

# Creating a Great Workspace

Where to find desks,  
bookcases, chairs, file  
cabinets, and more

By Ann Cochran

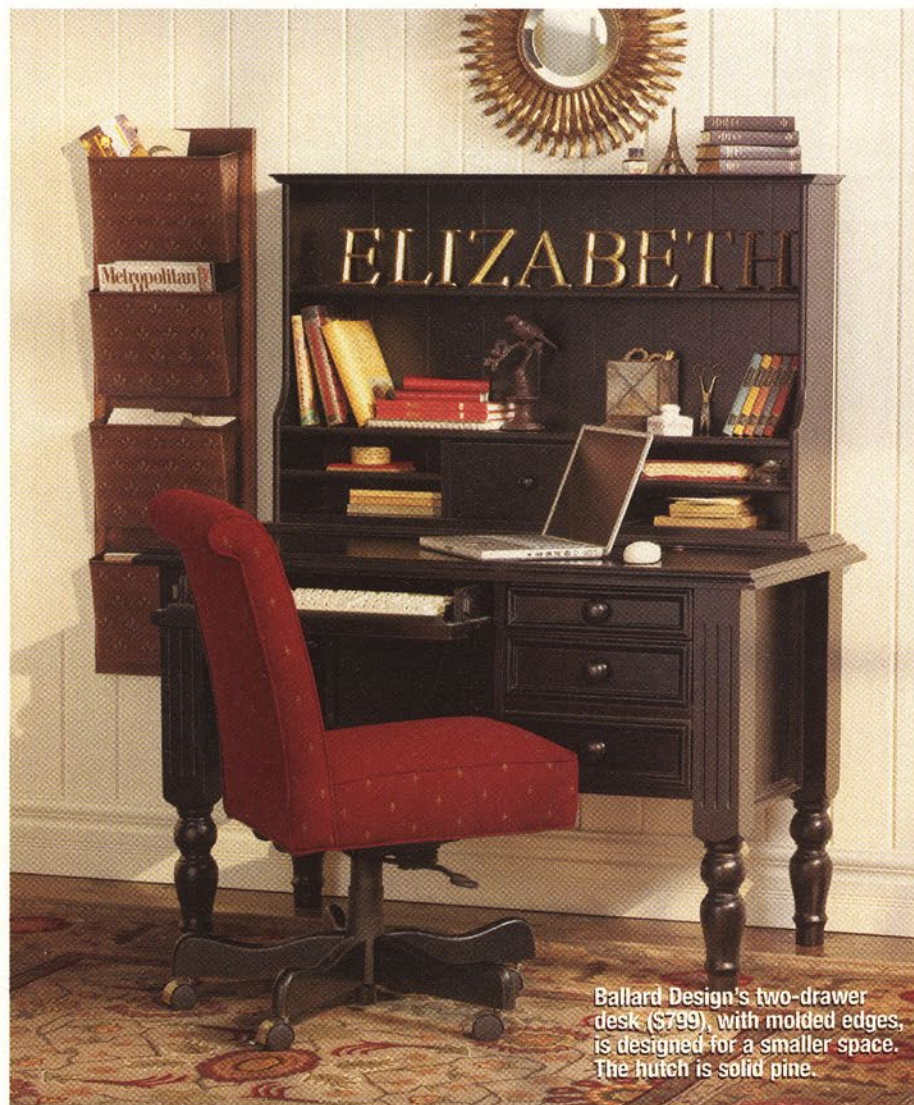
**M**any Washingtonians have a work area with a computer, files, and storage space. If we work at home but don't have a home office, we may work in the kitchen or a corner of the TV room.

Manufacturers have responded by producing home-office furniture in styles, colors, and finishes that fit in with the rest of the house.

Armoires, with doors to hide clutter, are ideal for computers that have to fit into a bedroom or den. Desks and modular systems make it easy to set up an office to suit any space. If you don't need a large file cabinet, papers can be stored inside tables with deep drawers, ottomans, chests, or boxes. The roll-top desk is still with us, but it's been revamped for PCs and all those cords.

