SLOAN WORK AND FAMILY RESEARCH NETWORK
BOSTON COLLEGE

Questions and Answers about Telework:
A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet

Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets which provide statistical answers to some important questions about work-family and work/life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about Telework.

How many employees are teleworking?

☑ **Fact 1** According to the U.S. Census Bureau: In 2001, 15% of employed persons worked from home at least once a week (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

☑ **Fact 2** More than 23 million U.S. workers telework on a part-time or full-time basis (Office of Personnel Management, 2004).

☑ **Fact 3** In April of 2001, 53,389 Federal employees were also teleworkers. In October 2001, that number jumped to 72,844, in October of 2002 there were 90,010, and in October 2003 there were 102,921 Federal employees who teleworked (Office of Personnel Management, 2004).

☑ **Fact 4** Over the past 15 years, the number of employees who telework has more than doubled (Office of Personnel Management, 2004).

☑ **Fact 5** "The number of telework-eligible and teleworking employees continues to grow. Seventy-four agencies with more than 1.7 million employees responded to the 2003 telework survey. The agencies reported a total of 751,844 employees (43%) are eligible to telework, compared with 625,313 employees (35%) in 2002. This represents a gain of more than 126,531 telework-eligible employees or a gain of more than 20%" (Office of Personnel Management, 2004).

☑ **Fact 6** "About 18 percent of all wage and salaried employees use a computer at home to read and send job-related email outside regular work hours" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 23).

☑ **Fact 7** "More than one third of employees (35%) sometimes use a computer at home for job-related work" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 22).

☑ **Fact 8**   In April 2001, 53,389 Federal employees were teleworkers. In October 2001, that number jumped to 72,844, in October of 2002 there were 90,010, and in October 2003 there were 102,921 Federal employees who teleworked (Figure 1) (Office of Personnel Management, 2004).

☑ **Fact 9**   Of more than 1200 Australians questioned, "...7.4% of the sample are seriously considering telecommuting but the majority 87% is not" (Brewer, 2000, p. 38).

☑ **Fact 10**   Of more than 1200 Australians questioned, 88% worked outside of the home (Brewer, 2000, p. 38).

❓ Who has access to telework?

☑ **Fact 1**   According to the National Study of the Changing Workforce: "Employees in managerial and professional occupations are much more likely (62%) than employees in other occupations (22%) to use a computer at home for job-related work" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 23).

☑ **Fact 2**   According to the U.S. Census Bureau: In 2001, the rate at which men and women worked from their homes at least once a week was approximately comparable,14.8% and 15.2% respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

☑ **Fact 3**   "Telework arrangements support employees who need a reasonable accommodation for a disability or have a temporary health problem. In 2002, there were 1,749 employees who fell into these two categories. In 2003 that number grew to 3,849 (an increase of more than 120%)" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002).

☑ **Fact 4**   Of the total U.S. population employed in 2001, 16.3% of White wage and salary workers were paid to work at home at least once a week as part of their primary job; in comparison 7.6% of Black employees and 6.7% of Hispanic employees were paid to work at home at least once a week as part of their primary job (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

☑ **Fact 5**   Of people employed in 2001, 29.8% of managerial and professional employees, 12.2% of technical, sales and administrative support employees, and 5.3% of service employees worked from home at least once a week (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

☑ **Fact 6**   Small business owners (23%) are more likely to sometimes work regular paid hours at home than either self-employed independents (15%) or wage and salaried employees (9%) (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 59).

☑ **Fact 7**   "The most common off-site workers are those who work in a variety of locations ("mobile workers", 12%) and those based at customer sites (12%). Together these two categories account for about half of all off-site workers" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 8).

☑ **Fact 8**   "Among all managers and professionals, 39 percent use a computer at home to read and send job-related email outside regular work hours versus only 8 percent of employees in other occupations" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 23).

☑ **Fact 9** "The vast majority of 25-to 34-year old women worked only partly at home, with just 4 percent reporting that they had worked exclusively from home" (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p.13).

❓ Which employers offer telework opportunities?

