



Achieving info-presence

The clear-to-see case for immersive workspaces



The dilemma we're facing: the business equivalent of tunnel vision



As business people, we all rely on digital tools to do our jobs, make our decisions, and collaborate with our colleagues.

No matter who we are or what we do, we all work with an array of software programs - like spreadsheets, for example, or word processing packages, or slide decks, or web-based SaaS applications.

Frequently, we also work with online collaboration tools, like Teams, or Webex, or whatever - which bundle together video conferencing, scheduling, and messaging solutions.

And, the more specialised our jobs become, the more likely we are to rely on specialised digital tools - like an accounting package perhaps, or a data analytics program, or a 3D design tool, or a customer relationship management system.

Access to these tools is generally fine when we are sitting at our desks and working solo. But, when we come together with our teammates, things can go awry.

When we get to a meeting room, we will often be competing for limited screen space - we'll be flicking endlessly between different documents, we'll be working out ways to share our devices and, out of desperation, we'll often resort to flipcharts and printouts.

The big issue is that, in most meeting rooms, you can only ever see one tool at a time. Hence, as teams, we can only ever see one small portion of the information we rely on to do our jobs. **It's the business equivalent of tunnel vision.**

There is another way. **It's what, at Igloo, we call info-presence.**

This is how craftsmen do it

For some inspiration, it's worth taking a look at how some other people work (i.e. people doing physical tasks, who use physical tools).

They tend to work in a spatial environment - **a room specifically designed for the purpose.**

They can move around. They can think and act spatially. All the tools they need are on show and within easy reach. Nothing is much more than an arm's length away.

In fact, you could say that **the room itself is a macro-tool.** One that they are embedded within. It almost becomes an extension of their bodies.

So, next time you are in a carpenter's workshop, or a commercial kitchen, or a potter's studio, or a car repair shop, take a look around. Notice how elegantly and spatially arranged everything is. See how easily accessible the tools are. And how easy it is for team members to collaborate.



As with this example, at Ventana Surfboards, a workshop is a spatial environment, enabling people to think and act spatially. (Photo credit: Christian Brandes)



In a well-planned workshop, all the tools are easy to see and reach for. (Photo credit: mtneer_man)



It's the same in a commercial kitchen. All of the tools are elegantly and usefully arranged. (Photo credit: snowpea&bokchoi)



It's easy for people to collaborate in these environments, enabling them to think and act as a team. (Photo credit: Mike Arney)

This is how it's done in control rooms



This is the control room for the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, where nothing interrupts the visual communication between team members.



Take a look at how elegantly arranged everything is at the European Space Agency - the room itself is a macro-tool.



Here's another control room at CERN. And, again, the same principles apply.



It's the same at this ABB control room, where everything is in plain sight and easy reach.

It's not just craftsmen, or people who use physical tools and work with their hands.

You see exactly the same type of arrangement in the control rooms of complex systems - like TV studios, or recording studios, or air traffic control towers, or power plants, or public transport networks, or scientific research facilities.

In complex systems of this type, the operators design a room from which they can see, and understand, and discuss, and control every part of their system.

Again, it's a spatial environment. Again, all of the tools (in terms of the dials and the data) are within plain sight and easy reach. And, again, the actual rooms are macro-tools.

So, why do so many meeting rooms still look like this?

Contrast the workspaces and control rooms on the previous pages with the meeting rooms and collaboration spaces in most of today's businesses.

They are remarkably uniform: typically a large rectangular room, equipped with a large rectangular table.

There are no tools available - with the exception of a single screen at one end of the room and perhaps a whiteboard or flipchart.

And the room itself is just that. A room.

But, the thing is, many of today's businesses and business projects are at least as complex as the type of complex systems on the previous pages.

In order to understand these projects, and manage them, managers need easy access to a similar range of tools and a similar depth and breadth of information.

Yet, in the rooms where most of us meet and collaborate, the information isn't easy to see. Nor is it within easy reach. Instead, it's trapped behind tiny rectangular screens, and you can rarely see more than one screen at one time. Again, you're hampered by the business equivalent of tunnel vision.





This is the other way

Here's our solution: the immersive workspace.

The walls become vast wraparound screens, enabling teams to engage with any type of digital content - such as websites, web-based applications, dashboards, data visualisations, spreadsheets, video conferencing platforms, 3D design tools, and more.

Just like with the workshops and control rooms, the room itself becomes a macro-tool.

As a team member collaborating in an immersive workspace, it is easy for you to see, and understand, and discuss, and control every aspect of every project you are working on.

The technology you use in your working life is no longer trapped behind a little rectangular screen. It's a spatial environment. None of your data or documents is more than a glance away. And everything is up there, on the walls, clear to see, for debate, discussion and decision-making.

