



Working Anytime, Anywhere: The Effects on the World of Work



Jon C. Messenger, ILO/WORKQUALITY

Technology-enabled Work: Some examples

- “Gig-economy”
 - “Crowdwork” i.e. completing tasks through online platforms
 - Work on-demand via apps (e.g., transportation, home services)
- Traditional economy
 - Telework, which has evolved in nature and expanded over time (see Messenger & Gschwind, 2016)
 - ICT-mobile work (see Eurofound, 2016)
- Need to consider implications of these developments for job quality

Definition of T/ICTM Work

Telework/ICT-mobile work (T/ICTM) is third generation telework (the “virtual office”).

It includes all work performed by workers using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) outside the employer’s premises.

Scope

COUNTRIES:

- Europe: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
- Other regions of the world: Argentina, Brazil, India, Japan and the United States

POPULATION:

- Focus on employees but comparing with self-employed where relevant

T/ICTM worker categories

Category	Use of ICT	Place of work	
Regular home-based telework	Always or almost of all the time	Working in at least one other location than the employer's premises several times a month.	From home at least several times a month and in all other locations (except employer's premises) less often than several times a month.
High mobile T/ICTM			At least several times a week in at least two locations other than the employer's premises or working daily in at least one other location.
Occasional T/ICTM			Less frequently and/or fewer locations than high T/ICTM.
Always at the employer's premises	All categories	Always at the employer's premises.	

Source: Sixth EWCS (2015)

Methodology

Joint ILO-Eurofound Expert Questionnaire (2015)

1. Incidence of Telework / ICT Mobile work

2 Effects of Telework / ICT Mobile work

Hours of work and work schedules

Individual/Job performance and organisational performance

Work-life balance

Health and Well-being: risks and outcomes

3 Policy responses to Telework / ICT Mobile work

Examples of companies

National and sectoral agreements

Government initiatives

4 Comments

European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS, 2015)

Typologies based on incidence and place

Country comparison

Effects

Incidence of T/ICTM Work

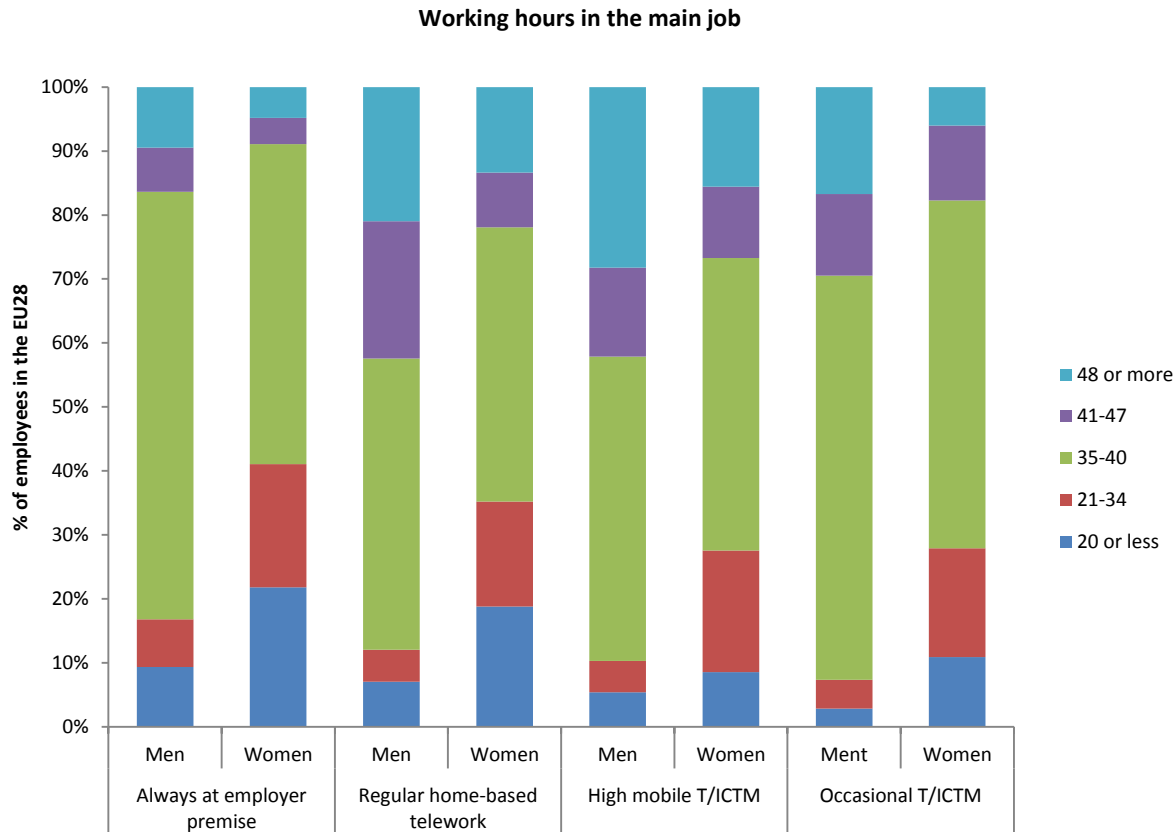
- General increase in T/ICTM in recent years (especially in other places different from home)
 - It ranges from 2% to 40% of employees, depending on the country, occupation, sector and the frequency with which employees engage in such work.
- T/ICTM is most common in the following industries: information and communication, finance and insurance, and professional, scientific and technical activities
- T/ICTM is most common among professionals and managers, but is also significant among clerical support and sales workers
- In relation to gender:
 - In general men are more likely to perform T/ICTM than women
 - However, women carry out more regular home-based telework than men.