If your budget is generous and you plan to stay in your home awhile, you might consider a custom-designed office. Furniture and file cabinets can be partially or completely built in—all you shop for is the chair.

For those of us buying off the rack, what's next? According to Jaclyn Hirschhaut of the American Home Furnishings Alliance, consumers will soon see furniture in-



Ballard Design's two-drawer desk (\$799), with molded edges, is designed for a smaller space. The hutch is solid pine.



spired by the way architects work, often standing over drafting tables. For anyone who likes to stand and work or change positions, taller desks and slanted work surfaces will be appealing options.

Here are good places to find home-office furniture:

**Ballard Designs catalog**, *ballarddesigns.com*; 800-367-2775. This catalog has a beautiful but limited selection for the office, including a graceful corner desk with curves, a pine secretary, and a black distressed writing table. A rolling pine cabinet on hidden casters is \$199. The two-drawer desk with solid pine beadboard hutch is \$799. The Web site is superior to the catalog for office furniture.

**Container Store**, locations in Maryland, Virginia, and DC; *containerstore.com*. The Elfa space-organization system, popular for closets and kitchens, is also an option for a home office. Elfa drawers, shelves, brackets, and bins allow for endless variations. The Web site's "Plan a Space" function allows shoppers to supply information about their space and needs, and a customized plan is posted three to five days later. The expert staff helps with installation arrangements.

**Contemporaria**, 3303 Cady's Alley, NW; 202-338-0193; *contemporaria*.



For \$199, the rolling pine cabinet from Ballard Designs includes a caddy for sorting mail.

Photograph courtesy of Ballard Designs

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com. At this stylish Georgetown shop, home-office furnishings are distinctive. One desk, which is really a table, has a slight hourglass-shaped top supported by a thin frame and steel legs. It's available in three sizes (\$937 to \$1,607). The Home Desk by Bruno Fattorini, available in 16 sizes and starting at \$2,014, is more traditional. The Toolbox cabinets (\$765 to \$9,857), with whimsical numerals for handles, can be ordered with doors or drawers in 22 colors and made of cherry, black walnut, oak, or wenge wood.

**Crate & Barrel**, locations in Maryland, Virginia, and DC; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com); 800-967-6696. Crate & Barrel's look is clean and stylish, with a touch of trendiness. The distressed pine Pietra line has turned legs, wood knobs, and a nostalgic feel. The frosted-glass-and-metal Quartz desk is futuristic. With its mahogany veneer hand-carved panels, the "modern ethnic" Nile armoire is an attractive example of conservation in action—Crate & Barrel uses only timber harvested from responsibly managed forests. The Nile is \$1,299, compared with \$1,800 for others in solid woods.

**Design Within Reach**, 4828 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda, 301-215-7200; 1838 Co-

lumbia Rd., NW, 202-265-5640; 3307 Cady's Alley, Georgetown, 202-339-0890; [dwr.com](http://dwr.com). This modern furniture culled from all ends of the design globe. Herman Miller's Caper chair, at \$199, is

The Bedford modular desk system from Pottery Barn includes a desktop, bookcase, file cabinets, hutch, and more. Metal label holders add to the vintage look. Pieces are sold separately; prices range from \$149 to \$449.



