



Port Workspace

An Ethnographic Study of
Coworking in Oakland, CA

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INTRODUCTION

The way that people are working is changing. Laptop computers and wifi connectivity have made it possible for workers to leave a traditional office environment and get work done just about anywhere. Many industries are abandoning the idea of keeping all their workers in one office space and are letting their employees work from home. In the Bay Area, it is not uncommon to find a tech worker in a cafe during the middle of the day working. In the early 2000s, some remote workers decided they missed the comradery and social environment of the office environment but wanted to maintain the freedom of being freelancers. They realized that they could easily afford an office space if they split the rent. This was how the coworking space was born and coworking spaces have been popping up in different cities all over the world ever since. (Frost)

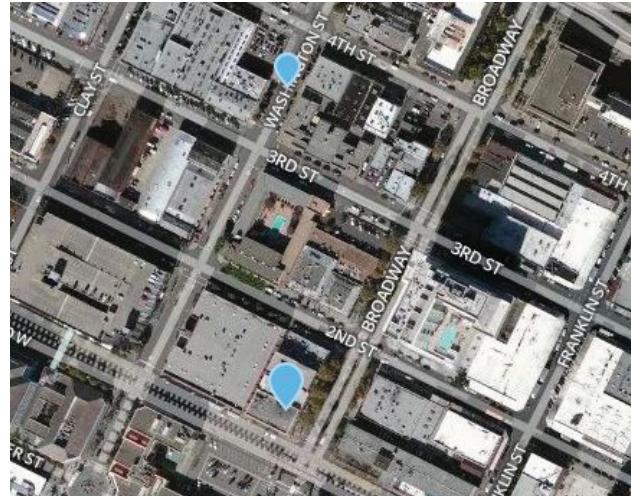
The site that I have chosen for this study is a new coworking space in Oakland, CA. The building is a multi-story, historic building in Oakland's Jack London Square at the corner of Broadway and Embarcadero. The first story houses a newly refurbished restaurant space as well as the lobby of the coworking offices. The second and third stories are also newly refurbished and contain three types of working environments that people can rent out: Private office spaces designed for a working with teams, smaller private offices for a single person, a personal desk and storage space in a shared office, or coworking desk space in an open, shared area. The terms of their rental agreement allow business owners to choose the type of working environment and office space best suits their needs. The idea behind these types of working environments assumes that people will be able to share ideas and knowledge despite working in different industries and the added benefit of easy access to different creative industries can give small businesses an advantage.

LOCATION

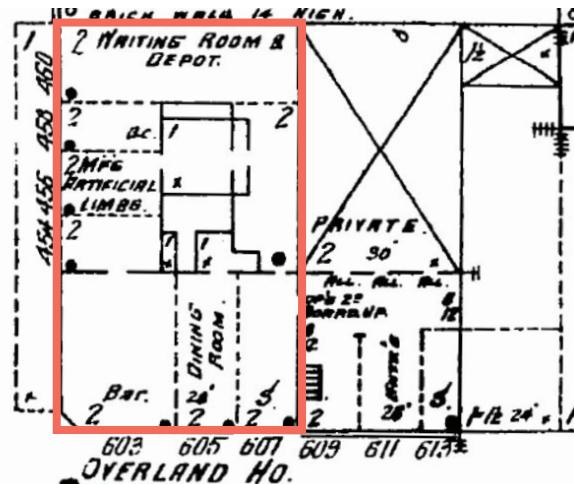
Port Workspace currently has two buildings that members have access to. The main office is at 317 Washington St., Oakland, CA but I've focused my research on their second building called the Overland House at 101 Broadway, Oakland, CA.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Overland House was built around the turn of the 20th Century at what was once known as 1st and Broadway. This site was adjacent to the Transcontinental Railroad terminal and housed a restaurant and brothel. According to the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (right), it also used to house the train depot and waiting room as well as an artificial limb manufacturer. ("Digital Sanborn Maps")



Port Workspaces at 101 Broadway and 317 Washington in Oakland, CA



Overland House as seen in the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

The current users of the workspaces vary quite a bit. The owners and building architect both have private offices in the buildings and the rest of the staff have work areas in each of the buildings as well. The people who rent work space come from a wide variety of industries. There is a music booking agent, lawyers, web design, interior design, engineering firms, and others. The coworking space is utilized by a few different businesses as well as a few solo workers.

PURPOSE

I decided to look at a coworking site because of recent work from Giancomo Becattini, David Harvey, and Richard Florida on post-Fordist urban economic space. To see spaces where businesses cluster together in order to work cooperatively is something that has been happening for quite a while where there are concentrations of productive forces. The clustering of industries is called Marshallian Clustering, after Alfred Marshall who noticed the clustering of similar industries in London during the late 1800s. I'm interested in seeing if coworking fosters this kind of clustering, what kind of resources or knowledge are being shared between proximate workers, and what the larger implications of this kind of development are.

Considering the district, specifically the industrial district, as a social and economic space of activity and imagining this district to be contained in the walls of an office building where its inhabitants function as a community of potential collaborators and competitors, the resemblance of the industrial district to the coworking environment is striking. The coworking cluster relies on a somewhat closed community of firms, with firms coming and going regularly, engaged in productive activity through a network of personal relationships between entrepreneurs. Opportunities for firms to take on side work from other firms in the cluster are available just as there are opportunities to learn new skills from other firms in the cluster. The proximity of the different entrepreneurs in a coworking space adds to the sense of all-togetherness and solidarity that can be crucial for when times are tough for new companies. The permeability of the cluster as well as its malleability make for stronger economic footings for these industries. (Becattini)

Richard Florida has been writing about the rise of the Creative Class since the early 2000s. He defines the Creative Class as young tech workers, designers, artists, musicians and entrepreneurs that cities have been competing to attract and retain.

Cities can keep these workers cultivating a vibrant nightlife, restaurant scene, art events, and outdoor recreational activities. This type of vibrant urban environment makes the decision to move into a city easier for young creatives and can help keep them there by providing a prepackaged lifestyle that's easy to assimilate into. Creative workers are typically choosing where to live by what a city has to offer recreationally and then find work once they get there. Developing this kind of city relies on building a diverse set of activities for a diverse set of people to take advantage of. (Florida)

This kind of post-modern development is a reaction to the changes that have occurred in the proto-typical work environment. Businesses have looked for ways to both cut costs and to maintain their best employees. By offering their most talented to be unchained from their desks they are able to do both. It's a rational move that allows for an organic urban form to emerge to meet the needs of talented workers. It also allowed for cities to compete with one another in more ways to attract workers and businesses with amenities that interest individuals more so than large companies. The appropriation of space in a city by highly skilled workers breathes in new life but can lead to shifts in the urban form that exclude long standing urban residents:

