



IMS LUXEMBOURG
Inspiring More Sustainability

A stylized illustration of a modern office environment. In the foreground, a person's hands are shown typing on a laptop. In the background, another person is looking at a computer monitor. The scene is composed of various shades of blue and teal, with a central circular graphic containing the title text.

FLOW

— THE GUIDE —

BALANCING YOUR DIGITAL
PRACTICES AT WORK

.....
LUXEMBOURG'S LEADING NETWORK FOR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY
.....

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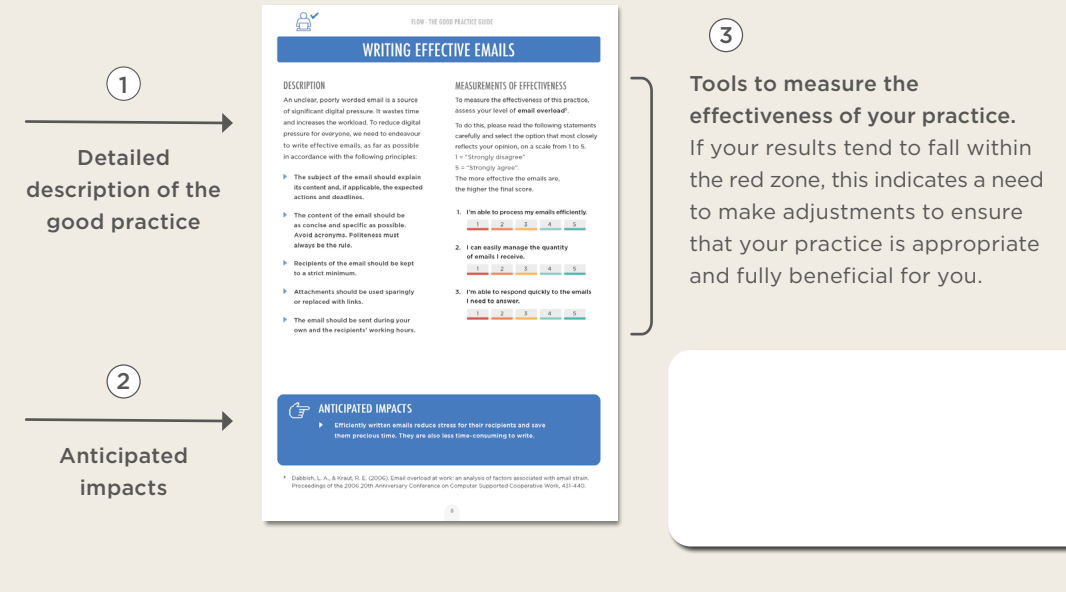
INTRODUCTION

This good practice guide is part of the Techwell project, which aims to promote mental health at work in a digital environment by responding to the challenges of hyperconnection, information overload and increased productivity requirements. It is supported by IMS Luxembourg and financed by Digital Luxembourg, the Chamber of Commerce of Luxembourg, the Luxembourg Chamber of Employees, the Ministry of State, the Ministry of Labour as well as the European Union and the European Social Fund.

Every day, 320 billion emails are exchanged worldwide¹, and this figure is growing every year. 70% of emails received are read within less than six seconds, and it takes more than a minute to return to pre-interruption productivity². As a result of this overload, working days are becoming longer, or at least increasingly taken up by processing information. The different communication tools are piling up, forming a kind of indigestible “millefeuille”³. So it’s hardly surprising that communications spill over outside the workplace, leading to a phenomenon known as “hyperconnection”. While some people favour this “always on-call” scenario – for the autonomy it seems to give them – it is generally detrimental to work-life balance and, more widely, well-being⁴. However, “technostress”, defined as stress caused by the excessive or inappropriate use of digital technologies, is not always inevitable. Organisational, managerial and individual solutions exist to deal with this issue and transform the digital experience into a more motivating and enjoyable adventure. This document outlines the main solutions.

The following pages consist of information sheets summarising a set of good practices, designed to be followed and applied in the suggested sequence, to promote digital well-being within organisations. The sheets are divided into two categories: individual practices and organisational practices.

