

Is hyperconnectivity hurting our health?

Switching off from work is becoming more and more difficult in today's digital workplace.



© stokkete/stock.adobe.com

Does your normal workday feel endless? Do emails and texts from clients or colleagues make you anxious long after the day has ended? There's added pressure to work even during off hours. The borders between work and home are blurring, especially in a post-pandemic world.

A team of researchers at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom revealed that employees usually feel overwhelmed by technology and the need to constantly be

connected due to the demands of working online. The study was published in the journal [‘Frontiers in Organizational Psychology’](#) [↗](#).

Take a walk on the dark side of workplace tech

“[W]e have found in our research that there is a potential dark side to digital working, where employees can feel fatigue and strain due to being overburdened by the demands and intensity of the digital work environment,” explained Elizabeth Marsh, research assistant at the School of Psychology, in a [news release](#) [↗](#). “A sense of pressure to be constantly connected and keeping up with messages can make it hard to psychologically detach from work.”

The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with employees from different professions to understand ways in which their digital work environments influence well-being. They looked at possible underlying psychological, technological and organisational aspects that may affect how employees experience the job demands.

The participants were asked about their perceptions and experiences of digital workplace job demands and outcomes on their health. They disclosed their struggles

with continuously being available and emphasised the blurred boundaries between work and personal life.

Techno-strain

The results showed that these experiences were especially impacted by a state of connectivity in the digital workplace called hyperconnectivity. This led to stress, exhaustion and decreased work-life balance. According to the study, this hyperconnectivity has become the norm among workers in a world of remote and hybrid working practices.

Another major factor that contributed to employee stress was the fear of missing out on key information and contact with co-workers.

The study also provides several practical implications of the research, including helping employees boost their digital skills and empowering them to cope with boundaries in the digital workplace.

Marsh believes more needs to be done to ease the burden. “The findings underline the need for both researchers and professionals to identify, understand and mitigate the digital workplace job demands to protect the well-being of digital workers.”

Keywords

hyperconnectivity, work, workplace, employee, digital workplace, digital work, job, worker

Last update: 9 January 2025

Permalink: <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/455770-is-hyperconnectivity-hurting-our-health>

European Union, 2025