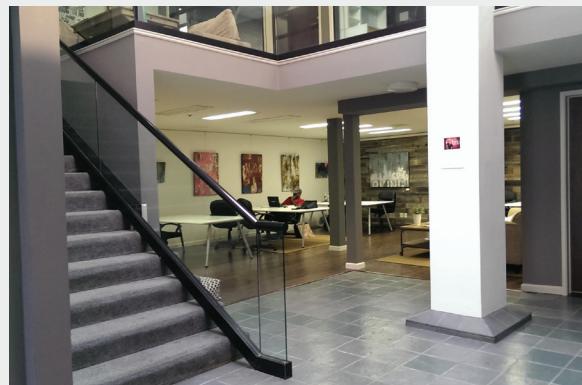
The vitality of the central city core has been reemphasized, themes such as quality of urban living (gentrification, consumption palaces and sophisticated entertainment,) and enhanced social control over both public and private spaces within a city, have been of widespread significance. But the urban process has also had to cope with increasing impoverishment and unemployment under conditions where the social wage could not be increased. Harvey 269

The potential for increased social conflict because of spatial appropriation is a point to take into consideration given the rise of mobile workers and the availability of space for appropriation. How space is created, who creates it, and who has access to it are fundamental questions that need to be addressed. (Harvey)

PHOTOGRAPHS



Entryway at 317 Washington



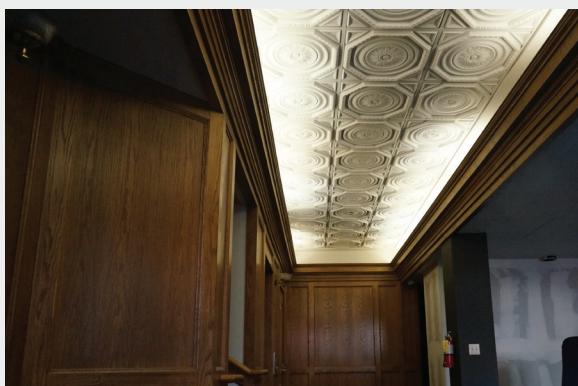
Coworking Space at 317 Washington



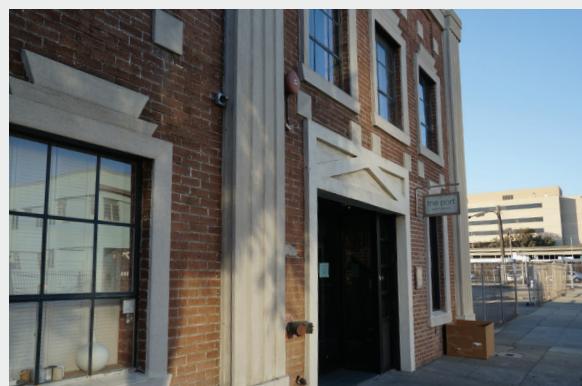
Conference Room Booking System at 317 Washington



Conference Room at 317 Washington



Entryway at 101 Broadway



Front door at 317 Washington



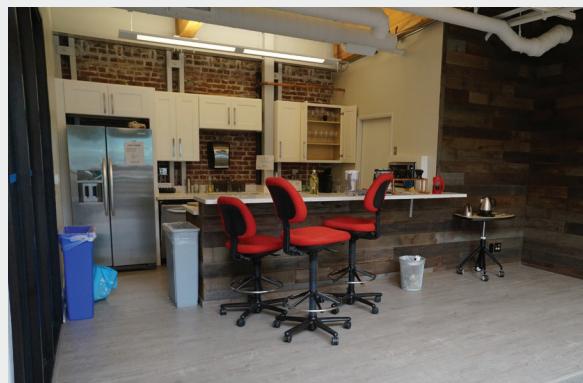
Lounge at 317 Washington



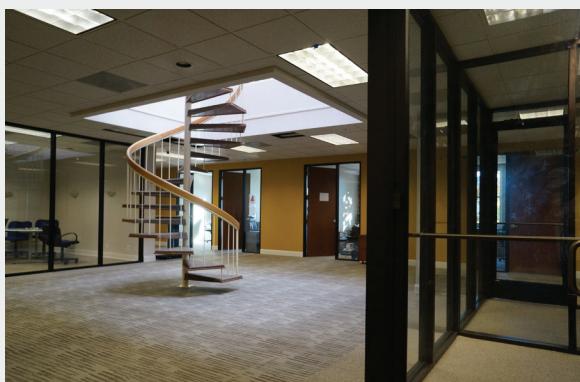
Front Door at 317 Washington



Front Door at 317 Washington



Kitchen at 101 Broadway



Staircase at 101 Broadway



Hot water station at 101 Broadway

METHODS

PROCESS

My process for studying this site involved various methods in order to gather a wide body of research. I began my process by contacting the workspace site and requesting a tour. The person who showed me around the facilities ended up being my informant and allowed me to interview her for this study. After the interview, I did a semantic study of the interview transcript and created a taxonomy from the key terms my informant used. This study was a way to determine what aspects of the space and its workings are important to the informant. Through observation of the site, I was able to get a better understanding of how the space was used. Outside research was also a large part of this study and I looked for literature about office culture, coworking, industrial clustering, knowledge sharing, and studies of the office as a social environment. I also did one informal outside interview with a professor at UC Berkeley who teaches Urban Theory to help get a better understanding of the coworking space and how it fits into the fabric of the city.

INFORMANT

The informant I chose to interview was the initial point of introduction to the space. She is one of the staff members who is in charge of the daily operation of the business and responded to my email requests for more information about the space. For the purposes of this project, I'll refer to her as Ms. I to protect her identity. I decided that she would be a good informant because she has experience with different coworking spaces and seems to be personally invested in the success of the Port Workspaces.

IDENTIFYING INFORMANT

Since Ms. I handles much of the sales aspect of the business, she was responsible for giving me an initial tour of both of the facilities and introducing me to the owner of the business. She is also familiar with the many tenants who rent

private space or rent coworking space. She has also recommended specific renters who she thinks will have valuable input into the research that I'm doing and can make those introductions happen more smoothly than I may able to on my own. Ms. I is also a recent UC Berkeley graduate who majored in Anthropology and may be able to provide interesting insights of the space from an anthropological perspective.

INTERVIEW

My interview with Ms. I spanned about 15 minutes at the end of the day on a Tuesday. I chose this time specifically because, in my experience, I'm most at ease at the end of a work day and I'm happier to talk with colleagues for longer than a few minutes since the work day is about to end. I interviewed Ms. I in the lobby of 101 Broadway and two other staffers were present, which actually worked out fine as they would periodically chime in with extra information.

