

Installing a home office and simple home IT network - a Brief Guide

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Many of us are taking the opportunity to work from home, so it clearly pays to have a space that is practical and functional for this purpose. The home office can take many forms but the following important features are generally common:

- Effective communication with the outside world
- Good lighting
- Comfortable seating
- Sufficient surface to spread out
- Suitable hardware
- Sufficient power sockets

Not everyone has the luxury of a dedicated room as a home office, so we may fit the space under a staircase, on a large landing, in a bedroom or other living area. A loft could also be converted with home office functionality in mind. If flexibility is important, and you wish to work from a laptop in any room, it is possible to set up a wireless network linked via a wireless access point (WAP) if required (depending on the distances involved and constitution of the property). In this way, it is possible for any additional hardware (P.C. printer, etc) to be contained in a smaller space and/or more remote from the user.



If a living space doubles up as a home office, it is important for the office to “disappear” from time to time. We create bespoke furniture in-keeping with the rest of the room to house computers and printers, and provide stylish furniture units to accommodate files and stationery. A large oak veneer desk just looks like a beautiful table, with cable management to hide the leads. Stylish office chairs are both comfortable and functional yet don't look out of place in a reception room (there are some design classics on the market). Close a few cupboard doors and, as if by magic, the office disappears.

Regarding IT, the basic architecture might be to have a central hub with router and switch connecting all the access points. If the property is being renovated, we take the opportunity to install pairs of CAT 5 (or CAT 6) cables and satellite aerial cables so that the property is largely future-proofed, providing fantastic opportunities for home entertainment. As part of some recent projects, we connected multi-room music systems to a router and a hard drive. The client ripped his entire CD collection to the hard drive in lossless format (so could dispense with the several CD racks in his living room). He downloaded a free app to his mobile phone which then allowed him to control music from the hard drive via the network to his high-end HiFi system as well as playing internet radio and music from one of the on-line libraries (which boast millions of tracks for a small monthly fee). Absolutely fantastic.

We have installed IT and home entertainment functionality in a number of our projects and advised on home office design. Our website is full of ideas and information, so please feel free to visit www.stylewithin.co.uk