Each sheet consists of 3 sections:



- 1 Radicati. (2021). Email statistics report, 2021-2025. The Radicati Group, Inc. <https://www.radicati.com/?p=17209>
- 2 Jackson, T. W., Dawson, R., & Wilson, D. (2001). The cost of email interruption. *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*, 5(1), 81-92.
- 3 Kalika, M., Boukef, N., & Isaac, H. (2007). La théorie du millefeuille et l'usage des TIC dans l'entreprise. [The millefeuille theory and use of ICT in business]. *Revue Française de Gestion*, 33(172), 117-129.
- 4 Stich, J.-F., Farley, S., Cooper, C. L., & Tarafdar, M. (2015). Information and communication technology demands: outcomes and interventions. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(4), 327- 345.

FLOW

—THE GUIDE—

BALANCING YOUR DIGITAL
PRACTICES AT WORK

This project is supported by:



Service des médias et des communications



1.

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES



WRITING EFFECTIVE EMAILS

DESCRIPTION

An unclear, poorly worded email is a source of significant digital pressure. It wastes time and increases the workload. To reduce digital pressure for everyone, we need to endeavour to write effective emails, as far as possible in accordance with the following principles:

- ▶ The subject of the email should explain its content and, if applicable, the expected actions and deadlines.
- ▶ The content of the email should be as concise and specific as possible. Avoid acronyms. Politeness must always be the rule.
- ▶ Recipients of the email should be kept to a strict minimum.
- ▶ Attachments should be used sparingly or replaced with links.
- ▶ The email should be sent during your own and the recipients' working hours.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **email overload**⁵.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

The more effective the emails are, the higher the final score.

1. I'm able to process my emails efficiently.



2. I can easily manage the quantity of emails I receive.



3. I'm able to respond quickly to the emails I need to answer.



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Efficiently written emails reduce stress for their recipients and save them precious time. They are also less time-consuming to write.

⁵ Dabbish, L. A., & Kraut, R. E. (2006). Email overload at work: an analysis of factors associated with email strain. Proceedings of the 2006 20th Anniversary Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, 431-440.



CHECKING EMAILS LESS FREQUENTLY

DESCRIPTION

The majority of employees react to an incoming email in less than six seconds, and then take more than a minute on average to return to their pre-interruption productivity. Fifty or so incoming emails each day therefore equates to over an hour of lost working time.

So it is good practice to reduce, as far as possible, the frequency at which you check your emails to minimise interruptions.

The optimum frequency is estimated at three email deliveries per day. Alternatively, you can block "push" notifications by putting your phone or mailbox on silent, or set aside specific times of the day and week to deal with all emails at once.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **digital pressure**⁶.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

1. I try to respond quickly to messages.



2. It's hard for me to concentrate on anything else when I receive a message.



3. I can only concentrate fully on my tasks once I've replied to my messages.



4. I can't stop thinking about a message until I've replied to it.



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Checking emails less often, when this is possible, reduces the number of interruptions during the day and therefore significantly increases productivity.

⁶ Barber, L. K., & Santuzzi, A. M. (2015). Please Respond ASAP: Workplace Telepressure and Employee Recovery. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 20(2), 172-189.



KEEPING ON TOP OF YOUR MAILBOX

DESCRIPTION

To cope with a constant flow of emails, recipients can develop strategies to manage them. This practice involves familiarising yourself with the following features and using them as much as possible:

- ▶ **Automatic filters** can be used to classify incoming emails according to predefined rules. They keep the inbox organised and make it easier to process emails.
- ▶ **Out of office messages and forwarding** should be set up in the event of absence to manage sender expectations.
- ▶ **Sorting, labelling and archiving features** keep the inbox tidy, especially if they are used rigorously during the day.
- ▶ **The task management features** (reminders, flags, special folders, etc.) help you to be more productive when using email.
- ▶ **Reducing checks and notifications as far as possible** helps to keep interruptions to a minimum.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

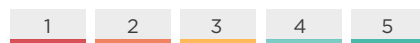
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **email overload**⁷.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

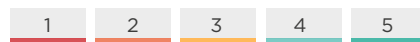
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

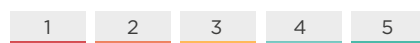
1. **I'm able to process my emails efficiently.**



2. **I can easily manage the quantity of emails I receive.**



3. **I'm able to respond quickly to the emails I need to answer.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ These mailbox management measures are designed to reduce information overload for users, particularly those who need to deal with large and continuous volumes of emails.

