



The digital-ready workplace

Supercharging digital teams in the future of work

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The workplace is where the work is

WHAT COMES TO mind when you think of “the workplace”? The chances are high that you thought of a place, a physical location, probably an office, where people go to work. Or maybe, thanks to the prevalence of working from home during the pandemic, you imagined someone sitting at their kitchen table or on the couch, laptop open and smartphone in hand. But what if neither of these scenarios is the best way to think about the workplace anymore? As the COVID-19 experience forcefully demonstrated, people don’t *have* to be together physically to work together. Nor does working from home pose insuperable barriers to productivity.¹ Indeed, productivity can improve when working from home, though it does create new challenges.

We all know that much work today takes place in digital rather than physical space. We use technology to interact with business processes, collect and analyze data, and draft reports; to communicate, collaborate, and knit teams together across spatial and organizational boundaries. Work is now digital and mobile, enabling the *work* to go (digitally) to the workers.²

The workplace, in other words, is no longer the place where the *workers* go to work. Nor is the workplace *where* the *worker* is, as digital work is independent of a physical place. The new workplace is where the *work* lives: the shared digital environment used by a team, the collection of digital collaboration

and communication tools that workers navigate as they find ways to get things done.

Working in digital space creates a challenge for organizations. Practices and norms that drive productivity in the physical workplace don’t necessarily work as well in the digital one, and may even be counterproductive. You can’t encourage remote workers to connect with each other by putting table soccer³ tables in the office lounge or providing a catered lunch. It’s harder to standardize tools and technologies when workers need to improvise solutions to unanticipated (digital) challenges and have countless options available for the downloading. Tasks as simple as whiteboarding may trip some people up when they need to do it via Zoom or Teams instead of just picking up a marker.

Because these kinds of challenges are specific to working digitally, creating a productive digital workplace begins with shifting one’s mindset from thinking about the workplace as a *location* to thinking of it as a network of digitally mediated *relationships and interactions*. Grounded in this viewpoint, organizations can more easily find new ways to promote collaboration, information-sharing, and creative problem-solving among teams working digitally, while compensating for any losses suffered through lack of in-person contact.⁴ The goal: to empower teams to quickly find their own solutions to both expected and unexpected challenges, the better to succeed in an unpredictable and fast-changing world.

Workers today experience three overlapping workplaces

BEFORE EXPLORING WHAT drives productivity in a digital work environment, it's useful to understand how digital technologies have split the workplace into three overlapping types.

The *physical* workplace is where workers work, whether it's at the office,⁵ at home, or in a third place⁶ such as a café. Traditionally, the physical workplace has been the particular location where people gather to do their work. Prior to digital technology, the physical workplace, by necessity, was the only workplace for the majority of workers.⁷ Workers commuted to the work, placing them in contact with materials, tools, and coworkers so they could interact with the people, things, and information they needed to do their jobs. Even now, when technology allows people to work from anywhere, the physical workplace has remained our dominant concept of the workplace. The digital workspace might be an emerging fourth space, a new environment requiring new norms that are still emerging.

The mass adoption of digital technology created two additional digital workplaces operating in parallel with the physical. First, there's the *personal digital* workplace, which consists of the tools and technologies making up an individual's personal digital environment. These days, the personal digital workplace blends a worker's own devices and services with those provided by the

organization they work for, blurring professional and private concerns.⁸ Then, we have *shared digital* workplaces: the web of relationships, facilitated by digital media, within which people interact with their teammates. A worker's personal digital workplace is their window into the digital world around them, both within the firm and to the public, that they use to discover and access the information and services they need to navigate their personal and professional lives.

The personal digital workplace is where workers work on tasks that they are solely responsible for. Shared digital workplaces, in contrast, are where teams gather to work together. While each worker has a single personal digital workplace, they can be involved in a number of shared digital workplaces, one for each team or workgroup they interact with.