The questions I asked were related to the overall functions of the business and the ideas about people's preferences for different work environments that were used to shape the business. One thing I wanted to try to get more information about was their concept of Territorial vs Social people. This phrase was repeated both by Ms. I and the owner of the business. I was interested in uncovering more of this concept as it was similar to an examination of the Myers-Briggs personality types we studied as it relates to working preferences and to see if they were applying similar thinking to what an Introvert/Territorial-person and an Extrovert/Social-person would desire in a working environment. It also seems that there is some a sorting mechanism by design that divides the tenants into two distinct categories and thus two different buildings.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, AND KEY TERMS

Interview	Data Analysis	Key Terms
Q: So you've already told me a little bit about the space when I came for the tour last time. But why don't you tell me a little bit about what your day look like? What's sort of a normal day for you here?		
A: Making sure there is coffee and the dishes are done is probably the most important thing. Beyond that we have to take care of all the sales and marketing stuff for the building. For instance, we realized that we did not have an events management process for when we have events. So today, I had to start putting that together. Other than that, I set up tours and get leases together for people.	Ms. I handles a lot of the day to day operations of the space. Sales = Responding to emails requests for info through the website. Events = Art shows, meetings, etc.	Marketing Events Management Tours Leases
Q: Last time I was here, both you and the owner mentioned that some people were Territorial and some were Social. What did you mean by that?		
A: Well, we notice that some people work differently than other. Like, some want to have their own office space, with their own desks and storage, and other are fine with working out in the coworking spaces.	Territorial = introverts Social = Extroverts Coworkers vs. Long Term Tenants	Territorial vs. Social
(FedEx driver comes in with a delivery, interview stops for a few minutes)		

Interview	Data Analysis	Key Terms
<p>Q: That's interesting because today in lecture we all had to take a Myers-Briggs test before coming to class. Then we broke up into groups by our personality types and tried to design an office for the opposite type. It was interesting trying to design a place, as an extrovert who likes more communal working, for an introvert assuming that introverts like to have their own space and more privacy. Do you notice different people making those kinds of decisions on where they will work in the space?</p>		
<p>A: Well, if there are unleased offices, the coworkers are free to go work in there so if someone wanted to work in a more private setting, they have that option as long as there is an open office. So there is a level of sorting that is involved with that.</p>	<p>Open offices are available for anyone to use.</p>	Private
<p>Q: So you've showed me both of the buildings. What are the differences between the two?</p>		
<p>A: 317, by design, is the cleaner, more professional, mellow space and this building is a more lively, playful environment.</p>	<p>317 Washington is the other office bldg. Has more neutral color scheme and was first co-working space in the company. 101 Broadway is still being finished and not all of the spaces are occupied yet.</p>	Cleaner Professional Mellow Lively Playful
<p>Q: Hence the slide...</p>		
<p>A: Yea that's why we have the slide in this building.</p>	<p>There are plans for a slide to be built between the 2nd and 3rd floors.</p>	Slide
<p>Q: Do you find that people sort themselves by building then?</p>		

Interview	Data Analysis	Key Terms
A: Definitely. Between the buildings there is a level of sorting. The people in 317 have long term leases on private spaces and typically have a more professional vibe.	Rather than a differentiation between the types of workers who choose to work in the open vs work in a private office, some differentiation may occur between the decision of which building to work in.	Long Term Leases Private Space Professional Vibe 317 vs 101
Q: What sort of hours do people come in? Is it different between the buildings?		
A: Coworkers usually come in between 10-11 and office tenants usually come in between 8-9.		Coworking vs Private Office
Other Staff: I can actually get you metrics on card swipes if you want to have the real data. I haven't looked at it very closely but we do log everything.	Entry to both buildings is via a magnetic key card. The card will open the doors to both buildings and different leases allow access at different days and times.	Card Swipes Data
Q: Really? That's awesome. I'd definitely be interested in looking at that.		
Q: I noticed that most of the desks are moveable...		
A: Yea, most of the desks are moveable, but they're temporary. Since we are going to have more events, we need to be able to change the space to make room for that.		Moveable Desks Temporary Events
(New tenant comes in to sign a lease; interview ends)		

FINDINGS

INITIAL FINDINGS

Through my initial interview, a brief interview with other another workspace staffer, and through observation, I've been able to determine that there are several social and organizational sorting mechanisms in place at the Port Workspace.

First, because of the different designs of the two buildings, tenants have separated themselves depending on the culture of their business. Professional businesses, or businesses that want to appear to have the sheen of professionalism, tend to favor 317 Washington over 101 Broadway. Second, there is a further level of differentiation at play in 101 Broadway between the tenants that utilize the private offices and the tenants that utilize the coworking space. The front doors of all the private offices are decorated with the tenants' logos which signify that those tenants are claiming those offices as their own. Some of the tenants with private offices have gone as far as to commandeer some of the coworking desks and have moved them into the private offices to use. The coworkers, while not having assigned work areas, tended to better utilize available conference rooms, private phone booths, and vacant offices as well as the coworking desk spaces.

The private offices at 101 Broadway all line the edges of the buildings and each typically have one or two windows facing outside and glass walls and doors that face the central office space or hallway. The 3rd floor is lit naturally by a large skylight and the desks are arranged around a spiral staircase in the center of the building. This layout is nearly the same on both the second and third floors. The kitchen is located on the third floor and a small break area is located on the second.

The coworking space on the second floor does not have as many desks but does include one standing desk in a hallway and a work area that mimics a reception station with a curved, standing height ledge on the opposite side of the workstation. The workspace designer is currently having pub height furniture

fabricated that will be located on the 3rd floor to function both as standing height desks that can be used with stools. More coworking desk space is also being added to the second floor to accommodate new tenants who are starting to sign leases.

Through my observations, I've seen both the territorial and social aspects that my informant previously mentioned. One of the coworking businesses has multiple employees. The owners of this business would sit together quietly working while the rest of their employees would work in one of the available conference rooms or at a nearby desk, but never at the same desk as the owners. It seemed like either the employees were consciously giving the owners space or the owners were consciously separating themselves from the owners. This territorial dynamic is probably more common in a traditional office setting, but in this case it was interesting to see it play out in the common, coworking space. In another instance, a tenant who happens to be an accountant was assembling a new desk and chair (after the workspace staff asked him to return the ones he had previously borrowed) and another tenant stopped to inquire about which accounting software he should be using. This second interaction is the basis for concept of coworking and one of the benefits of industrial clustering.

PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW

As I've had a chance to observe the workspace more, I've been able to witness the exchanges between the different tenants and ideas being shared. Business consultants have given advice to retail startups, accountants have made book keeping software recommendations, and programmers have shared ideas about ways to push software forward. It's exciting to have had a chance to see these kinds of exchanges.

The space is still in progress although most of the working features are in place. A few of the offices are unfinished, new furniture is being fabricated and the slide that connects the 2nd and 3rd floors has yet to be installed. This has made it

a bit more challenging for me to propose a redesign as the space is in transition. Some of the changes I would make initially would be to have a wider range of seating and desk options available for coworkers that would include more standing height desks and high platforms. In addition to workspace changes, a lounge where people could easily stretch out or not work would be a good addition.

Coworking spaces are a good thing for Oakland because they can add new pull factors to attract new businesses to the city. The civic amenities in Oakland have been increasing in the past few years and include many great bars, restaurants and night life. More people have been moving to the area as the real estate prices in San Francisco keep growing and people are now wanting to live, work, and play in Oakland.

EMIC POINT OF VIEW

The idea of coworking is a relatively new form of doing business. It caters to a segment of the workforce that wants to have both a sense of community and collaboration as well as some private space. Breaking from the traditional office environment, coworking has many opportunities for development and growth and can be a great urban amenity to offer young businesses.