This means you can:

- 1 **Collaborate effectively**
All of the documents, data and technology tools that you need for discussion, deliberation and decision-making are clear for everyone to see
- 2 **Run productive meetings**
Project meetings can be run in a technology-rich space, and live project documents are displayed and worked on around the room
- 3 **Share multiple screens, streams and devices**
Team members can share multiple streams of content, from multiple locations, and multiple devices, all at the same time
- 4 **Bring disparate teams closer together**
You can easily bring remotely-located team members into the heart of the discussion with immersive video conferencing
- 5 **Find new perspectives and fresh insights**
With wraparound content and room-scale visualisations, you can see right inside your data and get new angles on your KPIs
- 6 **Facilitate ideation sessions**
With web-based tools and an inspiring, cocoon-like environment, you can run thought-provoking idea-generation sessions
- 7 **Tell compelling corporate stories**
With 360° screens, spatial surround sound, and a vast 360° canvas you can turbo-charge your presentations and punch home your messaging

It's what we call info-presence, which is one step on from tele-presence.

With tele-presence, people can feel as if they are present, or give the appearance of being present. With info-presence, all of the information your team needs to make its decisions and progress its projects is present and available and seeable. And instead of being hampered by tunnel vision, your teams are liberated by 20:20 vision.

A word to the wise: don't worry, it's really, really easy to use

So, yes, there are a few alternative solutions out there, which lay claim to similar levels of functionality - such as large interactive screens, video walls, and so-called multi-share collaboration platforms.

And, yes, we know that these alternatives don't always have a great reputation for usability (from what we have been told, users can struggle to get value because they are difficult to operate, difficult to integrate with existing content, and difficult to create new content for). The Igloo solution is different.

We put an emphasis on ease of use and flexibility.
For example:

Easy to understand

The user interface (which we call Igloo Home) looks and acts just like a huge smartphone screen. All of the apps are there, plain to see. To use them, you just point and click. And content windows can be positioned, sized, re-sized, minimized and so on.

So, if you understand how to use a phone or a PC, you will understand how to use an Igloo.

Easy to operate

It is easily controlled, using a full range of everyday devices - like smartphones, tablets, keyboards, mice, VR controllers, and even gesture and voice.

So, again, if you can operate a phone or a PC, you will know how to operate an Igloo.

Easy to mix-and-match existing content

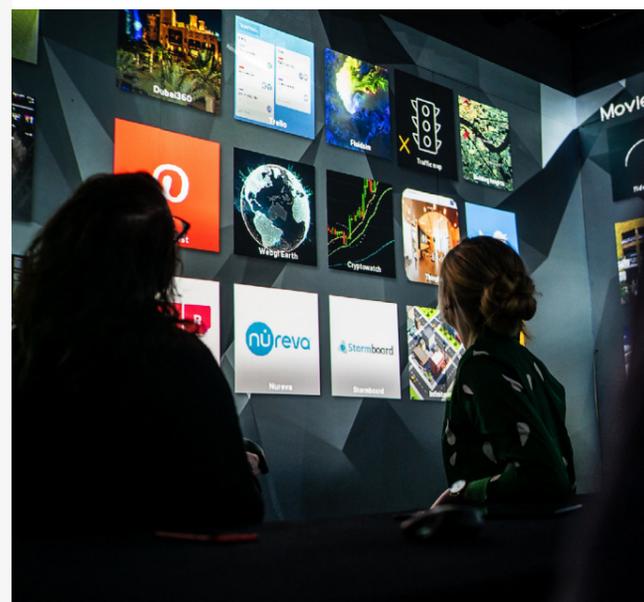
It integrates, out-of-the-box, and works natively with all your existing business tools (like 3D design packages, CAD software, data visualisation tools, Office software, collaboration tools, etc, etc, etc).

So, if you work with any software programs or digital tools, you will quickly get to grips with an Igloo.

Easy to create new content

One of the joys of working in an Igloo is the ability to work across the huge immersive screens, which are so great for engaging team members, delivering stand-out presentations, and telling compelling corporate stories. And it's super-easy to make great content using standard technology tools - like the Office, Google and Adobe suites.

So, if you can create a PowerPoint deck, you can create an immersive presentation for the Igloo.



Important. You MUST read this bit: All of the inspiration (and quite a few of the words) for this white paper came from a technology evangelist called Bret Victor, who is known for his talks on the future of technology. We'd say that browsing through any of his work is a great use of your time. But (for reasons that'll become apparent) we'd particularly urge you to take a look at his [TED Talk](#) and also his [Comic](#) on Seeing Spaces.



For more information

Igloo is the immersive workspace company

From bases in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia, we work with clients worldwide.

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