These three types of workplaces have been gradually separating as digital technology has woven itself into the fabric of both society and work. Initially, digital technology was simply a tool to manage structured information—as with departmental computing in the '70s—and neither personal nor shared digital workplaces existed. The development of commercial groupware applications (software to help people working on a common task, Lotus Notes being an early example) in the '90s digitized collaboration and started the divergence between the physical and shared digital workplaces. The growth of consumer digital

technology in the late '90s and early 2000s, including the mass adoption of the internet along with personal email, social media, and bring-your-own-device, triggered the divergence of the personal digital workplace from the shared digital workplaces.

When COVID-19 struck, the personal and shared digital workplaces were suddenly separated from the physical one. This separation is commonly seen as a shift from working in the office to working from home, but it can be more productively thought of as a shift to working purely digitally, as workers could choose to work anywhere other than the office; it's just that for many of us, this happened to be working from home. Rather than working with digital tools in a physical workplace, we suddenly found ourselves in a workplace defined by digital technology.⁹

Importantly, this separation occurred at a time when teams have become the main vehicle for prosecuting work.¹⁰ The progressive unbundling of the firm has made it necessary for increasingly heterogenous teams—with members drawn from a range of organizations, not just a single one—to be responsible for different portions of an organization's activities. And because teams are where the work is done, the team is also where problems and challenges must be identified and solved.¹¹ Work is becoming more social and less task-based, as automation drives workers to work together and improve operations, identify problems, and craft solutions, rather than execute tasks. The shared digital workplaces in which teams work thus takes on outsized importance in helping or hindering team effectiveness—especially when it is not supported by in-person interaction.

The pandemic-driven exodus from the physical workplace spawned many research projects looking

at the challenges of creating a productive workplace at home (the physical workplace), or how a firm's investment in digital tooling and training could smooth the transition to working digitally (the personal workplace). The results of these studies have been mixed. A survey of UK workers early in the pandemic reported that they were more productive when working from home.¹² More comprehensive work by Japanese researchers later in the pandemic, however, showed that productivity was significantly lower.¹³ Other work in the United States found little difference or slightly lower productivity when working from home.¹⁴ Additionally, these findings are somewhat difficult to interpret, as survey participants may have confounded productivity in the sense of output per unit of time with productivity in the sense of overall output. There is anecdotal evidence that many workers simply worked longer hours during the pandemic, investing time that was previously spent commuting in work rather than leisure.

The variability in these results may well have resulted from differences in workers' experience of their shared digital workplace—whether they and their organizations were successful in establishing a common digital environment that facilitated work rather than getting in the way. If so, the important question then becomes: What does it take to establish a productive, shared digital workplace? We explored this issue in a survey conducted in the second half of 2020 where we polled 430 people working from home. Forced remote work created a unique opportunity to isolate what happens in a digital workplace when the physical workplace is completely removed, allowing us to glimpse the nature of the digital workplace in a nearly pure form.

What makes digital teams productive? Three important attributes

OUR STUDY SHOWED that the individuals who smoothly transitioned to working from home were typically those who were members of mid-sized teams.¹⁵ Independent workers such as freelancers, or workers caught up in very large teams and bureaucracies, had a harder time adapting. Indeed, membership in a moderately sized team of 2–12 individuals was a stronger predictor of a smooth transition to remote work than the worker’s own digital skills or the tooling and training their firm provided.¹⁶ This implies that, if team membership rather than an individual’s knowledge and skill is what most strongly determines success in a digital work environment, then our focus should be on preparing and empowering teams, not just individuals.

Our study identified three attributes common to productive digital teams: psychological safety, digital competence,¹⁷ and management support for experimentation and flexibility (figure 1). The more successfully an organization can encourage these attributes, the more productive its teams’ shared digital workplaces will be, and the more productive its workers will therefore be.

