

Study examines stay-at-home worker productivity potential

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Working from home has become part of the so-called "new normal" for many people during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there has been a move underway towards increased telecommuting for many years.

Writing in the *Global Business and Economics Review* a research team from Portugal has set out to explore the potential of telecommuting in terms of productivity and quality of life gains, cost savings for workers and employers, and perhaps even environmental improvements through reduced transport pollution.

Commuting generates enormous economic, social, and environmental costs, although it has been the conventional approach to "going out to work" since the industrial revolution if not before. There are some benefits, of course, but largely these are often outweighed by infrastructure and transport requirements and ultimately increased use of energy and resources and an increase in pollution and carbon emissions. However, with a big shift to [online services](#) and the increased use of information technology in this so-called [digital age](#) many traditional jobs can readily be performed from the home at least some of the time if not the whole of the working week. Obviously, some jobs, such as construction and manual factory work, farming, and healthcare can rarely be reduced to the working from home paradigm.

Deveani Babu, Nelson Ramalho, and Pedro Falcao of the University Institute of Lisbon suggest that increasing the level of telecommuting across various sectors is entirely feasible. Moreover, given the global pandemic that emerged since the time of their review, it is likely that we will garner more evidence for the personal and societal benefits of this form of working. Our unwitting experiment caused by the pandemic might also offer insights into previously unknown problems with telecommuting too.

More information: Deveani Babu et al. Telecommuting potential analysis, *Global Business and Economics Review* (2020). [DOI: 10.1504/GBER.2020.108396](#)

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