



Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



Topic: Workplace Innovation Lab (WIL) - Insights and Applications

Date of Presentation: August 15, 2024

Presenters: [Ryan Doerfler](#) and [Ryan Booth](#)

GSA Workplace Resources

View:

[Workplace Innovation Lab - Insights and Applications recording](#)
[Workplace Innovation Lab - Insights and Applications slide deck](#)

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Q1. Will the IoT (Internet of Things) cameras (i.e. Meraki) track occupant count information by space?

A. Yes, the Meraki's sensors can track occupants by area/space, non-facial recognition, by counting bodies.

Q2. The technology looks great - but what's the price premium for adding all of those features that historically are not part of a typical government office build out - \$/SF premium?

A. The goal was to test multiple pieces of tech/furniture... We don't expect federal space to equip ALL of this at once, but it helps our partners understand what works and what doesn't for their use case - agencies can pick and choose what works for them, and their budgets.

Q3. What is the extra cost that comes with opting for 4k video and/or high-performance audio in an agency's workspace? Will the average Joe have access to these in his future workspace?

A. Most of the video conferencing equipment being offered now has 1080/4k... when we did our market research, we targeted equipment that met our security standards first and foremost, but



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also had these performance requirements. There are a myriad of variables that could influence an agency's "upgrade" costs, but there are many solution scenarios that can fit your budget - reach out to our [GSA Workplace program](#) to reach a workplace specialist to help you think through your requirements and develop a budget estimate.

Q4. What did respondents to the WIL survey say would be an improvement that might encourage them to return?

- A. Respondents noted that If we could offer more parking availability, more private spaces, dedicated space to leave personal things and if it had a better location (the WIL was in downtown DC), it would encourage them to return.

Q5. Is there a COTS (Commercial Off the Shelf) reservation system you recommend to agencies setting up an enterprise-wide system that doesn't have the capabilities or resources to develop a customized reservation platform?

- A. There are several COTS products that we looked at; I'd be happy to discuss them in more detail. We actually utilized a COTS tool, but made some modifications. Please email ryan.booth@gsa.gov.

Q6. Was the WIL near easy parking?

- A. There were several parking garages near the building, and access to the DC Metro.

Q7. Workers don't need neighborhoods to perform their work. They need dedicated offices and quiet private workspaces to concentrate and not be distracted. Collaboration can take place in meeting rooms. A Harvard Business School study demonstrated that face-to-face interactions dropped 70% in open office areas. (The Truth About Open Offices – Harvard Business Review) Has anyone asked the workers what they want and works best for them? Make a reservation to use a desk? That might have value if you are traveling. No one needs another app.

- A. When assisting our client agencies in determining their workplace needs, GSA always seeks to understand the business goals of the organization undergoing the workplace change, as well as how the staff currently and could do their work in the future. This Activity Based Planning approach is the foundation of our workplace strategy services, both in terms of the tools and services GSA offers.

Ever since the workplace program was created in 2005, GSA has consistently found that when workplace needs are not based on this understanding, there is a much higher risk of the office design, furniture, and technology not fully meeting the day-to-day needs of that organization. It is for this reason, the Workplace Innovation Lab is not intended to offer a single approach that will be right for all agencies. Rather, a range of options that federal agency leaders can evaluate to determine the approach that is best for their organization.



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More information about how Activity Based Planning is used, as well as GSA's tools and services, can be found at the following GSA Client Enrichment Series presentations, all of which have recordings available on the [CES web site](#).

- [July 9, 2020: WIFM 3.0 - The Sustainability Edition](#). This session shows client agencies can use our workplace modeling tool to scenario plan requirements given their telework policy and work styles, and see impact on emissions
- [October 26, 2023 : New Tools for the New Workplace](#). This session describes the features and benefits of federal co-working and workplace engagements, and learn how to use GSA's inventory of owned and leased properties to help develop client agency workplace requirements.
- [March 16, 2023: Understanding Your Space Usage with Daily Occupancy Data](#). This session describes how data collection technologies and techniques can be applied to evaluate workplace utilization and support portfolio planning.
- [February 17, 2022: Workplace Engagements](#). This session covers the variety of services our Center for Workplace Strategy has to offer to help you reimagine your workplace. From Activity Based Planning analysis to self-service tools like our "Workplace Investment and Feasibility Modeling" to full-blown workplace engagements requiring organization-wide buy-in and change management.

Q8. Can you share links to the tech items you used and what worked well?

- A. GSA worked with a variety of furniture and technology vendors to equip the WIL. See the [presentation slide deck](#) and [session recording](#) for details on the design intent for our various neighborhoods and user feedback.

Q9. We're using FM Systems to manage our hoteling needs. We're finding a lot of similar findings. In regards to encouraging folks to come into using these hoteling spaces, how much of it was the appeal of the space?

- A. We found that if we can provide space with the latest in tech/innovations as well with proper design, customers want to come into the space. Customers did like to know they were guaranteed a spot after making a reservation.

Q10. According to your map, the areas of access are in certain states. Will there be more WILs coming in the future and in more states?

- A. Our map highlighted additional [federal co-working sites](#); however, there is only one WIL. Our Lab is intended to do research, showcase and try different things. In this instance, co-working services was an additional service offered with the Workplace Innovation Lab. The future will also have coworking services offered. We are doing some very early investigations on other WILs and other



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locations that aren't in Washington, DC. However, there are many variables that need to be considered as far as where that might be, the type of WIL, and evaluation focus.

