

New reality

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Unlike now I had my own office at work fifteen years ago. Despite climbing the social ladder to become a professor, I now regularly feel like a refugee at work. Spent a whole day on campus yesterday for the first time since the lifting of the Corona measures. Uncomfortably, I walked into the building at 8:45 am, knowing that my lecture in a real classroom (not online) would not take place until the late afternoon. The first meeting was at 9 o'clock. Except for one colleague, everyone still worked from home. The room where I had sat down had meanwhile been filled with 2 colleagues, who were not necessarily waiting for my Teams meeting contribution, so I went on the move.

I sat down with the other Teams meeting colleague present, but hearing his voice in real life and also much later on the headset was so confusing that I quickly left to enter an empty room. About 10 minutes later, someone came in, telling me with a (played) regretful face that she had reserved this room. I left again. With my laptop and phone in hand and headphones on, I continued my search while continuing to attend the meeting.

After the meeting from 9 to 10, there was one from 10 to 11, from 11 to 12, then a break, and then again... At every meeting, at least one colleague claimed the room I had taken, who was very sorry, but reserved it. So I went on the run repeatedly, looking for empty rooms, of which there were, fortunately, more than enough. However, due to the constant relocation, it was impossible to double-task, to answer or edit emails during the meetings. Because I couldn't set up my equipment, I fell behind. Finally the time of the lecture came: AMAZING! Real students ... After my 1.5 hour lecture I spent at least another half hour chatting with some students, there were so many questions.

When I got home in the evening, I went straight to bed. The peer reviews of an article for an American journal will have to wait, as will the latest changes to my chapter in a new book. I felt broken. This morning I started very early, I felt like working in my own home office with my own computers. At noon, during the walk with the dog, I come up with this column.

The displacements that took place as a result of modern communication techniques have never been felt so clearly. Among other things, the internet made it possible to increase the distance between living and working and people could also work from home (answer emails, prepare lessons, etc.). As a result, the number of workplaces has been greatly reduced: 1 place per employee became 1 place per 3 or 4 employees. The open-plan office was created as an interim solution. If all colleagues came to campus, there would be a huge shortage of workplaces. However, because of Corona we all got our own office again, at home, with bookcases, super computers, furnished and decorated by ourselves in our own chosen environment.

So Saxion University has an office in the village Aalden, in my house. My partner Victorine, who has since become faculty dean at Windesheim University, is just one door away. In our house, two universities, and probably through all those other colleagues their home offices border, through Teams we border many other universities, companies and institutions in the same way.

In fact, the divisions of the office space on location (bullpens, etc.) and, for example, the room reservation systems no longer match the current reality. The headquarters should consist of many small rooms on basis of first come, first served. On the other hand, the public space should be designed much more for meeting, making it attractive to meet each other, like a beautiful museum with labs. Our own offices are at home! Bring in your own device has evolved into bring in real estate (home office), TOP!