STRENGTHS

Port Workspace seems to be doing a lot of thing right: they have considered the different ways that people work, they are conscious of the varied nature of social tendencies, they are repurposing old buildings in Oakland, and they are providing social interaction for workers who need it. Their decisions have been very thought out and deliberate. Any of the worker recommendations are taken into consideration and the ways that the space is changing reflects that.

From a brief discussion with the designer of the space, I learned that he wanted to make sure the spaces ran more like a business and less like a co-op as the earlier iterations of coworking spaces did. He wanted to be able to cater the space to

multiple types of tenants so the space could have a broader appeal. This has allowed the business to insulate themselves a bit more from the temporary tenants that some workspaces have.

CHALLENGES

This kind of working environment can be a good way for getting disparate creative workers together but it also acts like a citadel from other kinds of work. Much of the work that is done in coworking environments is divorced from place and doesn't allow many other businesses to take advantage of the proximity to these creative workers. It creates a larger social space of proximate strangers.

ETIC POINT OF VIEW

Through my literary review, I've been able to focus my research on the following points: Coworking, Office Space and Health, Social Factors of Work, and Socio-economic Factors. These four points will allow me to look at coworking environments at differing scales and will broaden the scope of the paper beyond just the office space.

COWORKING

The concept of coworking is relatively new and was born out of the rise of freelancers in the workforce who found themselves working at home or in cafés and missed having the social connectedness that they had in a more traditional office environment. These independent workers initially had very basic needs. They needed Wi-Fi, lots of coffee or tea, some desk space, and a nice environment. What programmers brought to this idea of a cooperative workspace was the potential for collaboration. The innovations in web technology have recently focused on social media, open source development, and sharing, which differed from earlier ideas of internet use being focused on searching, buying and selling, and self-promotion. The programmers who were working on these innovations also wanted these ideals to be realized in real space and sought out collaborative environments where they could

meet people with the same ideals. (Frost; Leforestier; Aguiton and Cardon)

This model of working turned out to be attractive to more than just programmers; entrepreneurs, remote workers, students, and other small businesses started to be interested in an environment that was focused on knowledge sharing and collaboration. Beyond the collaborative aspects of coworking, this new group of workers are interested in community, openness, and sustainability. (Deijl)

OFFICE SPACE AND HEALTH

Typical office space design has tried to balance collaboration and sociability with privacy and productivity. It has also been a forgotten factor in health. Beyond the mental stress people endure at work, there is also the physical stress of sitting for long periods of time in front of a keyboard. The design factors were largely guided by the Taylorization of office work; designers were focused on increasing productivity rather than creating healthy environments. This is evidenced by the rise of illnesses that began appearing in office workers in the 1960s that has been attributed to Sick Building Syndrome (SBS). SBS is a group of work related symptoms such as cough, nausea, skin rash, and respiratory infections that occur more commonly in certain types of buildings. (Brookes and Kaplan; Baldry, Bain, and Taylor)

SOCIAL FACTORS OF WORK

In order to look meaningfully at this new type of working environment, a look at the more traditional office space is needed to see how they differ. The ways that office workers have used their workspace may lead to insights on how workers are using their space in coworking environments and socio-cultural tensions between different workers may appear in a coworking environment. Displays of territoriality, office personalization, workspace ambience, may influence or discourage the behavior intended in coworking spaces. How different behaviors are moderated by the groups of workers may be required to ensure that openness and collaboration

are the goals for all the participating workers. (Wells; Noennig and Schlenker)

One of the most common tropes in office design is the open-plan office. This style of office layout involves an arrangement of desks cheek-by-jowl with minimal partitions, or no partitions, in between. The purpose of this layout is to increase the amount of knowledge shared between different workers and to create a more equal environment for all workers. This may sound nice in theory but the workers' experience does not reflect that. Workers in this type of office environment often complain of a lack of privacy, more distractions, increased interruptions, and difficulty in atmospheric control such as temperature, lighting and ventilation. This type of layout may work well when the workers are collaborating on projects as a team, but when it's used as the default office layout for workers in different departments or, as in the case of coworking spaces, different businesses all together, the loss of privacy and increased levels of distraction ultimately harm productivity levels. (Hedge; Feifer; Schwartz)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Coworking offers an opportunity for real estate developers to capitalize on older office spaces and repurpose them for new styles of working. This requires that the developers make design decisions that improve the functions of traditional workspaces. There is room for them to implement changes that address the sustainability of the building and the businesses that it will hold and marketing a new coworking space often makes these kind of improvements mandatory. (Fernandez et al.)

The minority of the workforce is able to work remotely, and most of the people who work remotely are self-employed or contract workers (Felstead). Some cities see coworking as part of an innovation cluster and are working them into the general plans for cities. They see these as opportunities to bring new businesses in to their cities and are trying to encourage these new working environments as a

way to promote growth. New York has even decided that it would provide funding to these innovation centers to help their economic development (Salinger). But there may be issues with pushing these kinds of centers forward. Coworking spaces are typically inhabited with workers that are involved in industries that can fluctuate dramatically. New businesses and entrepreneurial ventures are risky by nature and given the pace of technological change, extremely precarious. With the recent boom and bust trends in the economy, making risky bets with government funds may not be in the best interest of a municipality (Vivant).

COMPARISON

The challenges that are faced from the emic perspective are ensuring that Port Workspace lives up to the promises of coworking. My informant is tasked with figuring out ways that the workspace can create community and cater to the needs of the tenants. She needs to balance both the management of the facility with the social cohesion of the tenants. It seems to be a mix between marketing, operations, management, and client curation. The diversity of the portfolio of clients is an important part of both the marketing of the business and the functioning of the space.

Port Workspace is able to maintain a diverse collection of tenants which is a way to balance more stable businesses with more precarious businesses (See Table 1). Running your own business, especially a creative one, is a very exciting prospect but it is not something that everyone has the luxury of doing. The ability to work at home is already reserved for a specific social strata and the further ability to afford a work space away from home is yet another. Coworking, as it currently stands, seems to be reserved for a specific type of worker with an entrepreneurial nature whose product is not grounded in space.

