

Housewares TrendTracker 2006



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About Housewares TrendTracker 2006

How the American Home Is Changing

AT LEAST ONE HOME OFFICE

More and more people are working from home at least part of the time:

- According to government statistics, more than four million Americans work exclusively from a home office and 20 million work at home part-time.
- 12% of the U.S. workforce qualifies as distributed, according to Work Design Collaborative LLC in Prescott, Ariz., which means that they have no permanent office at their companies and are highly likely to be working from home.
- Close to 10 % of all Internet households (or around 6.5 million US households) qualify as “home office worker households,” according to Research and Markets.

The impact of this workplace trend on the American home is that a dedicated home office has become a standard fixture in many U.S. homes. Almost a third of all families in America have some kind of home office, according to The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette.

The latest trend is for the home to have not only one dedicated home office but a second home office...or at least some place in the home that is separate from the home office for another computer setup. For example, new home builders are incorporating what home builder Remington Homes calls “tech centers” – alcoves which used to be left idle that are instead being designed as computer work stations complete with Category 5 wiring for high-speed Internet access.

CRAFT ROOM

Now in addition to the standard traditional home office, trend-setting consumers and home builders are starting to also offer dedicated spaces within the home for crafting.

Scrapbooking and stamping show no signs of abating in popularity and now knitting is emerging as the new hobby. All of these hobbies require supplies that take up room and need to be stored and organized. Many crafters are tiring of working on the dining room table and having to put everything away every time they work on a craft project.

All of this has sparked the trend toward dedicating a room to crafting or having a multifunction room.

- At least two showcase homes of national significance which display the latest residential amenities and home-design trends – The New American Home 2006 in southwest Orange County FL and the 2005 Southern Living Idea House in DeLand FL – featured multi functional rooms with space for crafting.¹
- The HomeTrend Influential who is in the process of having a custom home built will have a home office so she can manage the paperwork associated with managing 12 rental properties and selling real estate part-time, but it will also have a dedicated craft room.
- Retailers are jumping on the home office/craft room bandwagon. For example, Pottery Barn features a modular system suitable for an office or a craft room. The grouping combines file cabinets, desks and bookcases, along with a utility shelf and a wall-mounted organizer that holds wrapping paper, tape, ribbon and other gift-wrapping trappings.²

EVERY PART OF THE HOUSE IS A ROOM TO BE PROUD OF

The American home owner is no longer content to have any areas of their home that they are not proud to show off...and that includes the laundry room and garage.

Larger, attractive, well-appointed, nicely decorated, bold colored, brightly lit laundry rooms that are near the main living space are “in”. Tiny, dingy, dark, damp, poorly-lit laundry rooms that are in the basement or garage are “out”.

Innovations in washer and dryer design and function has spurred many consumers to replace their old washers and dryers. They don't want to put their attractive new washer and dryer in a tiny, dingy, dark, damp, poorly-lit laundry rooms that are in the basement or garage. At a minimum, the laundry room is getting a make over with new lighting, new paint, and new cabinets. In some cases, the laundry room is not just getting a make over, it is getting a major remodel and sometimes, the laundry room is even being relocated to a more convenient part of the house.

As usual, HIPsters are setting the trend. When ET added a second floor onto her home a couple of years ago, she put the laundry room on the second floor just down the hall from the bedrooms. CK left her new laundry room in the basement when she remodeled but she increased the size of the room dramatically, put in new lighting, and invested in custom cabinets with lots of counter top space to make laundry folding easier.

Not only are American homeowners focusing attention on making their laundry rooms attractive and nicely decorated, they are doing the same to their garages.

Like the laundry room, the garage is being treated like a room that needs decorating and maintaining. According to the Washington Post, “These adjuncts to the house are getting designed or overhauled to resemble another room of the house -- with attractive cabinetry and flooring, detailed facades, generous windows, even expansions for gyms below or living quarters above.”³

Garage improvements showed up in the National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) May 11 report on consumer wish lists and as a top priority in Atlanta-based Peachtree Consulting's spring report on the \$7 billion a year home organization industry.⁴ NAHB predicts that consumers will spend \$2.5 billion on garage improvements this year.⁵

The garage is typically one of the least organized areas in the household:

- Sixty percent of homeowners say their garages are disorganized. ⁶
- A U.S. Department of Energy survey found that 25 percent of America's two-car garages have no room for cars. Another 32 percent house one car. ⁷
- Only 12 percent of three-car garages are used to park three cars; instead homeowners use the extra space to house big items like lawn movers, snow mobiles, boats and to store sports equipment, tools, holiday decorations, and all the stuff that does not fit inside the house.