Psychological safety

Psychological safety refers to an individual’s or group’s perceptions of the consequences of risk-taking.¹⁸ Psychological safety gives team members the sense that they can speak up without being



FIGURE 1

Three attributes help teams behave in ways that produce positive outcomes

Attribute	Activity	Outcome
<i>This characteristic ...</i>	<i>... allowed teams to do this ...</i>	<i>... which gave this result</i>
Psychological safety	Develop new digital practices to build social connections within the team and facilitate working together.	An atmosphere of trust that dispels the fear of failure. This facilitates better information exchange, knowledge-sharing, and risk-taking by empowering workers to experiment, be creative, share knowledge, and negotiate.
Digital competence	Negotiate a coherent shared digital workspace that enables all team members to contribute and be productive.	Empowers team members to work productively in a digital workplace that spans physical and organizational boundaries, successfully dealing with both challenges and opportunities.
Management support for flexibility and experimentation	Empower the team to look beyond the firm's standard operating environment to pull in the tools and technology they need to address unanticipated problems and opportunities.	The ability to address unanticipated problems and opportunities and deal with unexpected challenges in a complex world.

Source: Deloitte analysis.

judged, and affords them the confidence to take risks, to voice unconventional ideas, and to engage in constructive conflict in the pursuit of common goals. It creates the comfort with experimentation and creativity needed to recognize and address issues—including issues in the working process as well as those related to the work itself.¹⁹

One important role of psychological safety is to help dispel a worker's fear of failure when negotiating new digital problems or online social interactions, as such fear can potentially hinder experimentation and risk-taking. Workplaces therefore need to build an atmosphere of trust in order to facilitate better information exchange and knowledge-sharing.²⁰

Psychological safety also has a demonstrated mediating role in creativity.²¹

Our study participants agreed that communicating and collaborating, exploring ideas, planning and setting goals, and discovering what needs to be done were more challenging when working remotely than when working face to face.²² However, many also saw a burst of creativity in their team, and in their organization, as they adapted to working digitally.²³

The creativity and problem-solving behavior encouraged by psychological safety become even more critical when the shared digital workplace

must stand on its own without the aid of in-person interaction. If a team member cannot figure out how to use a videoconferencing platform, for instance, they cannot ask the colleague in the next cube to show them how to use it; indeed, without knowing how to use it, the person may be at a loss as to how to contact their teammates at all. Psychological safety is essential to a team's ability to find solutions to these types of problems, such as exchanging personal phone numbers so that team members can call each other if the videoconferencing technology fails (or needs to be explained).

More than a year into the pandemic, it's a truism that strong relationships, the kind that promote psychological safety, are hard to establish and maintain when working entirely digitally. Yet the all-digital work environment also fostered human connections in other, unexpected ways. As the boundary between one's personal and professional life eroded, interruptions that might have been seen as unprofessional became humanizing instead. Nowhere was this more apparent than in a video clip from a little before the pandemic showing a child interrupting their parent's interview on broadcast television.²⁴ Instead of annoyance, people responded with empathy, relating the presenter's experience to their own challenges. This empathy came through in our survey, with *all* respondents noting an increase in tolerance for others.²⁵

It is the *team* that learns, adapts, and finds creative solutions that flourishes in this new paradigm. Our survey supported this, finding that people belonging to any team were more successful at adapting to working digitally than were "lone operators."²⁶ This was especially evident in the challenges faced by those working across organizations.²⁷ Preparations made by individual organizations for working digitally were often in conflict: One might standardize on one platform while another might select a

different platform, leaving teams that need to work across both organizations (drawing members from both organizations) to deal with the incompatibilities. Teams spanning organizations were generally able to negotiate a consistent approach to bridging these conflicting digital environments. Lone workers (workers not on teams), on the other hand, found that they had little influence on their digital workplaces, as the larger groups they interacted with tended to force tools and norms onto them.