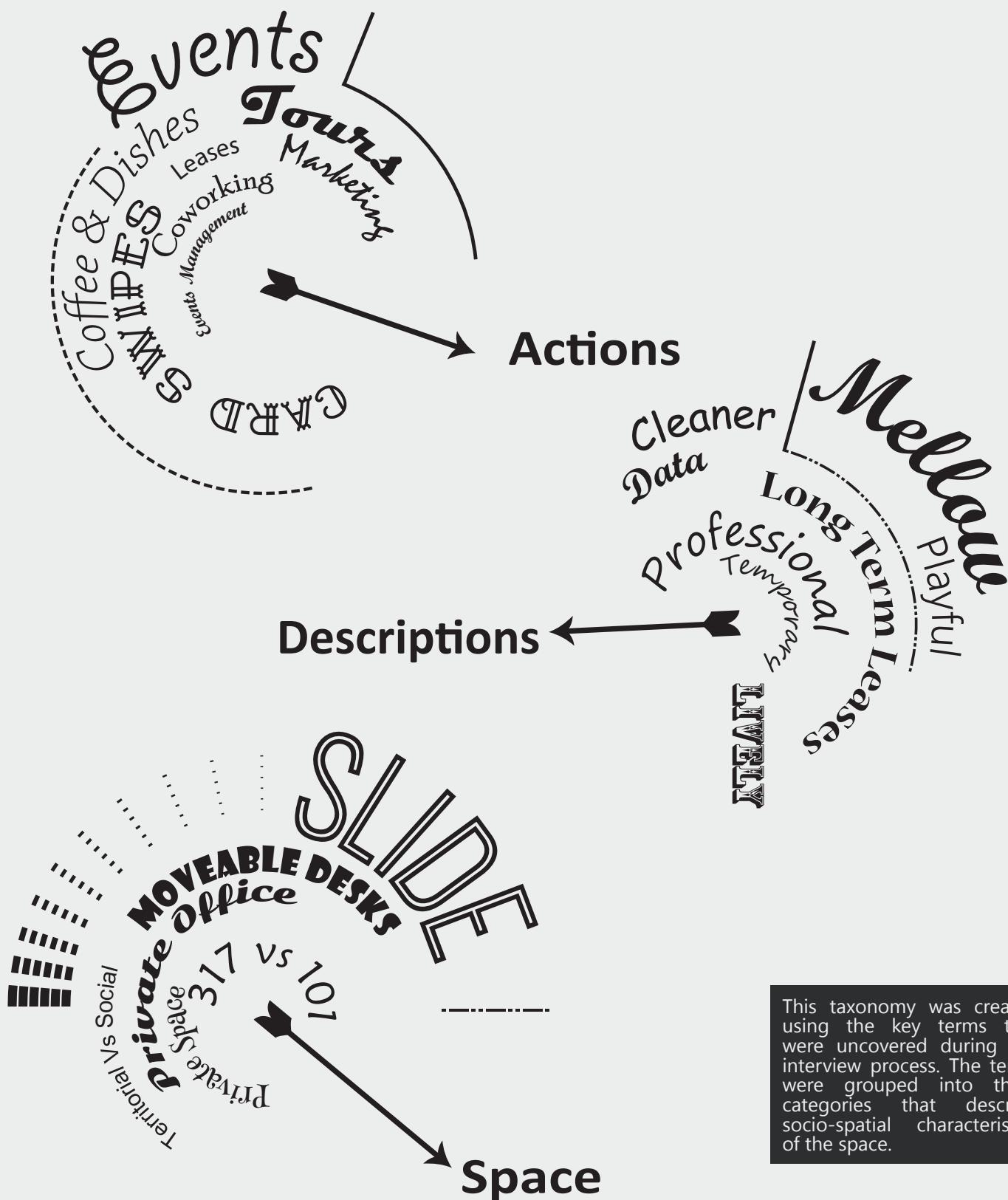
As a relatively new business model, coworking benefits from a freelance based creative class. Whether creative clustering in urban environments is a viable

form of economic development is yet to be determined but there is a growing trend of workers who are striking out on their own. It's predicted that in the next 5 years, 24 million workers will be self-employed and coworking spaces will benefit greatly from this. Some of these workers will choose to work at home, but some of these worker may chose a coworking space for some part of their work environment.

(Webber; Baer)

Table 1	Businesses at Port Workspace
Web Design	Booking Agency
Interior Design	Bookkeeping and Accountant
Data Assessment Consultant	Nonprofit Immigration and Criminal Defense Lawyers
Real Estate Developer	Multiple Web and Software Developers
Life Coach	Catering
Human Resources Management	Online Retail
Engineering	Business Consultants

TAXONOMY OF PORT WORKSPACES

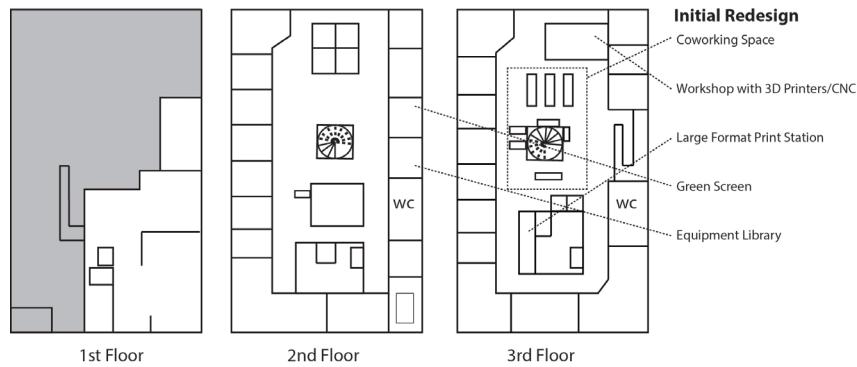


This taxonomy was created using the key terms that were uncovered during the interview process. The terms were grouped into three categories that describe socio-spatial characteristics of the space.

REDESIGN

INITIAL REDESIGN

The 101 Broadway coworking space has only been opened for a few months so the space is still undergoing changes. The owners had the foresight to use moveable and adjustable furniture for most of the office furniture so the layout is fairly malleable. The initial changes or recommendations I recommended were functional ones: adding a workshop area with 3D printers and CNC machines, a large format print station, design workstations with preinstalled software, a green screen, an equipment/tool library. An organizational tool that may be interesting would be a weekly or biweekly meeting between the tenant to discuss what they are working on or any urgent needs that they have but, upon observation, this happens organically.



FINAL REDESIGN

After observing how the space was used at Port Workspace and after reviewing literature on coworking and office environments, there are a few changes that I am proposing to the existing workspace as well as to the restaurant on the first floor. In the existing coworking space, a slide to connect the second and third floors is planned for construction. While this is a clever marketing tool that speaks to startup culture and to the early dotcom offices in the 90s, it is neither a functional design element nor a practical one. The space needed for the slide would ultimately eliminate at least 3 private offices and would require the floor on the third story to be opened up. Instead of installing the slide, my recommendation is

to leave the offices but convert one into a lounge space on the second floor. There is already a break room that has a ping-pong table on the second floor but there isn't a space that would allow people to have a quiet space where they could passively rest. On the third floor where the entrance to the slide would be, the existing room should be removed and the coworking floor space expanded. In lieu of the folding tables that are currently in the coworking space, several rows of either adjustable standing height workspaces or simple pub-height tables could be used. The premise of these changes is to give the tenants more choice in their active or passive use of the building.

One thing that is missing to the coworking space is the integration of the surrounding community. Currently the space is closed to the public and access is controlled with magnetic key cards. Only once a month is the space opened to the public. This public opening coincides with Oakland's First Friday art and street festival. While this is a nice gesture to the arts community, the festival is not representative of the entire Oakland community.