⁷ Dabbish, L. A., & Kraut, R. E. (2006). Email overload at work: an analysis of factors associated with email strain. Proceedings of the 2006 20th Anniversary Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, 431-440.



MAKING A POINT OF COMMUNICATING DURING WORKING HOURS

DESCRIPTION

In view of the difficulty of resisting incoming communications, it is essential that the person initiating the communication does so at an appropriate time. While it might sometimes be convenient to work in the evenings or at weekends, you need to make sure that messages are not sent at these times as this creates a risk of hyperconnection for your contacts.

A good practice is to delay the sending of messages as far as possible, for example, using the "postpone" feature available in most mailboxes to defer the delivery of an email until working hours. Although this is likely to cause messages to pile up on Monday morning, it is the lesser evil.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**⁸.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

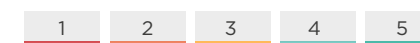
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

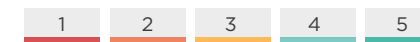
1. **I spend less time with my family because of digital tools.**



2. **I have to stay in touch with work even when on holiday because of digital tools.**



3. **I have the impression that my personal life is invaded by digital tools.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Keeping communications within your working hours and those of your contacts helps to reduce hyperconnection for everyone within the organisation.

⁸ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. Information Systems Research, 19(4), 417-433.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT DIGITAL TOOLS

DESCRIPTION

Email is so widespread in organisations that it is often used indiscriminately to communicate when other digital tools might have been more appropriate. This “default” email culture leads to overload and interruptions.

So before sending an email, you need to ask yourself the right questions:

▶ **Is email the most appropriate digital tool?**

So-called emotional (e.g. realignment) and complex communications are more appropriate face-to-face. Documents can be transmitted more efficiently on intranets or cloud services.

- ▶ **What digital tool would the recipient prefer me to use for our interactions?** Some people will prefer a phone call, while others will prefer email. Showing empathy by using your contacts’ preferred tools for communications helps to significantly reduce their digital pressure.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

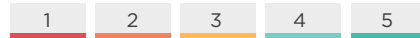
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your **default level of email usage**⁹.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

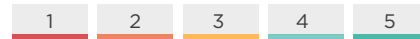
1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

1. **My colleagues don’t know which communication method I prefer to use.**



2. **My colleagues communicate with me by email when they could use another means of communication (for example, speaking to me in person or a phone call).**



3. **My colleagues send me documents by email when they could use another document-sharing application (e.g. SharePoint, portal, ERP, Skype for Business).**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Choosing the right digital tools to communicate helps to reduce digital pressure and information overload for your contacts.

⁹ Tarafdar, M., Wenninger, H., & Stich, J.-F. (2023). Email Overload: Investigating Technology-fit Antecedents and Job-related Outcomes. The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems, 54(2), 77-96.



TAKING TIME OUT TO DISCONNECT

DESCRIPTION

Hyperconnection undermines work-life balance and disrupts working days with interruptions. This is why it’s essential to allow yourself time to disconnect at critical moments of the day, for example, during meetings or outside working hours.

An effective way to do this is to switch your digital tools to silent (“do not disturb”). Productivity apps such as Pomodoro can be used to maximise concentration and disconnection over specified periods.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **digital pressure**¹⁰.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

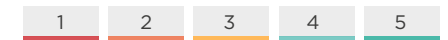
1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

1. **I try to respond quickly to messages.**



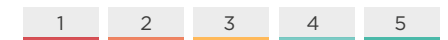
2. **It’s hard for me to concentrate on anything else when I receive a message.**



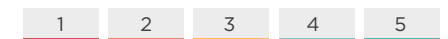
3. **I can only concentrate fully on my tasks once I’ve replied to my messages.**



4. **I can’t stop thinking about a message until I’ve replied to it.**



5. **I often feel the need to reply to messages as soon as I receive them.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Reducing hyperconnection and digital pressure helps to increase both well-being and productivity. Multitasking can adversely affect many people and their productivity due to the associated interruptions.