People on productive teams had lower support requirements, were more creative when dealing with the challenges of working from home, and quickly developed new practices to help bind the team together when they were themselves apart. As new norms for digital interaction rapidly evolved, workers in productive teams developed more tolerance for others, and digital substitutes emerged to replace many face-to-face unstructured interactions. For example, a team might adopt practices such as "15-minute Fridays," setting aside time in meetings to catch up socially before attending to business, or scheduling, at short notice, five-minute video calls to mirror the corridor conversations that were no longer possible.²⁸

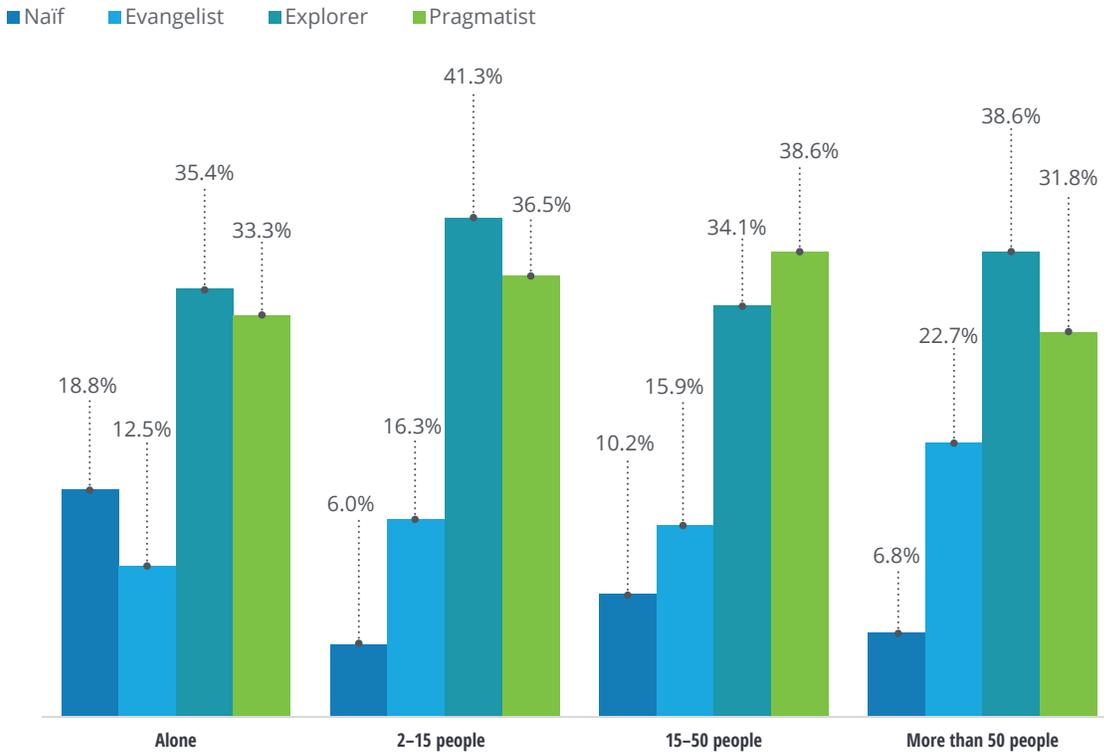
Digital competence

The second factor behind team effectiveness when working remotely was digital competence. Digital competence is the ability to navigate the proliferation of tools, technologies, and platforms that one could potentially use to work and to communicate digitally—the ability to work effectively in a workplace defined by digital technology.

One of our survey's key findings was that there was high proportion of digitally competent workers—digital pragmatists and explorers²⁹—in teams than

FIGURE 2

Worker digital competence varied by team size



Note: Analysis by Griffith University.

Source: Analysis of data from a survey of 430 individuals working from home, conducted in the second half of 2020.

among lone workers (figure 2). Digital pragmatists and explorers both take a welcoming view of digital technology. Digital explorers enthusiastically seek out new tools and approaches while digital pragmatists adopt them as needed (figure 3), but both are well prepared to share their expertise with less digitally inclined colleagues.

