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Preliminary frameworks and models for telework maturity within organisations

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Telework maturity

Telework is a binary model of non-ICT work. Telework is a three-part framework: i) that is, process, product and/or output of a digital form; ii) created out of digital environments of space and place; iii) with resources that is, writing, audio and video applications of a digital form.

Telework, thus, is a transformative work practice and central that is, a level of significance, enough of an enhancement, or an improvement to the pre-transformative state of that work. Telework would be alternative and complement to job function(s). Examples of process and output transformations include: writing, typing, paper reports to digital documents, telephone calls to video conferences and human interaction within the physical framework to online interactions within digital frameworks such as emails, forums, bulletin boards, VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and streaming video. Compared to non-ICT related work forms, telework as a technological infrastructure is unique in terms of three concurrent aspects: i) the capability to work at relatively higher standards of continuity that is, at any time and as per asynchronous communication, to connect, operate and interact with others, ii) the capability to work at any place and context, notably, at a distance from the designated or traditional, office place and space, and iii) at a minimum, akin to, or consistent with organisational standards of non-ICT process, product and output.

Themes and taxonomy

Telework: a feasible, productive and complementary solution in the competitive market? An exploratory study within local councils of the impact of teleworking in terms of maturity, transition and transformation of working practices. (Stage 1)

Telework maturity

Telework is a conceptual model or reality (World at Work, 2009. Cited In: Sener and Bhat, 2009, p.1) over many years it has not delivered widely in terms of modernisation of the workplace (Pyhönen, 2011, p.386).

Exploring a level of technology in terms of adoption and advancement has each contributed to and cemented the infrastructure layer (see figure 2) of the transformation process. Today, the infrastructure layer has materialised to the extent that it would now present a sustainable platform for telework to exist in terms of longevity. As the size of each macro level layer correlates to time, subsequent layers would be formed in decreasing time scales. To avoid being left behind, the focus for teleworking now switches to strategic and human resource capabilities within the organisation to adopt and implement teleworking sooner rather than later, in order to maintain position and continuity ahead. Early positioning may also be a potential resistance forces to change. There can be a number of restraining forces that decelerate rates of growth. At a macro level, organisations may seek a level of governance in terms of employment contracts and agreements to establish telework as an official working practice. Governance (see Gruber, 2010) would form two functions: firstly, as a protection mechanism that is, to make official the teleworking infrastructure that is available to, and operating to the benefit of the organisation. Secondly, to promote and create an environment that is hospitable to telework that is, an alignment to a community of teleworking practice, namely, layer 3. Thus, governance would be a driving force of change. The transformer model would be a key tool for an assessment of the maturity of an organisation to telework in terms of viability and feasibility.

Figure 2: Transformer model

Source: adapted from Lewin (1951a); b Lewin (1951b) and b Maslow (1943)

References


Metrics and KPIs within qualitative frame

Qualitative units of telework as per above represent identifiable units of working practices in and within such that we have parameters within which to target our investigation. Councils would be representative of potential case studies for research owing to the large part to metrics and KPIs that are established within this sector as per government protocol. Metrics and KPIs would provide a measure of the impact and thus feed our research in terms of the impact of telework for an organisation. We would further posit data in a meaningful form in terms of themes and taxonomies.