

Whitney Foutz

Background: My background is fairly eclectic but definitely centered around the tangible built environment. I have an undergraduate degree in architecture and worked in construction management before coming to MIT 2 years ago. I am currently pursuing the MCP and MSRED degrees. My research interests have ranged from sustainability indicators to affordable housing, in addition to the effects of technology on the city and real estate development.

Here are a few preliminary thoughts on a research project based on the separation of work from workplace:

Central Question:

How will new working and lifestyle patterns emerge as media and communication technologies continue to permeate our environment?

Technological advances in the last two decades have dramatically changed the way people work. Mobile technology and telecommuting are freeing people from the restraints of a downtown office address. We are able to take our work with us wherever we go, creating a flexible concept of the office. Our work is becoming separate from our concept of a workplace.

This increased freedom and flexibility in our working lives suggests a new set of priorities and criteria in selecting a place to locate.

Perhaps a new shape for cities will develop as our workplace becomes less of a physical place.

Some interesting visions:

Joel Kotkin – Nerdistan and Valhallas

An example of the new working environment:

Free wireless internet connections are becoming more and more prevalent in coffee shops and public spaces. What are the motivations of business owners and technology and media companies to provide these services? How are these places becoming the new office? In a sense these places provide a temporary office and even a temporary office community for people who choose to work outside of the typical office environment.