



Figure 17.7
Bryant Park, New York: an
example of physical public
space.

from which to work has increased, and different (physical) settings will be better suited to different activities. Sustainable cities will need to accommodate these work styles and respond to their needs in order to either keep or attract this demand.

A simple way of characterising virtual and physical space is that virtual space can take on the role of convenience, while physical space becomes more about providing meaning. As virtual space can work well to maintain relationships, physical space can become more symbolic acting as sustenance in an otherwise virtual existence. The growth of conference locations such as castles in rural settings, survival weekends and golf days are indicators of this. The physical attributes of a place, namely views, architecture, history, location, accessibility, can greatly contribute the experience of an event.

In order to determine which profile fits an activity, or to what degree virtual and physical spaces should be used, the critical issues to be considered are: *time*, *location* and *connectivity*. These issues are important when making decisions, as shown by some of the criteria listed below (Figure 17.8).

These criteria are by no means exhaustive and they show the range of issues that have significance in the two parallel work patterns of the cluster of physical hubs and the virtual network. An organisation or population that tends towards criteria on the left-hand side (see Figure 17.8) will be more suited to a cluster of physical hubs, whereas the needs of those tending towards

Figure 17.8
Decision-making criteria
influenced by issues of time,
location and connectivity.

Physical		Virtual
Flexible schedule	←→	Heavily scheduled
Predictable diary	←→	Volatile diary
Planning	←→	Prioritising
Location dependent	←→	Location independent
Physically connected	←→	Virtually connected

the criteria on the right-hand side will be better accommodated by a virtual network.

Accommodating these profiles in cities

As people and organisations cover wider distances and deal with more information, the need to stay connected becomes more important. Looking at two major cities New York and London, evidence of sectors clustering together is clear. Both cities have a media centre, financial centre and a commercial centre, within which local and international companies cluster together. The area becomes ‘branded’ for that activity; for example, Soho is known for art, fashion and media in both cities. People are attracted to such areas for reasons including networking, access to labour and access to like-minded individuals. Often these places grow up around transport hubs or from historical conditions, which drives the rental and land value up, especially evident in the financial services industry. The density of these areas increases in order to meet the demand, and so clusters of tower blocks and large buildings appear.

Similar clustering can be seen at a regional level. The Øresund area of Scandinavia has attracted technology-based companies and universities to create a technology hub in northern Europe. New Jersey, between New York and Philadelphia is a major hub for many pharmaceutical companies due to its historical location of the Philadelphia School of Pharmacy and due to the pool of talent clustered in that area.

Cities offer a rich variety of settings for the mobile worker. As both activities and the duration of the working day become less defined, what used to be a business lunch venue might now be a place for escape from the office to do concentrated work in the afternoon. A street café can be the perfect place for a confidential conversation. A playing field in Hyde Park is a great location for a corporate teambuilding exercise. What tied workers to a location was access to information and management systems. Mobile and wireless technology means information can be accessed from where ever the worker is.