8 From *Paperless Offices* to *Peopleless Offices*: The Effects of Enforced ICT Usage During Covid-19 Lockdowns on Workplace Information Practices

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Introduction

Information and communication technology, ICT, has been a major driver of the development of how we have worked for decades. In the early 1980s, Alvin Toffler (1980) coined the notion of *paperless offices* as part of envisioning future workplaces because of the development of personal computers. White-collar workers would be conducting their duties from distributed *electronic cottages* detached from workplace offices. Toffler is perhaps the most well-known workplace futurist, but was certainly not the first, to anticipate a movement away from office buildings. Ten years earlier, Martin and Norman (1970, in Forrester, 1988, p. 227) predicted that a "time will come when the computer terminal is a natural adjunct to daily living" and that "in the future some companies may have almost no offices". There are probably several similar ideas in the previous literature, and often those idealist views were criticized heavily and deemed un-realistic. Among the sceptics, Forrester (1988) writes in response to Toffler's ideas that "[n]obody who has ever worked full-time at home for any length of time could possibly take seriously a statement which over-looks so many practical and psychological problems". In addition to technological infrastructure, several areas of concern in work being carried out from home have been recognized, such as psychological factors related to self-management (e.g., Atkinson, 1985) and relational and material household conditions (e.g., Atkinson, 1985; Forrester, 1988). Jackson and Van der Wielen (1998) conclude that work in virtual environments re-quires a revision of the social dimension of working to form "a sense of shared enterprise" (p. 340). They emphasize that it is not only a matter of new technologies, but also a social reform involving new attitudes and behaviors, and, consequently, "a wider understanding of issues and work dynamics is required" (Jackson & Van der Wielen, 1998, p. 340).

During the past two decades, the development of workplace information systems and the devices supporting remote access to them has been im-mense, and in many countries, including the Nordic ones, the technological

infrastructure and use of mobile devices are an inseparable part of everyday life, at work and at home. However, the office building has remained the totemic place of work for white-collar workers. In March 2020, many of these offices were temporarily closed as part of the effort to hinder the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in societies around the world. Consequently, many white-collar workers initiated a period of remote work that was labelled as an "enforced working from home" by Waizenegger and colleagues (2020). These digital workplaces differed from remote working in the past because this time the entire workforce carried out their duties from somewhere other than their ordinary office spaces. Remote work and remote workers turned from being a complement to the work taking place in company offices, to becoming the new standard in how work is done, making the people working in the office a minority. Studies thereafter have confirmed that the technological infrastructure has proved to have good functionality and that ICT solutions have made it possible for white-collar workers in many countries to fulfil their work duties remotely from home (e.g., Barrero et al., 2021). Whereas the technological development required for fully digital workplaces has been aptly gearing up, it is within the other modalities of work, the social, material and organizational dimensions, where the development has been slower. This is because of either greater resistance to change or underdeveloped alternatives to support "a sense of shared enterprise" (Jackson & Van der Wielen, 1998, p. 340) outside the walls of office buildings. Nevertheless, recent studies indicate that remote work will increase in the future after the experience gained during the Covid-19 pandemic (Barrero et al., 2021).

In this chapter, the focus will be on the effects of the prolonged, temporary all-digital workplace on the development of information practices. A digital workplace is facilitated and enabled by ICT tools and their related infrastructure, and it is independent of any physical framing, such as an office building. A workplace may be considered a digital one when the majority of the workforce is carrying out their work in digitally shared settings instead of physical ones (cf. Byström et al., 2019). Thus, many workplaces became fully digital when the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced, and white-collar workers were given the directive to work from their homes.

Information practices consist of shared understandings and established ways of acting related to needs, management, and uses of the information. They comprise a diversity of mundane activities—tangible and tacit—to handle information and knowledge, such as locating, gathering, sorting, interpreting, valuing, assimilating, producing, and communicating, and cover the epistemological, social, and embodied modalities of information (cf. Lloyd, 2010). During the enforced work-from-home period, some information practices remained the same, whereas others were disrupted completely; a transformation supported by ICT tools primarily accessed from laptops, the portable microcomputers, occurred.

The overall aim is to investigate how and why information practices were affected during the prolonged period of working from home (WFH). Whereas the information practice is seen as an analytical construct emphasizing a conglomeration of social activity, it is the experiences of the actual information exchanges taking place that form the empirical data in this study of everyday WFH. The research questions to be answered are as follows:

1   How have attitudes toward ICT changed during the enforced WFH?
2   How has the use of ICT changed during the enforced WFH?
3   What consequences do these changes imply for information practices at work?

The research questions will be considered from the information perspective, meaning that the examination will be based on the theoretical ideas and conceptual frameworks that either originate from or are revised to adapt to interests within information studies. This means that the purely psychological, social, and organizational examinations fall outside the limits of this analysis.

Previous empirical research

Prior to 2020, virtually no research exists on fully digital workplaces, that is, when the entire workforce primarily works in a digital environment with only limited, if any, connection to the physical workplace (cf. Byström et al., 2017, 2019). The present conditions are fundamentally different from those addressed in the pre-Covid-19 research on remote workers that was carried out beginning in the 1980s. In their seminal review paper on remote work studies, Olson and Olson (2000) found that common ground, independent work tasks, proper skills for collaboration, and the use of collaboration technology were all necessary conditions for successful remote work. They concluded that "[d]eviations from each of these create strain on the re-lationships among teammates and require changes in the work or processes of collaboration to succeed. Often they do not succeed because distance still matters" (Olson & Olson, 2000, p. 141). Remote work has typically been studied as a (minor) supplement to working in the office; either in the context of virtual teams (e.g., Gilson et al., 2015; Acharya, 2018) or con-centrating on work tasks performed independently and requiring con-centration (e.g., Messenger & Gschwind, 2016). These more recent research findings imply a more positive view of remote work. For instance, Olaisen and Revang (2017) found that trust and knowledge sharing can be achieved even when co-working in fully virtual settings, in particular when co-operators have both experience and expertise in their task, and have frequent, long-term contacts with each other. Another strand of research focuses on the group of remote workers—often referred to as digital

nomads, crowd workers, or gig workers—who are completely detached from a traditional physical workplace. They are described as being mobile, technologically savvy, and entrepreneurial, and were found to have developed their "personal knowledge ecologies" to facilitate their autonomous work (e.g., Jarrahi et al., 2019). Erickson and colleagues (2019) identified the concept of flexibility as a central characteristic for these generally individualistic remote workers, and they forecast that commonalities based on work domain or role become less important in knowledge work. However, the above-mentioned earlier research has focused on only a small proportion of work and the workforce, as only around 5% worked more than three days a week remotely in the United States in 2019 (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020), compared with all work carried out in regular offices.

