

DOCUMENT 1: You're Being Watched.

Adapted from *The New York Times*, 15 August 2022

In the back and forth over workplace power, American employers have been getting the better of employees for the past few decades.

Companies have been getting bigger, giving them greater ability to set prices and wages. Labor unions have been shrinking, leaving workers with less ability to negotiate for raises. And court rulings, especially from the Supreme Court, have tended to side with companies over workers or regulators. (...)

The Times has just published a story that examines the latest manifestation of companies having the upper hand on workers. The story, by Jodi Kantor and Arya Sundaram, is called “The Rise of the Worker Productivity Score,” and it’s the result of a monthslong investigation. It describes technology-based employee monitoring that often has a Big Brother quality, tracking workers’ keystrokes and more.

Jodi and Arya write:

In lower-paying jobs, the monitoring is already ubiquitous: not just at Amazon, where the second-by-second measurements became notorious, but also for Kroger cashiers, UPS drivers and millions of others.

Now digital productivity monitoring is also spreading among white-collar jobs and roles that require graduate degrees. Many employees, whether working remotely or in person, are subject to trackers, scores, “idle” buttons, or just quiet, constantly accumulating records.

Employees at UnitedHealth Group can lose out on raises or bonuses if they have low keyboard activity. Some radiologists have scoreboards on their computer screens that compare their “inactivity” time with that of colleagues. In New York, the transit system has told some employees that they can work remotely one day a week if they agree to full-time monitoring.

Work from home

The trend began before the pandemic, and the rise of at-home white-collar work over the past two years has intensified it. “If we’re going to give up on bringing people back to the office, we’re not going to give up on managing productivity,” said Paul Wartenberg, who installs monitoring systems for companies.

But even many in-person jobs now include productivity tabulations. One section of Jodi and Arya’s story describes the frustration of hospice chaplains who receive “productivity points” based partly on how many terminally ill patients they saw in a day. (...)

OPINION

Trying to get the most out of workers is nothing new. And some form of accountability is crucial to an organization's success. But minute-to-minute tracking of employee behavior, often using crude metrics, is a **more aggressive form of accountability than has been historically normal.**

“This is such an intimate form of control, which is part of why it took months of reporting to see,” Jodi told me. “To be clear, some workers really are derelict. But for many others, this is about what happens when you need to grab 10 minutes to clear your head, or deal with a kid interruption, or take a couple of extra minutes in the bathroom.”

In some cases, the monitoring systems may backfire, and the story documents how they can be inaccurate. Often, though, they can also contain accurate information about how an employee is performing from one minute to the next. And in doing so, they will further tilt the balance of workplace power away from workers and toward employers.

The growing mismatch also helps explain another trend: the **increasing interest in labor unions** among some workers, after decades of decline. Companies, **not surprisingly, are pushing back.**

DOCUMENT 2: What is 'quiet quitting,' and how it may be a misnomer¹ for setting boundaries at work.

NPR, August 19, 2022

Closing your laptop at 5 p.m. Doing only your assigned tasks. Spending more time with family. These are just some of the common examples used to define the latest workplace trend of "quiet quitting."

Some experts say it's a misnomer and should really be defined as carving out time to take care of yourself.

Ed Zitron, who runs a media consulting business for tech startups and publishes the labor-focused newsletter *Where's Your Ed At*, believes the term stems from companies exploiting their employees' labor and how these businesses benefit from a culture of overwork without additional compensation.

"If you want people to go 'above and beyond,' compensate them for it. Give them \$200. Pay them for the extra work," Zitron told NPR over email. "Show them the direct path from 'I am going above and beyond' to 'I am being rewarded for doing so.'"

A TikTok video on quiet quitting posted in July by @zkchillin (now @zaidleppelin) went viral. Many TikTok users shared their own experiences in response, with #quietquitting gaining 8.2 million views on the platform as of 4 p.m. ET Thursday.

Quiet quitting doesn't actually involve quitting. Instead, it has been deemed a response to hustle culture and burnout; employees are "quitting" going above and beyond and declining to do tasks they are not being paid for.

