to work “anywhere, anytime, anyhow”, *New Ways of Working* projects need some technological upheaval:

- Laptops for everyone;
- Software that makes it possible to work remotely (>< “old” remote working);
- Software that support remote working (communication technologies, document sharing solutions, etc.);
- Adequate hardware (e.g. USB phones, screens, etc.);
- Security and confidentiality policy update;
- Adequate equipment of workstations (docks, etc);
- Technical support for employees;
- Paperless side-projects



THE BYTES

NTIC Monitoring (real or assumed) Capacity

*“Who is watching? Why are they watching? What will they do?”
(Simon, 2005)*

Interviews excerpts

“You never know what is really possible. I mean your manager could always check if you are connected or not, if you are working or not. You want to go on Facebook during your working time? Bad idea. I am sure they can monitor what you are doing”

“Our software is generating a lot of data regarding the work that has been done (...) Sometimes, I check the numbers, but I don't always have the time to do so (...) Even if you do not monitor your people, you have to make them believe that they are being monitored. This way they will always remain careful”

THE BEHAVIORS

A wide range of wide things

Autonomy

People are more free to decide how, when and where they want to work (although what the work entails usually does not change much)

Responsibility

People are responsible for their own work and its outcomes

Results-orientation

Objective-based management, promoting results over work processes

Connectivity

Technology is used to perform work independently from time and place

Participation

Employees are invited to participate (to a various extent) in the change process and/or in team agreements

Human-centric

People are “at the centre” (whatever that means) of management practices and preoccupations

- But also training programs, roadmaps, coaching, team agreements, ambassadors, project meetings, workshops...
- Not always emphasized nor developed in NWoW projects

THANK **Y**OU!