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Bricks & Bytes Roundup

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Bricks & Bytes Wrap Up

Debbie Ginsberg, Educational Technology Librarian
March 22, 2010

The 2010 Bricks, Bytes and Continuous Renovation Law School Facilities conference was held in Philadelphia, PA, from March 10-12. Topics included the importance of designing law schools to encourage social interaction (“social design”), law school classroom design, and what to expect in 2020. Find more information here: <http://bit.ly/8TISiu>

Trends in law school facilities

- Media players and instructional computer in every classroom
- Smart podiums with media controllers
- Classroom video capture using built-in recording equipment
- Classroom variety including traditional, horseshoe, and circular layouts
- Law school as social space - designing law schools to encourage student/faculty involvement
- Green buildings with environmentally-conscious designs, e.g. solar power, roof-top green space

Social design in law schools: Marquette

Marquette’s new law school building will open in August 2010. The \$85M Eckstein Hall features:

- 4-story interior atrium designed to foster faculty and student interaction
- “Library without borders” which will be accessible on every floor with no controlled entrances
- Fitness center, café, large lockers- services to improve campus life for commuter students

Law school facilities tours

Bricks & Bytes was held at 3 law schools, Drexel, University of Pennsylvania, and Rutgers-Camden. I’ve put pictures here: <http://flickr.com/gp/dtclibrary/hj9595>.

Drexel – a newer building with sophisticated technologies in every classroom:

- Podium with computer, DVD/VCR
- Smart media controller
- Classrooms with dual projectors
- Sympodium™ monitors – faculty write directly on these monitors and notes are projected on the screen. Notes can also be saved to distribute to students.

Several study rooms featured built-in large-screen monitors on the walls for sharing documents and presentations. Drexel also has “hydration stations” for filling water bottles.

University of Pennsylvania – recently renovated several classrooms, improved student spaces, and will soon build a new building with a state-of-the-art courtroom, auditorium, and seminar rooms. New classrooms featured:

- Adjustable podium & sliding whiteboards
- Technology wall cabinets with AV equipment and computers
- Smart controllers to switch media
- Extensive sound proofing

In addition, classrooms (even older ones) now feature built-in recording equipment. New student spaces include meeting rooms for organizations and clubs, new lockers, and lounges which can be used as event spaces.

The newly-renovated faculty lounge doubles as a faculty event room with built-in presentation technologies.

Rutgers-Camden- completed its new building in 2009. The new building connects to the old campus by a bridge which doubles as a student lounge/cafe. The new building features:

- Classroom podiums with built-in computers, media, smart media controllers
- Classrooms with built-in audio and video recording equipment
- Sophisticated digital signage

Other new improvements include study rooms with built-in cameras so students can record and review skills practice sessions.

What to expect in 2010

One of the most interesting sessions discussed future technologies which will impact law schools during the next 10 years:

- Wireless chargers for phones and notebooks
- Green technologies such as improved HVAC, building materials, recycling technology, and solar power
- Improved remote learning technologies such as seamless video transmission, technologies which will be “reliable as the dial tone”
- E-casebooks – technologists continue to predict the demise of print (at least for textbooks)
- Ubiquitous digital signage especially since flat-screen displays will become even cheaper

- Voice recognition and the disappearance of the traditional keyboard