

Integrating Media Center Needs and Access Facility Planning

Design Philosophy and Goals:

- When to create a “media center” that does it all and when to network with other community groups
- Create an open and welcoming environment, plan for the flow of people, functions and energy, avoid maze-like floor plans
- Separation and connection of technical and administrative spaces, logical flow between functions
- Barrier-free access
- Good air-flow/ventilation
- Planning for future expansion

Functions:

- Teleconferencing, distance learning, satellite downlinks, video production, video/data authoring, computer learning, InterNet access, interactive/community bulletin boards, the arts, etc.

Data, voice and video networking:

- I-Nets (local networks) and/or metropolitan area networks (MANs); links between schools, government buildings, libraries, access center(s), etc.; links with community computer centers; links with neighboring communities; links with State-wide networks

Lighting & Power:

- Indirect and directional incandescent lighting vs. fluorescent
- Lighting separate from wall plugs
- Sufficient power for all uses to happen simultaneously
- Clean Power - Surge protection, UPS, power conditioners, phone line surge protection

Ergonomics:

- Ergonomic adjustable seating (a good place to buy quality), Keyboard height - 27 to 28 inches off the floor, Monitor height - top of screen at or slightly below eye level, Monitor-to-user dimensions - monitor face 18" to 28" from user
- Sound - the forgotten ergonomic consideration (the more noise and echo the more tired the users will become)
- Lighting - also an ergonomic issue (eye strain creates fatigue - plan your lighting accordingly)

A/V/Data Conduit systems:

- Wire tray around perimeter of computer work area and/or open wall design - may be able to snake additional phone/data lines in from the top of the wall (above hung ceiling)

Computer/Work Area:

- Main area - 12' x 14' or larger (multiple 4' x 4' open plan "study carrel" type workstations around room perimeter – users wear headphones)
- 4' x 4' per workstation plus provisions for walk-by space

Computer Collaboration Suites:

- 8' x 8' or larger for: Multi-user collaboration, Multi-Media preparation, training and other uses that might interfere with users in the general computer/work area

Staff: Network/System Administrator:

- Needs defined job title and/or description, ability to organize and communicate effectively, requires a dedicated role and knowledge of the systems in place, general computer troubleshooter

Network Wiring:

- EtherNet - 1000Base-T (Gigabit): Category-6e twisted pair, 100 meter (326 ft) maximum run, each computer connected via a "home-run" to a 1000Base-T (Gigabit) Switch