

# FURNITURE TODAY

## Thinking about 'green' and 2 computer screens

Heath Combs, Staff Writer -- Furniture Today, 11/19/2007

In the August 2007 edition of FDM, a trade publication that covers furniture, kitchen cabinet and door manufacturing, there's an article on how eco-friendly offerings dominated the NeoCon office furniture show this year. The story noted that even the Chicago Merchandise Mart, where the show is held, is pursuing LEED certification, based on the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system.

The article includes a helpful list of green terminology. It's interesting to note that the contract furniture industry, whose green roots are deeper than those of the residential industry, is still working on what constitutes a green product.

It would appear that even for contract producers, the question of what makes furniture green is still up for debate. For now, incorporating any of a number of eco-friendly elements suffices to makes a product green.

The furniture industry is clearly still in the infancy of this movement, debating whether green is a fad or a necessity. And that's true of our society as a whole. Think about it: Green is getting drilled into some children's heads more than the threat of nuclear holocaust was in the 1950s.

This is a movement that doesn't look to be going away. And U.S. consumers may prove to be more eco-conscious than the current price-conscious attitude in our industry dictates. Who knows? This movement could wind up making furniture more of a prestige or aspirational purchase than a postponable one.

At the October market, I was talking about what's on the horizon for home offices with Ken Levi, who is in product development at Aspenhome. He mentioned something I had observed but hadn't really registered — computer users with multiple flat-screen monitors.

Graphic designers may be more familiar with this setup. Recently, while in a buddy's condo, I noticed he had two flat screens set up side by side on top of a ratty old desk. I also noticed how effortlessly he worked between the two screens.

Rather than dropping and enlarging icons like I frequently do, he moved from screen to screen, creating multiple windows. His "office" was located in the middle of a large room that contained his dining table, living room and thousands of CDs (he's an archivist).

This arrangement is unusual, but it may become more common now that clunky monitors have gone away. In addition to the enhanced functionality provided by two screens, there may be a vanity element to this setup. After all, why shouldn't I have two screens? Wouldn't that make me twice as important? And who wants to waste time closing applications when you could just shift from screen to screen?

Who knows if dual screens will become more common as flat-screen monitor prices come down? If they do, there might be a place for them over the next couple of years in home offices. And that will demand new types of furniture.