

# ***Social Implications of a Computerized Society***

## **Computers in the Workplace**

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# **Main Topics**

- The Impact on Work Environments
- Flexibility, Reachability, Productivity
- Job Market Dynamics
- Employee Crime
- Employee Monitoring

# Key Topics

EXAMPLE WITH 5 PARTS



# **The Impact of IT on Work Environment: Themes**

- Access to Employees
  - time and space: employees can communicate after hours and at home
- Flexibility
  - employees can work after hours and at home
- Information about Employees
  - screening before hiring
  - monitoring during work



**Flexibility IN space**

# Key Topics

EXAMPLE WITH 5 PARTS



# Telecommuting

- Work From Home (WFH) using a computer electronically linked to one's place of employment
- Mobile office using a laptop, working out of your car or at customer locations
- Fulltime and part-time telecommuting
- See Canvas survey
- What benefits do you see in telecommuting (and to whom)?
- What downsides do you see in telecommuting (and to whom)?

# Telecommuting: Benefits

Employers	Employees	Society
Reduce need to maintain physical office	<u>Less Commuting Time/Money</u>	Reduce traffic congestion, pollution
Wide geographic hiring	Save money on work clothes	
Fewer disruptions from storms, blizzards etc	Work/life balance (errands, child care)	

# Telecommuting: Downsides

Employers	Employees	Society
Data Security Risks	Take on cost of office space/electricity	?
<u>Corporate Loyalty may weaken</u>	Cramped home spaces	
Employee collaborations may suffer: brainstorming, coordinating, conflict resolution, onboarding	isolation	
Resentment from office workers (SFU staff)	Reduced promotion chances	
	Blurred work/home boundaries	

# Hybrid Work: A Closer Look

- Robert Kelly: home/family boundaries
- About 70% of firms plan to move to hybrid work model
  - Some time at home, some in the office
- Just under 70% of U.S. workers want some time at home
- Wide variance in time preferences
  - Including gender bias
- WFH much lower chance of promotion than full-time office workers
- Productivity went up during lock-down

# Telecommuting Surveys

- These resources will not be on quiz/exam.
- Promoted by many people, [CIO Insight](#)
- Various surveys with statistics [here](#) and [here](#)
- [Cisco Survey](#)

***Flexibility in time***

# Key Topics



# Reachability and Productivity

- Study that those distracted by emails and phone calls saw a 10-point fall in their IQ
- Research shows that it takes 25 minutes to reach full productivity after an interruption.
- But we are interrupted every 3 minutes
- Some companies have restricted email
- Replace with slack, social networks

# Reachability and Well-Being

- Individuals experience anxiety, declare e-mail bankruptcy
- Long work hours lead to sleep deprivation in Americans
- Canada 3<sup>rd</sup>-most sleep-deprived country

# Employment Trends: Are We Working More?

- See Canvas survey Time Poverty
- Are we working more?
  - People work fewer hours compared to the Industrial Revolution.
  - But the average American worker puts in 200 hours more per year than in 1973 (J. Schor).
  - Tax law, benefits encourage overtime work rather than hiring additional workers.
  - One-earner per household used to be sufficient for middle class.
  - Free time the major concern for U.S. workers.
- Some Canadian studies report an increasing time crunch

# BC High Tech Legislation

- BC high technology companies are exempt from some labour regulations like paying overtime for extra work
- Can lead to disputes about when the exception applies

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# **Information: Screening and recruiting**