As a result, garage storage products are selling faster than any other home-organization items. According to *The Columbus Dispatch*, sales of garage storage products totaled more than \$800 million last year. ⁸

Sure signs that the garage is the next organizing and redecorating frontier: Several books have been published recently on the subject, including “Your Garagenous Zone” by a real-estate agent turned garage consultant and “organize your Garage...In No Time” by the president of the National Association of Professional Organizers.

Another indication of the popularity of garage makeovers is the number of new products that have been introduced in recent years. Garage Tek began offering custom-designed and dealer-installed garage storage systems in 2001. In 2003, Whirlpool introduced Gladiator Garageworks. California Closets jumped in with its own low-cost line of garage organization products, offered at Target stores since April. ⁹

NO “WASTED” ROOMS

American home owners are rethinking their homes and breaking the traditional rules about how their homes should look and feel and how the different rooms are used. They are making their homes fit their needs and their lifestyles.

The average American home is about 2,400 square feet. Many homeowners struggle with the issue of finding space to accommodate growing children and more home-based activities. Many are limited in their ability to add on to their homes because of setback limitations or zoning requirements so they have to get creative on how to find how more functional livable space inside their existing home.

One of the ways to get more functional livable space is to break the traditional rules about the need for a formal living or dining room. Some architects are going so far as to call the living and dining rooms “pretend rooms” because few people use them; as a result, they are designing homes that have no formal dining or living room.¹⁰

Consumers seem to agree with the experts: According to the consumer survey “What 21st Century Home Builders Want” published by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), many home buyers do not think that it is necessary to have a separate living room.

Craig Nakano of the Los Angeles Times suggests that the living room should be called lifestyle room. He says that the living room “is becoming a hybrid. It’s not a don’t-touch zone. It’s a real platform for living and interacting and as a result, it can be all these different things at once: a gathering spot, a media and entertainment room, an office, a bar.”

Some Americans are also questioning the need for a separate formal dining room. Although the majority of HIPsters have formal dining rooms and have no plans to convert them into another use space, a couple of HIPsters have done away with the formal dining room. LB turned her seldom used formal dining room into a library where she and her husband – both avid readers – could retreat to read and relax. PK converted his formal dining room into a playroom for his young children.

Homeowners are looking to find more livable space...and are willing to give up storage to get it. For example, when HIPster EL remodeled her kitchen, she got rid of the coat closet in the hall so she could have more space in the kitchen. LB is considering doing the same thing when she starts her kitchen remodeling project.

Homeowners are also finding creative ways to create livable space where there was

no livable space before. For example, TG created another room on the second floor by closing in the two-story living room in his home.

A trend in new home construction is the concept of “flex spaces” – rooms in the home in which the space can change with changes in lifestyle, needs and interests. HIPster HF is including a first floor guest suite in her plans for her new home. The suite will serve as a guest room now but will eventually become home to aging parents.

Some home builders are offering the option of a fourth bedroom in lieu of a two-story family room. That way, individual buyers can choose the configuration that is best for them. Some may want the extra room while others may prefer the openness of the two-story space.

Another trend, as more and more Americans decide to stay in their current home instead of moving, is the desire to have a home that they can grow old in. According to the American Institute of Architects first survey on home-design trends, 62% of the 420 architectural firms surveyed reported an annual increase in the number of projects in which accessibility was an issue.¹¹ One in four firms reported more clients seeking a single-floor design which the researchers noted was surprising given the popularity of maximizing space on shrinking lots.

OUTDOOR SPACES

Not only are American home owners making the most out of every inch of space within thier home, they are also turning their attention to making the most of thier outdoor space.

In a survey by the Michael Cohen Group, a New York-based research firm, about half of the 600 people surveyed said the outdoor space was as important as other rooms. About two-thirds – 65 percent – said the outdoor space was a major factor in the purchase of their home. Respondents viewed the outdoor room as a place to unwind and socialize.¹²

A growing number of Americans are making the “outdoor room” -- which has been characterized by home and design experts as a defined outdoor area with a cooking, eating, and sitting space -- an integral part of their home, according to the Weber Outdoor Room Tracking Study which tracks how consumers define, plan, and use their homes' outdoor space. Over one-third of outdoor room owners surveyed say that the design of this area is equally as important as the design of their homes' interior spaces. Nearly half of those surveyed who do not own an outdoor room say they are interested in having one (44 percent) and of those, 28 percent say that they are at least somewhat likely to create an outdoor room this summer. Importantly, over a third of outdoor room owners say that this space adds to their quality of life.

Melissa Birdsong, Lowe's Director of Trend & Design, describes today's outdoor room as similar to an indoor room, but with walls formed by trees, hedges or fences connecting to the home's exterior walls.

