

JUNE 2009

Interiors & sources

Excellence
in Commercial
Design

RATCLIFF: Tackling a Renovation of Seismic Proportions

Learning Environments
for Designers

Broadening the
'Design' Conversation

How Many Planets Do
You Require?

STOP

the PRESSES!

The new facility that houses ASU's renowned Cronkite School of Journalism incorporates a 'newsworthy' design that provides students and faculty a state-of-the-art learning environment.

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ASU

The six-story, 213,000-square-foot Crosbite Building is a beacon announcing ASU's presence in Phoenix. The facility has become an integral part of the fabric of the university's new downtown campus and a harbinger of the city's redevelopment efforts.

PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE





LEFT Before any plan was developed or sketch was drawn for the interiors of the building, the design team agreed that the facility needed to encourage public gatherings and the exchanging of ideas.

LEFT Burnished concrete block walls, ground and polished concrete floors, and warm wood ceilings express the forthright and direct nature of news delivery.

In August 2008, Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication left the main campus in Tempe, AZ, for a new building in downtown Phoenix. The move was part of the school's effort to expand its academic environments to include four campuses—serving the wide-ranging and geographically distinct communities of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

ASU selected the design alliance of HDR Architecture Inc. (executive architect) and Ehrlich Architects (design architect) for the \$71 million Cronkite Building.

BELOW A 150-seat, theater-style auditorium is one of the numerous components incorporated into the design of the new Cronkite Building.
PHOTO BY BILL TREMPER





which houses the journalism/communication school as well as the PBS station KAET/Channel 8.

THE DESIGN INTENT

Aesthetically, the building is a beacon announcing the university's presence and exhibiting an intention for excellence on the downtown campus. The six-story, 223,000-square-foot, 110-foot tall building has become an integral part of the fabric of ASU's energizing downtown campus and a harbinger of Phoenix's redevelopment.

As truth and honesty are guiding principles to journalism, so are they to the design of the building. The architecture is specifically expressive of function and materiality. The design is based on an economical 30-square-foot exposed structural concrete column grid with post-tensioned concrete floor slabs. The exterior is clad with glass, masonry and

multi-colored metal panels. The pattern of the panels is inspired by U.S. broadcast frequency spectrum allocations (the Radio Spectrum). The composition is kinetic and dynamic—symbolic of journalism and the media's role in our society.

From the beginning, the design team agreed that the new facility needed to encourage the exchange of ideas and public gatherings. With this theme in mind, the team decided to place a forum concept as the principle for which the interior of the school would follow, making it the "living room" of the building. By day students gather spontaneously between classes, and in the evenings, the grand hall transforms into a public forum where students and industry leaders discuss the most critical issues facing today's news media.

Starting on the second floor—the Cronkite Building's main floor—the forum rises two stories and is open on three sides. The main floor of the forum is framed by the glass-walled student resources center and library as well as several classroom auditoriums. Along the mezzanine level hang five high-definition television sets, and at the front of the forum is what may be the largest high-definition rear-projection television in the Valley. The large screen displays a steady stream of news from a number of sources. On the

below Large windows found in conference rooms, classrooms and newsrooms create a connection between what's going on inside the rooms and out, giving the impression that the activities in the building are always "on air."

PHOTO BY BOB THOMPSON

Cronkite News Service





▲ **2011** Starting on the second floor—the Cronkite Building's main floor—the forum rises two stories and is open on three sides. The main floor of the forum is framed by the glass-walled student resources center and library as well as several classroom auditoriums.
PHOTO BY BILL THOMPSON

▲ **2010** Locally sourced, recycled materials and occupancy sensors contribute to the building's environmentally friendly attributes.
PHOTO BY NARA BUCKLER





ABOVE The design team was challenged to break up the scale of the broad building to make it more welcoming and less monolithic.

BELOW Both the newsroom and broadcast anchor desks are contained within one massive production space with views overlooking the city.

PHOTO BY BILL THOMPSON



third floor, above the large-screen television, is a seminar room with glass windows through which passersby can read Walter Cronkite's famous sign-off—"And that's the way it is"—inscribed on the wall.

COMPONENTS OF THE CRONKITE BUILDING INCLUDE:

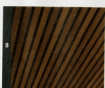
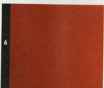
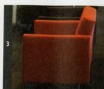
- ▶ Twelve university classrooms
- ▶ Seven working newsrooms
- ▶ Two television studios
- ▶ Seven digital computer labs
- ▶ A 150-seat, theater-style auditorium
- ▶ A 1,500-square-foot gallery dedicated to journalism history

Sustainability was addressed as an integral aspect of the overall design. HVAC systems were designed for maximum efficiency and are fed from the North wind-chilled water plant that now supports a number of major buildings in the downtown area in order to take advantage of economies of scale. Water-conserving landscaping, locally sourced and recycled materials, and occupancy sensors also contribute to the building's environmentally friendly attributes.

Large windows found in conference rooms, classrooms and newsrooms create a connection between what's going on inside the rooms and out, and theatre-style lighting exudes the impression that the activities inside the building are always "on air."

A comprehensive wayfinding package was "field tested" using a laptop and an LCD projector. An image of each major wayfinding element was projected in its intended location for client approval before fabrication, helping to keep surprises to a minimum.

The heavily mediated and camera-ready classrooms provide distance learning opportunities not present in many academic settings. Whether learning up-close and personal, or from the comforts of home, this new, cutting-edge facility will provide the students, faculty and staff associated with ASU's acclaimed journalism program a distinct advantage in higher learning for years to come. ●



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