¹⁰ Barber, L. K., & Santuzzi, A. M. (2015). Please Respond ASAP: Workplace Telepressure and Employee Recovery. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 20(2), 172-189.



SUPPORTING YOUR TEAM'S DIGITAL BALANCE

DESCRIPTION

Managers are best placed to assess their employees' work-life balance. They also implicitly set the standards for communication and digital pressure within the team. They therefore play a crucial role in reducing digital pressure. To fully assume this role, you need to show empathy, to the extent possible in the work situation. An accommodating approach towards family and personal needs helps to counterbalance the negative effects of hyperconnection. It is therefore important to develop this empathy by asking employees about their expectations and needs in terms of balance, for example, during the annual interview, but also on a more regular basis.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

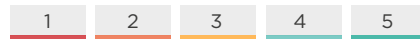
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **managerial support for work-life balance**¹¹.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

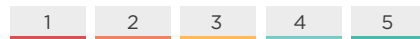
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

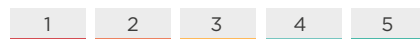
1. **In general, the managers in my organisation are fairly accommodating when it comes to family-related needs.**



2. **Senior management in my organisation encourages managers to be sensitive to employees' family and personal concerns.**



3. **In my organisation, employees are encouraged to find a balance between work and family life.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Managerial support for work-life balance aims to offset the risk of hyperconnection.

¹¹ Thompson, C. A., Beauvais, L. L., & Lyness, K. S. (1999). When Work-Family Benefits Are Not Enough: The Influence of Work-Family Culture on Benefit Utilization, Organizational Attachment, and Work-Family Conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54(3), 392-415.



TAKING THE TIME TO REPLY TO EMAILS

DESCRIPTION

Unlike postal mail, which arrives just once a day, email arrives in a continuous stream. Responding in a hurry can lead to conflict and misunderstanding. As far as possible, we therefore need to slow down the speed of email.

As email is asynchronous, it is acceptable not to reply immediately. It's best to take the time to write an understandable, short and courteous message. If the email is received outside working hours, the deferred sending option can be used to ensure that your reply is sent during working hours, to avoid exacerbating the hyperconnection. It is then preferable to take the time to think about the list of recipients, rather than selecting "reply all" or copying too many people. Finally, you should ask yourself whether it would be more appropriate to reply to the email with another email or to change the communication method, by switching to verbal communication, for example.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

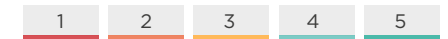
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **digital pressure**¹².

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

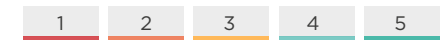
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

1. **I try to respond quickly to messages.**



2. **It's hard for me to concentrate on anything else when I receive a message.**



3. **I can only concentrate fully on my tasks once I've replied to my messages.**



4. **I can't stop thinking about a message until I've replied to it.**



5. **I often feel the need to reply to messages as soon as I receive them.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Somewhat slowing down the speed of email helps to reduce interruptions and hyperconnection, while encouraging other communication methods that are more appropriate in terms of immediacy.

¹² Barber, L. K., & Santuzzi, A. M. (2015). Please Respond ASAP: Workplace Telepressure and Employee Recovery. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 20(2), 172-189.



DESIGNATING CONTACTS IN THE EVENT OF ABSENCE

DESCRIPTION

Being contacted outside your working hours and while on leave is synonymous with hyperconnection. However, there will be times when work requires an immediate response. In this case, you should identify “back-up” contacts, i.e., colleagues who would be capable of dealing with files and customers during your absence. You can, for example, draw up a matrix of critical tasks for which a back-up contact is required.

Automatic messages can then be set up to forward requests to these back-up contacts in the event of your absence. Ticket management tools can also be used to automatically redirect messages.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**¹³.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

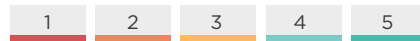
1. I spend less time with my family because of digital tools.



