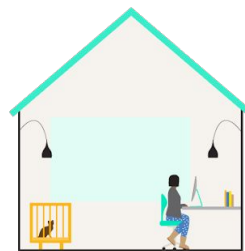
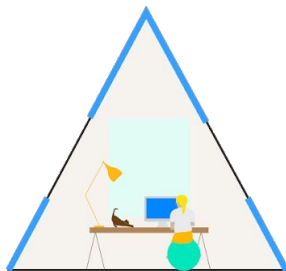
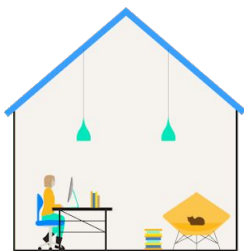


Reworking Work

Understanding The Rise of Work Anywhere

Global research into the impacts of COVID-19 on the nature of work and collaboration.



Foreword

When COVID-19 emerged into our lives, and rapidly changed how we were able to live and work, we had little idea of how hard or long the impact would be. It was obvious that this was an important opportunity to understand more about how people and teams work together.

Atlassian engaged Paper Giant to conduct research with people in Australia, USA, Japan, Germany and France to help us get an insight into how this extraordinary time was being experienced by knowledge workers. We aimed to build an understanding of how people have experienced this time and what the impact has been on their work lives.

The research work has culminated in the creation of clear insights and practical frameworks that will help us better support both Atlassians and our customers as we continue to move through these challenging times and evolve our way of working both as individuals and teams.

Leisa Reichelt

Head of Research and Insights
Atlassian

This is just the beginning

The experience of work has undergone a dramatic shift in recent months, and that change is far from over. Whilst COVID-19 forced change more rapidly, practices and behaviours were already shifting, at different speeds, in different places.

The 'next normal' is approaching. Organisations have low visibility over what it entails. They're uncertain about how to prepare and respond to emerging needs and trends, and they're in need of tools to help them.

We believe Atlassian is in a unique position to provide that guidance, both now and into the future.

This research provides a unique resource to share with the world, with suggestions on how Atlassian can best put it to use.

We hope you enjoy exploring our findings. Please get in touch with any questions you have.

Dr. Chris Marmo | Paper Giant CEO & Founder
chris@papergiant.net

We started with an ambitious goal

To understand the **changing work practices of individuals, teams and organisations** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced individuals, teams and organisations around the world to rapidly adapt to new restrictions on work.

To understand what these changes mean, Atlassian engaged Paper Giant to conduct research with knowledge workers in Australia, USA, Japan, Germany and France.

While triggered by COVID-19, the outcomes of this research will allow Atlassian to help other organisations understand their employees' needs and track the evolving nature of knowledge work.

Research questions

In response to COVID-19:

1. What's changed about the ways individuals, teams and organisations work?
2. What's driving differences in experience, or how well people adapt to these changes?
3. What does this mean for how people think about their work futures (hopes, needs and expectations)?

Experiences of 5000 workers in 5 countries

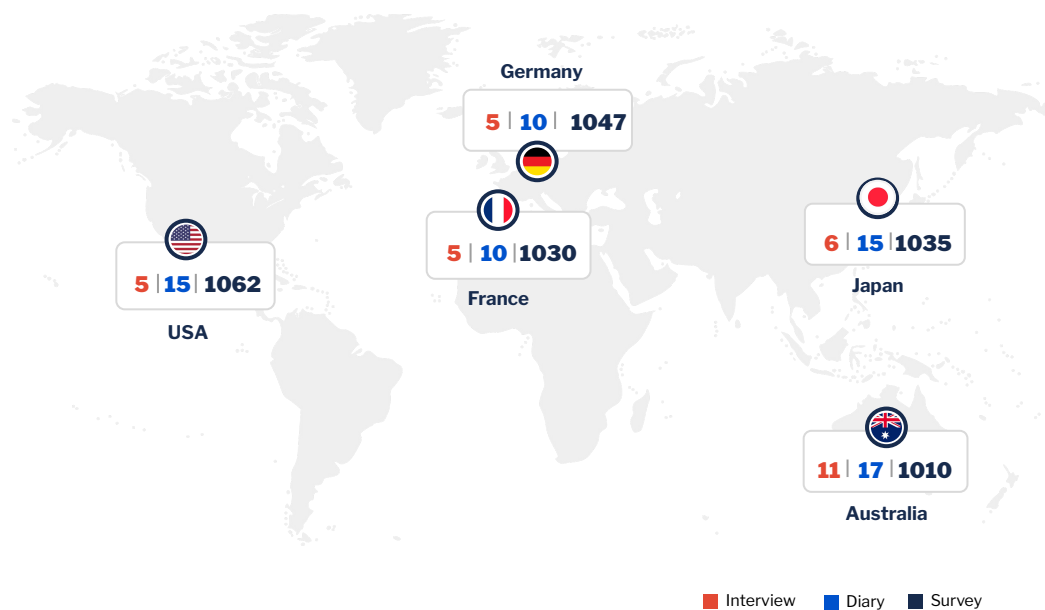
Between April and July 2020, we conducted qualitative and quantitative research to help us explore the **breadth and depth of change experienced**.