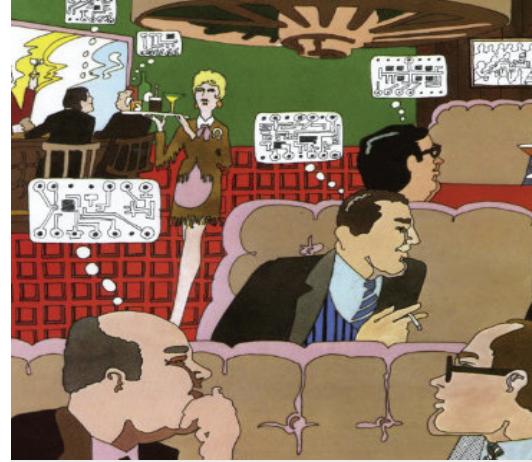
Just two doors down from the site, a small office houses a nonprofit that works to help young adults in underserved communities complete college and earn degrees. This proximity begs for some kind of collaborative coordination either in the form of donated access to meeting rooms or by facilitated interaction between the two user groups such as classes or tutoring. This may be accomplished by my final programmatic change in the restaurant on the first floor. The restaurant space could be integrated into the coworking business by including meeting rooms in the rear of the restaurant that are available to the public. The other benefit for integrating the restaurant into



The Wagon Wheel
from www.computerhistory.org

the coworking space is that it adds a casual environment for further information sharing to occur.

When mentioning the idea of integrating the first floor restaurant to Professor Marco Cenzatti, a lecturer in Architecture and City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley, he told me about a place called The Wagon Wheel in Silicon Valley. The Wagon Wheel was a bar in Mountain View where workers from many different tech companies would go after work. There they would talk with each other about the problems they were working on in the development of semiconductors and work through them together. Professor Cenzatti credited the Wagon Wheel with facilitating the sharing of information that lead Silicon Valley to grow so quickly in the tech industry. The addition of a casual environment for people to share ideas about their work with one another, whether those people are in the tech industry or they are young adults trying to get through college, could connect the micro-culture at the workspace to the larger community.



1969 illustration of tech workers at
The Wagon Wheel
from www.computerhistory.org

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN DESIGNS

Initially, the changes that I proposed for this site were mostly operational changes that added more functionality. The ideas behind this were to expand the tenant possibilities to different types of startup companies that had a need for expensive equipment for their operation. Now that I have a better understanding of how the tenants are curated and the working conditions they are accustomed to, I've proposed more substantive changes to the building. These changes include forgoing the plans for the slide and adding additional coworking desk options that include more standing desks, a room intended for more passive relaxation, and more active

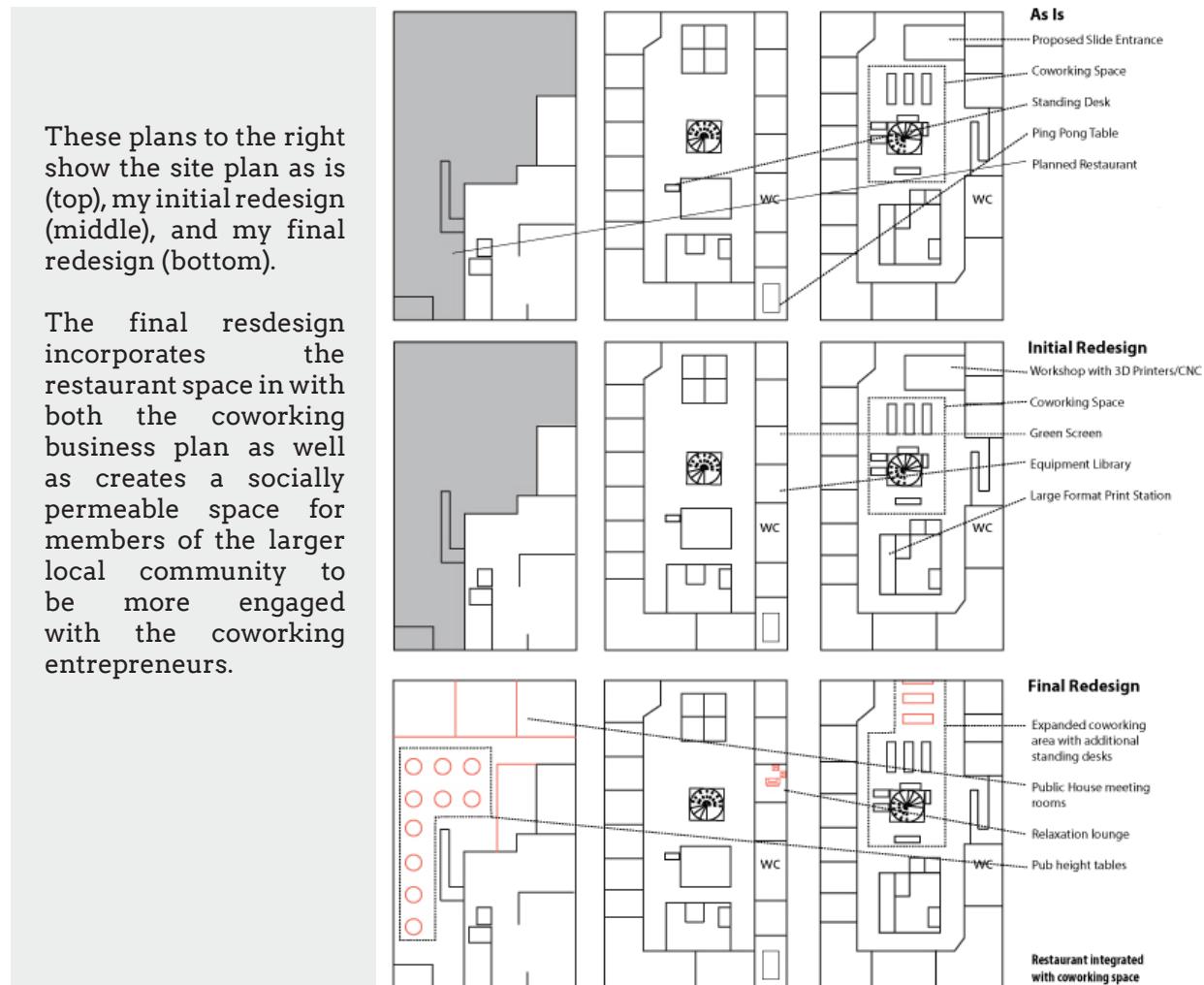
uses in the proposed restaurant on the first floor.

Beyond the obvious differences in the final redesign and the initial redesign, the new changes are aimed both inwardly and outwardly. There is a need for the current tenants to have a larger variety of choices in both how they work, how they rest, and how they collaborate. Having the option to work either standing or seated will yield better outcomes for the tenants. Additionally, having the option to actively rest from work (play ping pong or socialize) or to passively rest (sit or lie down and in a quiet space) will also lead to better outcomes for the tenants. There is also a need to increase the probability of chance encounters and open up knowledge sharing to a larger audience.