2. I have to stay in touch with work even when on holiday because of digital tools.



3. I have the impression that my personal life is being invaded by digital tools.



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

▶ This good practice aims to reduce hyperconnection and digital pressure.

¹³ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. Information Systems Research, 19(4), 417-433.

2. ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES



TRAINING IN THE USE OF EMAIL

DESCRIPTION

Email is the most widely used digital tool, yet few people are properly trained in its use. To reduce technostress, it is therefore essential to offer employees training in using and writing emails. This training could include the following content:

1. **Demonstration of basic and advanced features**
2. **Presentation and analysis of problematic emails (spam, contradictions, rudeness)**
3. **Simulation aimed at managing problematic emails (sorting, analysing, replying)**
4. **Collective drafting of email usage charters to take away and distribute**
5. **Final discussion and feedback.**

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess **the volume of emails exchanged between employees** (objective measure), and also **survey employees using items from the email overload instrument**¹⁴.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

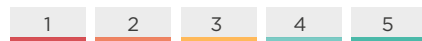
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

1. **I'm able to process my emails efficiently.**



2. **I can easily manage the quantity of emails I receive.**



3. **I'm able to respond quickly to the emails I need to answer.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Employees who have been trained in the use of email are less stressed and have less impact on the stress of their recipients. Knowing how to send concise, precise emails to a justifiable number of recipients reduces the collective level of digital overload. Knowing how to manage your inbox (sorting, archiving, setting the frequency of checks, etc.) also helps to reduce your own level of digital overload. The greater the volume of emails learners have to deal with, the more positive the impact of this training will be for them.

¹⁴ Dabbish, L. A., & Kraut, R. E. (2006). Email overload at work: an analysis of factors associated with email strain. Proceedings of the 2006 20th Anniversary Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, 431-440.



TEACHING CIVILITY AND DIGITAL RESPECT

DESCRIPTION

Digital pressure sometimes results in communications that are detrimental to civility and respect. Rapid exchanges can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. All employees must therefore be made aware of the essential rules relating to the use of digital tools. Training in the use of email (discussed on page 18) addresses some of these issues. Similar training can be offered for other digital tools such as instant messaging. Workshops on empathy and intercultural communication can be useful too. There are also workshops on civility and respect, for example, CREW (Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace). Finally, the organisation's IT charters can include a section on civility and cyberbullying.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

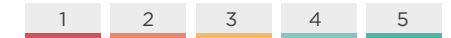
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **cyberbullying**¹⁵.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

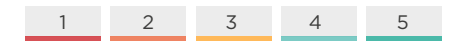
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

1. **I've received messages with a negative tone.**



2. **I've received aggressively formulated messages (e.g. using capital letters, bold type or multiple exclamation marks).**



3. **I've been the subject of communications that discredit me.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ These good practices are designed to reduce the stress and conflicts associated with inappropriate communications.

¹⁵ Farley, S., Coyne, I., Axtell, C., & Sprigg, C. (2016). Design, development and validation of a workplace cyberbullying measure, the WCM. Work & Stress, 30(4), 293-317.



OFFERING APPROPRIATE DIGITAL TOOLS

DESCRIPTION

Email is so widespread in organisations that it is often used indiscriminately to communicate when other digital tools might have been more appropriate. This “default” email culture leads to overload and interruptions. It is best to ensure that a variety of tools are offered, but most importantly, to make sure that the usage of these tools is clearly explained.

For each tool, training and a list of specially adapted tasks can be offered. For example, instant messaging may be preferable to email for short, urgent messages, while the intranet may be preferable to email for top-down informative communications. Files should be shared on dedicated systems to relieve mailboxes and support workflows in the event of employee absences.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

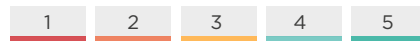
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess the extent to which **digital tools match your professional needs**¹⁶.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

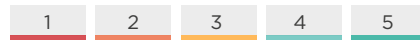
- 1. My organisation provides me with digital tools that are useful for communicating with my colleagues.