Interviews were held over the course of an hour, exploring workers' prior contexts, their remote experience and their expectations for the future.

Diary studies conducted over two weeks provided rich examples of work frustrations and successes as they happened, and all while participants managed the needs of the home.

Quantitative surveying of over 5,000 workers helped to contextualise and challenge the qualitative findings, while providing baseline measures for future research.

We also partnered with ANZ Bank in Australia to exchange knowledge throughout the project.



A New Normal is Emerging

The experience of work has undergone a dramatic shift in recent months, and that change is far from over.

Whilst COVID-19 forced change more rapidly, practices and behaviours were already shifting, at different speeds, in different places.

Within that diversity, we identified a set of core findings that speak to the shared experience of rapid change.

01 Everyone is 'managing more'

People working remotely are reporting a higher 'coordination cost' in their work, and they're working longer to compensate.

04 People are closer to their teams, more distant from their organisation

Teams are closer, but connections to colleagues and the wider organisation are weaker.

07 Women feel liberated from the 'status game'

There are fewer ways to communicate status or dominance in a digital world, and women are enjoying the change.

02 Everyone experiences this differently

Household complexity, role complexity and network quality are the most important factors in understanding needs.

05 Working from home reveals previously invisible inequalities

Personal circumstances are now far more important in determining the experience of work – and not everyone benefits.

08 Remote work is new to many, and most prefer the choice

As people became familiar with remote work, they became more aware of their preferences.

03 Remote work may lead to an innovation drought

More formal connection and structured communication is, so far, limiting the serendipitous encounters that spark new ideas.

06 People fear remote work may prevent career progression

People are anxious to demonstrate their effectiveness, and are worried that their managers aren't seeing evidence of their value.

09 People need help balancing new choices

Employees are still learning how to design the routines, schedules, and home environments that suit them and their role.

Everyone is ‘managing more’

People working remotely are reporting a higher ‘coordination cost’ in their work, and they’re working longer to compensate.

KEY STATISTICS

27%

reported **increased workloads** after the move to WFH

42%

believe working remote leads to **longer hours**

51%

are spending **more time** in **meetings**

53%

are spending **more time** **coordinating** with others

36%

are spending **more time** **documenting decisions**.

The rapid shift to remote and distributed work has brought with it new expectations of workers.

Across all geographies, workers shared how they were now ‘managing more’ in order to remain successful in their roles.

People are learning new tools and systems, coordinating with newly distributed teams, and balancing care responsibilities in the home while finding new ways to enhance focus and attention.

People reported that the core ‘people skills’ in their role, such as empathy, building trust and rapport, motivating themselves and their team, and effectively communicating with others, were far more important now than pre-COVID.

Rather than dropping their own expectations of productivity or effectiveness though, people are working longer to compensate.

Thought Starters

- Should role expectations be changed in response to the higher coordination costs of remote work? If so, how?
- How might flexible work policies adapt to better support and control the negative consequences of remote work?

The experience of remote work is diverse, but determined by three key factors.

1

Household complexity

The level of care duties a person has responsibility for, as well as the density of their household, impacts a person's remote working experience.