☑ **Fact 1** "Companies that have downsized in the past year (29 percent of the sample) are more likely to allow employees to work at home occasionally" (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. xv).

☑ **Fact 2** "Companies with more locations are more likely to provide...occasional work at home" (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. xv).

❓ What are the benefits to employees of telework?

☑ **Fact 1** "Employees in all work-from-home arrangements report less emotional and physical fatigue than on-site workers" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 25).

☑ **Fact 2** "Regular tele-workers (46%) are less likely to respond that they are drained at the end of a work day than are on-site workers (58%)" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 25).

☑ **Fact 3** "Remote workers (54%) and regular tele-workers (45%) are the most satisfied with their work arrangements; about half of them report they are 'very satisfied'" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 21).

☑ **Fact 4** "Telework arrangements support employees who need a reasonable accommodation for a disability or have a temporary health problem. In 2002, there were 1,749 employees who fell into these two categories. In 2003 that number grew to 3,849 (an increase of more than 120%)" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002).

❓ How does telecommuting affect business?

☑ **Fact 1** "Telecommuting reduces turnover by 20% on average, boosts productivity up to 22% and trims absenteeism by nearly 60%" (International Telework Association & Council, 2001).

☑ **Fact 2** "Regular tele-workers and remote workers report that 84% and 86% of their interactions with co-workers are about work-related issues..." (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 68).

❓ How does telecommuting affect home life?

☑ **Fact 1** "Most family members (83%) experience very little or no stress as a result of someone in the family working from home" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 28).

☑ **Fact 2** "Two-thirds of family members (of employees who regularly work from home) report a 'very positive' or 'somewhat positive' impact (of these work arrangements) on the family (65%)..." (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 27).

☑ **Fact 3** "Very few family members feel the employee's working at home has a negative impact on either the family (8%) or their relationship with the employee (9%)" (Richman, Noble, & Johnson, 2002, p. 27).

What are the barriers to telework?

☑ **Fact 1** "Job suitability is the most likely perceived barrier on telecommuting (73.2%), followed by facilities access (16.5%)" (Brewer, 2000, p. 39).

☑ **Fact 2** "Some 24.8% of respondents' organizations support flexitime compared to 14.5% (compressed work week) and 6.6% (telecommuting)" (Brewer, 2000, p. 38).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. You can find a topic page for **Research/Teaching** dedicated to Telework at:
   http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/academics.php (choose 'Telework' from the Topics List).

If you are interested in this topic from the **State Policy** or **Workplace Practice** perspective,
   a) go back to our home page www.bc.edu/wfnetwork/
   b) click on the appropriate user group
   c) and choose 'Telework' from the Topics List

2. Our database of academic literature contains the citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Telework. You can connect to this database at:
   http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-_0&local_base=BCL_WF

References

Bond, J.T., Thompson, C., Galinsky, E., & Prottas, D. (2002). *Highlights of the national study of the changing workforce.* New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"The NSCW surveys representative samples of the nation's workforce once every five years (1992, 1997, 2002). Sample sizes average 3,500, including both wage and salaried employees and self-employed workers" (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002, p. v).
Several of the questions in the National Study of the Changing Workforce were taken from or based upon questions in the Quality of Employment Survey (QES) conducted three times by the Department of Labor from 1969 to 1977. Although the NSCW is more comprehensive than the QES in addressing issues related to both work and personal life and has a stronger business perspective, having comparable data from over a 25 year period has provided a unique opportunity to look at trends over time. The 2002 NCSW uses 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce; dual earner couples, the role of technology in employees' lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002).

To read the Executive Summary or the press release, and to purchase the full report as a PDF E-product, please visit http://www.familiesandwork.org/announce/2002NSCW.html.

Brewer, A.M. (2000). Work design for flexible work scheduling: Barriers and gender implications. *Gender, Work and Organization, 7*(1), 33-44.