Photograph courtesy of Pottery Barn

Wall system with TV/Stereo unit, wengé-colored veneer, \$3,799  
Coffee table, mirror glass, \$229  
Corner sofa, from \$2,799  
Ottoman, from \$379



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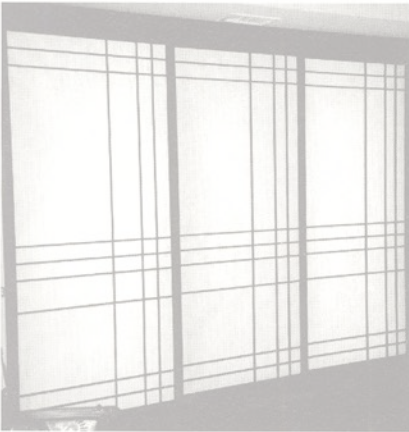
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**Crate & Barrel's Quartz desk (\$149), with a frosted glass top, is a good fit for a contemporary space.**

an exceptional bargain; most chairs run \$500 to \$1,000, and one is \$2,195. You'll find more worktables, starting at \$398, than desks or computer stations here. Detailed descriptions accompany every item. The online newsletter includes comments on art, architecture, and furniture design.

**Economy Office Supplies**, 8428 Lee Hwy., Fairfax; 703-849-8025; [economyprod.com](http://economyprod.com). One of the area's largest showrooms for home-office furniture. The Creative Ideas line offers custom-

**The Nile armoire (\$1,299) from Crate & Barrel has hand-carved mahogany veneer panels. Armoires are a good choice for computers stored in a bedroom or den.**



stained maple and oak. Traditional choices include the Woodcraft work station made of solid oak, Sauder executive desks made of cherry, and a selection of 28 leather desk chairs. Prices start at \$1,100 for armoires, \$355 for desks, and \$120 for chairs.

Photographs courtesy of Crate & Barrel









Contemporaria's custom-made Toolbox cabinets, which start at \$765, come in 22 colors.

**Hardwood Artisans**, locations in Alexandria, Chantilly, Rockville, and Woodbridge; [hardwoodartisans.com](http://hardwoodartisans.com). Everything is made from sturdy natural wood and can be custom-made for any room. Styles include contemporary, Arts and Crafts, and traditional Shaker. The popular corner desk starts at about \$5,000; a Mission-style bookcase starts at \$1,055.

**Hold Everything**, 5335 Wisconsin Ave., NW; 202-363-7840; [holdeverything.com](http://holdeverything.com). Hold Everything is more modern than its sister company, Pottery Barn. Its Mix N Match workstation, made of oak veneer and solid wood in two finishes with satin nickel hardware, includes parts priced from \$75 to \$275. High-quality extras like drawers and trays are outfitted with smooth glides; floor units have self-leveling feet. The contemporary Carroll desk, with a matching

Photograph courtesy of Contemporaria

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The Coronado leaning shelf, \$139 at Storehouse Furniture, is a good place for office accents such as clocks and photos.

hutch (\$277 for the set), is a good choice for small spaces or a guest bedroom.

**Home Decorators Collection**, *homedecorators.com*; 877-537-8539. There are nearly 300 items in this catalog's home-office category, from ornate Queen Anne to spare Shaker styles. Assembly is usually required, and materials are not luxurious—a platinum-finish desk surface is vinyl laminate over wood composite—as the prices suggest. Ergonomic kneeling chairs are \$69 and \$79. A contemporary desk chair, with fabric choices such as zebra or tiger, is \$149. The site's search function allows shoppers to explore creative uses for nonoffice pieces such as dining-room buffets.

**Ikea**, 10100 Baltimore Ave., College

Shelf photograph courtesy of Storehouse Furniture; chair courtesy of Home Decorators



This ergonomic kneeling chair from Home Decorators is \$69.



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Park, 301-345-6552; 2901 Potomac Mills Cir., Woodbridge, 703-494-4532; [ikea.com](http://ikea.com). This megastore, offering stylish contemporary furniture, is known for its low prices. Office furniture is no exception: The Krister steel computer desk is \$29.99. A Goliath particleboard corner workstation is \$89. Office chairs, like the Stefano swivel, start at \$39.99. If you require lots of storage, consider Ikea's kitchen cabinets. Go on weekdays to get the best service from consultants.

