

Computing

Lesson 6: Remote Working

IT and the World of Work

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¹ Materials from the Teach Computing Curriculum created by the National Centre for Computing Education



Introduction

The following slides contain a transcript from an interview with a remote worker. Read this transcript carefully to discover what remote working might be like.



Remote worker transcript

Could you introduce yourself?

Hi, my name is Hannah and I am an occupational therapist, which means I assess the workplace to prevent work-related injury and /or illness. I also assess the mental health of individuals who may suffer from work-related stress, anxiety, and depression. I have now been working remotely for two and a half years.

Where do you carry out this work?

I work from home most of the time, unless I need to assess a physical workplace. I will visit the workplace if this is the case, to make an assessment of the environment and equipment use. I will also discuss training provided for employees who use machinery.



Remote worker transcript

What work do you carry out at home?

I mainly make telephone calls and write up case notes for my employer.

Who is your employer?

I work for the NHS. Doctors will refer patients to occupational health therapists to assess their situation. The referrals are assigned to different therapists depending on their location and proximity to the patient. I have a daily quota of patients to contact, which is directed by my employer. I then submit approximate times for the case to be completed. There is usually a fast turnover of cases, as there is high demand for occupational health services.



Remote worker transcript

Do you ever write up case notes when you are not at home?

Sometimes I do, if the place I have travelled to is some distance from my home.

Where would these places be?

If I have an hour or so's drive, I will sometimes stop off at a cafe to have something to eat, and if the traffic is bad I will make a start on my case notes if I have taken my notebook with me.



Remote worker transcript

What do you mean by notebook?

My notebook is like a small laptop and can connect to the internet, so I can access my work environment – not the paper and pen kind, although this is sometimes the way I start my notes.

Do you worry about the security of your data when working away from home?

I don't have to worry about this, because the notebook I have been provided with uses a VPN to access the internet. I have to use a password to get into that before I can access my files on the virtual platform we use, so I think it is pretty safe to use it once and a while when not at home. The NHS prefers us to carry out most of our work in the home, though.



Remote worker transcript

Where at home do you work?

I can pretty much work in any room at home, but I don't find this very productive so I have a small room set up as an office.

Why don't you find working anywhere at home productive?

I find that if I don't work from the home office, I can get distracted easily from what I need to do. For instance, if I am in my kitchen/diner I will often make a drink, have a snack, or look at housework I need to do rather than focus on the work.



Remote worker transcript

How different from the rest of your house is your office space?

It isn't much different; I have it decorated to my taste, which you can see all over my house. However, I have kept the furnishings simple and office-like. For example, I have a desk, shelves for storing files, a comfortable office chair, and a bin for discarded paper, sticky notes, etc.



Remote worker transcript

How easy is it to work from home?

To be honest, it took a little while to get used to it, as I was used to working in an office with three other people, which was useful as I could ask for their opinions about a case to support my decision-making and recommendations. I also miss the interaction with my colleagues, but do find I can get more done at home than I would if I were in the workplace.

I have got used to the discipline needed to work remotely. I have a lot more freedom to manage my time, which can be a little daunting at first.

The best bit is I don't have to travel daily, only when I need to visit a workplace, which means I save money on petrol and don't have the stress of a commute and rush-hour traffic.



Remote worker transcript

Is there anything you would recommend for a remote worker?

Oh yes. One of the most important things a remote worker needs to consider is dedicated work hours. Working remotely means you can be contacted at any time and on any day of the week, which can be stressful if you don't set strict work times and forget to switch off from it.

Also make a designated workspace that you can walk away from and perhaps close the door if possible.

Have a window close by if you are working at a computer for long periods at a time, and take screen breaks.

Make sure you sit correctly and if possible have a wrist support to prevent RSI (repetitive strain injury).



Remote worker transcript

Do you prefer working remotely?

Now that I have got used to it, I would say yes. The only thing I miss is having colleagues around, which I mentioned earlier, but I make an effort to stay in touch with my friends and family more now, which is a positive that came from working remotely.



Positive and negative



Introduction

The following slide contains a list of impacts of technology. You must decide if they are positive or negative impacts of technology.

Copy and complete the table.



Positive (P), Negative (N)

Impact	P / N
Technology is making us inactive; we need to move around less than we did before	
Technology enables us to be more confident because we can research information and check that it is reliable	
Technology can cause addictive behaviour, meaning that we have to check regularly for new notifications	
Games such as Minecraft foster problem-solving skills	
Technology allows for collaborative learning and working	
Technology can lead to inactivity and snacking	
Technology supports effective time management and can give notifications for break times	