Effects of T/ICTM: Working Time

- All the national studies report that T/ICTM workers work longer hours than average employees in the country
- The national studies report that T/ICTM workers also work more atypical work schedules (evenings, weekends), but also perform personal tasks during normal working hours
 - E.g., Belgium, Finland, Spain, India, Japan
- The national studies also suggest that T/ICTM workers have greater working time autonomy/”time sovereignty”
 - E.g., Belgium, Finland, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US

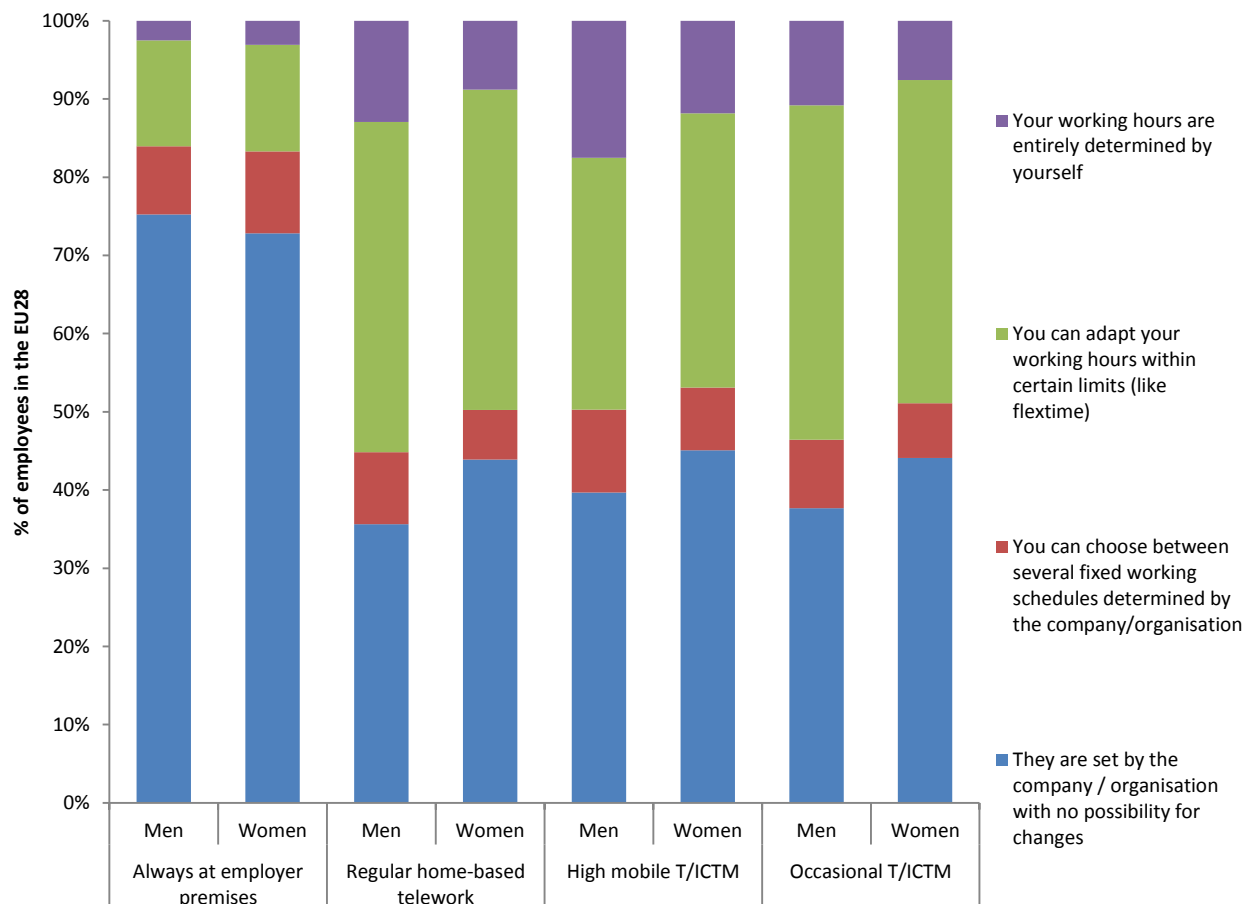
Effects of T/ICTM: Working Time

Percentage of employees by type of T/ICTM, gender and working hours, EU28



Effects of T/ICTM: Working Time

Percentage of employees with working time autonomy by type of T/ICTM and gender, EU28