How employees have changed their approach to work

Workplace culture has gone through many changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, including with the "great resignation." Some workers are negotiating for better work conditions and benefits with newfound leverage.

Some workers have expressed a desire for a less rigid line between their work and personal selves. Professionals told NPR's *Morning Edition* how during the pandemic, they have made changes in their work lives, from how they dress to their career field, to align more closely with their personal values. (...)

Zawatski works in project management, a job that has afforded her the flexibility she needs as a mom of two. Although she would always make sure her work was done, she felt guilty whenever she needed to leave early or take a day off. That changed with the pandemic.

¹ **misnomer**: appellation inappropriée

"Knowing that life could be short, I didn't want to waste it anymore all the time just worrying about what kind of employee I was, because my kids don't care what kind of employee I am," Zawatski said. "My kids care what kind of mom I am."

Quiet quitting is in line with a larger reevaluation of how work fits into our lives and not the other way around. As Gen Z is entering the workforce, the idea of quiet quitting has gained traction as Gen Zers deal with burnout and never-ending demands.

However, Gen Z is not the first generation to experience burnout, and quiet quitting is not a new idea. Zitron shared his frustrations with the framing of the term, because it mischaracterizes doing the tasks you are paid for with the idea of quitting your job.

"The term 'quiet quitting' is so offensive, because it suggests that people that do their work have somehow quit their job, framing workers as some sort of villain in an equation where they're doing exactly what they were told," Zitron said. (...)

DOCUMENT 3 : Big Tech Makes a Big Bet: Offices Are Still the Future

Adapted from *The New York Times*, 22 February 2022

TEMPE, Ariz. — Early in the pandemic, when shops along Mill Avenue in downtown Tempe closed their doors and students at nearby Arizona State University were asked to go home, the roar of construction continued to fill the air. Now, gleaming in the sunlight and stuffed with amenities, **towering glass office buildings have sprouted up** all over the Phoenix metropolitan area. (...)

DoorDash, the food delivery company, moved into a new building on the edge of a Tempe reservoir in the summer of 2020. Robinhood, the financial trading platform, rented out a floor in an office nearby. On a February morning, construction workers were **putting the finishing touches on a 17-story Tempe office building** expected to add 550 Amazon workers to the 5,000 already in the area.

The frenetic activity in the Phoenix suburbs is one of the most visible signs of a nationwide recovery in commercial office real estate **fueled by the tech industry, which has enjoyed unchecked growth and soaring profits as the pandemic has forced more people to shop, work and socialize online.**

Big tech companies like Meta and Google were among the first to allow some employees to work from home permanently, but they have simultaneously been spending billions of dollars expanding their office spaces. **Doubling down on offices may seem counterintuitive to the many tech workers who continue to work remotely.** In January, 48 percent of people in computer and math fields and 35 percent of those in architecture or engineering said they had worked from home at some point because of the pandemic, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

→ PARADOX

REASONS :

But companies, real estate analysts and workplace experts said several factors were propelling the trend, including a hiring boom, a race to attract and retain top talent and a sense that offices will play a key role in the future of work. (...)

“I think there are a lot more companies that are saying, ‘You’re coming back to work’ — it’s not ‘if,’ it’s ‘when,’” said Victor Coleman, the chief executive of Hudson Pacific Properties, a real estate investment group. “The reality is that most companies are currently working from home but are wanting and planning to come back to the office.”