As usual, HIPsters, espically the ones living in Southern California, are leading the trend: A number of HIPsters have had work done on their back yrads.

Two HIPsters recently completely re-did thier backyards.

- In 2004, BD tore down the old firepit and stone work, built an outdoor bar with a palapa roof which includes a refrigerator, fiber optic lighting, stainless steel grill, and seating for eight and a new firepit. In 2005, she re-did the rest of the backyard including re-doing the pool, adding a hot tub/spa,



landscaping, and adding a walkway to a small patio above the pool.

- LB completely re-did her backyard in 2004. She put in a pool and spa, outdoor kitchen with built-in barbecue grill, landscaped the entire backyard, and bought all new furniture.

A number of HIPsters have plans to do some extensive work on their backyards. For example, MBCA is planning a \$120K project which will include re-design of the pool and relocation of the spa, removal of the firepit and installation of a built-in barbecue.

Home Decor/Home Design Trends

THE TV IS OUT IN THE OPEN AGAIN

Big flat screen and wall mounted televisions are exploding in popularity among the mainstream population because the prices are coming down to what people perceive as being an affordable level.

In the days before the flat screen TV, consumers wanted to hide their TV, hence the immense popularity of armoires. But today flat screen and plasma TV's are considered to be really cool and the people who own them don't want to hide them away.

Big boxy TVs and huge entertainment centers or armoires to hide those big boxy TVs are definitely "out". The furniture industry has responded with units specifically designed to hold the components and showcase the television. [Get photos](#)
See p 58 htf summer 2005

Changes in Habits and Practices

THE FAMILY DINNER

The family dinner is back. According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 58 percent of teens eat with a parent or guardian at least five nights a week, a significant increase from 47 percent of families in 1998.¹³ Still 30 to 40% of families don't eat together most nights.

As usual, HIPsters are the cutting edge of the family dinner trend: Despite busy schedules, on average, HIPsters eat dinner at home as a family 5.4 times a week.

Studies show that teens who frequently have family dinners are far less likely to smoke, drink, or do drugs than their peers. Kids who gather with family at dinner also have better grades and nutritional habits.

The importance of the family dinner is getting a lot of media attention:

- The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, a Columbia University think tank, holds an annual nationwide "Family Day" to promote the ritual of the family dinner.
- In 2003, the TV Land cable channel, along with Nick at Nite, created Family Table: Share More Than Meals, a national project geared at reminding families about the importance of shared time together.
- In late 2005, The Arizona Republic newspaper launched the Family Dinner Project where readers were asked to pledge to eat dinner together at least four nights a week.

Not only is the family dinner trend getting a lot of media attention, new products are being introduced to encourage families to eat dinner together. For example, Active Media recently introduced the Family Table Time Kit and the book "Drawing Families Together – One Meal at a Time".

MEAL ASSEMBLY CENTERS

Services are popping up that offer home makers fresh cooked meals made from fresh ingredients with no scratch cooking required. The Denver Post calls them “do-it-yourself kitchens” that “do the prep and cleanup, and you get a freezer full of almost homemade food.”¹⁴

“Do-it-yourself” kitchens with such names as Dream Dinners, Dishin’ It Up, Dinners to your Door, Home for Dinner, Simply Homemade Dinners, What’s Cooking, and Supper Solutions are cropping up in major cities around the U.S.

The centers are opening up at a rate of about 40 a month and are projected to earn \$270 million this year according to the Easy Meal Prep Association, the industry’s trade group. The pioneer, Dream Dinners, opened in 2003 and now has 112 franchise stores with 64 under construction. Super Suppers, which opened in Fort Worth TX in 2004 is the largest chain, according to the New York Times, with 121 franchise stores and 77 more under construction.

DESIRE TO BE ORGANIZED

HIPsters are buried in paper. Almost every HIPster home has a pile (or two or three) of paper sitting on the kitchen counters. Even households with very bare kitchen counters have that pile of papers.

Trying to keep on top of the mountains of bills, schedules, invitations, letters, magazines, etc. that pour in every day is one of the chores that many HIPsters really dislike. HIPsters don't like trying to keep on top of all the papers that come into the house because trying to keep them organized and making sure important papers do not get lost is a never ending job.

Another problem is that they simply do not know how to store and manage all the various kinds of documents; they may not have a good system for storing and filing the papers so that they are easily accessible; or they cannot find the time to organize all the papers. Part of the problem is that there are not many paper storage and organization products on the market that are appropriate for use in the kitchen nor are kitchen cabinets designed to hold files and file folders. Part of the problem is a time issue: many HIPsters say that there are plenty of products available, the problem is that it takes too much time to get the system set up and organized in the first place and to keep the papers that come in every day sorted and organized.

