

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

Digital Revolution Changes Furniture, Too.

(NAPSA)—A host of new digital products seem destined to change the way PC users use their home computers, and also change both the manner and frequency of PC users' interaction with their computers. Over the past few years, Americans have purchased millions of CD-R and CD-RW drives, digital cameras, PDAs and MP-3 players. All of these devices need to plug-in to a computer in order to store pictures, download music, create schedules or send e-mails. This need for frequent interaction with the PC has defined the computer's new role as a "digital hub," and has created the need to "rethink" the design of computer furniture.

Most computer furniture positions the PC's central processing unit (CPU) well below the desktop. Frequently, the CPU is even enclosed behind a door, making frequent access cumbersome. In recognition of the need to plug-in the new generation of digital devices, many PC makers have added USB connection ports to the front of their PCs. While this improves the interface between digital devices and PCs, it does not improve the computer user's access to the all-important CPU. In response to this need, one major office furniture manufacturer has begun to "rethink" the location of the CPU in its furniture designs.

A new computer furniture design, called the Digital Dock™, seeks to reposition computer CPUs from the floor to the desktop. Relocating the CPU to a position at desktop height, directly in front of the user makes accessing CD-RW drives, and plugging-in portable digital devices a task that is now within "arms' reach" of the user. This new location not only addresses accessibility issues, but it also creates a central location for all cords.

The inventor of the patent pending Digital Dock™ design,



New "Digital Dock" feature raises CPU to desktop level for easy access with digital devices.

office furniture maker O'Sullivan Furniture, believes that the repositioning of the computer CPU provides additional benefits beyond ease of access for digital devices. The "off the floor" positioning of the CPU in the Digital Dock prevents the transfer of static electricity from carpet to computer and isolates the PC from some of the normal dust accumulation that occurs at floor level. Additionally, this raised position can help protect the CPU from the "accidents" that can occur when the computer is in reach of pets and very young children.

The repositioning of the CPU, as found in the Digital Dock, represents the first wave of office furniture innovation that will doubtless follow the development of this new generation of digital devices that interact with personal computers. As the computer's role as a "digital hub" continues to evolve, user interface with the PC will inevitably grow in importance and frequency. Redesigning office furniture to accommodate easy access to the CPU will continue to be the central focus of computer furniture designers.

The Digital Dock is currently available nationally at office superstores, home improvement centers and many furniture stores. More information is available at www.osullivan.com.