2

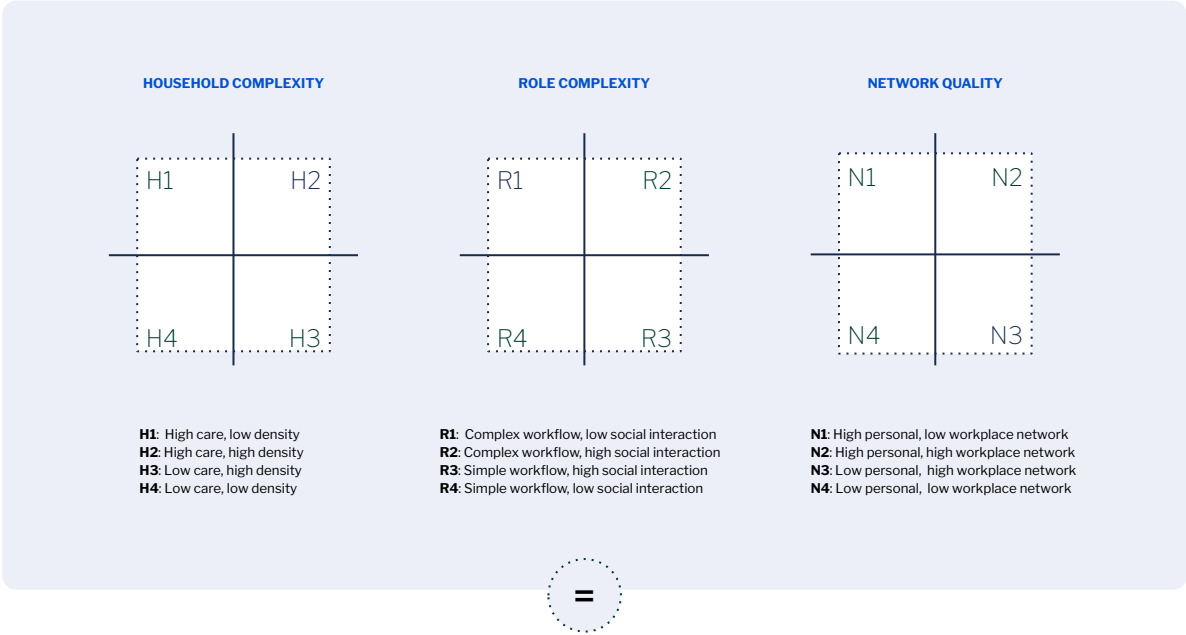
Role complexity

The complexity of an employee's workflow, and the level of social interaction they depend on to be successful in their role, influences their job success and satisfaction.

3

Network quality

A person's access to personal and workplace networks contributes to a person's sense of belongingness and support.



YOUR POSITION IN THESE QUADRANTS DETERMINES YOUR EXPERIENCE

Remote work may lead to an innovation drought

More formal connection and structured communication is, so far, limiting the serendipitous encounters that spark new ideas

KEY STATISTICS

51%

are attending **more pre-organised meetings** than before

31%

of people are **spending less time talking informally** with colleagues

28%

believe that there are **fewer or worse collaboration opportunities** in remote work

Connection and communication in remote work has become more intentional and deliberate.

This has encouraged more purposeful participation, but from carefully chosen 'invitees'.

To avoid 'meeting fatigue', and in efforts to remain efficient, fewer people are invited to attend meetings.

Some of our participants worried their work's potential could be limited, if they continue to receive narrow inputs from the same, familiar voices.

Likewise, they found it difficult to balance asynchronous work with the need to connect or invite input. Interpreting availability of others is complicated, and people feel hesitant to 'intrude'.

Remote work has an 'insulating effect', where more work is documented, but in less visible forms.

Participants lamented organic encounters of others' work, once pinned to walls or left on desks, which made them open to comment and improvement.

Thought Starters

- How might current remote work practices, policies and toolsets be better adapted to foster innovation?

People are closer to their teams, more distant from their organisation

Teams are feeling closer, but connections to colleagues outside of one's team have worsened, and attachments to 'the organisation' are weaker.

KEY STATISTICS

38%

believe their **teams are getting along better** now, than before

40%

believe the quality of **social interactions more broadly** have worsened

Many participants reported a strong sense of cohesion and connection between themselves and their teams after the transition to remote work.

High levels of contact helped most teams to sustain, and even enhance, their team cohesion.

Measures relating to task cohesion, such as the team's 'concentration' and their ability to 'pull together', are particularly strong, with confidence at 69% and 56% respectively.

However, people had fewer opportunities to connect with other colleagues, and few had made efforts to maintain relationships outside of their teams.

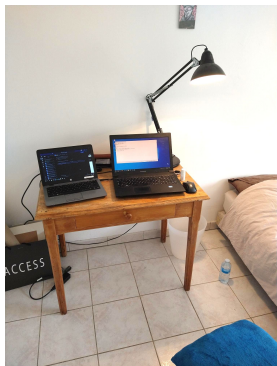
Organisations' attempts to promote cross-team connections have so far been lacklustre. Most have simply 'lifted and shifted' rituals once held in-office, such as evening drinks and team-building exercises. Others had taken to adding more 'human' elements to their intranets. Some had made no efforts at all.

Thought Starters

- How might organisations foster cross-team connection in ways that are meaningful and digitally appropriate?

Working from home reveals previously invisible inequalities

Personal and life circumstances are now far more important in determining the experience of work – and not everyone benefits.



WFH Snapshot: France

A 'low density' household can also mean smaller house, making it impossible to separate professional and private spaces

Those workers with larger, more private workplaces or less complex households have advantages over their colleagues who don't.

Likewise, those who are new to an organisation, or younger in their careers (and therefore have less established workplace or professional networks) are at a systemic disadvantage in remote work, and worry for their career prospects.

