

Establishing a 'Knowledge Commons' at the CSIR

9th SAOIM, 3-5 June 2008

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The logo for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of South Africa. It features the letters 'CSIR' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The 'C' is a large, rounded shape, and the 'S' is a vertical bar. The 'I' and 'R' are also vertical bars, with the 'R' having a small horizontal bar at the top.

our future through science

Background

- Interdisciplinary research projects
- Collaboration across organisational boundaries
- Opportunities for informal interaction & serendipitous knowledge sharing
- Knowledge transfer is problematic:
 - Organisational & physical distribution
 - Modern information technology & email
- Knowledge Commons facility



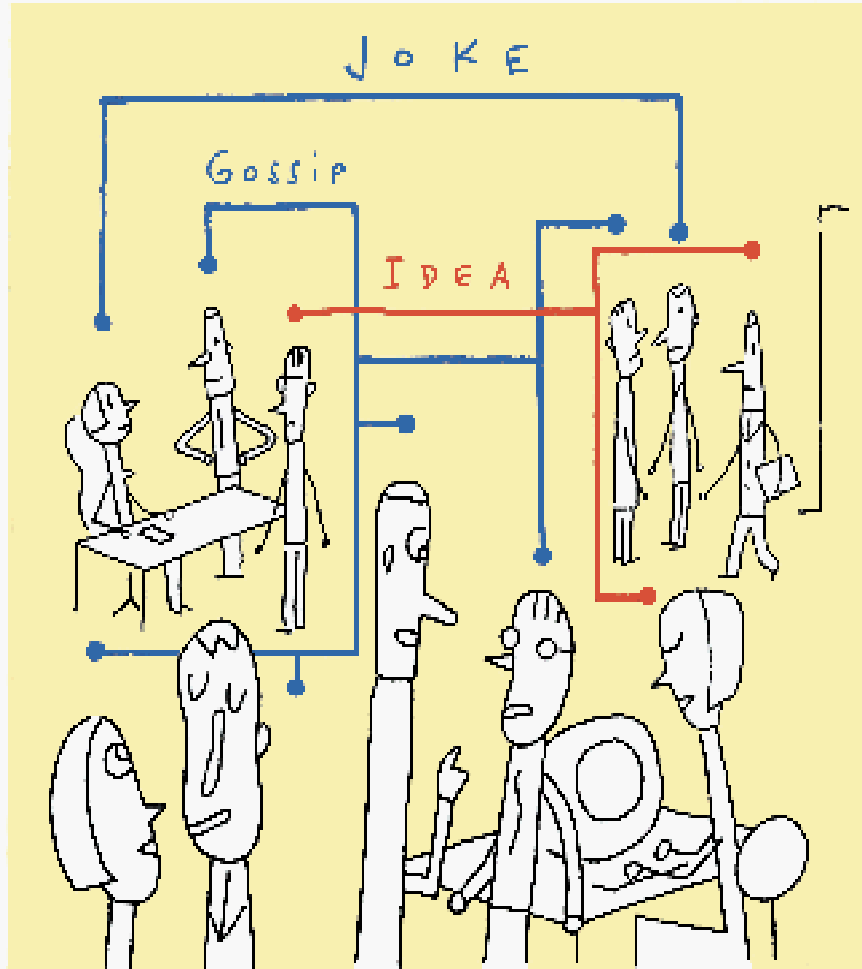
our future through science

KM Strategy

- How can spatial design be used to:
 - facilitate knowledge sharing?
 - increase collaboration across boundaries?
- Study consisted of:
 - Literature review
 - Determination of stakeholder requirements
 - Design, functionality & planning of the Knowledge Commons