**Pottery Barn**, locations in Maryland, Virginia, and DC; 888-779-5176; [potterybarn.com](http://potterybarn.com). Customers like Pottery Barn's vintage look. The Bedford, a modular desk system with metal label holders and steel pulls, has a desktop (\$149) designed to sit on two file cabinets (\$229 each) or one file cabinet and a CPU cabinet (\$199). Professional organizer Claudia Taskier says if you have space limitations, consider Pottery Barn Kids items, which are slightly smaller in scale.

**Scan Furniture**, locations in Falls Church, Rockville, Dulles, Columbia; [scanfurniture.com](http://scanfurniture.com). Scan's contemporary, durable pieces include desks, which start at \$129, and file cabinets, priced from \$139. The Houston desk (\$3,999) and the Graphic credenza (\$2,339) are sleek and modern. The popular Plus One collection, which in-



Need to spice up your home office? The Home Decorators Collection offers a \$149 desk chair in tiger or zebra fabric.



cludes a desk (\$279) and hutch (\$329), is simple and functional. Among the quirky accessories is a teak-wood clock with a swinging pendulum for \$149.

**Staples**, locations in Maryland, Virginia, and DC; 800-378-2753; [staples.com](http://staples.com). The brick-and-mortar stores have a limited selection, but check out the catalog or Web site. Traditional office furniture comes in sets: desks, file cabinets, bookcases, and hutches that are moderately priced and mostly veneer. A Sauder armoire, in bishop pine, is \$129. An office desk and credenza combo, with two file drawers, is \$300; a matching hutch is \$190. Staples also has the best sale prices on well-regarded Hon metal file cabinets that come in many styles and colors.

**Storehouse Furniture**, 13 area locations, including clearance cen-

**Storehouse's library wall (\$4,999), with wood veneers over pressed hardwood, has shelves, cabinets, and a ladder.**



Photograph courtesy of Storehouse Furniture



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ters in Leesburg and Baltimore, *storehousefurniture.com*; 888-786-7346. The Web site's home-office section offers eight desks, each in a distinct style, priced from \$299 to \$899. The "library walls" category includes everything from a \$139 leaning shelf to a \$5,000 "mega library wall" with shelves, cabinets, and a ladder. Fun items include the Bungie desk chair, with elastic cords that provide "energized support" (\$259).

**Techline**, 12221 Parklawn Dr., Suite 212, Rockville; 301-770-1779; *techlineusa.com*. Pick a bookcase, mix and match overhead cabinetry and drawers, then choose your favorite finish. Techline will customize those selections to fit your space. Color choices include maple, cherry, gray, and green. A home office averages \$2,000 to \$5,000, including delivery and installation, which is usually within six weeks.

**Topdeq**, *topdeq.com*; 866-876-3300. An online and catalog resource, Topdeq stresses quality, function, and design. It offers free online space-planning help. PC stations are priced from \$235 to \$1,595; desk chairs from \$216. The Rede lectern and standing table (\$915) lets you work on your feet or perched on a stool. The Spinola (\$235) is a seat that promotes "active" sitting by keeping you moving. Topdeq's liberal money-back guarantee includes shipping costs.

**Upscale Resale**, 8100 Lee Hwy., Falls Church; 703-698-8100; *upscaleresale.com*. The area's largest consignment store has more than 100,000 consignment, estate-sale, new, and discontinued items displayed over 28,000 square feet. One room is devoted to office furniture. An Ethan Allen Queen Anne-style desk, which retailed for \$1,200, was recently priced at \$444. A Jasper Cabinet Chipendale style with leather top, retailing for \$2,500, was \$552. The longer items remain on the floor, the lower the prices.

**Washington Design Center**, 300 D St., SW; 202-646-6100; *merchandisemart.com/dcdesigncenter*. The design center is the Mid-Atlantic's largest wholesale resource for interior designers, decorators, space planners, architects, and builders. Anyone is welcome to explore most of the 70 showrooms. If you like what you see, the center makes it easy to meet a pro with its Designer Index, a collection of reference portfolios. Half-hour consultations are free.



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