

Additional Resources

Additional references, news snippets and mini articles to add to and update the material in chapter 14: The Information Society.

Bosses Fight Back against Home working

Flexibility about when you work (and possibly where you work) has been a growing trend. There are obviously some jobs where employees have to be present – you can't stack shelves in the supermarket or fit the engine into a new car from home or the coffee shop but for knowledge workers there can be flexibility – and that flexibility is enabled by Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).

Advantages of flexible working can include:

- For the employee, the flexibility can cut down or eliminate the daily commute (and the cost and time that is involved). It can also help with that *work-life balance* equation so getting kids to school or sorting out a visit from the plumber can be fitted in alongside getting a full day's work done.
- For the employer, advantages can include a better morale amongst the workforce and being able to recruit and/or retain staff that might not be able to fit in a fixed day in the office with other things they must do.
- For all concerned, it can be just more productive. A day *working at home* should mean that one can get stuck into completing a job, writing a report or marking a pile of exam scripts, without interruption.
- For some organisations home working (teleworking) has become the institutionalised norm – the office has been much reduced (or closed down) and staff will only occasionally get together when a face-to-face meeting is required.

All that said, the trend towards flexible working now seems to be under attack. The new boss at Yahoo, Marissa Mayer has ordered that all 11,500 US employees should work in the office or leave the company. This has been closely followed by Alexandra Shulman, the editor of British Vogue, who also asserts that an organisation is at its most productive and creative when staff are present, working in the office. These are two bosses that know what they want and I guess they will get it (whatever the counter arguments).

Shulman, A. (2013) 'Alexandra Shulman on working from home: it's not an adequate alternative', *Guardian*, 2nd March 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2013/mar/02/alexandra-shulman-working-from-home>

McGregor, H. (2013): 'Working from home is the future', *Guardian*, 2nd March 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2013/mar/02/working-from-home-heather-mcgregor>

The impermanence of the Electronic Record

Some years ago, when the Google Books project, which aims to digitise all of the world's printed books, was getting underway, the two co-founders of Google were having a meeting with the librarian of one of the universities that had signed up for the plan. At one point in the conversation, the Google boys noticed that their collaborator had suddenly gone rather quiet. One of them asked him what the matter was. "Well", he replied, "I'm wondering what happens to all this stuff when Google no longer exists."

We have written records that date back hundreds of years – much has been lost but if it still exists then it is readable – there are however electronic records that are just a few decades old that are essentially inaccessible. How will the electronic record stand the test of time?

Naughton J. (2013) 'Even Google won't be around for ever, let alone Facebook', *Observer*, 3rd March 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2013/mar/03/google-facebook-nothing-lasts-for-ever>

