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New technologies shaping offices of the future

On Monday, 11 September 2017 the first conference in Poland devoted to new technology in real estate “PropTech: Digital Transformation In Commercial Real Estate” was held in Warsaw Spire office building. The event was organised by Cushman & Wakefield, a global real estate services firm, together with ShareSpace and spaceOS. S.

PropTech, similar to shared space or co-working industries, is one of the fastest growing sector on the commercial real estate market. Digital transformation is already sweeping across the world of finance, transport, marketing and media. Tesla has revolutionised the automotive industry, AirBnB did the same with tourism, while Spotify and Netflix came to replace CDs. Car-sharing has recently been added to this list. A smartphone app, which allows us to enter an office, book a conference room or control lights is no longer an option – it is an imperative, and people expect even more to be able to enjoy a comfortable working environment. With the rapidly changing needs and profiles of the new generation of tenants, including the growing number of start-ups, we are standing on the brink of a new technological revolution on the office market.

Last year co-working companies were the main driving force behind Warsaw's office demand. An increasing number of tenants were seeking a desk or an office in office schemes such as Brain Embassy, Business Link and HubHub.

Co-working space accounts for less than 1% of Warsaw's total office stock compared with 2-3% in the world's leading co-working locations. This segment of the Warsaw market is, however, expanding at a brisk pace of 70% year-on-year in 2017 and is expected to provide 78,000 sq m of co-working space by 2020.

The shared office is hotter than ever attracting more and more small-scale businesses which benefit from operating in a synergistic, energised and inspiring working environment.

The scale and depth of the market transformation is fuelling the PropTech sector, and we are now seeing a proliferation of innovative tech-solutions for commercial real estate clients. Modern technologies facilitate office space management, improve tenant retention and enhance the attractiveness of office buildings.

The conference “PropTech: Digital Transformation In Commercial Real Estate”, held in the head office of The Heart Warsaw at the Warsaw Spire office building, was organized by global real estate services firm Cushman & Wakefield, ShareSpace and spaceOS.

During five thematic sessions the experts of Cushman & Wakefield, ShareSpace and spaceOS has addressed various issues such the origin of co-working space in Europe, the difference between co-working space and serviced offices, emerging trends in real estate sector, start-up communities management, the role of office managers of the future, and workplace solutions and digital solutions in short-term shared space leasing.

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A special guest at the conference was Simon Schaefer, the founder of Berlin's legendary Factory, opened in 2011, and the organizer of the world's first ever event for start-ups "Startup Europe Summit". He is now driving the initiative Startup Portugal in Lisbon.

During the event Simon talked about the beginnings of Europe's first co-working projects and the impact, which a community created inside and around a building may have on the success of developers' projects.

Maciej Markowski, Partner and Head of Workplace Strategy CEE, Cushman & Wakefield, presented the results of the analysis of office space use in Cushman & Wakefield's Warsaw office carried out using iNotify sensors. Understanding in-house communication patterns is key to office space optimization, but – most importantly – it must be based on real data. With the rapid development of the PropTech sector, delivering solutions to both tenants and developers, the office of the future will offer much more than today. Virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence and smartphone applications will help revolutionise the way we work. What may seem revolutionary today is set to become standard in many modern offices in two or three years from now.

Mikołaj Niemczycki, Negotiator, Office Agency of Cushman & Wakefield, and Robert Chmielewski, the founder of the innovative platform ShareSpace, which provides quick access to offers of shared space operators across the country, talked about the new partnership of both firms. Thanks to the cooperation between Cushman & Wakefield and ShareSpace, the search engine remobile.pl, which previously included only traditional office offers, will enable browsing offers and leasing of co-working space, serviced offices and conference rooms across Poland. This is the first such cooperation between advisory firms in Poland that comes as a response to the growing occupier demand.

Marley Fabisiewicz, the founder and CEO of spaceOS, has been developing and implementing digital strategies for technology companies for 15 years. Together with Bartosz Dobrowolski, Business Development Executive at spaceOS, he talked about the need for a digital revolution in the real estate sector in which there has been insufficient focus on users in new solutions delivery. They presented an application which creates a community to facilitate building relations and ensures a positive human experience. Another advantage of adding a digital layer to commercial schemes is the efficient use and adaption of space to changing tenant needs. The digital layer can be used to increase the attractiveness of buildings, build loyalty and compete by offering the human experience in addition to competitive prices. spaceOS presented its pioneering solutions implemented in New York's New Lab, Warsaw's The Heart and Business Link Astoria.

Jędrzej Iwaszkiewicz, the co-founder of The Heart Warsaw, talked about cooperation between the real estate sector and start-ups. Corporations could unlock the segment's potential by joining forces, building partnerships and solving market problems together. The fact that companies such as Cushman & Wakefield are developing advanced technological solutions working together with PropTech start-ups bodes well for the future of this sector in Poland, and Warsaw stands a chance of becoming Europe's PropTech hub.