

Dark side of digital working - Interview Protocol

Interview timing

Welcome and consent	5 minutes
Work context and experience	5 minutes
Digital workplace demands	10 minutes
Personal resources	10 minutes
Burnout and negative affect	10 minutes
Anything else & close	5 minutes

Welcome and consent script

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my study on the dark side of digital working, and for completing the survey back in August 2021. My research as a whole investigates any unintended negative consequences of digital working such as stress, anxiety, overload and addiction.

Before we get started, I'd like to cover off informed consent. You should have received a Participant Information Form and Consent Form ahead of this interview (apologies if not, I can send these as soon as we end the interview). Please sign the consent form and return it to me as soon as possible. Essentially, this form covers the confidentiality of your data, the voluntary nature of your participation and option to withdraw at any time, and my intent as a researcher that you aren't harmed in any way by participation in this research.

I'll be recording the call today and taking some notes. Only myself and my supervisors will have access to the recordings. During transcription I'll remove any identifying information such as your name. The anonymized transcriptions will be deposited in the UK Data Service at the end of my PhD as per my funding body's retention policy.

The interview will last no more than 45 minutes. During this time I would like to ask you a range of questions relating to your experience of using digital technologies in your work and any stresses or strains you may experience in relation to them. To ensure we cover all the topic areas, I may sometimes politely interrupt you if we need to move on to a new area. I'm not evaluating your personal performance or personality characteristics but rather I'm interested in your experiences and perspective on this topic in order to help me better understand the topics I'm studying.

Are there any questions you have about my research or the interview before we get started?

Note for researcher: START RECORDING NOW.

Interview questions/ probes

Work context and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What devices do you typically use (e.g. laptop, smartphone) and what applications do you typically use (e.g. e-mail, intranet, Office 365, HR tools) for work? • How would you describe the quality of the technology provided by your organisation (e.g. really advanced, very basic)?
Digital workplace demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you find it stressful to use digital workplace technologies and if so in what way? • Do you experience overload and if so in what way (e.g. too much information, too many applications or features, too much communication)? • Do any aspects of the digital workplace cause you to have a sense of anxiety? If so, could you say a bit more about how this manifests? Do you experience fear of missing out (and if so does it relate to information or people)? • Do you find yourself using any of your digital work tools excessively or compulsively (e.g. e-mail, instant messaging)? • Do you think that your experience of these effects (i.e. stress, overload) is similar to that of your colleagues or other people you know? If not, in what way does it differ?
Burnout and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do any negative experiences of workplace technology you have ever lead you to feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ exhausted at work? ○ less effective in your work? ○ less engaged in your work? • Do you feel that these experiences have negative impacts on your mental well-being? How about your physical health?
Personal resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your level of confidence with the technology you use for work? • To what extent, if at all, do you find that you're 'running on automatic' or doing tasks automatically in your work without being aware of what you're doing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does that happen more or less when using digital workplace tools? • What (if anything) helps you to reduce any negative effects of using the digital workplace?
Anything else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything else you want to talk about in relation to this topic that I haven't asked about/ hasn't come up?

Closing script

That's the end of the interview! Thank you once again for your time and effort to participate. As I mentioned at the start, please sign and return your consent form. I'll also send you a short debrief sheet which includes information about how to find out about the results of my study.