Paper pile-ups are one of the main reasons why people call for help from personal organizers.

Some new home builders such as Grand Pointe Homes are incorporating optional kitchen "home centers" into their designs. The kitchen home center is a place where the home owner can pay bills or take care of other paperwork.

The Belleville News-Democrat published an article about a home organization center. "It may look like just additional cabinetry, but it is actually a multi-functioning stand-up information and organization area. It is strategically located between the kitchen and the garage, just at the entry to the mud room." Includes bulletin board, base station for the cordless phones, drawers for keys, pens and paper, push pins, cabinet for phone books, triple cubbies for family mail. Height of counter top is higher than rest of kitchen since standing next to it not sitting at it.

Add HIPster infor

The focus group findings indicated a very strong interest in home organization. I was wondering if you saw this as an overall trend for all consumers and to what you might attribute this trend to?

Home organization is “hot” right now: Good Housekeeping just published "The Complete Clutter Solution: Organize Your Home for Good" (Hearst, \$19.95).

My research with the full 50-member HIPster panel reveals that HIPsters (and by extension, American consumers in general) are feeling overwhelmed by the amount of stuff they own. They are tired of clutter and jam-packed closets and are running out of room to store their stuff. There is a definite trend toward “decluttering” and getting rid of stuff. But that does not mean that they aren’t planning to accumulate more stuff. Most of the HIPsters are getting rid of stuff not so much to have a simpler, less stressful life but rather to make room for new stuff.

HIPsters have not stopped looking to accumulate more stuff but they are stopping to think about just how much stuff they already own when they see something new that they want in a store. In some cases, they are deciding that they don’t really need that new item after all.

They are also getting more discriminating in what they buy. Instead of buying cheap bargain pieces that they will only keep a couple of years, some HIPsters are only buying quality (and therefore, in many cases, more expensive) things that they plan to keep for a long time.

It is not just the stuff that HIPsters already own but also with the popularity of wholesale warehouse clubs, the stuff they buy in bulk. One HIPster has one room in her house – originally a walk-in pantry off the hallway near the kitchen – that she calls her “Costco Room”. It is the room where she stores all the products she has bought in bulk and on sale. She has an upright freezer there. Most HIPsters, however do not live in 4,500 square foot homes that have extra rooms where they can store bulk purchases. Another HIPster has solved the problem by putting up a partial wall to separate the part of the garage closest to the kitchen from the rest of the garage. He has put up wire floor-to-ceiling shelving units to hold their extra food and household products. He has a chest freezer there as well.

Also, which rooms are Hipsters looking to organize?

Closets and the garage.

A recent study by The Freedonia Group, a Cleveland-based industrial market research firm, anticipates that makers of modular closet and garage storage systems will rake in annual sales increases of more than 5 percent per year through 2009, topping \$7.6 billion.

About Riedel Marketing Group

1.Elbowroom for handicrafts Some home designers are setting aside space for hobbies -- some crafters are creating it for themselves.

Carrie Alexander, Special to the Sentinel

1147 words

25 December 2005

Orlando Sentinel

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J1

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Michele Derus

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

1188 words

4 June 2005

[The Washington Post](#)

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[The Washington Post](#)

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F24

5. HOMEOWNERS LOOK TO GARAGE AS ULTIMATE CLUTTER CHALLENGE

Lee Stratton

1294 words

28 August 2005

[The Columbus Dispatch](#)

Home Final

6. HOMEOWNERS LOOK TO GARAGE AS ULTIMATE CLUTTER CHALLENGE

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7. HOMEOWNERS LOOK TO GARAGE AS ULTIMATE CLUTTER CHALLENGE

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8. HOMEOWNERS LOOK TO GARAGE AS ULTIMATE CLUTTER CHALLENGE

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9. HOMEOWNERS LOOK TO GARAGE AS ULTIMATE CLUTTER CHALLENGE

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28 August 2005

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Home Final

10. More Americans want a home they can grow old in; FEWER FORMAL ROOMS, SMALLER SIZE ARE OTHER HOME TRENDS

By Craig Nakano

Los Angeles Times

825 words

10 June 2005

San Jose Mercury News

11. More Americans want a home they can grow old in; FEWER FORMAL ROOMS, SMALLER SIZE ARE OTHER HOME TRENDS

By Craig Nakano

Los Angeles Times

825 words

10 June 2005

San Jose Mercury News

12. Outdoors is "in" for relaxing

by Tracy Hobson Lehmann

San Antonio Express-News

25 March 2006

Arizona Republic

13. "At dinner it's all in the family as ritual helps keep kids safe, builds strong ties", Boston Globe, 9/25/2005

14. Services whip up affordable home cooking

Amy Herdy and Kristen Browning-Blas

438 words

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