Currently, research on the consequences of the nearly two years of almost continuous, enforced WFH has exploded in the form of surveys and case studies that report on adjustments to the new working conditions and the rapid adoption of digital technologies. A minor part of these studies has particularly focused on coping with information and knowledge sharing at work. Their findings indicate that workers already from the start had access to a rich amount of digital information supporting their everyday work tasks, whereas other information flows changed gradually. Creative work has continued through contact among teammates (Tønnesen et al., 2021) but "siloed" the labor (Yang et al., 2022). Ad-hoc everyday problems have found new outlets on digital platforms (Lin & Hwang, 2021). Formal information flows have become more inclusive and transparent (Lee et al., 2020) and, at the start of the period, asynchronous communication increased (Yang et al., 2022). Leonardi (2020) uses the expression digital exhaust to describe this accentuated digitalization of work and, along with Tredinnick and Laybats (2021), calls for research on the long-lasting consequences of blended workplaces that combine physical and virtual work environments, allowing hybrid modes of work.

The extraordinary measures broke, at least temporarily, the over-200-year-old hegemony of work offices since the Industrial Revolution, and simultaneously contested the existing work practices and amplified the role of ICT in carrying out work. Understanding the changes in work practices connects to socio-technical research traditions of interconnecting people and technology with each other and their context, highlighting "the social aspects of computerization" (Kling, 2007, p. 205) as part of the organization of social practices in general (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014) and Lloyd's (2010) information landscapes in particular. Such landscapes are arranged around sociocultural contexts that consist of three intertwined facets of information: epistemic/instrumental (objective, factual and reproducible information), social (unwritten norms and conventions), and corporeal modality (sensations and embodied performances).

In line with this research approach, Taylor (1991) developed Information Use Environments (IUE) as a formation of a defined set of people, their

socio-material setting, and the essence of their central problems and typical resolutions, which all are reflected in the use of information resources. Byström et al. (2019) further developed these ideas to accommodate multiple IUE in their Workplace Information Environment (WIE) model. The WIE model focuses on information use as a development over time in relationships between the four original segments of IUE: sets of people, tasks and duties, settings, and legitimized resolutions in the workplace. In a workplace where many different professions interact, the needs, relevance, and uses of information and knowledge are framed by the traditions and values of each professional group (cf. Lloyd, 2010), but are also shared in settings populated by several professions organized in multiple, sometimes professionally mixed, work teams with their specific tasks and duties, as well as material and cultural preconditions (cf. Choo, 2016). Each set of people has duties and work tasks that relate to their specific responsibilities, sometimes coinciding, but oftentimes leading to different needs and uses of information from those of other groups in the work organization. Most work tasks and duties relate to resolutions that are known, not in detail but in general terms; the tasks, duties, and resolutions are legitimized and shared in social interactions, formally or informally, within the set of people, and often also acknowledged by outsiders. Finally, the local settings differentiate the prerequisites for working as its material and cultural context; available tools, regulations, and traditions allow certain kinds of information exchanges but prevent other kinds. Amid the segments, and sensitive to changes in any of them, information flows enable work and display a variety of knowledge. The recognition of multiple communities operating within a workplace provides a consolidated frame for studying ICT that facilitates or impedes information flows.

Method

The research questions are answered based on qualitative, empirical data collected during the spring of 2020, 2021, and 2022 in a Scandinavian university. The research approach has been opportunistic and evolving over time. The first round of data collection was expected to be a one-off occasion as the lockdowns were initially expected to last for only a limited time. As the pandemic continued, the period of enforced WFH was prolonged and the original research plan was ultimately modified to consist of three interview rounds. This material provides an opportunity to investigate how the use of ICT and attitudes toward ICT-supported work have altered during the two-year period.

The participants in the study were ten university employees with work duties mainly in administration (seven participants) or leadership (three participants) capacities. They were recruited through an open email invitation that was distributed twice, in late March 2020 and mid-April 2020. All ten were interviewed on each of the three rounds. Several participants had

been employed for many years at the university. Some participants had previous experience with WFH, while others had none, and the common practice, by preference or norm, was to work in the regular office all five days of a working week.

The first interview round focused on the immediate experience of WFH. The interviews were all conducted online. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions that started with general questions on participants' work duties and their experience with the tasks themselves and remote work. Thereafter, questions concerned the types of information they needed and how they usually collected them, what kinds of information and knowledge exchange they were used to, and how their access to information and knowledge had changed because of WFH. The final questions concerned their overall experience of WFH (surprises, benefits, and challenges) and how they thought this experience would alter their future way of working, if at all. The theme of (co)location-based information flows was identified as central in the first-round data. In particular, topics related to obtaining information for solving everyday work tasks, and the interactivity of information exchanges, were highlighted. These subthemes were returned to in the second- and third-round data collections. In the present analysis, these themes are related to changes in attitudes about and usage of ICT.

The empirical data consist of 21 hours and 37 minutes of interviews. All interviews, originally in Scandinavian languages, were transcribed verbatim and analyzed in three consequent but iterative rounds of manually executed qualitative content analysis. The aim was to identify and analyze variations in information exchanges, not to explain individual behavior. At first, open coding was employed to create an initial understanding of the data on the basis of the identification of significant or interesting characteristics (key word listing). This round was followed by axial coding to create thematic categories (key word clustering). On the third round, the analyses from the two previous rounds were refined in an iterative process to assemble an appropriate set of codes, compile results, and identify illustrative citations. Whereas the analysis was carried out based on the fully transcribed spoken accounts, the selected illustrative excerpts below were condensed and translated into English by the author. Each participant has been anonymized and given an androgynous pseudonym. The excerpts are referred to by each participant's pseudonym and interview round number (1–3).

There are some ethical considerations related to the study. In March 2020, when the lockdowns were put into effect, there was a general expectation that the period would last just a few weeks or months, and thereafter things would get "back to normal". Thus, there was a sense of urgency in launching a study concerning these extraordinary work conditions. This led to recruiting participants in the academic setting that was known to the author, and consequently some of the participants have or have had work-related associations with the author. However, all participants responded to an

open invitation, have received and responded to a formal consent form, and been granted a full anonymization. Moreover, the author has had no supervisory role in relation to the participants, nor have there been signs of these relationships affecting the content of the material or having any effect outside of the study. Thus, there are no identified risks or undesirable effects related to the project participation. The project has been assessed and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (reference number 523594).