# Key Topics

EXAMPLE WITH 5 PARTS



# New Job Market Dynamics

## Getting a Job:

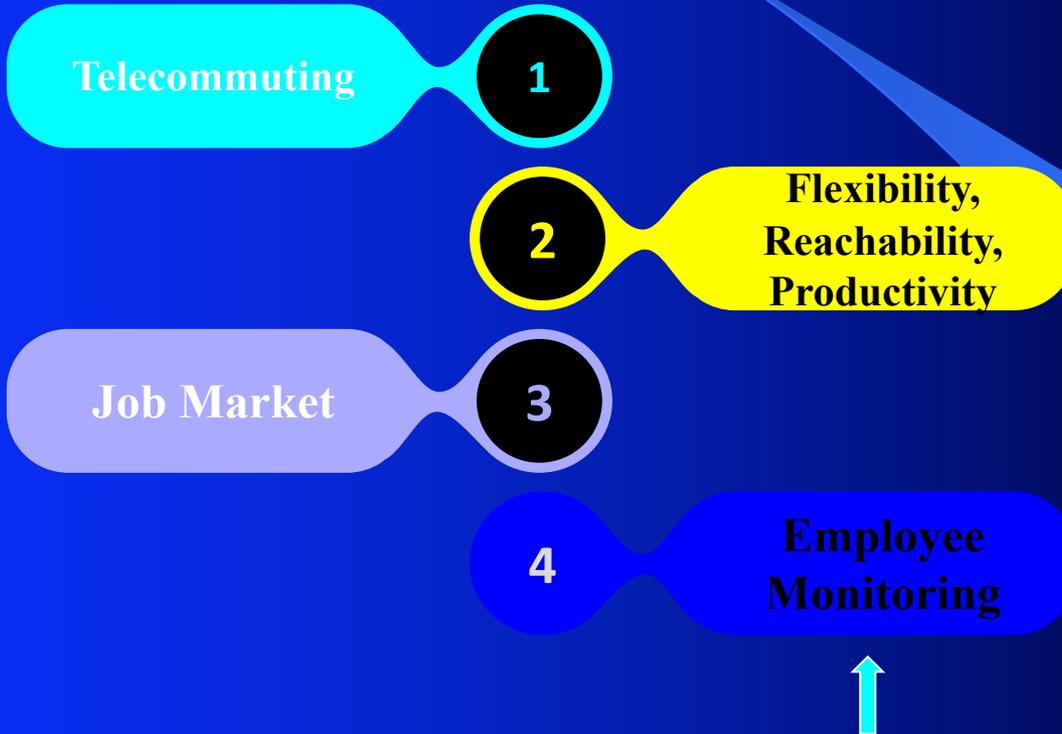
- Learning about jobs and companies
  - Online company histories and annual reports
  - Job search and resume sites (monster.ca)
  - Online training
- Learning about applicants and employees
  - Search online newsgroups and social networks
  - Legal advice from Monster
  - Prospective employees may craft an online profile and presence geared towards the job they want



**Information: Employee  
monitoring**

# Key Topics

EXAMPLE WITH 5 PARTS



# Cyberloafing

- Stats from large U.S. companies
- In 1 day
  - 50,000 YouTube videos
  - 4,000 hours of music
- In 1 month, 5M videos
- Percentage stats
- University students also cyberloaf
- See canvas survey “cyberloafing”

# Employee Monitoring

Monitoring is not new

- Early monitoring was mostly ‘blue-collar’ (factory) and ‘pink-collar’ (telephone and clerical) jobs
- Time-clocks and logs
- Output counts at the end of the day
- Bosses patrolled the aisles watching workers

# Modern Employee Monitoring

Data Entry, Phone Work, and Retail:

- Data entry
  - Key stroke quotas
  - Encourage competition
  - Beep when workers pause
- Phone work
  - Number and duration of calls
  - Idle time between calls
  - Randomly listen in on calls
- Retail
  - Surveillance to reduce theft by employees

# **Employee Monitoring Discussion Questions**

- How much privacy is reasonable for an employee to expect in the workplace?
- Under what circumstances is it appropriate for an employer to read an employee's e-mail?

# Employee Monitoring: E-mail

E-Mail, Voice Mail:

- E-mail and voice mail at work
  - Employees often assume passwords mean they are private
  - Roughly half of major companies in the U.S. monitor or search employee e-mail, voice mail, or computer files.
  - Most companies monitor infrequently, some routinely intercept all e-mail.
  - Over half have fired employees for e-mail/web use.
  - Microsoft: access private, password-protected folders on work computers.

# Employee Monitoring: Web use

- Some companies block specific sites (e.g. adult content, sports sites, job search sites, social-network sites)
- Employees spend time on non-work activities on the Web (cyberloafing)
- Concerns over security threats such as viruses and other malicious software
- Concerns about inappropriate activities by employees (e.g., harassment, unprofessional comment) - see [NYT article](#).

# Employee Monitoring: legal aspects

- Law and cases
  - Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) prohibits interception of e-mail and reading stored e-mail without a court order, but makes an exception for business systems
  - Courts put heavy weight on the fact that computers, mail, and phone systems are owned by the employer who provides them for business purposes

# Employee Monitoring: Labour Relations

- Courts have ruled against monitoring done for protected employee communications (US):
  - discussing working conditions
  - union activities
  - whistle blowing
- Many employers have privacy policies regarding e-mail and voice mail
- The [B.C. Labour Relations Board](#) sets rules and decides cases about worker-employer relations

# **Social Media Use By Employees**

- 1/3 of multinational companies took disciplinary action against employees for misuse of social media
- School district fired teacher for photo of her drinking in a bar
- Social services organization fired 5 employees for criticizing working conditions on Facebook
- Sheriff fired deputy for “liking” a Facebook campaign page by an election rival

# Conclusion

- Information technology increases flexibility, access, and monitoring
- Telecommuting: flexible work place
- Often flexible non-standard work hours on-line
- Employee monitoring: social media use, emails sent from company computers