

This early evening Forum was organised by CoreNet UK Chapter's Workplace Group, one of several committees which involve members in researching current corporate real estate issues and setting up events of key interest.



The event, hosted by Google in their sparkling new offices in Central St Giles, just off Charing Cross Road, examined how we can understand what our current and future customers demand from their workplace.

We took our seats in Google's conference room, to the sound of the Beach Boys hit 'I wish they all could be California Girls' and were welcomed by Google's head of real estate, **Joe Borrett**, and **Farrol Goldblatt**, of CoreNet's Workplace Group, who pointed out that all three speakers, each drawn from a different generation, were not property professionals but 'users'.



Professor Jeremy Myerson, Hamlyn Professor of Design at the RCA, then took over as facilitator for the evening. Pointing out that we currently face worldwide the biggest demographic shift ever, with four generations all working (veterans of the last world war, post war baby boomers, generation X from the years 65-80 to the post 80 millenials), he noted that these generations also included 'digital natives' (those born in the computer age) and 'digital immigrants' those of us who have had to learn at a later age.



First speaker was **Francis Hardy**, from the **Bartlett School of Architecture**, who described the importance of communal areas, combined with personalised work space. As a 'digital native' he uses technology all the time which, as a result, has become the norm and no longer a novelty. And it means that he can work almost anywhere, in corridors, kitchens or the British Library. Where he doesn't want to work is in a cubicle in an open-plan office.



Next up was **Ben Lambert**, of **Telefonica Digital**. Now working at Telefonica Digital Piccadilly Circus HQ. He is the youngest employee in his team and was heavily involved with the design workshops and thinking around planning Digital's global HQ. Digital is a new offshoot of the long established multinational Spanish company, Telefonica and the new office incorporates old and new with an emphasis on creative dynamics aiming to inspire a change of behaviour: subliminal messages to the staff, inspiring thought through movement. The new design has been used to differentiate the business from its parent and staff should feel they can be themselves at work, and ideas and inspiration should flow naturally and from the surroundings.

Last was **Sue Thomas**, Head of Secretarial Services at



PriceWaterhouse Coopers, who described the changes she had seen over the last 30-odd years, from an extremely hierarchical environment at the old Price Waterhouse, with dark corridors and partners' dining rooms in the 80s, to the 90s when walls were removed and replaced with glass partitions. Then the move from Southwark Towers to Embankment Place on the merger with Coopers & Lybrand and its attendant problems of incompatible IT systems. Finally the most recent move, to More London, which presented a fantastic opportunity to break the old culture for good and replace it with hot desking, team working and a new emphasis on technology, allowing homeworking, social networking and a general involvement of all the staff, including the PA teams. "How you are looked after is what counts" she said, "it changes everything".

The evening was rounded off with a fascinating tour round the Google offices and then a reception.