Results—changes in information flows in everyday work

There was an immediate disruption of all colocation-based information flows that made visible many mundane information practices, when physical work sites were closed in March 2020. This was a completely new situation, as the participants were used to of working in the regular office. In addition to the cancellation of preplanned, formal onsite meetings and events, many spontaneous conversations that take place in shared office spaces such as by a coffee maker or a printer, on the way to meetings, or coming together for lunch, were all lost overnight. "Brom" explains that "there are a lot of such 'waterholes' at work, at the coffee maker and by the printer, where you meet people and get information. That informal part is gone" (Brom1).

Many activities were transferred surprisingly quickly and with surprisingly good functionality to digital work sites after just a few weeks, and in due time were considered the normal work routine. Among others, "Bobby" and "Bennie" describe the easy transformation. "Bobby" notes early on that "it works very well even for longer periods when everyone works digitally elsewhere rather than in their physical workplace. It is my first time to experience it" (Bobby1). "Bennie" states that "it actually works well. At first it was a bit arduous, but now you almost think that this is normal, and I had not expected that to happen" (Bennie1).

There was also a broad understanding that the all-digital work was not by choice, but rather was a decision imposed on the workplace. In addition, it was not only working conditions that were affected, but also life in general was restricted, with regard to moving around or meeting others. Thus, the usage of and attitudes toward ICT also mirrored the reactions to the overall situation. "Bennie" clarifies that the working mood "has not only to do with work. It also has to do with the whole societal situation, that everyone stays at home, and it affects the way one feels" (Bennie1).

As all-digital work was initiated, there was a realization that for many of the work tasks, it did not matter whether the work was done in the office or elsewhere. Many of the participants' everyday tasks were already relying on ICT tools. "Blaze" points out that "there is nothing I cannot do from home for my work" (Blaze1).

Most information was available, or existed solely, in digital formats, while some was bound to physical objects. However, these printouts and

notebooks comprised just a minor part of all the information required for work tasks. Moreover, these material information objects were often easily replaced with digital ones, but the material form was often relied upon by force of habit, preference, or perceived perspicuity and ease of annotation. Becoming all-digital also highlighted some office routines that had remained manual by tradition, and indeed plainly required extra effort to maintain their functionality in the modern information landscape. "Bent" explains that even though they "packed the bag full of papers that I would need, everything is in digital format somewhere. I just need to look it up" (Bent1). "Billie" identified a cumbersome office practice.

> I have started to wonder why we have such old-fashioned systems. For example, we usually produce documents that must be signed by hand and stamped. Often these documents are sent to students by email, so you must first print the document, sign, stamp, and scan in it again.
>
> (Billie1)

Whereas it was possible to manage most work remotely, the material infrastructure of physical offices was often lacking at home. "Boo" states, "I think that no matter how well things work at home, they work better at work" (Boo1). The small screens of participants' personal laptops were immediately perceived as inadequate. As the lockdowns persisted, more dedicated workspaces were set up—a desk, a chair, and a bigger screen, in a separate room when possible.

ICT and individual preferences

Already in the beginning of the enforced WFH, individual preferences and prerequisites surfaced. Some of these were principal approaches, rooted long before the enforced WFH. Whereas "Bevin" was open to new opportunities, "Well, I do not focus on all the problems. I focus much more on the possibilities" (Bevin3), "Brom" was oriented to make the best of the situation and simply stated after returning to the regular office that "when we worked from home, I did not miss the office, and when I sit here, I do not miss the home office. I am fine with both" (Brom3). Yet, for "Blair", who kept a strong preference of full-time onsite office work throughout the two years, WFH was "a kind of inferior variant of a workday" (Blair1).

  The mode of consuming information was also viewed differently. Some "prefer to read on paper" (Bent1), instead of reading on screen. Then there were those who made the conscious choice to become more digitally fluent, including reading on screen. During the lockdown period, digital habits were strengthened. "Brom", despite having a printer at home, decided to have fewer documents lying around. "Brom" aimed from the start to "a fully digital office. It has been my goal for a long time. It is not necessary

to read on paper, even if you like it best" (Brom1). "Brom's" digital reading practices were reinforced and complemented with new writing practices: "Before I used a notebook. Now I always write directly on the PC. I read everything on screen. That is new too. It is more sustainable in many ways. It is a changed routine" (Brom3). "Bennie" came to rely fully on the digital documentation. After stating that "I had not used that much paper previously, but now I have not used any" (Bennie1) in the first interview, "Bennie" confirms in the last one that "I do not use paper. All documentation is online" (Bennie3).

In general, the participants expressed a preference for a mix of working both on and offsite, depending on the work tasks at hand, and after the restrictions had been removed, most participants opted for one or two days WFH over the typical five-day onsite schedule adhered to prior to the pandemic. "Blair´s" preference for full-time onsite office work stayed intact and was coupled with a striving to minimize WFH throughout the period because "that kind of everyday working from home, it is not something I feel for" (Blair1). The rest of the participants revised their views on work location through their experiences during the enforced WFH, and the general expectation was that WFH would increase in the future. "Blaze" reasons "that being able to work from home is important. We will probably have more digital meetings so that people can work wherever, based on their life situation and other things. In my experience, we have not become less efficient by working at home" (Blaze2). To "Bennie" increased WFH seems inevitable, "people are going to have home offices. It seems like a very sensible use of time" (Bennie3).