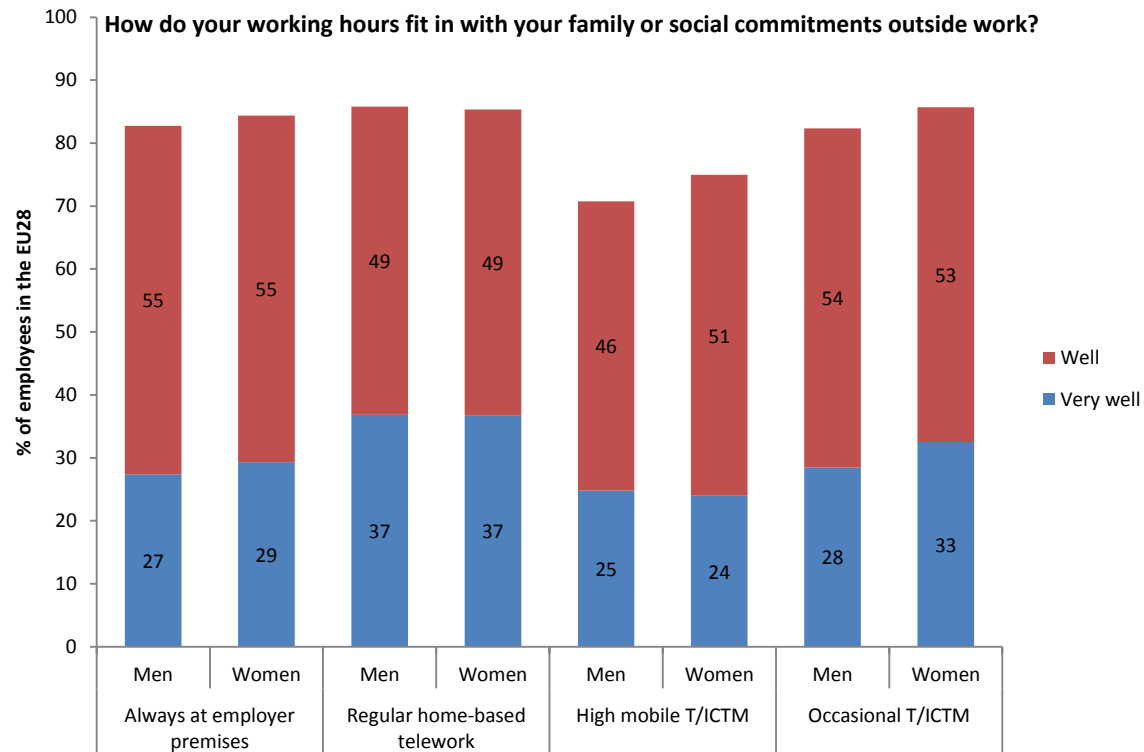


Effects of T/ICTM: Work-Life Balance

- Most of the national studies suggest that, overall, T/ICTM work has positive effects on work-life balance
 - Reported results most positive in Argentina, Belgium, Italy, Spain
- However, most national studies *also* report a “blurring of the boundaries” with more work-home and home-work interference
 - E.g., Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and the US
- Home-based teleworkers seem to report better work–life balance, while the ‘high-mobile’ workers report more negative outcomes.
- Partial and occasional forms of T/ICTM appear to result in a more positive balance than T/ICTM at higher frequency
- From a gender perspective, women doing T/ICTM tend to work shorter hours than men, and women seem to achieve slightly better work–life balance results

