

# **ADVOCATE-GENERAL**

## ***AF FREDERICA ADVISORY #1***



## **Critique, Recommendations, and Formal Notice**

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## Advocate-General



### Session of 2006-2007

#### ***Critique of previous arrangements***

The job center previously had what appeared to be an elaborate and successful design to give a finely calibrated balance between employees and users, making the place relaxed, informal, accessible, yet serviced. The room was constructively used, with the entrance being clear so that users, feeling reasonably unsupervised, could choose whether to use the central computer hub at the right, the café style tables at the center, or either of the two computers situated peripherally to the left. Or the user could move straight ahead to ask information from staff, which was at hand to assist with information when asked, but which as a matter of policy does not approach visitors otherwise.

#### ***Critique of changes and their implications***

The changes and their implications have been detailed at our website, [www.advocate-general.com](http://www.advocate-general.com), and in the Advocate-General's AF Fredericia Responsum. Individually and collectively, these changes have had the effect of making use of the center a significantly less informal experience for users, whereas staff has become more visible.

The computer terminals situated peripherally to the left were dismantled, and although users are still free to use the tables, there is little practical use for these, leaving the typical user but one choice: To use the computer hub located to the right; thus in effect having cut the room in half, and having rendered the left side of the room what architects and interior designers often refer to as "passive space." Regardless of the intentions behind this change, it is difficult to see this as anything other than a deterioration of the job center's design from a user point-of-view as well as from a resource-efficiency point of view.

As far as the new working desk for staff, which is now situated immediately inside the entrance, the possible motives are questionable. The employee usually does not actually greet visitors to the center - this does not appear to be an information desk. Rather, the employee seems to be just doing his or her regular work. Which, absent any indication to the contrary, leads us to presume that the table may have been situated there for one or two of the following reasons:

- ❖ For the staff's own convenience or enjoyment;
- ❖ To make staff more visible to users.

As far as the need for logon to computers that were previously kept turned on, we have difficulty in ascertaining whether this is intended or rather due to some oversight by staff.

If indeed the change is intentional, this would be inconsistent with the fact that the national database to which the job center's computers grant access does not require logon for many purposes. If a visitor to the website is allowed to search for available jobs and other key information without a logon when searching from a computer located outside the job center, it does not seem reasonable to require logon from all users at the job center.

If the change is unintentional, presumably the terminals would be kept switched off to conserve power. However, this would not seem to justify requiring universal logon.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) The two computer terminals situated peripherally to the left should immediately be restored so as to give users a choice between using the main computer hub or working in relative privacy at one of these two terminals
- 2) The working desk for staff located immediately inside the entrance should immediately be removed
- 3) If monitors are being kept off to require password from all users, this should be reversed, as the central network does not require such universal passwords. If monitors are being kept turned off by staff to preserve power, the password protection to require boot and access to the main menu should be removed, or information about the password should be displayed clearly - e.g. by placing a small sign on the table.
- 4) As for any potential future changes, the administrator should carefully consider whether such changes constitute genuine improvement from a user perspective. Due to the users' need to be able to use the job center in an informal and uncomplicated setting, changes should in any event be kept at a minimum to avoid inconveniencing users with new designs, rules, and procedures.

**Formal Notice**

This Advisory has been offered to the administrator on March 20, 2007. If, within 30 days, the administrator fully implements the above recommendations, the case may be closed. Otherwise, a formal Quality-of-Regulation Evaluation and a Virtual Trial will be conducted without further delay.

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