- 2. My organisation provides me with digital tools that are useful for my work.



- 3. My organisation provides me with a satisfactory range of digital tools for communicating with my colleagues.



- 4. My organisation is flexible when it comes to the digital tools I can or can't use.



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Providing the right digital tools to communicate helps to reduce digital pressure and information overload for employees.

¹⁶ Tarafdar, M., Wenninger, H., & Stich, J.-F. (2023). Email Overload: Investigating Technology-fit Antecedents and Job-related Outcomes. The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems, 54(2), 77-96.



PROVIDING A PROFESSIONAL SMARTPHONE

DESCRIPTION

When work-related messages and calls are received on a personal smartphone, it becomes even harder to resist incoming notifications and communications. Configuring parameters for checks and disconnection times is complex and generally ignored. This creates a real risk of conflict between personal and working life.

It is therefore advisable to offer employees a separate smartphone for their business communications. This smartphone can also be secured if required. The dedicated telephone number can also be used, for example, to prevent WhatsApp threads between colleagues (which can be created spontaneously) being mixed up with private threads.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**¹⁷.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

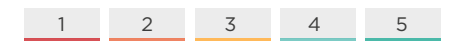
1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

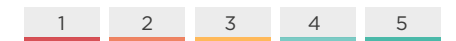
- 1. I spend less time with my family because of digital tools.



- 2. I have to stay in touch with work even when on holiday because of digital tools.



- 3. I have the impression that my personal life is being invaded by digital tools.



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ The availability of a work smartphone makes it possible to separate personal and professional communications, and therefore to promote a better work-life balance.

¹⁷ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. Information Systems Research, 19(4), 417-433.

DRAWING UP A CHARTER ON THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT

DESCRIPTION

The principle of the right to disconnect is now established in many countries, including Luxembourg and France. It is therefore advisable to draw up a charter setting out the practical and technical procedures for disconnection. All the good practices set out in this guide could be appropriate for this charter - as some reduce hyperconnection directly and others indirectly (for example by reducing interruptions or digital overload). As with this good practice guide, the charter can include both the protective measures implemented by the organisation (e.g., training, awareness-raising) and the commitments made by employees to contribute, at their own level, to establishing a culture of the right to disconnect. Finally, as far as possible, we should seek to encourage a “right” to disconnect rather than making this a “duty”, as this could sometimes create difficulties for employees. In addition to this charter on the right to disconnect, which applies to all employees, it is a good idea to establish clear, shared rules of communication within each team.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**¹⁸.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

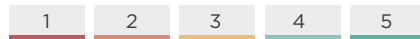
1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

1. **I spend less time with my family because of digital tools.**



2. **I have to stay in touch with work even when on holiday because of digital tools.**



3. **I have the impression that my personal life is being invaded by digital tools.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ A well-designed charter on the right to disconnect should help to reduce hyperconnection as well as overload and interruptions. The impact is both psychological (for employees) and economic (for the organisation).

¹⁸ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417-433.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE RISKS OF HYPERCONNECTION

DESCRIPTION

Hyperconnection is sometimes not perceived as a problem, and in some cases it is even portrayed as desirable for the sake of “professionalism”. But it is not without risk. Employees therefore need to be made aware of the associated risks, for example, through workshops dealing with this subject or communications on the intranet. Good practices from this guide can be used in targeted communications.

This awareness-raising must be aimed primarily at managers, who are both the main victims and the main culprits of hyperconnection. Managers have a duty to set an example because their own practices implicitly create norms of hyperconnection.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**¹⁹.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

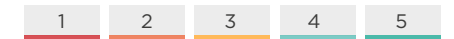
1 = “Strongly disagree”

5 = “Strongly agree”.

1. **I spend less time with my family because of digital tools.**



2. **I have to stay in touch with work even when on holiday because of digital tools.**



3. **I have the impression that my personal life is being invaded by digital tools.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Raising awareness of the dangers of hyperconnection is the key to reducing it. It involves making disconnection desirable.

¹⁹ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417-433.