ICT and altering meeting practices

Whereas ICT use for written exchanges had already been a common practice prior to the pandemic, digital meetings had been used much less often in the past. However, they soon filled the need for synchronous communication as a replacement for onsite office meetings. There were two alternative ICT tools, Zoom and Teams, in use to support synchronous information exchanges, such as one-to-one or group meetings. After a short trial-and-error period and educational efforts, these meetings were considered to have surprisingly good technical functionality. Basic competence was attained quickly and relatively effortlessly, and extended dependence on the use of ICT made it easier to adopt new skills. For "Blaze" adjusting to the new meeting technicalities was easy, "I quickly learned about these meetings, the rules of speaking and muting" (Blaze1), and "Brom" found better replacements for earlier work practices, "it is easy to share a screen, compared with before when you stood next to each other and looked at the same screen. The sharing-screen feature is really useful" (Brom2). "Billie" was pleased with the generally better familiarity with ICT tools:

> Everyone has become used to working from home and it is perhaps more structured now compared to how everything was a year ago. Everyone has learned, including myself, to use these digital tools. There are no discussions about how I should technically do something, how Zoom works, or how Teams works.
>
> (Billie2)

The digital meetings were quickly viewed as an ordinary part of WFH. Formal meetings were considered to be more efficient in the digital format, which was seen as both a pro and a con, often because of the same characteristic. For instance, the ease of organizing and joining a meeting offered many the possibility to participate, but then again it also resulted in many meetings of varying relevance and engagement. "Blair" noted that at the regular meetings, "there tends to be full attendance but there are few who speak up" (Blair2), whereas "Billie" experienced that there were "more meetings than before. We used to have a two-hour section meeting once a month. Now we have an hour-long weekly section meeting, which is often not so relevant to everyone attending" (Billie2). Concerning how much room there was for discussion, some felt that the digital meetings kept the content more focused, like "Bevin", "perhaps the meeting activities are more efficient. Maybe you are better at sticking to the point" (Bevin1). "Boo" noted that the meetings had become "very matter-of-fact oriented" (Boo1). Yet others felt that the discussions remained superficial, as was experienced by "Bent" in a recent meeting where "there were some comments, but there were no discussions, no deliberation" (Bent1). In general, digital meetings were shorter and more formal than the physical meetings.

The digital format was better suited for general meetings with an aim to inform, and thus entailed merely one-way communication. The major gain here was that they reached a larger audience. Some meetings, as "Bent" explains, "such as the faculty meetings, they are suitable to have digitally because they are often one-way communication. There is not much dialogue, just a lot of information. More people get an opportunity to join and just listen" (Bent3). "Boo" explains that "it is so nice to have physical meetings again and be able to see each other. You get a different type of communication by being present" (Boo3) but recognizes the value of digital meeting for some purposes, "there are a number of meetings which are just as good to have digitally, such as information meetings, or short meetings" (Boo3).

In addition, meetings that were goal-oriented, factual, practical, and had a clear purpose functioned well for smaller working groups or between colleagues. "Bent" shared a positive experience of group work, "it has worked very well because we are a group that is going to deliver something. There have been working meetings, progress meetings, and we have had a common goal and a deadline" (Bent2). "Bevin" had adopted the format for short

meetings, and referred to meetings of the day, "I have had several Teams meetings, status reviews, and meetings about something that needs to be done. It is quick to request and set up a short chat where you can choose to see each other or not. It works great" (Bevin3). "Bobby" too appreciates the digital format for short updates, such as "weekly status meetings on Zoom. We know each other very well and the chat is only for an hour. It is nice to just get a quick update regardless of where you are" (Bobby3).

   In the end, the participants considered the onsite meetings to be superior to digital ones as a form of communication. However, the digital meetings provided a good alternative when meeting onsite required more effort in relation to the expected gain. It could be that gathering everyone in the same location was difficult to schedule or that attending the meeting in person was not considered worth the time and effort. "Blaze" sees them as a part of everyday work, "I think that the threshold for having this type of meeting has completely disappeared. It may well be that I will conduct such meetings even if people are on campus. If one is sitting in [one building on campus] and I in [another]" (Blaze1). Such practical issues made the participants appreciate the possibility of meeting digitally, depending on the situation and the matter at hand. Thus, even if the digital meetings were considered less rich as to both content and experience, they were from the start seen as a promising complement to physical meetings, a view that intensified toward the end of enforced WFH.

> If you have a group that knows each other well and you have clear views that you know in advance that you are going to promote, then [a digital meeting] is fine. But if you are going to have a discussion where you have to come up with a result that you do not know in advance, then [a] physical [meeting] is better.
>
> (Bennie3)

> We have digital meetings when collaborating across campus or with external people. It is often difficult to get everyone gathered, so it is much better to arrange digital meetings. Regular staff meetings, project meetings and some team meetings, those we try to have physically. Seeing each other and getting energy from being in the same room, you feel the team pulse. When it is important to meet physically is very dependent on the purpose.
>
> (Bevin3)

When the regular offices were reopened, many meetings were again taking place onsite. However, it was possible to attend many of them remotely. The hybrid formats were often considered less functional, a kind of compromise between the two formats. At this initial stage of reopened offices, there was some confusion over meeting formats. "Boo" explains that "we have section meetings on Zoom and we have ad-hoc meetings on Zoom, and then we

have some meetings in Teams, but the big meetings are on Zoom. We have now started to have team meetings as physical meetings again" (Boo3). "Bennie" reflects upon the necessity of hybrid meetings, "there are often some who cannot attend a physical meeting. Then some are on Teams, and some are sitting in the room. And I think we will continue to do so" (Bennie3). "Brom" identifies new difficulties related to these hybrid meetings, "we are back to physical meetings a lot, but they are often hybrid because someone cannot come. We spend time making the technology work. And when it works, I have noticed that the focus is either on those who are on screen or on those who are in the room" (Brom3).

ICT and altering written communication practices

The initial experience of the increased use of ICT for both asynchronous and synchronous information exchange caused an overflow of information, and uncertainty as to where the information, specifically written information, was to be made available. "Billie" experienced that "there was suddenly a lot of information to deal with, lots of channels, and a lot of information came all the time. It was challenging to stay up-to-date on everything, on all that information that was distributed" (Billie1). The initial situation was considered as overwhelming.

> I try to stay informed, but the challenge is that information is now provided on so many different platforms. It is very fragmented. Some information is provided in Teams, Sharepoint, some by email and some on our website. It is a jungle of channels.
>
> (Brom1)

One digital platform in particular established itself during the period: "We have had Teams before. It was not used so actively, but now there is a lot of information that is distributed in Teams" (Billie1). Prior to the pandemic, there was already a plan to introduce Teams as the main communication platform for the workplace, and this development was enhanced by enforced WFH. The establishment of the platform as a standard for general, group-specific, and one-to-one information sharing and contacts happened relatively swiftly. The transformation was successful for several participants, mostly because it was considered to have better functionality than previous information-sharing channels, such as email and university websites. "Bennie" finds that Teams "works. It has become a natural part of everyday work. General information is easier to find in Teams. Before, you had to search [the university's] messy websites and it was not always easy" (Bennie3). Whereas the advantage of channeled documentation was a particular source of appreciation: "Now it is easier to gather information. For example, [a development project] has a specific [group in] Teams. There is a lot of information that is more easily accessible to anyone who is a member

of the group" (Blaze2), the platforms coverage of several communication formats was also valued.