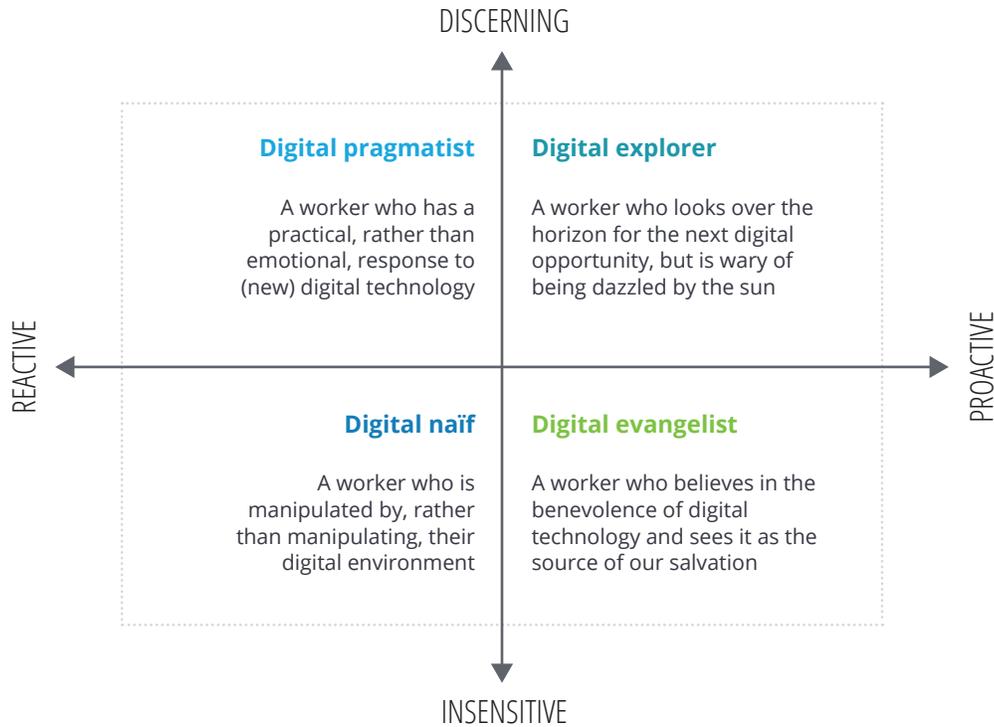
Not everyone on a team needs to be digitally competent for the team itself to be digitally competent. Rather, digital competence is an emergent property of the team, arising from the attitudes to digital technology among team members. A team is digitally competent when its

members' collective digital knowledge, skills, and experiences can be leveraged to understand and solve collective problems. In this context, individual team members are digitally competent when they are comfortable tapping into, and contributing to, the collective knowledge and experience of their team.

Given the importance of knowledge-sharing and psychological safety among team members, it's no surprise that the teams that transitioned most effectively to working from home were moderately sized ones of 2–12 individuals.³⁰ A team of this size is easiest for members to navigate and to

FIGURE 3

Digital workers can be classified by discernment and initiative



Source: Adapted from Peter Evans-Greenwood, Tim Patston, and Amanda Flouch, *The digital-ready worker: Digital agency and the pursuit of productivity*, Deloitte Insights, October 18, 2019.

access what their teammates know (“I know this because I know someone who knows it”). Workers in bigger teams have more trouble finding others with the knowledge to help them as they struggle to navigate the structural complications of large organizations, while workers who have no team at all (conceptually, a team of one) must solve problems on their own.

Of course, digital competence is important to digital collaboration whether or not team members physically sit together. Working in a fully digital environment doesn’t necessarily create new challenges—but it does make it impossible to work around these challenges in person. There is a

distinct difference between working 90%, 95%, or even 99% digitally, and working 100% digitally.

A productive, shared digital workspace must be usable for everyone, and it must be able to accommodate unforeseen changes and challenges, such as incompatible systems among teams working across different organizations, that their employer’s standard tools and training may not address. The advantage of digital competence here is obvious: Digitally competent teams will be better able to successfully search for and adopt alternative solutions to bridge digital gaps.

Management support for flexibility and experimentation

This brings us to the third factor behind a productive, shared digital environment: management support for flexibility and experimentation. The key behavior encouraged by this support is “pull”: empowering teams to find and adopt new and better solutions, including solutions not covered by a firm’s standard operating environment, on an as-needed basis as work demands shift and evolve.³¹ Pull contrasts with “push” approaches in which organizations endeavor to provide their workers with a predefined suite of tools and technologies, a common platform, along with the training to support them.