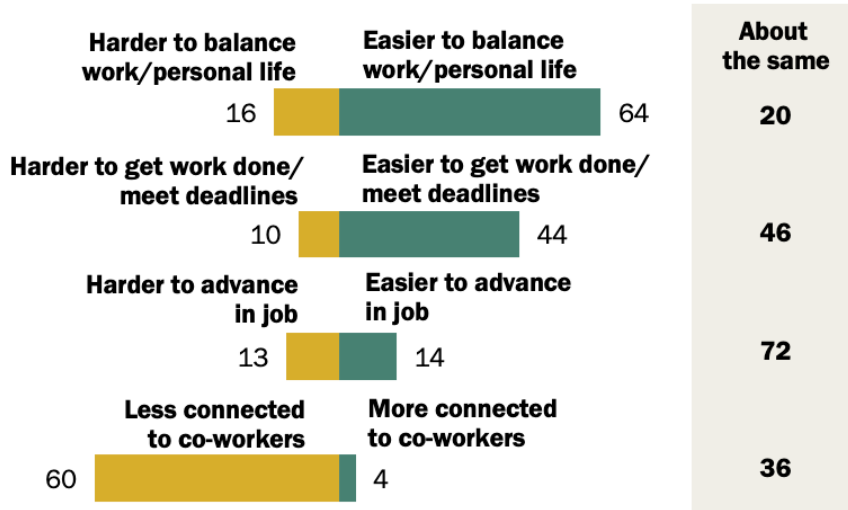
Debates over whether workers should be required to return to the office can be thorny because some employees say they have been happier and more productive at home. One way companies are trying to lure them back is by splurging on prime office space with great amenities.

Big Tech executives say that office expansions are to be expected and that modernized buildings will probably be spaces for people to collaborate rather than stare at screens. (...)

DOCUMENT 4 :

Six-in-ten of those new to working from home say they feel less connected to their co-workers

Among employed adults who rarely or never worked from home before the coronavirus outbreak and currently work from home at least some of the time, % saying working from home has made it ...



Note: Based on those who say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 24-30, 2022.

"COVID-19 Pandemic Continues To Reshape Work in America"

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DOC1	DOC2	DOC3	DOC4
<p>Companies have more power on workers than the other way round</p> <p>New trend : Monitoring workers' productivity</p> <p>Started before the covid-19 pandemic → has been gaining momentum since</p> <p>→ Monitoring workers online and offline / office-jobs & lower-paying jobs</p> <p>Not new + employers do need to check what their employees are doing. But this getting way out of hand.</p> <p>→ will increase the power of employers over employees.</p> <p>As a result : more workers are turning to labor unions, although companies are opposing the trend.</p>	<p>Quiet quitting = "misnomer" → it's not actually quitting</p> <p>Companies are exploiting workers → unpaid overwork → now : more and more employees are refusing to do the work they're not paid for</p> <p>Changes due t the Covid-19 pandemic</p> <p>Great Resignation = higher-than-usual number of employees voluntarily leaving their jobs to focus on their personal lives</p> <p>Quiet quitting is not a new idea, but it's highly popular among Generation Z</p> <p>"Misnomer" : companies call it "quitting" → just doing your job, and nothing more.</p>	<p>Online work developed but more and more offices are being built.</p> <p>This is due in particular to the technology industry, which has profited enormously from the boom in online working → paradox</p> <p>Reasons :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role of offices will be paramount in the future - workers are bound to come back to the office <p>Companies are trying to attract workers, and make offices better places to collaborate (more efficient than on line)</p>	<p>American workers who just discovered online work with the pandemic.</p> <p>Most think it's easier to balance work/personal life.</p> <p>Most think they are more efficient when working online.</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>Most think they are less connected to co-workers</p> <p>Advance in job → no real difference</p>

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PLANS (non détaillés)

A :

- 1- Pressure on workers in the name of productivity
- 2- But workers are asserting themselves
- 3- So → evolution in the future

B:

- 1- Workers have been asserting themselves
- 2- BUT pressure for productivity doesn't let up
- 3- So → evolution in the future / tensions

Work is changing: for the better?

The pandemic and technological progress have reshaped the workplace in the USA, which is what this corpus deals with. While two articles from *The New York Times* published in 2022 focus on new office buildings (Doc3) and increasing surveillance at work (Doc1), the third article from *NPR* dated 2022 (Doc2) analyses a new trend called “quiet quitting” and a 2022 graph from the Pew Research Center assesses the advantages and drawbacks of remote work. Considering the new trends that have emerged in the American post-pandemic working world, can it be said that work is being redefined?