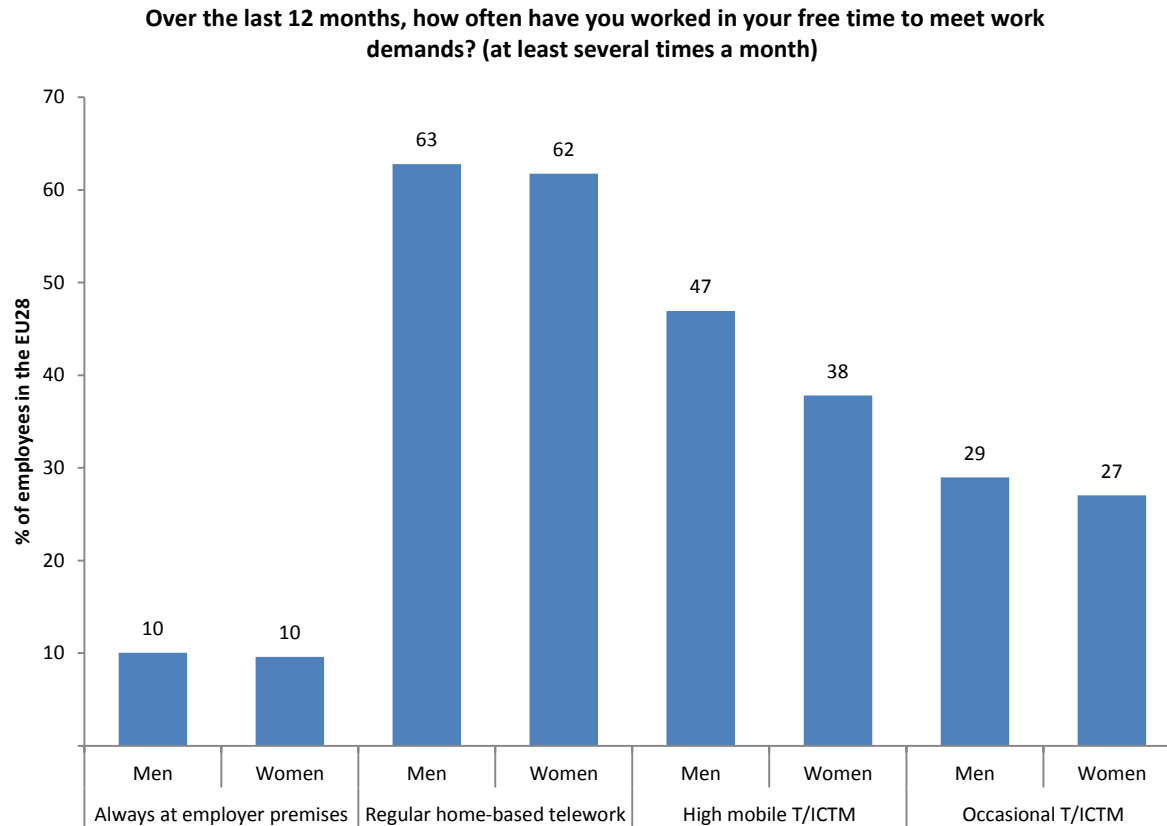
Effects of T/ICTM: Work-Life Balance

Employees reporting that their working hours fit well or very well with family or social commitments, by type of T/ICTM and gender, EU28 (%)