Parents reported finding it more difficult to be effective while working from home than non-parents.

Those in more complex, 'people' roles, including managers, also found it far more difficult to perform their job to their satisfaction than others.

Organisations will need to be proactive around identifying systemic inequalities in their workforces and ensure the equitable workplace policies extend far further than they ever have before.

Thought Starters

- What role should organisations play in supporting aspects of an employees life that were previously considered 'personal'?
- What does it mean to support an equitable and safe workplace, when that workplace is someone's home?

People are concerned about recognition and career progression

People are feeling more effective, but are anxious to show it, and they're worried that they're not 'being seen' by managers.

"I love the fact I'm stress free and really productive but I'm afraid I lose credibility and become disposable. I feel like out of sight out of mind kind of. It's easier to lose sight of the value I would bring."

KEY STATISTICS

43%

of people had become **more concerned** about their job security

33%

are spending **more of their time reporting** to clients or managers

Many participants reported feeling more effective and productive, enjoying the fewer distractions that working from home can bring.

However, concerns around job security – and a recognition that managers and executives often had real concerns about people's effectiveness and productivity at home – led to more effort demonstrating their effectiveness.

As options for remote work become more permanent, a choice to work remote while others remain in office could limit opportunities to develop their work identities.

Being distant from others, especially those in influential positions, was felt to threaten their visibility and, ultimately, their career progression.

Thought Starters

- How might we develop new tools, rituals or ways of working that help individual contributors demonstrate effectiveness in a remote work context?
- How might staff be reassured of equal opportunity, no matter their work location preferences?

Women feel liberated from the 'status game'

There are fewer ways to communicate status or dominance in a digital world, and women find this liberating.

"You feel kind of restrained when you're in a business office. I can get anxiety going into a meeting with people who, for whatever reason, I might see as above me. These video calls just makes me feel a little more comfortable and open."

KEY STATISTICS

46%

of **women say their confidence in their ability to achieve has improved** since the move to remote work.

39%

of **women want to work fully remote** (as opposed to a mix, or from the office), compared to just 31% of men.

Freedom from the more performative elements of work may contribute to women's comparatively stronger desire to work fully remote.

Survey results show two-fifths (39%) of women want to work fully remote (as opposed to a mix, or from the office) compared to just 31% of men. However, many shared concern about maintaining visibility in the office, should those in influential positions choose to work from the office.

Many reflected that preparing and maintaining work identities was exhausting. Now free from expectations of 'presentability', they felt more able to focus on doing their jobs.

Almost half (46%) of all women say their confidence in their ability to achieve has improved since the move to remote work. Only two-fifths (40%) of men believed the same.

Thought Starters

- How might organisations support women in remaining more confident and assured if they return to the office?
- How might organisations ensure equal career opportunities and acknowledge to those who chose to work fully remotely?

Remote work is new to many, and most prefer the choice

As people responded to and then became familiar with remote work, they became more aware of the benefits (and the drawbacks).

KEY STATISTICS

72%

had some form of **flexible work policy** in place pre-COVID.

43%

had **never, or very rarely, worked from home**

41%

say it is now **easier to manage work- and home-related demands** on their own time

41%

say it's now **easier to find time to relax** and unwind during the work week

COVID-19 forced many workers (and managers) to use flexible work policies that were already in place but rarely used.

Many of our participants had never, or rarely, worked from home. Despite some of the challenges (documented here), many found working remotely, from home, preferable to office based work, and most prefer at least one day of non-office based work going forward.

Those that preferred full-time presence in an office had complex households or made that selection on the assumption that their colleagues would also, mostly, be in the office.

Thought Starters

- What conditions or activities will be best suited to office based work and collaboration?

People need help understanding the trade-offs presented by new choices

As organisations implement changes to workplace policies, employees are still learning how to design their routines, schedules, and home environments.

KEY STATISTICS

33%

of people **are uncertain whether their work style preferences will be supported** by their organisation

Most people had never or rarely worked from home, and now the majority want the choice to continue doing so permanently or regularly.

Workers are still learning 'remote working skills' and are trialing routines, rituals and set ups that suit them and their role.

Most people are clear that they need a better workspace, but there is far less consensus about other needs.

Participants reported wanting a 'better work-life balance' in remote work (29%), 'greater clarity in their role' (28%), 'more emotional support' (14%), or 'support to manage care or household demands' (8%). Many are unsure they'll get this support.

This indicates a long tail of diverse needs, and organisations will be expected to be proactive in helping individuals design the work experience that's best for them.

Thought Starters

- How might organisations help workers reflect on their needs and implement the right kinds of supports?

Thank you

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