Our six federal co-working locations (Tacoma, WA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO, Kansas City, MO; Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA) are fantastic work environments. They are robust offices with workstations, meeting rooms and everything you would come to expect with modern technology. However, unlike the WIL, those coworking locations are not testing new things or doing the type of research, if you will, that we explore in the WIL.

Q11. Is it GSA's long term plan to take vacated federally-owned or leased space to create these WIL's throughout the country? This would ultimately reduce the individual agency leases and "Reduce the Footprint".

- A. Not currently. We're always open to exploring different options as far as properly utilizing space and working with client agencies for an agency that is downsizing. We welcome having conversations related to the workplace long term strategy direction for your agency, and the portfolio. Discussions based on needs in a particular building and market are always sought. With respect to the WIL, however, there are no plans of creating WILs in different locations where there might be that particular instance or need. Right now, it's just WIL 7200 (named after the WIL's building wing location) opening in the Spring 2025 at the GSA HQ in Washington, DC. There have been some explorations of other potential workplace innovation labs across the country, let's say two or so, over the next year or two. That's as far as we've gone as far as exploration.

We welcome a discussion about how your agency, at a national level, can integrate some of what GSA has learned from the WIL and how to integrate those insights into your own workplace planning. Please reach out to us at workplace@gsa.gov to reach our workplace team, or to your [National or Regional Account Lead](#) to engage with us.

Q12. When building spaces like the WIL in our own footprint, does GSA have specialists to help us ensure we meet accessibility needs and requirements of our staff?

- A. Yes! As far as meeting accessibility and design requirements, we definitely have experts in that area who can help with design features to ensure your space works well for all your staff. Reach out to us at workplace@gsa.gov, and we can discuss your requirements.

Q13. Are there any particular articulating arms that worked well with dual monitors? We are looking to create some hoteling spaces at NASA HQ with a standard IT set w/monitor arms.

- A. We made sure in the WIL, (and we're encouraging folks to do the same when you're doing the design), to bring technologists as well as the design folks together at the same time. That really helps both sides understand the dynamics of the actual space. Regarding the specific arms,



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there are so many different arms that work. GSA looks at the space itself and determines which arms might work for that specific niche of space. We wanted the arms oriented to the size of the monitor that we are going to put on there. All the mounts are generally the same type of mount. However, when we did the WIL, we actually made the furniture vendors provide the arms, depending on how they were designing the space. Some of the spaces didn't need dual monitoring arms. Some of them needed one, or would have a laptop and a monitor. So we worked with the furniture vendors and told them what our technology requirements were. The vendors were the ones to actually design the arms and how that design would look. So we put the ball in their court after we gave them our requirements.

Q14. How can you make an adaptive (on castors) work space with built in monitors and sit/stand desks, which require electricity and computer connections?

- A.** What we're designing now are a couple of pods in spaces where we know that we're going to want movable screens in certain spaces. Therefore, it all depends on the kind of design and getting the furniture and the workplace team along with the technology folks to make sure that the requirements are in sync. Overall, flexibility in the design is key. For WIL 7200, we plan to explore the use of battery packs that can be checked out by a user from the concierge desk to enable greater desk mobility.

Q15. Have you seen any demand signals for touchdown spaces versus reserved spaces? Hard to determine at the WIL, but perhaps with the GSA workforce at large?

- A.** The WIL is a temporary environment where lots of different organizations are coming in and using that space, a variety of different times. It's not like one stable organization using it over and over again. That's one of the caveats on the data. We have a lot of different organizations coming in. Individuals that are curious, which is great for assessing overall demand. It gets tricky when you're using that figure to come up with the ratio. It's actually better to take a reverse approach. Have a conversation with the organization regarding the work they will do, and what the nature of the work they are trying to accomplish is, and how they would see themselves working in the future.

From there, you can then create the benching station or individual work points ratios based off of that activity based planning. It is the same type of approach that goes into how many open collaboration areas, or how many four-person meeting rooms or larger meeting rooms, are needed. It will vary depending on the work that's being accomplished. We take into account an organization that is assigned to that space versus a space that's not really assigned for one organization, but allows lots of organizations to work in the WIL. Therefore, there is no magic number. As always, we're more than happy to continue that conversation offline - email us at workplace@gsa.gov.



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Q16. I feel that agencies have some hesitation in building out hoteling/collaboration spaces. In our agency, we're noticing the program will build a few large and open collaboration spaces; however, they fear that they may be obsolete, given the uncertainty of Return to the Workplace policy. In your observation, do you feel that these WILs have become so established that they essentially become part of the fabric of everyday work life? Meaning, are WILs here to stay?

A. Yes, when it comes to creating a work environment for a hybrid workforce. For example, in a space that is being reduced, it takes into account employees that come into the office 2 days a week. You could have a very traditional, very conventional type of workplace setting with offices, workstations and collaboration spaces along with telework. You have now created a hybrid work environment. Another option is to do a workplace strategy that leans on [coworking services](#) provided by another entity, for instance, like GSA, while also having an anchor space. That smaller anchor space will enable that Federal agency to have special mission critical types of spaces. If your agency is interested in doing research in a particular area, and it's within your established authorities, a WIL might be right for you. Please reach out to schedule a more in depth conversation at workplace@gsa.gov.