ANALYSIS

While my initial redesign would have added additional functionality to the space, it was not in line with the marketing strategy Port Workspace had developed. What I didn't know at the time of my initial design was to what extent they had made very specific decisions about how the space would function and what design features would convey to tenants. The decision to install a slide in the space was not because they need to get from the third floor to the second floor quickly, or because the owners really enjoy slides, it is a design feature that not only pays homage to the tech industry in the 1990s but also affords any worker who isn't a tech worker the opportunity to be able to tell their friends, family, and colleagues that they work in a cool tech office that has a slide. Essentially, it gives them bragging rights. My proposal to remove the slide and replace it with standing height desks on the third floor and a lounge space on the second floor confronts the idea that working in a tech driven, startup environment may not be ideal. Favoring a healthy workstation and an area to decompress and recharge over a marketing tool will appeal to a broader group of potential tenants. The present level of territoriality that the coworkers express in making efforts to keep the open space quiet and productive

will conflict with people sliding between floors. Integrating the restaurant with the coworking space will give further options for tenants to work, relax, and socialize in a different environment than where they are working. It creates more publicly accessible space where tenants can mingle with the community rather than being walled off in a citadel of productivity. It will also create a space that is open to chance encounters that could lead to opportunities that might not have been possible in such a controlled environment.



CONCLUSION

In order for a coworking space to be a successful business it must focus on the needs of the workers. These spaces can act as laboratories for designers and will hopefully impact other spaces where more traditional office work takes place. In my final redesign as well as my poster I point to the opportunity this space has in incorporating the restaurant into their business. That additional social space lies outside of the work environment and can act as a third space of interaction that may be able to include the surrounding community into the vibrancy of the coworking environment. I feel strongly that in order for this kind of coworking space to both benefit the city and to capitalize on opportunities outside their industrial circles more porous walls are needed to allow new people in. The potential for this to happen organically is there, but awareness of the need should be raised.

All told, Port Workspace has a strong foundation as a coworking business and its expansion into other industrial coworking environments should be expected. With Oakland's growing food industry, shared kitchens are starting to pop-up and food start-ups are gaining more traction every day. These kinds of cooperative models are good ways for businesses with limited resources to get started and have the potential to be diverse economic engines for urban development. The rise of coworking space points towards a changing model of work relies on social connection and entrepreneurship. This model of work may not be bound to a place like the way that traditional office work is, but it benefits greatly from having a place that is more responsive to workers needs.



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This article examines the impact that the new technology of Web 2.0 has impacted the ways in which people work together to create goods for public consumption. The impacts of virtual working space on real space are an interesting way to think about how people's interactions have been affected by the internet.

Baldry, C., P. Bain, and P. Taylor. "Sick and Tired? Working in the Modern Office." *Work, Employment & Society* 11.3 (1997): 519–539. CrossRef. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Baldry, et al. look at the ways the changes in the way that people work has affected health and illness. This will be useful in determining ways the site I'm researching can be redesigned in order to create a healthier environment.

Brookes, Malcom, and Archie Kaplan. "The Office Environment: Space Planning and Affective Behaviour." *Human Factors: The Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics Society* 14.5 (1972): 373–391. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Looking at the office environment through a human factors lens, this paper looks at the economic impact of office space design as well as the providing a behavioral study of office workers. This paper will be useful both as a structural frame of study as well as a providing context to look at the ways that office design has been traditionally undertaken.

Deijl, Claudia. Two Heads Are Better Than One: A Case Study of the Coworking Community in the Netherlands. Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2001. Web. 12 Oct. 2013.

Deijl's Undergraduate Thesis is a case study on a coworking space in the Netherlands. This contemporary look at coworking will be a way to test the general goals of coworking and provide a guide for determining if my site is conforming to the precedent or if it's different.

Felstead, A. "The Shifting Locations of Work: New Statistical Evidence on the Spac-

es and Places of Employment." *Work, Employment & Society* 19.2 (2005): 415–431. *CrossRef*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Felstead's study of how technology has impacted the portability of work has given workers the opportunity from mobility. It looks at the types of work that have been altered as well as the spaces where work is being done.

Fernandez, N et al. "Improving Urban Resilience in Coastal Eco-Cities: System Integration." *Lloyd's Register Foundation Collegium* 1 (2013): 170. Print.

This environmental study on coastal cities searches for interventions in the build environment to improve sustainability. It makes the case for repurposing old, abandoned buildings into coworking spaces as a way to improve economic development.

Frost, Dan. "They're Working on Their Own, Just Side by Side - New York Times." 20 Feb. 2008. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

This newspaper article traces the development of the concept of coworking to Brad Neuberg and ties it to the social needs of freelancers. It uncovers some of the social vs. antisocial sentiments that my informants have mentioned and is helpful in defining the current concepts inherent in coworking.

Froth, Marcus. *Urban Informatics, Ubiquitous Computing and Social Media for Healthy Cities*. Brisbane, Queensland, Australia: Urban Informatics Research Lab, Queensland University of Technology, 2011. Print.

Froth looks at the intersection of the Internet, Technology, and urban planning and how it plays a role in social space. By connecting place based strategies to creativity and democracy, I hope to use this study to show the potentials of interventions such as coworking.

Hedge, A. "The Open-Plan Office: A Systematic Investigation of Employee Reactions to Their Work Environment." *Environment and Behavior* 14.5 (1982): 519–542. *CrossRef*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Hedge's study of a large open planned office space uncovered the different relationships between employees, managers, and clerical staff with each other and the office environment. While it is focused on determining the effectiveness of the open-plan office, I will use it to survey issues of privacy, sociability, and the ways that form affects working.

Leforestier, Anne. *The Co-Working Space Concept*. Indian Institute of Management, 2009.

This report looks at coworking space concept from an entrepreneurial prospective and outlines the potential users, their needs, and the benefits of coworking. It looks at the business model of coworking and establishes its viability.

Noennig, Jörg Rainer, and Lars Schlenker. "Atmospheres and Socio-spatial Patterns: Designing Hyperspaces for Knowledge Work." *Distributed, Ambient, and Pervasive Interactions*. Ed. Norbert Streitz and Constantine Stephanidis. Vol. 8028. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2013. 474–483. *CrossRef*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Noennig and Schlenker's study examines of how space and place can foster knowledge based work both in virtual and real space. It looks at how different places can foster connections and interactions and the space (atmosphere) that is created from this.

Salinger, Jordan Harrison. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES THROUGH BUSINESS INCUBATION AND CO-WORKING: A STUDY OF SAN FRANCISCO AND NEW YORK CITY. Columbia University, 2013. Print.

Salinger's Master's Thesis looks at the role of government in funding business incubators as a way to enhance economic development. This will be helpful in tying the concept of coworking spaces into a larger discussion of economic development.

Spinuzzi, C. "Working Alone Together: Coworking as Emergent Collaborative Activity." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 26.4 (2012): 399–441. *CrossRef*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

This study of the proliferation of coworking seeks to determine the desirability from the users' perspective. It uses the concept of coworking as a guide to analyze distributed work models with 9 case studies in Austin, TX.