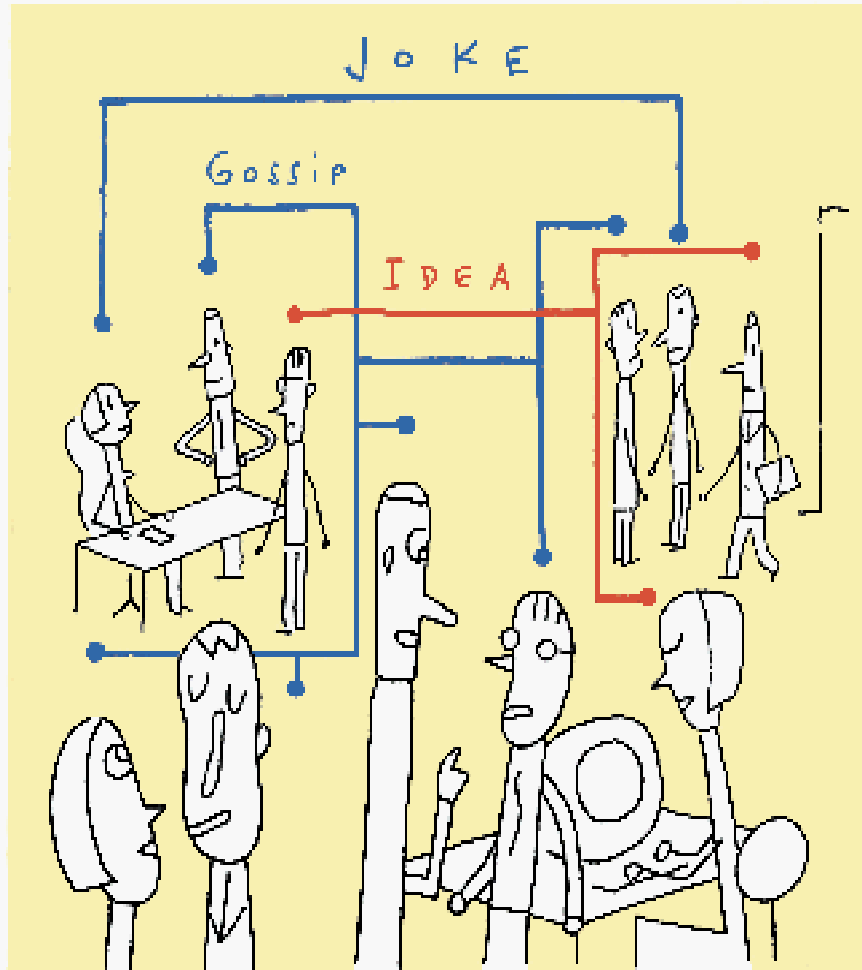
KM Strategy

- Personalisation strategy vs. codification (Hansen, Nohria & Tierney)
 - CSIR provides highly customised solutions to unique problems
 - Tacit knowledge sharing through person-to-person contact & development of networks
- Spatial school of KM (Earl)
 - Use of space & spatial design to facilitate knowledge sharing



Graphic from Gladwell (2000:60)

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The **Knowledge Commons** is located at the main entrance to the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library.

It provides undergraduates with a "one-stop-shop" for access to printed and electronic learning and research resources, plus office software to process their work.

Four UCT Libraries' staff and 30 Student Navigators offer a service that is available 74 hours a week and accessed by over 8000 students a week.

