



Evolving our Workplace, Transforming our Business.



A constantly evolving media landscape, the disruptive impact of digital technologies and evolving organisational structures has meant that Fairfax Media needs to be increasingly agile and responsive to change. Coupled with multiple internal initiatives running concurrently, our real-time working project represented a significant challenge.



Overview of Fairfax Media's Real-Time Working Project for submission to the 2014 INMA Global Innovation Award

Fairfax Media and the real time working initiative

Fairfax Media is a leading multi-platform media company in Australia and New Zealand. The Group comprises metropolitan, rural, regional and community mastheads and services its audiences through high-quality, independent journalism and offers dynamic venues for commerce and information.

Fairfax Media has a portfolio of leading websites, tablet and smartphone apps, including the online news sites smh.com.au and theage.com.au. The Group also has leading transaction websites.

Mastheads include The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Australian Financial Review, The Canberra Times, The Sun-Herald, and The Land. The Group also holds radio licenses in several metropolitan locations in Australia.

Fairfax Media has implemented Real Time Working across its Sydney and Melbourne metropolitan offices, creating a workplace that is as flexible and agile as the media landscape. The RTW environment enables innovation and collaboration and attracts the very best people. Our new workplace is designed to bring to life our culture and values while simultaneously improving the operating performance of our business.

What is Real Time Working?

Real time working (RTW) is a set of physical, behavioural and technological strategies that enable more flexible and efficient work by individuals and teams. It recognises there is a spectrum of work styles and demands and that each day, people will have different activities to complete, requiring varying levels of concentration, collaboration and innovation.

RTW is about choice. Staff can choose to physically locate themselves wherever it is most appropriate for them to undertake their work. If quiet concentrative work is necessary then a semi-enclosed area can be used; if an informal discussion is required there are small rooms equipped with screens and audio-visual equipment.

This choice is supported by appropriate tools of trade such as wireless/cloud IT solutions and a menu of work settings with appropriate technology. Providing this choice means staff are no longer forced to do everything at the one desk. This enables Fairfax to dramatically increase desk utilisation as the majority of staff are not assigned a fixed desk.

Why?

Cost savings

Property is a significant fixed cost for Fairfax and needs to be closely managed to ensure it is aligned with current and future business strategies. The project was scoped to deliver \$32 million of savings over four years, in addition to improving the underlying operating performance of our business and delivering key strategic objectives.

Technology

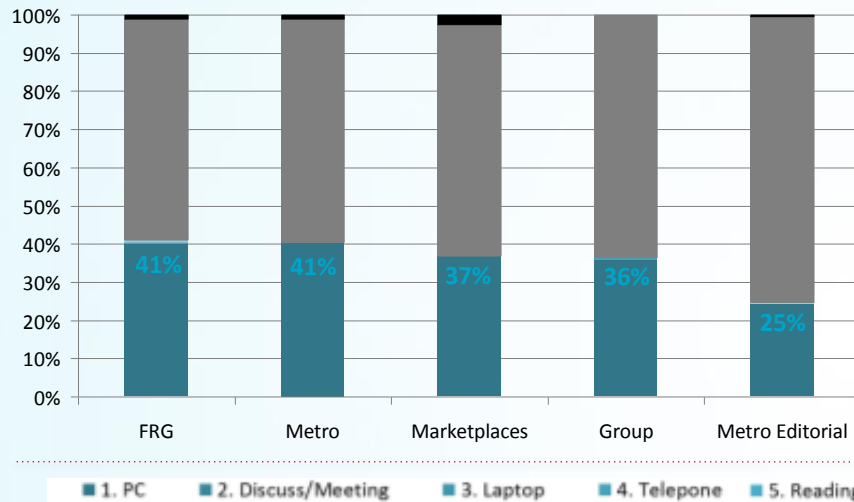
New technology is having a dramatic effect on how and where work is done. Trends such as the adoption of mobility, virtual workplaces and the migration to “cloud computing” have seen a fast-paced transition to new ways of working. Workplaces designed around desktop PCs, fixed desks and limited staff mobility are fast becoming obsolete. Employees and their organisations now need to be agile, mobile and responsive.

