



The Sanctuary screen could help alleviate seasonal affective disorder by providing mood-elevating lighting | Photo source James Dyson Award

Innovation > Architecture & Design > Lighting panel helps to elevate the 'working from home' mood

LIGHTING PANEL HELPS TO ELEVATE THE 'WORKING FROM HOME' MOOD

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

A design student has developed a room divider that changes its lighting to suit the user's mood

Spotted: During the coronavirus lockdowns, many people were forced to work from home. For those with large houses or flats, with a room that could be used as a dedicated office, this may not have presented a major inconvenience. But for those in flat shares, or without a spare room, working for months in their bedrooms or dining room tables soon became draining. Cardiff Metropolitan University design student Ben Sawyer was inspired by this to create a room divider that can help to elevate the user's mood.

Sawyer's 'Sanctuary' consists of a frame made of honeycomb cardboard, enclosing three curved panels with strips of RGB LEDs around them, attached using magnets. These, in turn, illuminate a Tyvek diffusion screen. Electrical current from the LEDs is passed through the magnets into the supporting frames to create a simple but effective user interaction, with satisfying haptic feedback.

The result is a 'day wall' that changes in appearance to create lighting which can help to elevate the mood of those who spend a lot of time indoors. Sawyer came up with the idea when forced to remain isolated for long stretches of time in student housing with limited space, limited access to natural light and "a less than desirable aesthetic".

In developing his product, Sawyer conducted research and surveys of potential users. He **explains that**: "These concepts were then evaluated against a set of criteria outline by my brief of the project. The successful idea ... then underwent a series of iterative design developments focusing on sustainability, usability and achieving the desired effect." The design has been entered into the 2021 Dyson Award.

Lighting is about more than just illumination – it can affect our mood and can be used in a number of innovative ways. We have seen this in recent developments such as an infrared, [under-skin sensor](#) that shows the levels of drugs in the bloodstream and a [coating](#) that absorbs UV rays and glows in the dark – providing street lighting without electricity.

Written By: Lisa Magloff

[Explore more: Architecture & Design Innovations | COVID-19 Innovations](#)

25th June 2021

Website: jamesdysonaward.org

Takeaway:

The pandemic has made it clear that a large number of people around the world live in crowded conditions, without much access to natural light or space. It is well-known that these conditions can contribute to seasonal affective disorder and exacerbate depression. The Sanctuary screens could provide lighting to help alleviate these conditions. At the same time, it can make crowded spaces more aesthetically pleasing. Sawyer hopes to eventually produce Sanctuary commercially, “in the hopes of improving well-being for everyday lives.”