The Modern Office Fact Sheets



WHAT MAKES A MODERN OFFICE DIFFERENT FROM THE TRADITIONAL ONE?

Office design, since the introduction of typewriter in the early 1900's up until mid- to late 1970's remained virtually unchanged. Dedicated word processing systems such as WANG, for example, started being used in mid-seventies. This was the beginning of a period of rapid changes in office technology. Personal computers in the early eighties became the main tool for office workers and continue to transform offices at an ever increasing pace. And it's not over yet. Current technologies such as tablets, phones, and touch screens are evolving the workplace once more.

All changes in the office environment were and still are driven by advances in technology. The overwhelming impact of computers on office work has resulted in redesigning the office around, if not for, the computer. In many instances the computers and remote access technologies have changed not only the shape of the office and the way office work is done, but it has also affected even the lifestyle of workers.

Do computers contribute to health problems among their users?

Like many other innovations, computers generated a great deal of resistance at first. People raised concerns about the effects of radiation on everything from their eyes, to their neck, shoulders, arms and back, even to their reproductive fertility and pregnancy outcome. Headaches, eyestrain, muscular tension, and suspicious clusters of miscarriages were widely reported. However, studies which have addressed these concerns have failed to prove that any measurable radiation, no matter how minimal, has been responsible for any of the adverse effects reported. In addition, current flat screen monitors use different technology and as such, eliminate radiation as a concern.

Nevertheless, one cannot discount the increasing numbers of dissatisfied and/or injured office workers: their discomfort and health problems are very real. There is very little doubt that working with computers (with emphasis on the actual work and not the computers themselves) causes or heavily contributes to these problems.

Why ergonomics for the computer users became so important?

The number of people working with computers and related technology is ever growing. What is even more alarming is the high number of complaints about discomforts and injuries. Prevention through participation may be the right approach. In other words, "the involvement of people in planning and controlling a significant amount of their own work activities, with sufficient knowledge and power to influence both processes

and outcomes in order to achieve desirable goals”.

Source: © Copyright 1997-2021 CCOHS