In practice, both push and pull are necessary. Our study found that workers and teams that adapted most easily to working from home relied both on what they already had—pushed to them by their organization—and what they discovered as they went along—pulled from coworkers who had already found a solution to their problem, or from external training and information sources.³²

However, shifting the balance from mainly push to mainly pull is the crucial difference between driving productivity in a physical workplace versus a shared digital one. Push works best in a stable environment with few surprises. When work is predictable, it makes sense to roll out mandated tools and approaches that have proven effective, as there’s little need for people to use anything else. Any deficiencies can be worked around in person, by improvising with a pen and napkin, for example, to illustrate a point. When working digitally, though, all problems are digital problems and require digital solutions—and unanticipated problems can require nonstandard solutions.³³ The standard tool set assembled by the firm might be insufficient for the task at hand, or a team that blends workers from more than one firm might find that the digital platforms provided by each firm are mutually incompatible.

The digitization of work, and the shift to working digitally, has made work more complex. Pull in such an environment is essential both for navigating today’s dizzying array of digital tools and technologies and for adapting to unforeseen situations.

Creating a productive digital workplace

THE MOVE AWAY from the office as the workplace was often seen as a move *to* the home. Organizations typically viewed this movement as a “lift and shift”: The new workplace is like the old workplace, just in a different “place.” This might seem common sense, but in reality, where the worker was located was not what mattered most when working remotely. Rather, digitizing work had the effect of shifting work from the physical to the digital workspace—instead of working physically, people were working digitally. What *does* matter most in this environment is the quality of the digital workplace in which teams operate.

Teams need a coherent, shared digital environment if they are to be productive. If team members are drawn from different locations, cultures, and organizations—from different digital environments—then the first order of business should be for the team to negotiate within itself what tools its own shared digital environment should contain.³⁴ This is something that productive teams do naturally. It’s also not something that many firms included, or would know to include, in their plans for enabling people to work from home.

A *push*-based approach comes naturally for firms—preparing their teams for anticipated challenges by providing them with the tools and training that they are expected to need. However, if teams are to be productive in the digital workplace, then

they also need to be empowered to respond to unanticipated challenges and to find effective ways to work across digital silos. Management sanction for *pull*, the ability to flex organizational structures at need, is therefore an important piece of the puzzle. To encourage pull, organizations must balance their efforts around structure and standardization with the freedom to leave corporate guiderails where required, allowing teams to supplement standard tools and platforms with additional ones at need. It’s still necessary to provide a suite of digital tools and training that will fulfill many worker and team needs. But organizationally sanctioned pull is also required to support teams in beginning with what is provided, but then quickly complementing it with new approaches as circumstances demand.

Developing digital equivalents of in-person social contact is important as well. While in-person work has its drawbacks—work distractions, office politics, long commutes—the physical workplace has also long been the heart of a firm’s culture. It’s where norms are developed and enforced, and it acts as the catalyst for serendipitous encounters that spark creativity and deepen interpersonal bonds. When we work from home, we can avoid the commute and the politics—but that doesn’t mean that we also need to give up the serendipity and sense of community. Organizations can encourage teams working remotely to build social practices into their shared digital environment, such as the

aforementioned 15-minute Fridays or virtual coffee roulette,³⁵ to foster the kinds of spontaneous conversations that lead to new ideas and stronger human connections.