> I use [Teams] all the time. I have gotten further and further away [from email]. I am a member of many [groups in] Teams, and I communicate with many of my colleagues in the chat all the time. You can easily add an at-sign and get answers right away. We also share information [there], the log in Teams [is available] all the time. In an email you must search and do much more sorting. Here you have all the information gathered.
>
> (Bevin3)

During the two pandemic years, the Teams platform was found to provide more resilient, although not yet completely agreed upon, forms for both written and oral communication within the group of administrative staff. Thus, the process remained unsettled for the broader information flows at the university. "Boo" reflects upon the dependency between individual and collective views on the ways to communicate: "I am very fond of written communication, so it is very nice to have things on chat. But it requires a chat culture. [Otherwise,] the response time gets long and then the chat falls away" (Boo3). "Bennie" considers email as more engaging format.

> The intention to use [Teams] instead of email does not work because people do not read it as often as email, or it is not as personal. It does not concern me personally when a message is added to the group. But when I receive it as an email, it becomes more personal, even if it is general information.
>
> (Bennie3)

For some, emailing persisted as the main form of communication both among some workmates and in some other parts of the university.

> I prefer information by email. I read the emails first, and when I am done, I go to Teams. So those who think that they get hold of me faster via Teams actually have to wait longer than those who contact me by email. Most colleagues still use email. It is the simpler system. In Teams you must enter into so many different groups to find the information. On email, everything comes into the same stream.
>
> (Brom3)

In addition, there were still uncertainties when it came to structuring information flows.

> There is more information available to me now than before. But it is a struggle to know where to go, which channels, and where it should be.

> It is still a challenge. We use [Teams], but there was no actual [decision to do so]. I try to use as little email as possible for information addressing a large group. I have become more and more a fan of Teams and channels [instead of] email; the email file is awful. I have now added the chat function in Teams, but there are not many who have started to use it though it has many positive [effects].
>
> (Bent3)

Nevertheless, as Teams became more familiar, the sharing of written information went through a transformation from being a solely asynchronous form of communication, to being more direct and instant. The chat function came to fill the void for asking quick questions—the everyday small, sometimes trivial problems surfacing during a workday, such as needing help with locating a specific site on the intranet, or with solving a minor problem with a program or application. In the physical office, these questions were smoothly handled in a spontaneous manner by stepping out of one's office, locating a suitable and seemingly available colleague, and approaching them with a question. During WFH, such problems loomed larger, leading to more effort being spent on trying to solve the problem on one's own, or ignoring it when possible: "It happens that I first think, 'Do I need to know this right now? Is this so important that I have to send an email?' I may search the website to find the information there" (Billie1). Moreover, if out of necessity, colleagues were consulted with these questions, the interactions often remained on this more concrete level. After a while, these questions found an outlet in Teams: "First option is the Teams chat. That is where I get inquiries too, which I did not get a year ago" (Blair2). However, after restrictions were removed, the short, informal information exchanges at the office made a quick comeback: "If there is someone in the office, I would rather go over and talk to them instead of sending a chat message" (Boo3).

ICT and information transparency

As informal meeting arenas disappeared, the information flows became more transparent and inclusive through digital platforms. They enabled many to partake of the same written or oral information at the same time. This broke the tradition of letting news spread from mouth to mouth, a change that was considered positive by the participants. According to "Brom", the "written information has improved. Since we are not together, there is more effort invested in internal communication. It has been a weakness [for many years]" (Brom1). "Bevin" agrees that the employees were now provided better updates than before and ponders if this was because of "a better structure for information exchange has been created" (Bevin2). "Billie" provides an example of such improved information flow.

For example, the unit meetings did not used to have any written summary because everyone was expected to attend. Now, if there are any important matters, like assignments for many, there are postings of it in Teams, which is good, and something that should have been done already before.

(Billie3)

This development was hoped to remain, although the reopening of offices caused some uncertainties around these new information flows. "Bent" identifies the potential of the new structures, whereas "Brom" already distinguishes the return of old behaviors.

Since you did not have access to informal information circulating in the hallways, it had to be channelled through more official meetings. I think that was positive. Maybe that will result in an even flatter structure and the hierarchical paths will get shorter, and then it would be the original source conveying the information.

(Bent3)

It is probably more back to the way it was before the pandemic. In the beginning of the pandemic, there were a lot of newsletters and a lot of information from the leadership. But now there is much less of it. What information you get is again more random. You get different pieces of information about the same issue at different meetings. So, what is internally communicated is not standardized; it is a bit arbitrary.

(Brom3)

ICT and time management

In the very beginning of the WFH period, many meetings were cancelled. However, meeting frequency quickly increased again, and was soon considered to be excessive: "The short conversations I had at work, in the corridor or stopping by someone's office, they are now set up as meetings. They fill the calendar" (Blaze1). The high frequency of meetings became a problem that required control measures, which led to better usage of existing tool functionalities. For instance, calendars were used to prohibit fragmentation of workdays by many meetings. "Blend" chose a "quick and dirty" solution: "Now I have simply added to the calendar 'out of office' to show that I am not available for meetings" (Blend2). "Blaze" opted for "own calendar bookings to avoid meetings. I now add to the calendar fixed things, like 'Write a response to this request', or 'Write that memo'" (Blaze1). "Blair" was delighted by two particular suggestions given by the Outlook calendar:

I received a meeting invitation one day. Then [Outlook] notified me, 'It seems that you have a lot of meetings next week. Should I set up some focus time?' The tool has a functionality that protects my working

hours. [Outlook] has also suggested to me, 'You have been summoned to a one-hour meeting. Should we suggest 45 minutes?' and I have said yes to that too. This is the first time that I have appreciated [suggestions from the system].

(Blair2)

After a year, some simply recapitulated, and when the meeting topics were of no immediate relevance, the participants used their time more flexibly. This flexibility allowed by spending time together without being in the same location was used for working on individual tasks, and also for low-intensity group activities. "Boo" worked simultaneously on other matters when appropriate, "I have learned to zoom back more in the meetings … multitasking …" (Boo2). "Bevin" too kept an eye on several matters concurrently and altered smoothly between them as required.

It is a much more efficient use of time. You can have a joint document open while you are working on other things, and then you can see who is working on a document and where they are in it and write comments to each other. It is a very effective way to have good interaction.

