AWE
Animated Work Environment
A Robot-Room for Working Life

The Information World demands of architects and allied designers a wider range of design activities and expanded collaboration with others. Our increasingly-digital design community is, however, not fully prepared or fully willing to abandon tactile manipulation of design tools and artifacts and sole authorship of their works. But as design practices transform, so must physical work environments transform, physically, to support more and different physical/digital design activities and social, collaborative interactions.

A response to this condition is "AWE," an Animated Work Environment. AWE is a user-programmable robotic work environment that dynamically shapes and supports the working life of architects, designers and their new and more traditional collaborators working with both new and old, digital and analog materials and tools. AWE is composed of eight hinged panels which change the spatial characteristics of the work environment, affording work and play activities such as collaborating, composing, presenting, viewing, lounging, and gaming.

Users of AWE select one of six configurations and fine-tune that selected configuration by hand-gesturing proximity sensors. Embedded with touch-screens, touch-pads and virtual keyboards, AWE's three horizontal work-surfaces of different forms can be moved, rotated and re-joined to create a variety of "activity tables."

AWE affords users the opportunity to collaborate on complex design tasks and to configure for themselves, in real-time, the mix of digital and physical engagement their design activities demand and AWE frames.

Furniture as Interface
The three mobile components of the AWE table have contact sensors at their edges. Different combinations of tables create different configurations of the robotic wall.