Firms also tend to focus on the knowledge and skills of the individual worker: what does the worker know and what can they do. In a workplace defined by digital technology (rather than one that merely contains digital tools), individual knowledge and skills are less important than the attitudes and behaviors that team members bring with them, and the social norms and practices fostered by the team. Digital competence depends on the workplace's attributes as well as the worker's, and organizations with complex and opaque work cultures—where the pressure to be seen as competent prevents workers from admitting any confusion or uncertainty—can be fertile ground for learned helplessness. Rather, employers should encourage the attitude that it's okay to not immediately understand how to do something, as long as one is actively working toward it. Much online communication responsible

for team is the result of a grassroots effort. Imposing from above does not work. Managers need to foster the attitudes and behaviors that will enable workers and teams to effectively integrate digital tools into their work habits. Workers need to feel empowered to reach out to colleagues to learn what they need when they need it, and employers should tweak HR and management frameworks to create the space for these more experienced colleagues to respond. Our survey also found that openness to new experiences, flexibility, and resilience³⁶ were associated with higher productivity among wholly digital teams.³⁷ This too highlights that we need a human response for what at first appears to be a digital problem.

When work happens in the digital world, then our concept of the workplace must follow suit, or we miss opportunities to help teams be as successful as they can be. How we think about and frame the digital workplace, and the nature of the work that takes place within it, is likely to be what empowers organizations to take full advantage of the benefits it has to offer.

Endnotes

1. Jose Maria Barrero, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, "Why working from home will stick," University of Chicago, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics, Working Paper 174, April 22, 2020.
2. Just as online shopping enables the shop to go to the customer, rather than the customer to the shop.
3. "Foosball" for those of us in North America.
4. Those losses, of course, don't occur when a team that works in digital space also shares the same physical space. But that doesn't mean that creating a productive digital workplace is unimportant—only that the digital workplace carries less of the burden for enabling the social connections, including trust and serendipitous interactions, characteristic of high-performing teams.
5. Or warehouse, factory, or salesroom, and so on.
6. A "third place" is an environment such a church, café, club, public library, or park that represents neutral ground where people can gather and interact. The term was coined by Ray Oldenburg, an urban sociologist, in his book *The Great Good Place* (1991). The phrase comes from considering our homes to be the "first" places in our lives and our workplaces the "second." Oldenburg argues that "the beauty of third places, or 3rd spaces, is that they are other than the structured areas of our lives that are dictated by certain norms and dynamics."
7. The workplace as "the place workers go to work" is a legacy of the Industrial Revolution. Before the Industrial Revolution, the workplace was typically the home as workers obtained work via the putting-out system, fetching raw materials from a warehouse and returning finished goods. It's interesting to note that the Luddites' complaint wasn't that automation (the water frame) was taking their jobs, but that the shift from manual to powered weaving forced them to go to the work, rather than bring the work into the home, destroying their lifestyle in the process.
8. This blending of personal with professional digital technology is one major driver of the disruptions to work/life balance that working digitally can entail, which is similar to the changes the Luddites objected to, as mentioned in the previous note.
9. The challenges workers confront in transitioning from a workplace that uses digital tools, to one that is defined by digital tools, are discussed in Peter Evans-Greenwood, Tim Patston, and Amanda Flouch, *The digital-ready worker: Digital agency and the pursuit of productivity*, Deloitte Insights, October 18, 2019.
10. Don Miller, Tsutomu Okamoto, and Trevor Page, *Organizational design: The rise of teams*, Deloitte Insights, March 1, 2016.
11. Jessica Watson et al. *Building the peloton: High performance team-building in the future of work*, Deloitte Insights, July 1, 2020.
12. Barrero, Bloom, and Davis, "Why working from home will stick."
13. Masayuki Morikara, "The productivity of working from home: Evidence from Japan," *VOXeu*, March 12, 2021.
14. Alexander W. Bartik et al., "What jobs are being done at home during the Covid-19 crisis? Evidence from firm-level surveys," NBER Working Paper 27422, June 2020.