(Bevin3)

"Billie" gave another example of flexible time usage while working together in a workshop format. The project group members were having a digital meeting open all day but would interact only when necessary. When work was carried out independently, the members muted themselves, and when questions arose, they called each other. "Billie" considered this workshop format to have several advantages:

It works better digitally. When you sit at home, you have more peace and quiet. When there was no need to talk with others, we muted ourselves. If there is any noise, like me – I sometimes swear loudly when things get difficult, I do not disturb [the others]. [laughter] If we were to gather in the same room at work, everyone is away from their own office so if they need something from there …, or if they need to go to the restroom, take a break, or eat … everything must be more organized. But when you sit at home, you just have to say, 'I'm taking a break now', and you do not disturb others by going out.

(Billie2)

The environment in which the ICT-supported work is carried out appears to have consequences for how work *per se* is perceived. Some participants experienced WFH as being more tiring, as they needed to spend a lot of time being interactive on screen, or simply because of a lack of variation. "Blaze" had "gotten used to it, but it is more tiring" (Blaze2). "Blend" and "Bobby too were used to WFH but finding themselves "so tired of these

digital platforms. I get such meeting fatigue" (Blend2), or "very tired of working from home. There was so little variety" (Bobby3).

Individual approaches to WFH differed and appeared to influence the experience of WFH in general and the role of ICT tools as a part of it. The discipline of turning off the laptop was one of the most important individual abilities, for keeping the workdays within normal workhours, and work and private life separated. Some were able to keep the working days intact and turn off the PC at the end of the workday, in much the same way as they would in their regular office. "Bent" is one of them.

> When I work at home, I sit down with the computer at half past seven, then I work until half past four every day. But when I log off in the afternoon, I do not work. I do not read or reply to emails in the evenings or on weekends. Then, I am completely disconnected.
>
> (Bent2)

For others, it was more difficult to avoid prolonging their working hours. However, not all participants considered this type of blending to be a problem, but instead perceived it as a part of the flexibility offered by WFH. "Blend" explains that "when I work from home, it flows much more. I am not so good at setting boundaries and work from eight to four. I have a hard time shutting down the laptop" (Blend1). "Brom" reflects upon the difference in working at home or in the office.

> Separating work and leisure has become more blurred. When I went home from the office, I left the laptop there. If I had not finished a task [at the end of the workday], I often waited until the next day. [At home,] it is easy to turn the PC on again. I might spend more time on it, not so many hours but just to finish the task.
>
> (Brom2)

There was also a different perception of work time. At the office, one could freely move between spaces and get engaged in various discussions, and still feel one was at work, whereas, at home, working time was closely connected to the actual time spent in front of a PC. "Brom" notices that "there is a lot of small talk, which is very nice. But the day becomes less efficient than at home, where one can work focused without so many interruptions" (Brom3). "Boo" reflects upon the difference in experience caused by the location, rather than the content, explicitly:

> When I work at home, I feel that all the time that is not [spent] on the PC is something other than work time. But while at work, I can talk about a cake recipe with a colleague, and I still feel I am at work.
>
> (Boo3)

In addition, there was also the realization that different practical arrangements related to working onsite required time, which had been minimized during WFH. "Brom" become aware of that "in terms of content, [work] is much the same. [But] there is no organizing of refreshments like coffee and water for the meeting delegates in the home office. There is less time spent on those [things]" (Brom2). "Bobby" noticed that organizing physical meetings involves "quite a lot [of] traveling" and "how much more work it is to make travel bookings, how much more time the actual meeting takes" (Bobby3).

ICT and relational information flows

Nevertheless, no matter how functional and practical the digital information exchanges were, they were not able to bridge the entire spectrum of human interaction. Particularly difficult was replacing the context for the informal and spontaneous meetings that would have naturally sprung up at the office. "Bent" explains that "there is something about going to your neighbor's office and having a relaxed conversation. The social part has been completely absent" (Bent3). Such meetings serve both to facilitate work-related matters, and to strengthen the sense of community. From the start and throughout the two-year period, the overall feeling among the participants was that something had gone missing.

> The informal, it disappears. I try to take care of it at these lunches we have, just a chat so that everyone can say how they are doing. But it is something completely different. It gets formal, a bit like staccato … people mute themselves and the spontaneous disappears.
>
> (Blend1)

The importance of these relationship-oriented information practices that had been taken for granted in the regular office setting become obvious as they become unavailable. The participants noticed that meeting each other at shared locations for coffee or lunch had provided a rich platform for information exchanges, which were now lost. "Blair" ponders over "the daily lunch, the daily conversations we have at work – there is something there that is also about information that you need in your everyday work. It is more casual. I cannot put a finger on it" (Blair1). The longer the enforced WFH became, the clearer the consequences of what had been lost. These discussions provided the possibility of keeping track of matters generally relevant to the workplace, strengthening one's engagement, and receiving and pondering news in one's professional field. "Bennie" states that one gets "a lot of information at the coffee maker, not just gossip. A lot is relevant to your work situation" (Bennie3). "Bevin" emphasizes the motivational aspect and states that "when you are with your colleagues, you get energy to do something instead of needing to problematize everything on your own" (Bevin3). "Boo" misses the opportunity to field-specific discussions:

"It is one thing to do the work tasks that you know you should do. But you do not get the professional conversations in Teams. [For that], you pretty much need to be together with others" (Boo3).

In addition, the spontaneous meetings sometimes offer knowledge support that facilitated work directly. "Brom" reflects upon the informational part of the such meetings and ensures that one gets "more information if you are physically present—the short conversations in the hallways, meeting someone on your way in and out—you snap up information that you would not get otherwise, since it is not part of the formal paths" (Brom3).

Whereas many factual- or technical-matter-oriented tasks were successfully managed in small group or one-to-one digital meetings, other matters were not so easily handled in digital format. Interactions relying on interpersonal relationships did not function satisfactorily in digital format. Examples of these kinds of interactions include getting to know new people, or handling more delicate or personal matters involving feeling the atmosphere in the room or possibly catching several simultaneous reactions, or when reading the body language of the other persons involved is important. "Blaze" used to "feel the atmosphere at lunch, a bit informal, just to soothe the mood. That arena is not there now" (Blaze1). In "Bennie's" opinion, "the performance reviews have been very good online. They are better in person" (Bennie3), and "Boo" finds "it is so much easier to talk about things and take things by email, or whatever, if one has already greeted each other physically" (Boo3).