Space

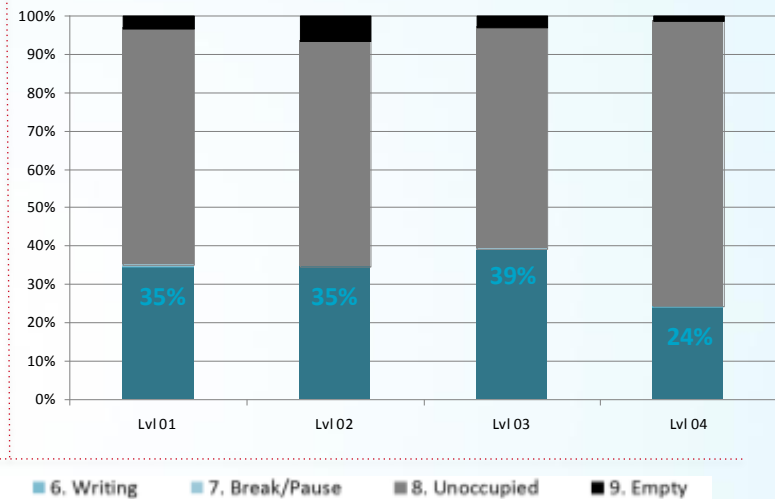
We conducted observation studies that found the average utilisation of traditional desks across Sydney and Melbourne was only 40%. Moving to RTW has enabled the business to significantly reduce its footprint in Sydney and Melbourne by addressing the inefficient use of space. This increased spatial agility allows us to restructure and re-organise the business with minimal impact on space.

Desk utilisation

DESK UTILISATION BY LEVEL



DESK UTILISATION BY TEAM

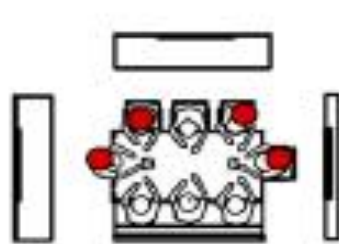


AVERAGE UNDER-UTILISATION OF 67%

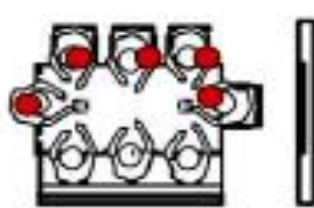
- Between 14%-21% of workstations across ODI/MH were vacant
- Average desk utilisation across both locations was around 40%

Working together

More open meeting spaces, with enhanced technology, to work together and drive innovation



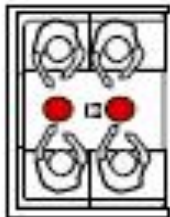
LIBRARY TABLE
18.0 sqm
4 workpoints- Adjustable chairs



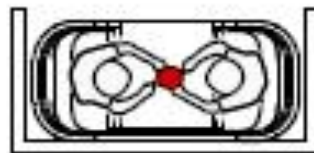
10 PERSON CREATION TABLE
15.0 sqm
4 workpoints- Adjustable chairs



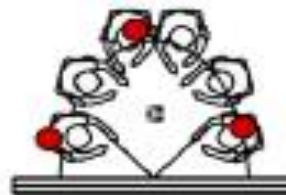
6-8 PERSON CREATION NODE
14.0 sqm
4 workpoints- Adjustable chairs



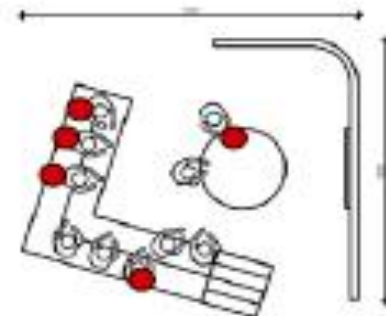
LARGE 4 PERSON WORK BOOTH
9.0 sqm
2 workpoints- Non ergonomic



SMALL 2 PERSON BOOTH
9 sqm
1 workpoint - Non ergonomic



6-8 PERSON INTERACTIVE SPACE
3 points- Adjustable chairs



FORUM
40 sqm
10-12 ppl - fixed furniture

Enabling transition of staff and lowering property footprint costs

Across Fairfax's metropolitan Melbourne and Sydney offices:

**38,000m² reduced to 22,800m² -
release 40% of space for subleasing**

Drive utilisation from 40% to 90%



**Low cost and prioritised budget - 10% of the
usual \$/m² budget**

2,000 staff transitioning over 9 months

Mobile working, reconfiguration and IT



Enabling transition of staff and lowering property footprint costs

Rolled out in the midst of 1,900 redundancies, and a shift from decentralised to centralised operating model.