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updated March 2008

● **The Knowledge Commons offers:**

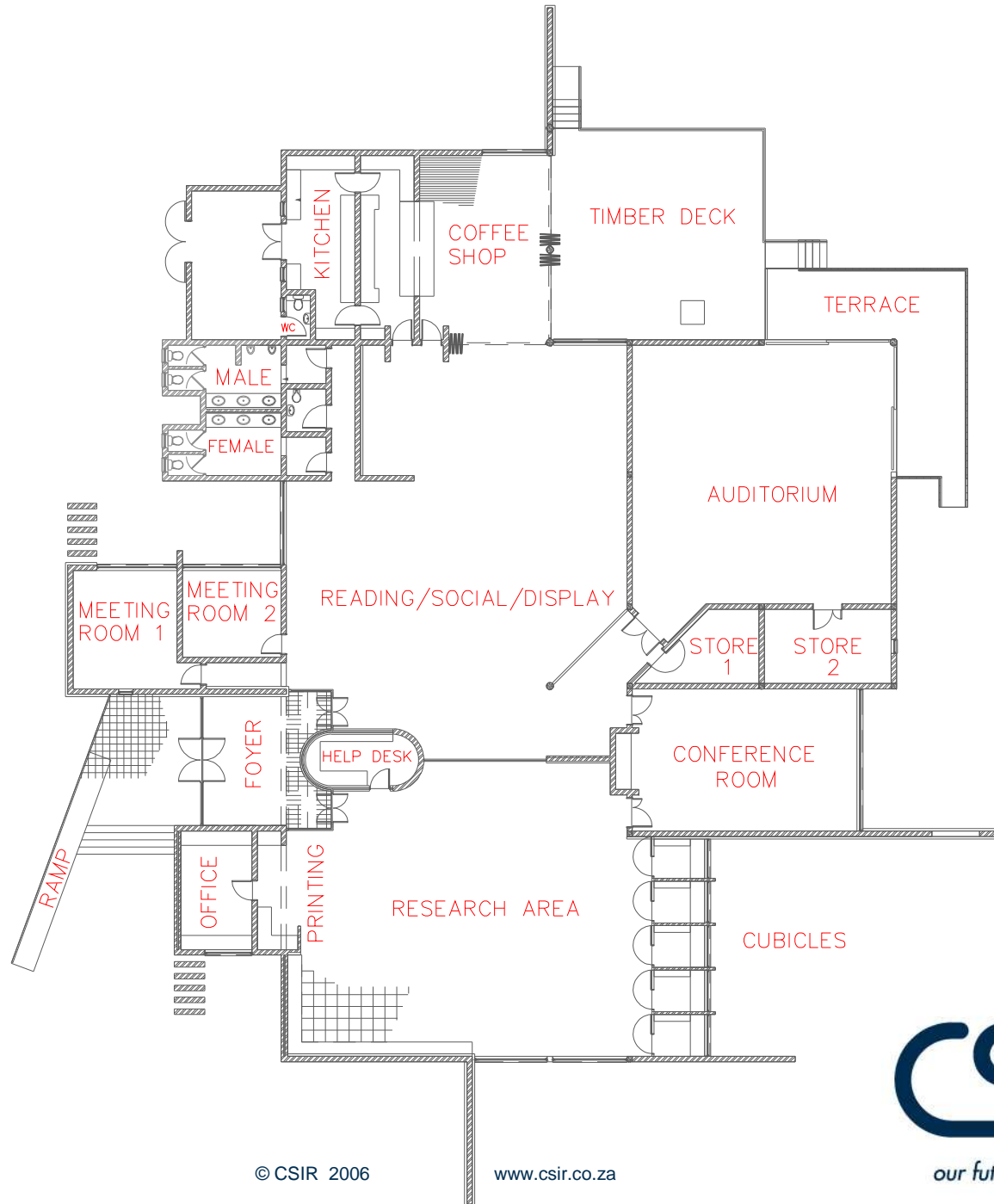
- the Internet
- ALEPH, the online catalogue
- indexes to journal articles
- full-text electronic journals
- SABINET, the online catalogue of South African libraries
- electronic reference books
- MS Office software, with online training