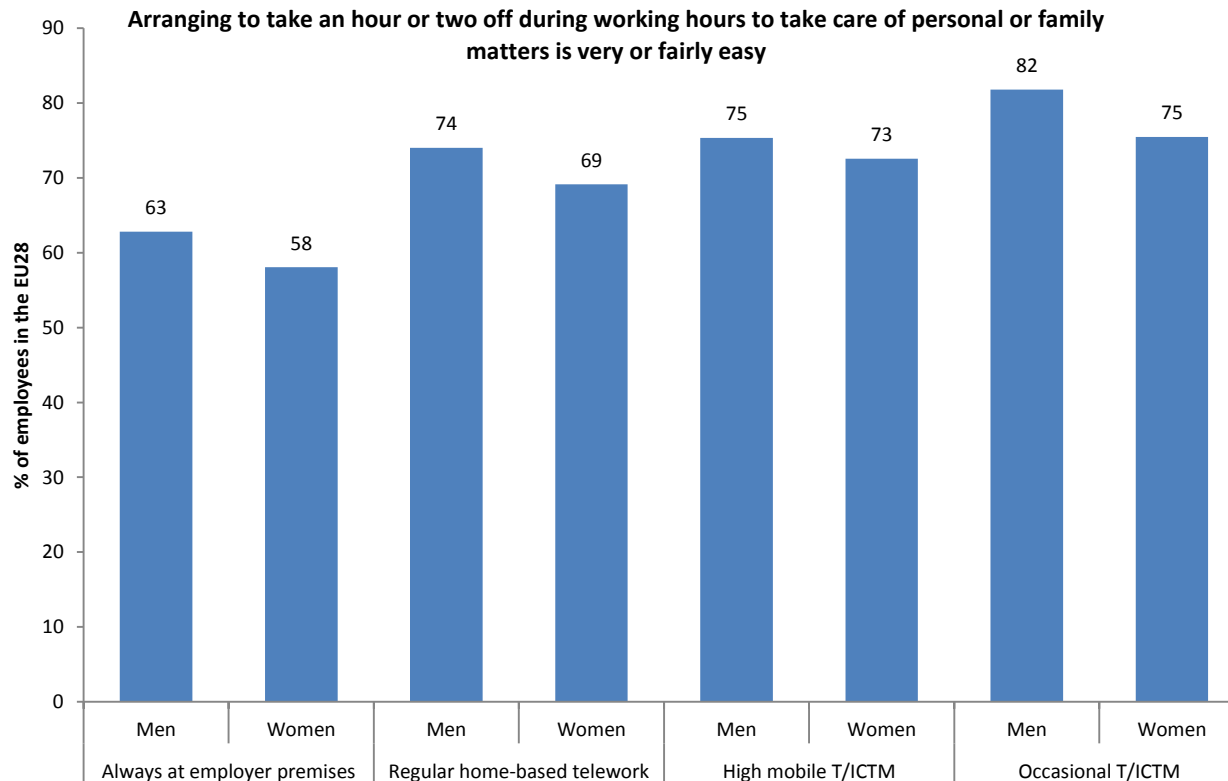
Effects of T/ICTM: Work-Life Balance

Employees reporting working in their free time to meet work demands by type of T/ICTM and gender, EU28 (%)



Effects of T/ICTM: Work-Life Balance

Employees reporting that it is very or fairly easy to take time off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters, by type of T/ICTM and gender, EU28 (%)

