

The simplified office

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In response to [my description of my own office](#), my colleague Colin Birge shared this anecdote about one Microsoft employee who took office simplification about as far it could go:

He was one of the earliest usability specialists in Office, later to become the usability manager before ultimately retiring. As befits a person of seniority, for most of the last four years or so he spent at Microsoft, he had a window office, usually extra large.

The contents of his office were as follows:

- One small square table.
- One office chair.
- One guest chair.
- One laptop.
- One whiteboard.

That was it. The rest of the standard desk was gone, including the corner piece and the extended table. There were no bookcases. Apart from the whiteboard, he had nothing on his walls. He had no books, no computer equipment apart from the laptop, no personal materials at all. When he retired, he didn't have to clean out his office. He took nothing with him but the clothes he was wearing.

Apparently his apartment was nearly as spartan.

I knew a guy once who claimed that you didn't really own anything that you couldn't carry at a dead run while firing an AK-47 over your shoulder. This fellow was the only person I ever knew who lived that philosophy.

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