Workers have strongly asserted themselves lately, not least due to² the Covid-19 pandemic. *NPR* shows that numerous workers are setting their own limits, “quitting” the culture of overwork and refusing to do extra, unpaid work. The so-called “Great Resignation” has given them more power to negotiate better working conditions (Doc.2) and labor unions have been on the rise in some sectors (Doc.1). As a result, businesses, like the tech companies mentioned in document 3, have been open to giving employees more flexibility thanks to remote work, leading to a better work-life balance and improved personal well-being, as highlighted by the graph.

However, pressure for productivity has not relented³. Not only do efficiency and career remain two main concerns of remote workers (Doc.4), but, over the past decades, the balance of power has been growing in favour of ever bigger companies that set the rules for workers (Doc.1). And in a culture of overwork, not going beyond basic work expectations and requirements without compensation is not well regarded by companies, according to *NPR*. Consequently, many businesses are firmly intent on⁴ bringing workers back to the office (Doc.3) and the monitoring of worker productivity has been increasing dramatically thanks to new technology, as emphasized by Document 1.

² Not least due to ... / Not least because of ... =

³ To relent =

⁴ To be intent on doing sth =

Although using more and more intrusive ways of constantly tracking low-paid and white-collar workers, on site and remotely (Doc.1) may be worrying, there are encouraging signs of change in the American work culture. Some insist on the necessity to start rewarding extra work instead of inappropriately accusing employees of “quitting” (Doc 2) and companies intend to redefine the office and make it a place of social interaction (Doc.3), thus meeting workers’ need⁵ for a greater connection to colleagues and advance in job (Doc.4). Therefore, many shifts in workplace power are currently under way with employees finding more space for their personal lives and companies rapidly adapting by redefining the office. But tensions remain between conflicting forces, making the future of the American workplace still unclear. (433 words)

⁵ To meet sb’s needs =

~~*workers are being tracked « Doc1 » and companies want them back at the office
« Doc3 »~~

~~○ * we will answer this question by focusing on these articles~~

~~○ *like shows the Doc 3~~

~~*Is there more remote work than before?~~

~~*to what extent is there more remote work than before?~~

Why is this a new era in the working world?

Why is this a new era in the working world?

→ Is this really a new era... ?

→ To what extent is this a new era...?

As work will never be the same, to what extent are workers and companies going to deal with the expectations of the other side? 🤔

As work seems to have been profoundly changed, to what extent can the expectations of both sides be reconciled?

How possible is it to reconcile workers' needs and companies' expectations?



Working from home has a lot of benefits but is it really the future of work?

Why is remote work an issue for companies although it makes their employees more productive and happier?

Now that workers want to better take care of themselves, are we going to stop going to the office?

Now that workers want to better take care of themselves, are ~~we~~ going to stop going to the office?

→ Now that workers want to better take care of themselves, **are they REALLY** going to stop going to the office?

Will this be a turning point or a return to the old order?

How do companies attempt to get the better of employees in a work-from-home era?

How do companies attempt to get the better of employees in a work-from-home era?

- How CAN they get the better of ...
- How are they supposed to get the better of...

To what extent has remote work changed the working world indefinitely / irreversibly/ for the better?

- **TITLES**

The tension between companies & workers

→ The never-ending duel between companies and employees → dispute / clash / tensions

How to find a balance between productivity and happiness at work

→ A tricky balance between productivity and worker's wellbeing

CONCLUSIONS

Companies focusing only on productivity will fail but those listening to employees and aiming to fulfill their wishes will thrive.

It 's not sure / It is unclear how long the changes will last

Happier when working from home

Hiring boom has led to quiet quitting

Increasing interest in labor unions.

60% feel less connected to co-workers

Happier when working from home

Hiring boom has led to quiet quitting

Increasing interest in labor unions.

60% feel less connected to co-workers

Topic sentence : Workers / employees are willing to change their working conditions, as the rising interest in labor unions illustrates. **So**, they favor remote work, which makes them happier and some **even** become quiet quitters. **However**, 60% say they are less connected to their co-workers.

Next : **That is why** companies are trying to make them come back to the office.

Fix the mistakes

*A happiness feeling →

*Workers life →

*Workers monitoring →

* Companies and employees way of working →

*It is a part of companies hidden agenda →

*New office buildings' number →