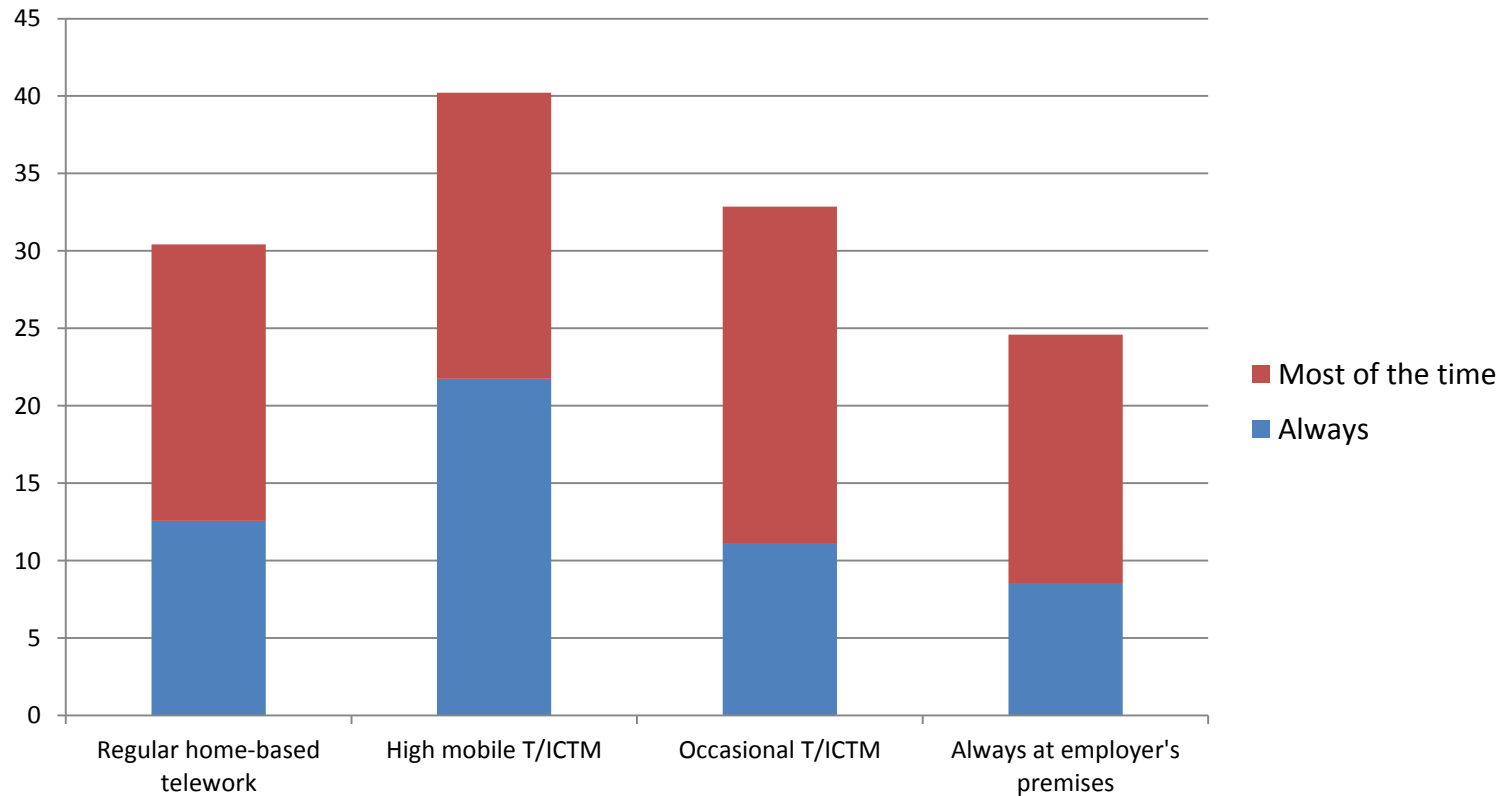


Effects of T/ICTM: Health and Well-Being

- Ergonomics: more research is needed
 - Finland, Spain, the Netherlands
- Blurring boundaries and stress
 - Most of the EU national studies
- Commuting and stress reduction
 - Brazil, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, UK, US
- Isolation is a potential problem
 - Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Netherlands, UK
- Flexibility, autonomy, work intensification, and stress

Effects of T/ICTM: Health and Well-being

Percentage of employees reporting stress always or almost all of the time by T/ICTM group, EU28



Main Effects on Job Quality: Summary

- The effects of T/ICTM work are *ambiguous* and perhaps even contradictory
- Longer, more “porous” working hours, including supplemental working hours, BUT reduced commuting time, more working time autonomy for employees to organize work schedules based on personal needs
- Better overall work-life balance, BUT more work-home and home-work interference due to blurring of work-life boundaries
- Greater work intensity, BUT more working time autonomy appears to offset the greater intensity except for “high mobile” T/ICTM workers
- More stress for some T/ICTM workers, especially ICT-mobile workers
- Lack of attention to ergonomics and the potential for isolation
- **Partial (part-time) telework and occasional ICT-mobile work seem to produce most positive balance in relation to the effects of T/ICTM**

Policy Suggestions

- Because T/ICTM work, overall, brings benefits for both employees and enterprises, policymakers should aim to strengthen the positive effects and reduce the negative ones
 - E.g., by promoting partial or part-time T/ICTM work, while restricting informal, supplemental T/ICTM and high mobile T/ICTM involving long working hours.
- The organisation of working time is changing and working time regulations need to reflect this reality. It is particularly important to:
 - Address the issue of supplemental T/ICTM work, and
 - Ensure that minimum rest periods are respected.
- A major challenge to applying OSH prevention principles and health and safety legislation to T/ICTM is the difficulty in supervising working environments outside the employer's premises.
 - Training and awareness initiatives are needed for both employees and managers on the effective use of ICTs for working remotely, as well as the potential risks.

Policy Suggestions

- T/ICTM work can play a part in policies that aim to promote inclusive labour markets and societies, such as older workers, young women with children and people with disabilities.
- Governmental initiatives and national/sectoral collective agreements are important for providing overall framework for a T/ICTM strategy.
 - This framework needs to provide sufficient space for developing T/ICTM arrangements that serve the needs and preferences of both workers and employers.
- The findings regarding differences in the working conditions of those engaged in different types of T/ICTM work need to be considered, and policy measures should tackle the reasons underlying the negative effects on working conditions.



Thank you for your attention!

Jon C. Messenger, ILO/WORKQUALITY
messenger@ilo.org