OFFERING DISCUSSION GROUPS ON HYPERCONNECTION

DESCRIPTION

It's not easy for employees to realise the risks of hyperconnection and the available solutions. Hyperconnection often takes place outside working hours, during family life, and this phenomenon can therefore be something that is experienced in isolation. The discussion groups raise awareness of the fact that other employees are dealing with the same problems. In cases where charters on the right to disconnect are not available or are insufficiently applied, employees find their own solutions. Discussion groups can be used to discuss the problems as well as tips for resolving them. Their content must remain confidential and participants must undertake to respect this confidentiality.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

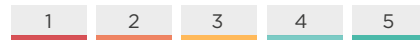
To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**²⁰.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

1. **I spend less time with my family because of digital tools.**



2. **I have to stay in touch with work even when on holiday because of digital tools.**



3. **I have the impression that my personal life is being invaded by digital tools.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Discussion groups on hyperconnection can help to overcome isolation and reduce hyperconnection, and therefore conflicts between personal and working life.

²⁰ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417-433.



DESIGNING APPROPRIATE DIGITAL TOOLS

DESCRIPTION

If your organisation offers its employees personalised digital tools or digital tools developed inhouse, it is essential to ensure that their design minimises the risks of technostress and digital pressure. A tool designed to limit technostress is a simple, reliable, **UX-designed*** tool offering clear, prioritised information and integrated user support (e.g., with help menus, documentation and helpdesks). Positive feedback loops further protect users from technostress.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**²¹.

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

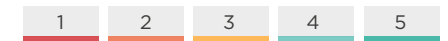
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

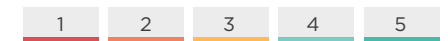
1. **I don't have sufficient command of digital tools to manage my work satisfactorily.**



2. **I can't find enough time to study and improve my skills in using digital tools.**



3. **I often find it too complex to understand and use digital tools.**



* UX design (User Experience Design) involves making a website, app or service easier, more enjoyable and more effective to use.



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Good design of digital tools can reduce technostress and therefore the overload associated with these tools.

²¹ Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417-433.



REGULARLY MEASURING TECHNOSTRESS LEVELS

DESCRIPTION

Technostress (stress generated by the use of digital tools) is harmful to both employees (psychosocial risks) and the organisation (loss of productivity). Measuring this stress regularly ensures it remains under control. The measurement can also be benchmarked between departments or teams to check that no department or team is particularly at risk of technostress.

Simplified measurement items are shown opposite. For a more comprehensive measurement, considering the five dimensions of technostress (overload, invasion, complexity, insecurity and uncertainty), it may be preferable to use the complete instrument available in the article at the bottom of the page.

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of this practice, assess your level of **technostress**²².

To do this, please read the following statements carefully and select the option that most closely reflects your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 5.

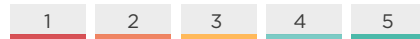
1 = "Strongly disagree"

5 = "Strongly agree".

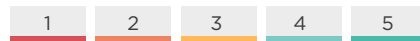
1. **Digital tools force me to do more work than I can handle.**



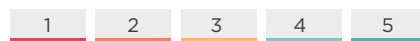
2. **I have the impression that my personal life is invaded by digital tools.**



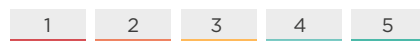
3. **I often find it too complex to understand and use digital tools.**



4. **I have to constantly update my digital skills to avoid being replaced.**



5. **There are always new developments in the digital tools we use in my company.**



ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

- ▶ Measuring technostress allows potential problems to be identified and corrected.

²² Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Qiang Tu. (2008). The Consequences of Technostress for End Users in Organizations: Conceptual Development and Empirical Validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417-433.

▶ FIND OUT MORE / BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES

▶ Writing effective emails (page 8)

Byron, K. (2008). Carrying Too Heavy a Load? The Communication and Miscommunication of Emotion by Email. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(2), 309-327.

- *This academic article explores in detail the issue of communication and the decoding of emotions in email exchanges.*

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Kushlev, K., & Dunn, E. W. (2015). Checking email less frequently reduces stress. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, 220-228.