The interruption of opportunities to meet at the office with colleagues with whom one had no work tasks in common caused lost possibilities for interaction in the broader work context, and made many existing relationships fade away. "Brom" discovered that "updates on how people are doing are now absent" (Brom2), and "Bent" lost many previous contacts.

> Meeting someone from [another section] in the [office], I could say, 'Hello, how are you? What are you working on?' It no longer exists. Now they are just a bunch of people that I have nothing to do with. There are many fewer people that I relate to now than I did before.
>
> (Bent1)

In order to keep the informal relationships active, several digital alternatives were tried out in the beginning of the enforced WFH. Digital coffee breaks and lunches were common and aimed to offer arenas where one could stay in touch, even with colleagues with whom no particular work duties were shared. However, the attendance at these informal gatherings decreased or ceased entirely after a while, as the digital workdays made the participants less interested in spending any more time on digital platforms than necessary: "You are not keen for more Zoom or Teams when you have finished the workday" (Bevin2).

Results summary—changes in ICT usage and attitudes and the development of information practices

For the administrative staff, it became obvious that most of their practical work was carried out with ICT. The participants stated from the start that most of their work tasks were not affected by moving out of their onsite offices. The regular work tasks remained the same and it was possible to carry them out throughout the period (cf. Barrero et al., 2021). They confirmed that all information and administrative systems that they were working with were available for them, in much the same way as when they were in the office. During the WFH period, the participants became more advanced users of many of the different tools that they had had only an elementary, if any, knowledge of at the start (cf. Olson & Olson, 2000). Moreover, they needed to expand the use of ICT into areas where they had earlier been relying on physical interactions, such as meetings and ad-hoc problem solving. Despite the problems with small screens and fatigue resulting from intense virtual communication, the participants were both surprised at and appreciative of the functionality of the ICT tools. Many became more open to utilizing these functionalities even in their onsite office work, indicating that existing information practices related to ICT usage had broadened.

In contrast to carrying out practical work tasks, the social interactions at work went through a profound transformation from in-person, face-to-face contacts to ICT supported interactions. After the first immediate period of adjusting to uncertainties—the increased flow of written information and getting accustomed to digital meeting structures—the new ways of interacting were rapidly established as part of everyday work (cf. Leonardi, 2020). The digital meetings were often shorter and provided increased opportunities to participate, which were viewed as a positive change for all kinds of meetings: meetings with workmates in and outside of their own work organization, or organizational meetings for the unit and the entire workplace. Then again, the number of meetings quickly multiplied and participation in them was sometimes considered to be too time consuming. The meetings were also experienced as being more focused on matters of fact, which made the smaller, goal-oriented meetings more productive, but inhibited in-depth deliberations in the larger meetings and in the meetings where participants did not know each other well. On the other hand, if the aim of the meeting was merely to inform, then digital meetings of any size functioned well. In the end, the participants considered the onsite meetings to be superior to digital ones as a form of communication, especially for creating a broader common ground (cf. Olson & Olson, 2000). However, the digital meetings provided a good alternative when meeting onsite required more effort than the expected gain from meeting physically. In general, the participants adopted a highly practical attitude toward digital meetings during the period, indicating that a new information practice was in the making.

During the WFH period, formal information sharing was channeled through ICT tools and replaced the informal spreading of information in the organization. Overall, as the mouth-to-mouth distribution system of the onsite office collapsed, the new channels of information sharing were considered better in that they were more inclusive and transparent, and information was made available to everyone simultaneously (cf. Lee et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2022). This was seen as a very positive change, which, however, was at risk of weakening as the offices reopened. It remains unclear whether these new information practices will survive the transition back to onsite working.

In addition, a joint virtual communication platform, Teams, that had been introduced shortly before the pandemic, got established in some but not all parts of the workplace, which caused some uncertainties and rivalry between old and new information practices. By the end of the period, general information and work-related material were being shared via several forums, including the re-established solely location-based formats, as the regular offices were reopened. The new ways of using ICT in working with others included sharing material in designated virtual sites, and using chat and video calls/meetings for short clarifications, which partially replaced emailing (cf. Lin & Hwang, 2021). However, email was considered a more personal and intentional form of contact, and persisted as the main communication practice for many, which means that the two partially overlapping information practices will continue to coexist and to require an extra effort by their users, constituting a risk of either misunderstandings or frustration, or both.

Additional new ways of using ICT were adopted for the sake of time management. For instance, calendars were used more actively to manage one's workdays by arranging and prohibiting meetings. In addition, interacting on ICT tools introduced a more effective and flexible use of work time. Multitasking acquired a more positive connotation; one could participate in a meeting and still attend to other matters during the less relevant parts. As with low-intensity collaborative activities, one could interact concurrently or iteratively as required. This type of distributed attention was not experienced as fragmentation, but rather as a more effective use of time. This indicates that information practices during WFH related to ICT usage were viewed differently from those in the regular office.

Replacing the context of informal and spontaneous meetings that occur at the regular office proved to be difficult and was not achieved during the two years of enforced WFH. The physical proximity afforded by the office facilitates these interactions for both work-related matters and for strengthening the sense of community, and the effects of the lack of these arenas grew stronger during the period. Yet, the ICT supported the relationships surprisingly well between colleagues who shared work tasks and duties, and who had regular contact in different work matters (cf. Olaisen & Revang, 2017; Tønnesen et al., 2021). As long as there was joint work to carry out,

even new contacts were successfully made using ICT tools. However, the ICT did not succeed in supporting facets of interpersonal relationships without a common denominator on the level of practical work. Interactions between colleagues that depended solely on co-location in the physical office, such as gatherings at breaks or having offices close to each other, vanished to the periphery. This was considered a personal loss, and also hindered opportunities for cross-boundary collaboration (cf. Yang et al., 2022). The lack of a joint physical space was also a hinderance in interactions relying on interpersonal relationships, such as getting to know new people, or handling more delicate or personal matters. Moreover, meeting each other at shared locations had provided a rich platform for information exchanges, both in matters relevant to the workplace, and for participation in professional discussions in general. In addition, recharging one's energy and gaining new angles on different issues were also acknowledged as positive outcomes of collegial togetherness. The attempts to emulate these informal gatherings that take place in a regular office, by adding digital lunches and coffee breaks, lasted only a while before attendance waned. Thus, these information practices remained passive and unfulfilled in the all-digital workplace.

