

CURRENT TRENDS IN LIBRARY DESIGN

2013 is an exciting time in the library space as public libraries become virtual 'living rooms in the city' with an increased focus on soft seating to create quiet reading zones in a warm, cosy environment outside of work and home. Additionally, patrons are given access to knowledge in an interactive environment with new styles of furniture, adapted to accommodate

technology. For examples ottomans with charging stations for iPads, phones, and laptops; smaller desk sizes to accommodate internal keyboards; and signature pieces such as the iconic laptop chair with a reading arm, removing the need to have a desk top at all.

Along with quiet reading zones and spaces for interactive learning, meeting rooms play a prominent part in library design, to ensure the libraries of tomorrow are key hubs in the community, providing a wide range of services to those within the municipality and beyond.

Embracing natural light is still a key consideration in building, and design with colour pallets favouring neutral finishes and warm toned timbers, often contrasted with a

statement furniture piece to add vibrant colour and interest. Likewise mobile solutions continue to be popular, offering versatility for the ever-changing library space. A new trend that has emerged recently is the demand for clever furniture that can be transformed to meet the functional needs at the time, for example, shelving that converts to a desk so the user can access material right at the stack.

These public library themes are replicated in the educational realm with 'loungue areas' dominating secondary school library design creating cosy hubs that enhance the learning experience. Schools are also adopting furniture solutions to accommodate collaborative learning with 'round the table' and booth seating and desking that facilitate the sharing of ideas and knowledge.

These new 'loungue' styles of library design reaffirms the importance of this key community and student space in providing a comfortable and desirable environment in which to learn, discover, connect, and explore.

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