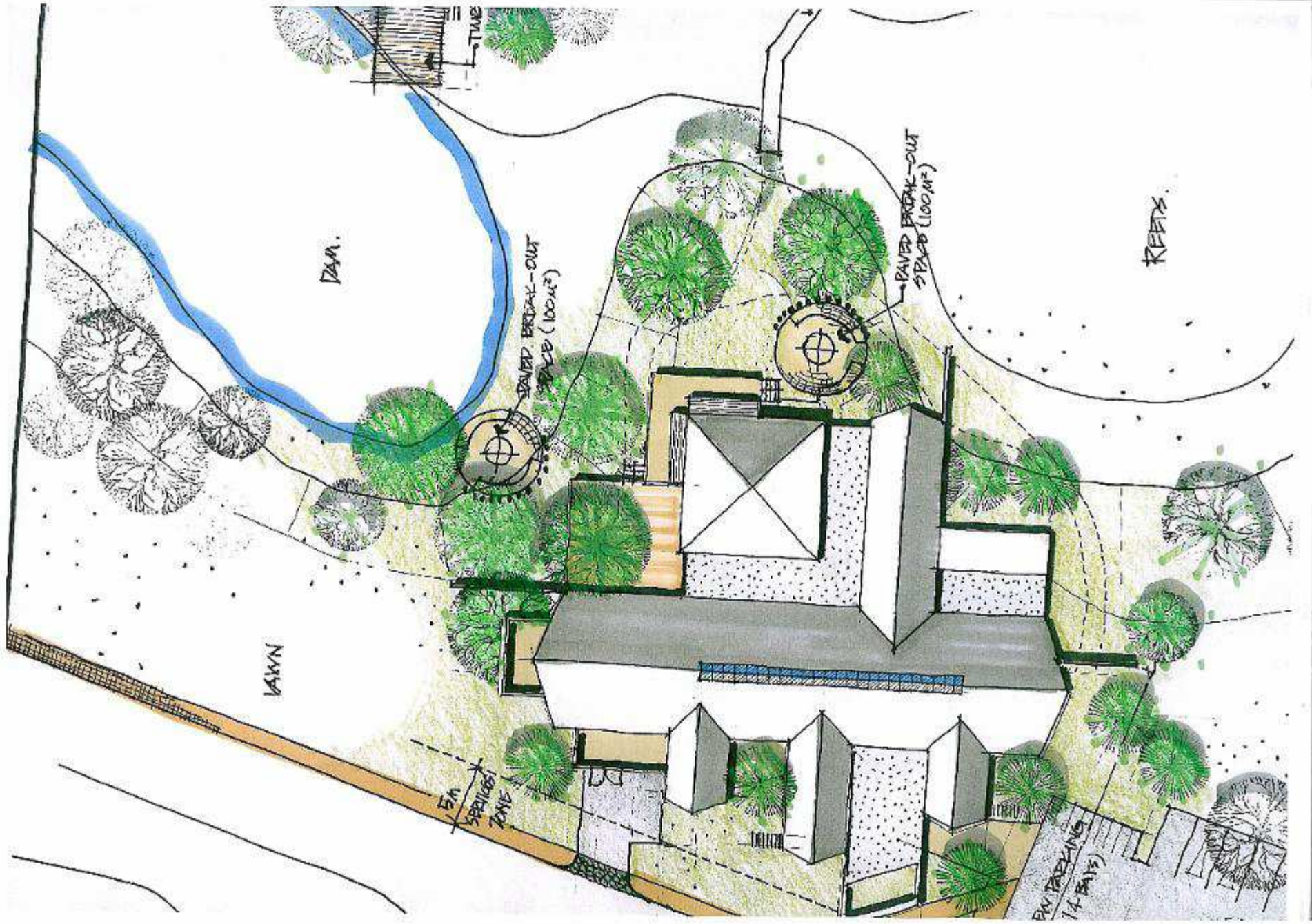


The use of space for knowledge work

- Personal space - Individual time for concentration, reflection & learning
- Team space - Collaborative learning
- Social space - Casual interaction in a non-threatening environment

(Ward & Holtham; Doyle & Nathan; Gladwell)





DAM.

PAVED BREAK-OUT SPACE (100sq ft)

PAVED BREAK-OUT SPACE (100sq ft)

REEDS.

LAWN

5m SERVICE ZONE

PAV. PARKING (14 BAYS)





Critical success factors

- If we build it, will they come?
- Principal of 'contactivity'
- Encouragement & legitimisation
- Marketing & liaison
- Draw cards
 - Top class facilities
 - Networking events, talks, Science Cafes
- Measurement & evaluation

Bibliography

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