As the mode of work was transferred from regular offices to homes, individual distinctions surfaced (cf. Erickson et al., 2019). Some preferred working in the regular office and found WFH draining. Some preferred regular hours and others preferred more flexible hours. For some, the laptop and other office equipment simply being constantly in sight at home instigated continuous attention to work. For those who strived to keep their private and work lives separated, it became a question of discipline to turn the computer off without the support of changing their location. Additional aspects related to time management surfaced, even in views on work itself. One aspect concerned what is regarded as working; in the office, working was related to the time spent at the location, whereas at home it was defined by the time spent on a PC, thus consisting of a much narrower spectrum of activities, often directly related with work tasks. Time usage became particularly discernible as offices were reopened, and time was again allocated to arranging and attending onsite meetings, as well as to socializing with colleagues. Thus, the many non-actual-work related information (and other) practices carried out in onsite offices were reevaluated as the regular offices were reopened.

All in all, ICT proved effective in supporting practical administrative work, as well as work relationship building for joint activities. The enforced WFH both highlighted the functionality and expanded the use of ICT in performing regular work. The participants discovered new ways of using ICT, which positively affected their attitudes toward ICT. The new ways of using ICT were expected to continue, in both on- and offsite regular offices. However, ICT performed poorly in support of contextual and personal relationships at work. Many information practices related to ICT usage were

highlighted during WFH. Some of them, mostly the practical ones, were transformed, while others found no alternative outlets and remained passive during the period. The successful transformations led to increasingly positive attitudes toward ICT, whereas the unsuccessful ones moderated the attitudes toward both ICT and WFH. In sum, the demonstrated ease of accomplishing work remotely, along with the reinforced importance of in-person meetings, were key insights that trigger expectations of altered ways of working in the future.

Discussion

So, what do the results tell us about the usage and attitudes related to ICT during the two years of WFH, and what does it mean for the future development of work? The short answer is that ICT usage increased, and that attitudes grew more positive toward both ICT and remote working, but that does not mean that future ICT use is unproblematic. The results give food for thought for considering the long-term effects. Whereas WFH triggered a huge need for social interaction, and widespread feelings of boredom because of restrictions on activities outside the home, ultimately WFH was still viewed as an anticipated part of future work, closing, if only partially, the gap on Toffler's *electronic cottages* (1980).

   The white-collar workers with administrative duties have gained good knowledge of ICT and found novel ways of making use of ICT. Thus, ICT tools have attained an even more profound role in the everyday work of white-collar workers, who by now are more familiar with, more accustomed to, and more relaxed in using ICT in different work situations. There is reason to believe that many of these newly discovered abilities will continue to be used, in both on- and offsite offices: Tutoring on shared screens, having quick digital meetings with colleagues whose offices are in other buildings, having digital meetings with external partners, and keeping the sharing of documents away from email, to mention a few. This indicates an intensified use of ICT in the future. Leonardi (2020) refers to digital exhaust, which is not a negative phenomenon as such, but simply describes how digital information and digital environments become increasingly established in people's lives, including work, making everyone more dependent on these digital interactions.

   Whereas the results point to an overall positive attitude toward ICT tools, they also indicate that the difficulties related to WFH are not primarily related to the technology, but instead center around the social facets of working. The findings are in line with Jackson and Van der Wielen's (1998) conclusion about the "sense of shared enterprise". Whereas such a sense of cohesion may be maintained between the closest colleagues when WFH, it seems more difficult to sustain for the workplace at large. Even though the formal information became more transparent and inclusive, the information flows remained more siloed. The interactions tended to be tuned in to shared

practical work. The ICT tools served well in such integrated clusters, mediating the flow of both written and oral information, and keeping interpersonal ties activated. While the platforms provided the same capabilities for information sharing more broadly in the workplace, they did not activate the same interest and effort. Thus, the support for serendipitous and cross-boundary interactions remained poorly managed in the all-digital work environment.

The broken office routines left individual workers to organize their workdays themselves, which underscores the importance of developing other individual skills outside of competence in using the ICT tools. As the frequent interruptions of onsite offices were gone during WFH, many felt that they were able to work with greater concentration and be more efficient. However, the lack of interruptions also means that natural breaks disappear, and, if not addressed, this may lead to feelings of both physical and mental fatigue, as Atkinson (1985) cautioned early on. Without reminders from colleagues about things happening at work, one needs to create other ways of staying on top of things. This highlights the need for helping workers to create good work habits, including keeping track of what is going on at work as well as on one's work hours—issues where the use of ICT could be beneficial.

The newly gained experiences call attention to the role of individuals in the transformation of work practices. As the overt view of the office as the place for working has been challenged, there is more room for individual approaches and preferences to surface. This finding aligns with Erickson and colleagues (2019), who predicted that individual approaches would become more significant in shaping future work practices. The prolonged period of offsite office work has made people realize that there are alternative ways of organizing one's work life. While on the one hand, these opportunities may lead to a positively flexible way of working, on the other hand, they may cause conflicts between groups and individuals having different views on how to collaborate and interact at work. In addition, the findings portray remote workers as being, in a sense, the opposite of digital nomads (cf. Jarrahi et al., 2019). Instead of striving toward individualistic independence to work flexibly from wherever, they seem to cherish the work community, including its immediate and peripheral relationships, and thus strive to achieve a blended on- and offsite workplace, characterized by a cohesive coexistence of colocated and remote work.

The hybrid environment concept comes with a new set of challenges for workplaces and for ICT tools to address and is, thus far, met with skepticism. This on-going development introduces novel socio-technical, situated, and socially shaping phenomena to be investigated, opening a new strand of research within social informatics. The present work has demonstrated that addressing the role of ICT in the development of information practices within the WIE framework offers a fertile research approach for examining the interdependencies among people, digital

technologies, and their contexts, which are the core foci in social informatics (Sawyer & Jarrahi, 2014).

To conclude, we are amidst a social reformation of work that affects both individual workers and their workplaces. Regardless of the role of WFH in the future, the period of enforced WFH has interrupted many work practices and, by doing so, it has also spotlighted matters that have been taken for granted in the past. The disruption opens work practices for reflection, and indeed necessitates such reflection, on the ways in which work is both looked upon and carried out, being equally relevant no matter whether the work is done offsite or in the regular offices. Moreover, the disruption of information practices has brought them into full view, which offers a rare opportunity to study these practices that are usually imperceptible, deeply embedded, and transforming slowly in their social settlements.

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