"The current analysis is based on information gained from the Commuter Questionnaire comprising five sections…The current study is based on data from Sections 2 and 4 of the questionnaire, from 1249 respondents (718 men and 531 women, all over the age of 18 with a personal income ranging from $3,000-$70,000, Australian dollars), (response rate of 89%). The questionnaires were delivered and collected from each household by interviewers…88% of the sample was in paid employment outside the home" (pp.37-38).

DiNatale, M., & Boraas, S. (2002). The labor force experience of women from "Generation X". *Monthly Labor Review, 125*(3), 3-15.

"Most of the data in this chapter were derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For more information regarding the Current Population Survey, see Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology, Bureau of Labor Statistics Technical Paper 63, March 2000." (p.15)

Galinsky, E., & Bond, J.T. (1998). Business work-life study: A sourcebook. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"The Families and Work Institute's 1998 Business Work-Life Study (BWLS) is one of the first and most comprehensive studies of how U.S. companies are responding to the work-life needs of the nation's changing workforce. Funded by Allstate Insurance Company, The Chase Manhattan Bank, The Commonwealth Fund, Freddie MacFoundation, Kaiser Permanente, and Travelers Foundation, the 1998 BWLS surveys a representative sample of 1,057 for-profit (84 percent of the sample) and not-for-profit companies (16 percent of the sample) with 100 or more employees. It was developed to complement the Families and Work Institute's 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW), which surveyed a representative sample of employees in the U.S. labor force" (The 1998 Business Work-Life Study Executive Summary, p. 1).
To read the Executive Summary or to purchase the full report, please visit, http://www.familiesandwork.org/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=9

International Telework Association & Council (2001, August). Telecommuting is a flop, so fix it already. *Ziff Davis Smart Business.* Washington, D.C: Author. Retrieved September 7, 2005 from, www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_zdzsb/is_200108/ai_ziff6725

The research survey was a random digit-dialed telephone survey and was conducted in August and September, 1999.
For more information on the results of the survey go to http://www.workingfromanywhere.org/news/1999_research_results.htm
For more information on the International Telework Association and Council go to www.workingfromanywhere.org

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Office of Personnel Management (2004, January). *The status of telework in the federal government 2004.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved September 7, 2005 from www.telework.gov/documents/tw_rpt04/ 2

Data were collected from seventy-four Federal agencies with more than 1.7 million employees. Though 77 agencies responded in 2002 and 74 responded in 2003, the two data sets are comparable with regard to the Federal population. Four small agencies, with a total of 18 teleworkers, reported in 2002, but not 2003. Two small agencies, with a total of 18 teleworkers, reported in 2003, but not 2002. Two larger agencies which had reported independently in 2003, reported as parts of parent organizations in 2003. The new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reported for the first time in 2003. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) reported separately in 2002, and as part of Commerce in 2003. Thus, changes from 2002-2003 can be used to evaluate overall progress of the Federal telework program. However, because 2003 was a year of transition, with many agencies moving all or part of their staffs into DHS, taking their teleworkers with them, caution must be used in evaluating the progress of specific agencies or comparing agencies with one another.
For description of data sources, see http://www.telework.gov/documents/tw_rpt04/status-results.asp#data
See http://www.telework.gov/documents/tw_rpt04/status-conclusion.asp for conclusions of the study.

Richman, A., Noble, K., & Johnson, A. (2002). *When the workplace is many places. The extent and nature of off-site work today.* Watertown, MA: WFD Consulting Inc.

This report, sponsored by the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care, studies off-site work in organizations with at least 500 employees. Findings are based on, "a nationally representative sample of 2057 adults who are either full-time employees of companies with 500 or more employees, or family members of employees" (p. 1).

Go to this website to download Executive Summary:
http://www.abcdependentcare.com/docs/ABC_Executive_Summary_final.pdf

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U.S. Census Bureau (2003). Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003, The National Data Book, Section 12, Labor Force, employment, and earnings, Table No. 605, Persons Doing Job-Related Work at Home: 2001. Washington DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

The chief source of these data is the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The sample includes employed full-time wage and salary workers 16 years old and over in the US. Excludes the self-employed. Data relate to the primary job.
For description of data sources, see http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/labor.pdf.
See http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/app3.pdf for limitations of data.