15. All survey respondents reported that the transition to working from home was successful, and they felt empowered to contribute digitally, though teams of 2–12 people reported the most successful transitions, while large teams of 50+ people reported the worst transitions.
16. Members of teams of 2–12 individuals reported less need to supplement the digital tools and training required to work from home, while also reporting a greater change in the nature of their work (across collaboration, tolerance, adaptability, communication, goal setting, multitasking, resilience, and exploring).
17. “Competence” can be seen as “the application of a skill in a particular context.” With “digital competence” the context being a workplace defined by digital technology, rather than a physical workplace. The concept of “digital competence” is discussed at length in Evans-Greenwood, Patston, and Flouch, *The digital-ready worker*.
18. M. Lance Frazier et al., “Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension,” *Personnel Psychology* 70, no. 1 (2021): pp. 113–65.
19. Watson et al. *Building the peloton*.
20. Alexander Newman, Ross Donohue, and Nathan Eva, “Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature,” *Human Resource Management Review* 27, no. 3 (2017): pp. 521–35; Yaping Gong et al., “Unfolding the proactive process for creativity: Integration of the employee proactivity, information exchange, and psychological safety perspectives,” *Journal of Management* 38, no. 5 (2012): pp. 1611–33.
21. Abraham Carmeli, Roni Reiter-Palmon, and Enbal Ziv, “Inclusive leadership and employee involvement in creative tasks in the workplace: The mediating role of psychological safety,” *Creativity Research Journal* 22, no. 3 (2010): pp. 250–60.
22. All respondents reported an increase in the need for collaboration, allowance/tolerance for others, adaptability/flexibility, communication, setting and communicating goals, multitasking, resilience, and exploring/validating ideas.
23. All respondents reported that the shift to working digitally resulted in their groups becoming more, or significantly more, creative and innovative in how they responded to work challenges.
24. BBC News, “Children interrupt BBC News interview,” YouTube, March 10, 2017.
25. The survey asked respondents “[h]ow has the nature of your work changed with the shift to digital?” The response was unanimous, with all respondents at least agreeing that allowance/tolerance for others was more important when working digitally. Larger groups tended to more strongly agree. People setting the direction of the work agreed more compared to supervisors, and supervisors agreed more compared to workers. Digital evangelists agreed the most, then explorers, followed by disinterested and pragmatists.
26. Team members (particularly of 2–12 member teams) rated their digital tooling as more effective than did individual workers. They also spent less time discovering what they should be doing, or dealing with (digital) challenges and rework. Individual workers reported that they spent more time (than members of a team did) multitasking, discovering what they should be doing, and dealing with challenges. It’s interesting to note that while individual workers were required to invest more time in organizing their work, dealing with challenges, and rework than did team members, they still reported slightly higher productivity working digitally than did team members. They also reported that they spent more time working alone, so it is likely that they were able to avoid the distractions and interruptions of an office and so felt more productive.

27. Satisfaction of the digital tools and training used was higher for collaboration with team members within the same company, than with team members drawn from other organizations.
28. All examples are taken from comments in the survey.
29. This framework was adapted from Evans-Greenwood, Patston, and Flouch, *The digital-ready worker*.
30. Members of teams of 2–12 people reported spending less time on “busy work”: discovering what they should be doing, dealing with (digital) challenges, rework, and so on.
31. The distinction between *push* and *pull* learning was explored in Evans-Greenwood, Patston, and Flouch, *The digital-ready worker*.
32. Individuals and members of larger groups were more likely to need to supplement the firm-provided digital tools.
33. There are anecdotal stories of organizations that have found less to be more. Rather than providing staff with comprehensive platforms, they provide them with a kit of tools that staff are free to supplement. The effect of this is to push responsibility for assembling the digital workplace to the team, empowering teams to find and combine tools to address their particular needs rather than forcing them to adopt a one-size-fits-all solution.
34. The World Economic Forum (WEF) talks about inclusiveness, trust, and shared capabilities—in essence, about building shared goals to enable the digital future. See: WEF, *Our shared digital future: Building an inclusive, trustworthy, and sustainable digital society*, December 2018.
35. Networking Tips for Beginners, “C is for... coffee roulette,” April 3, 2021.
36. These three personal attributes are also the cornerstones of creativity.
37. All survey respondents reported higher productivity when working digitally, strongly agreeing on the increased importance of flexibility and resilience.

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Practice leadership

Pip Dexter

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