Thursfield, D. "The Social Construction of Professionalism Among Organizers and Senior Organizers in a UK Trade Union." *Work, Employment & Society* 26.1 (2012): 128–144. *CrossRef*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

This sociological study surveys professionalism as a social construct by examining managerial roles within union organization. This theoretical analysis of a particular microculture offers a framework for looking at the perceptions of professionalism that are at play in my study site.

Vivant, Elsa. "Creatives in the City: Urban Contradictions of the Creative City." *City, Culture and Society* 4.2 (2013): 57–63. *CrossRef*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Vivant's paper offers a counterargument to the promotion of the creative economy in the urban environment. It looks at the problems with promoting creative clustering and the precarious nature of creative work.

Wells, Meredith M. "OFFICE CLUTTER OR MEANINGFUL PERSONAL DISPLAYS: THE ROLE OF OFFICE PERSONALIZATION IN EMPLOYEE AND ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 20.3 (2000): 239–255. CrossRef. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.

Wells looks at the personalization of work space and how gender effects this condition. This study will play a role in developing a redesigned space that provides room for territoriality and well-being.

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APPENDIX

VOCABULARY LIST AND CODING:

A – Actions; S – Space, D- Descriptions

317 vs 101 – S: The two workspaces are distinctly design with different end users in mind. 317 Washington is designed for more ‘professional’ businesses while 101 Broadway is designed for more casual, startup types of businesses.

Card Swipes – A: Entry to the workspaces is controlled with magnetic keycards. When a tenant swipes their card, the front door is unlocked for them and their entry is recorded.

Cleaner – D: 317 Washington is described as being cleaner. This is not a description of the cleanliness of the space but instead refers to the design and feel of the space.

Coffee & Dishes – A: Making coffee and doing the dishes are part of the workspaces responsibilities.

Co-working – A: The concept of co-working is the idea that different businesses can share the resources of a workspace and work alongside one another. Creative industries may be able to share ideas and work together on certain things.

Data – D: Behind the scenes, the workspaces are collecting data about who comes and goes, what types of tenants they have, what tenants needs are, and what they can improve.

Events – A: Events are held in the workspaces as a way to both build the tenant community and to market to the public.

Events Management – A: In order to engage the outside business and entrepreneurial community, the workspace staff and, occasionally the tenants, hold different events in the space.

Leases – A: Each tenant chooses their level of participation in the space by picking a lease. Some leases allow for visitors and others don’t.

Lively – D: 101 Broadway is designed specifically for startups and casual business that typically have a more social nature.

Long Term Leases – D: Long term leases are options for tenants who plan on using the space as a permanent home for their business. There may be a correlation between private office spaces and long term tenants

Marketing – A: Ms. I and the other workspace staff are responsible to putting together various types of marketing material including flyers, postcards, and online

marketing material

Mellow – D: 101 Broadway is designed for a more casual business environment. These tenants range from designers to contractors.

Moveable Desks – S: Moveable desks are a component of primarily the coworking spaces. Tenants with private offices typically bring in their own desk and office furniture but this is not required.

Playful – D: The workspace at 101 Broadway is described as a more playful atmosphere. This descriptor adds to the more casual nature of the space.

Private – S: The workspaces are comprised of open co-working desk space and private office spaces.

Private Office – S: Private offices house one person or a small group of people.

Private Space – S: Private space is demonstrated by the private offices, the conference rooms and the private phone booths.

Professional – D: 317 Washington is designed for businesses that have or need a professional public facing image or brand identity. Attorneys and consultants would fit into this category

Slide – S: 101 Broadway has plans to install a slide that connects the 2nd and 3rd floor. This is to add to the playful atmosphere of the space.

Temporary – D: The modular nature of the coworking space in 101 Broadway allows for new working environments as well as a space to hold events.

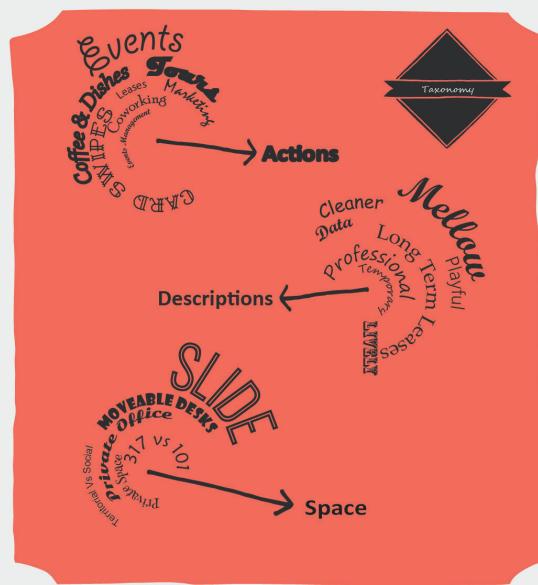
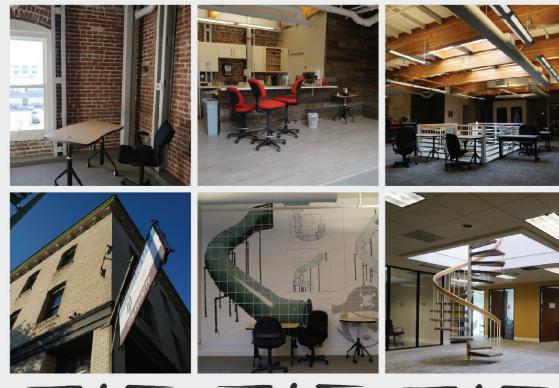
Territorial vs. Social – S: The workspace staff and owner both used this idea of territorial people and social people to describe how different people engage with their workspace environment.

Tours – A: Potential tenants take tours of the two spaces to see what they offer. This entails meeting at one space, touring the offices then walking a block to the other space for another tour.

The Port Workspace Ethnographic Study



LOCATION: 101 Port Workspace is located in Jack London Square at 101 Broadway in Oakland, CA. The building was once known as the Overland House and is rumored to have been one of Jack London's favorite places to drink. Currently, the top two floors house a coworking offices and a restaurant is planned for the ground floor. The location is accessible by bus, BART, or ferry and is very close to downtown Oakland.



My proposal to remove the slide and replace it with a moveable office desk system will allow for more social interaction between tenants. The current social interaction is limited to the private office space on the second floor. This proposal will also allow for more productive work environments. The current workstations are not ergonomic and do not encourage movement. The proposed moveable office desk system will be able to accommodate different work styles and encourage collaboration. The proposed moveable office desk system will also be able to accommodate different work styles and encourage collaboration.

Integrating the restaurant space with the coworking space will provide more choice for tenants. The final design changes I'm proposing will give further options for tenants to work, relax, and socialize in a different environment than where they are working. It will also create a more accessible public space where tenants can integrate into the community rather than being walled off in a citadel of productivity. It will also create a space that is open to chance encounters that could lead to opportunities that might not have been possible in such a controlled environment.