Two locations simultaneously



Constant change requires flexibility and adaptability

2 year payback



How was RTW executed?

We created a project team, incorporating individuals at all levels of the organisation, called Evolving Our Workplace (EOW), dedicated to the implementation of RTW across Fairfax's Sydney and Melbourne CBD sites over 12 months. Experts were commissioned to help develop the project plan and an EOW brand and concept were formed and agreed upon by the Board of Directors and Senior Leadership teams. The project team researched various global approaches to RTW and commissioned studies and focus groups which helped define the relevant approach for Fairfax.

We defined three key focus areas - Space, Technology and People - which would become the lenses for viewing this project from concept through to completion.

Space focused on creating the right environment for the work we do. RTW has enabled us to create an innovative and agile work environment, responsive to our current challenges and aligned to the creative nature of our people and work. The RTW environment has helped drive innovation and evolution through our legacy operating models. Our new environment has allowed us to walk the talk - matching our work environment to our ever increasing digital focus.

How was RTW executed?

To build employee knowledge, we developed a **change management plan** aligned to the ADKAR model and transferrable to all business units during each phase of the project. A dedicated **intranet site** was created and **regular bulletins** sent to all affected employees. We hosted **employee roadshows** and tours across Melbourne and Sydney sites and information sessions for senior managers.

Our **manager training program** focused on change management and managing via outcome, while **employee training** included how to operate in the new environment. This included embracing tools such as Google Drive, Chat and Hangouts, meeting room smartboards and audio visual equipment, as well as ergonomics training.

We researched and identified the “successful habits” required to work successfully in RTW and these were reinforced throughout the training and communication programs.

Driving Cultural Change – Successful Habits of RTW

Specific habits have been identified to differentiate those who thrive in such workplaces:



SELF INTRODUCTION

With the greater likelihood of interacting with new people, those who network comfortably (i.e. ease in and out of interactions, establishing rapport) will find it less overwhelming and more invigorating.



CHECKING IN

Especially when we may not always see each other, it is teams that excel at informal communication that develop mutual trust, collaborate and boost productivity.



DIGITAL FIRST

Being light on paper is key to mobile working, and this requires patiently replacing a very entrenched habit of jotting things down on paper with digital note-taking.



PLANNING

If rocking up to one's desk is no longer the default plan for the day, those thrive who reverse-engineer their plans from the end goal, matching settings and resources to the task at hand.



SPEAKING UP

As ownership shifts to output, it is those who can comfortably and respectfully address intervening issues, taking control of their day, that have the best experience.

RTW – part of our culture and values

People were the key focus for the RTW project as it embeds Fairfax's culture and values and helps our staff adapt to the ever evolving media landscape. It encourages employees to have choice and a voice, empowering them to challenge the status quo and define the way they work. Team effectiveness was equally important for these reasons and RTW has provided teams with the capability and infrastructure to be innovative and creative, with collaborative workspaces enabling employees to knowledge share and participate in virtual team environments.

In order to attract and retain high performers Fairfax Media needed to make itself a more attractive organisation by translating corporate values and culture into action. The new workplace provides a powerful visual and physical medium to convey these messages not only to staff, but also to visitors and the public. Executed well, the workplace can be a key lever available to management to transform the business and bring to life our culture and values.

RTW has also embedded our corporate values into daily work practices:

- **innovation and collaboration:** providing tools work spaces and technology that promote a creative, inventive culture and increase team effectiveness;
- **audience-centricity:** providing the flexibility and agility to choose the work environment relevant to employees' work and audiences;
- **transparency:** reducing silos, increasing cross-functional and cross-regional collaboration;
- **accountability:** having managers lead via outcome and employees choose the way they deliver their outcomes

Technology and Space

Technology was an important lever in ensuring the success of RTW. By removing the IT and infrastructure barriers and providing staff with the choice of technology, we empowered employees to embrace a digital, innovative and agile culture. This enhancement in technology was required to break down silos - particularly important as teams are now nationalised. As a result of this project, 90% of employees at the Sydney and Melbourne locations were given a choice of two laptops to support working in the new environment. 10% of employees will remain in fixed work locations as a result of their unique work needs.