- *This academic paper examines the effectiveness of restricting checks to three times a day.*

▶ Keeping on top of your email inbox (page 10)

Russell, E., Jackson, T. W., Fullman, M., & Chamakiotis, P. (2023). Getting on top of work email: A systematic review of 25 years of research to understand effective work email activity. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

- *This academic article takes a very comprehensive look at email management strategies.*

▶ Making a point of communicating during working hours (page 11)

Stich, J.-F., Farley, S., Cooper, C. L., & Tarafdar, M. (2015). Information & communication technology demands: outcomes and interventions. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(4), 327-345.

- *This academic paper examines the effectiveness of limiting checks to three times a day.*

▶ Choosing the right digital tools (page 12)

Tarafdar, M., Wenninger, H., & Stich, J.-F. (2023). Email Overload: Investigating Technology-fit Antecedents and Job-related Outcomes. *The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*, 54(2), 77-96.

- *This academic article takes a very comprehensive look at email management strategies.*

▶ Taking time out to disconnect (page 13)

Li, H., Gupta, A., Luo, X., & Warkentin, M. (2011). Exploring the impact of instant messaging on subjective task complexity and user satisfaction. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 20(2), 139-155.

- *This academic article looks at the impact of interruptions on single- and multi-tasking employees.*

▶ Supporting your team's digital balance (page 14)

Thompson, C. A., Beauvais, L. L., & Lyness, K. S. (1999). When Work-Family Benefits Are Not Enough: The Influence of Work-Family Culture on Benefit Utilization, Organizational Attachment, and Work-Family Conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54(3), 392-415.

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Barber, L. K., & Santuzzi, A. M. (2015). Please Respond ASAP: Workplace Telepressure and Employee Recovery. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 20(2), 172-189.

- *This academic article looks at the risks posed by the pressure to respond immediately to incoming messages.*

▶ Designating contacts in the event of absence (page 16)

Mazmanian, M. (2013). Avoiding the Trap of Constant Connectivity: When Congruent Frames Allow for Heterogeneous Practices. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(5), 1225-1250.

- *This academic article looks at the risks posed by the pressure to respond immediately to incoming messages.*

▶ FIND OUT MORE / BIBLIOGRAPHY

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▶ Training in the use of email (page 18)

Soucek, R., & Moser, K. (2010). Coping with information overload in email communication: Evaluation of a training intervention. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(6), 1458-1466.

- *This academic paper presents a training programme and evaluates its effectiveness.*

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West, B., Foster, M., Levin, A., Edmison, J., & Robibero, D. (2014). Cyberbullying at work: In search of effective guidance. *Laws*, 3(3), 598-617.

- *This academic article suggests practical ways of combating cyberbullying in the workplace.*

▶ Offering appropriate digital tools (page 20)

Tarafdar, M., Wenninger, H., & Stich, J.-F. (2023). Email Overload: Investigating Technology-fit Antecedents and Job-related Outcomes. *The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*, 54(2), 77-96.

- *This academic paper presents a training programme and evaluates its effectiveness.*

▶ Providing a professional smartphone (page 21)

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- *This article looks at the risks associated with using smartphones for work.*

▶ Drawing up a charter on the right to disconnect (page 22)

Stich, J.-F., Farley, S., Cooper, C. L., & Tarafdar, M. (2015). Information and communication technology demands: outcomes and interventions. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(4), 327-345.

- *This article looks at the risks of hyperconnection and therefore the need to offer employees ways of disconnecting.*

▶ Raising awareness of the risks of hyperconnection (page 23)

Cavazotte, F., Heloisa Lemos, A., & Villadsen, K. (2014). Corporate smart phones: professionals' conscious engagement in escalating work connectivity. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 29(1), 72-87.

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▶ Designing appropriate digital tools (page 25)

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- *This academic article suggests approaches for reducing technostress.*

▶ Regularly measuring technostress levels (page 26)

Tarafdar, M., Cooper, C. L., & Stich, J.-F. (2019). The technostress trifecta techno eustress, techno distress and design: An agenda for research. *Information Systems Journal*, 29(1), 6-42.

- *This academic article looks in detail at the phenomenon of technostress.*

FLOW

— THE GUIDE —

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