After moving into the new RTW environment, observational studies were commissioned to assess the utilisation of space. We sought feedback from employees post-move to understand how they had transitioned and what was still required to make it sustainable. Further focus groups and training were made available to employees who required more support. In response to the feedback, we developed an orientation program including e-learning modules, an introductory video and a manager induction toolkit to ensure future sustainability.

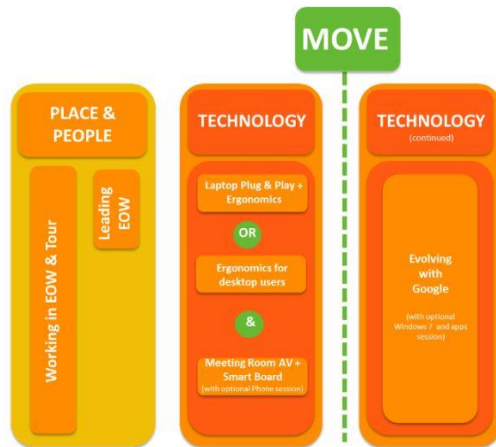
Training Program



Learning Program

The Evolving Our Workplace (EOW) learning program has been developed to support the move to our new workspace. You will find links to the Program Overview, Program Schedules and Registration at the bottom of this page.

The image below provides a snapshot of our training structure.



Which sessions should I register for?

If you're not sure which sessions to register for, please click through to the Program overview below which outlines the mandatory and recommended learning program.

Click here for
**Program
Overview**



Learning Program Overview

Working in EOW | **Mandatory for all employees**

The *Working in EOW* session is designed to enhance our awareness of the etiquette and protocols of the new spaces in our workplace such as meeting rooms, chat rooms, quiet rooms and various collaborative spaces. Your session will include a tour of an EOW working space and specific details and plans for your business unit.

Leading EOW | **Mandatory for managers only**

Leading EOW will provide managers support with leading teams in our new workplace.

Laptop Plug & Play + Ergonomics | **Mandatory for laptop users only**

This session will give you the opportunity to:

- learn laptop specific information;
- reacquaint everyone with chair and desk ergonomics; and
- 'plug and play' with the technology, to ensure everything is ready for you on your first day in the new workplace.

Ergonomics for desktop users | **Mandatory for desktop users only** (laptop users will have this covered in their session above)

The purpose of this session is to go through important ergonomic information about chairs and desks for desktop users.

Meeting Room Audio-Visual + Smart Board (and optional Phones) | **Recommended for all employees**

In this one hour session you will learn how to use the new technology located in the larger meeting rooms. This includes; audio-visual, conferencing system and the smart white boards. This is followed by a half hour optional session on the Avaya 4610SW IP Phone.

In the optional phone session we will learn how to use the speed dials, the directory and answer your specific questions.

Evolving with Google (and optional Windows 7 + apps) | **Recommended for all employees**

Evolving with Google is a high-level, one hour overview of how to use collaboration tools such as Google Plus, Google Hangouts, Chat, Drive and Docs. The *Evolving with Google* session is followed by an optional one hour session on the tips and tricks for Windows 7.

We will also cover some apps to aid your transition to a reduced paper environment.

Images



Images



The results

Cost savings - Improved operating costs, with savings realised as floors became available to new tenants (effective May 2013)

Space - Reduced risk of OHS issues such as trips, slips and falls due to less clutter and staff packing up each day; Reduced risk of ergonomic issues thanks to enhanced mobility and choice of workstation; Creation of collaborative spaces to work together, enhancing sharing of ideas; Creation of an agile workplace, where people can be re-aligned to structures without it impacting on the physical workplace.

People & Culture - A flexible workplace where staff have the choice of where and how they work, which: align our organisational values to the physical workplace; empower people to take control of the way they work; provide people with the space and technology to be creative and innovative; develop leadership capability as a result of managing via outcome – teams are both physical and virtual; grow change management capability not only for leaders but for project participants – creating change agents across multiple business layers; create more cross-functional opportunities, and attract talent to a contemporary workplace.

Sustainability - Replaced about 2100 PCs and laptops across Sydney and Melbourne with 80% repurposed to regional Fairfax offices and 20% donated to Work Ventures charity; 76.7% reduction of storage and paper.

At our core, our products are an integral part of society, informing, shaping thoughts and opinion throughout the community. The ability to collaborate more effectively, as a result of RTW, enables us to drive innovation across our product offering, developing even more ways of delivering independent news and information to the community.