

# The influence of technologies on the workplace, employees and organizational culture in the post-Covid-19 era

## Abstract

Work and employment are being impacted significantly by the COVID19 pandemic. This paper tried to discuss important research that affect the new technologies used in the surveillance and monitoring of workforce in the post-Covid 19 era. Looking back at the published research, news and business magazine articles from a theoretical perspective, the new monitoring and surveillance technologies are affecting employees work and personal life which is vital to study and bring new insights for further research and practice. Thus, it is of utmost importance to study new technologies and their effect on employees' work attitude. We conclude that it is critical that employees and their organizations be included in the evaluation and subsequent adaptation to working remotely of the insights acquired from the pandemic situation.

**Keywords:** covid19, technology, control, resistance, surveillance, crisis, work

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## Introduction

The terms “surveillance” and “monitoring” are often confused, taken to indicate the same concept, and used similarly in almost the same sentence. There are many variations between the two, despite the fact that they both include comparable organizational approaches. In contrast to employee monitoring, which has a more positive connotation, work-related activities are often the focus of employee monitoring. Taking things a step further, surveillance tactics may take the form of invasive and comprehensive monitoring, which involves tracking a wide variety of information (both work-related and non-work-related) (including personal traits) and violating the private domain of those under observation. Additionally, the term “surveillance” indicates that employees may be unaware that they are being watched. Observation is sometimes connected with more apocalyptic aspects in social discussion, and it conjures up images of a modern digital supervision state in which people — whether working or not — are subjected to uneven, unseen, and persistent observation.<sup>1</sup>

The COVID19 situation has had a massive influence on people's working life. As the pandemic progressed throughout the globe in the early part of 2020, it caused significant disruptions in our personal and professional matters. As firms fight to meet different expenses, millions of people throughout the world found themselves unemployed or laid off. The pandemic's entire financial impact has yet to be assessed, although it will be enormous.<sup>2</sup> Emotional manifestations in the profession have grown, and frustrations have risen as society grapples with the pervasive mortality and morbidity of friends, family, and coworkers.

There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that increased and prevalent workplace monitoring systems has significant detrimental consequences for employees, including the inhibition of innovative and self-sufficient cognition, the limitation of individual freedom, the induction of tension, and the erosion of confidence in administration. Employee “monitoring” and “surveillance” need to be examined not just in terms of confidentiality rights, but also in terms of whether they influence a larger range of privacy rights and workforce productivity. That's owing of the broad consequences for the workplace. “Monitoring” and “surveillance” in the workplace,

if done without sufficient regulations and proper safeguarding for workers, may jeopardize basic humanity and result in a degradation of employment arrangements. When workers are under monitoring — or fear that they are under observation — their cooperation is narrow. Supervision that is excessive and unnecessarily intrusive may lead to increased employee resistance over time, as well as professional harm for the companies that engage in such tactics, demonstrating to be a fruitless labor control method.

## Industrial relations in the post covid-19 era

Albert Einstein said, “in the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity”. Due to the fact that huge sums had been set aside for economic stimulation, and that companies and labour unions were present at the negotiating table and appeared to be interacting successfully, the authorities had the potential not only to spur economic growth, but to do this in a direction that also dealt well-documented disparities. With this thawing of lengthy adversarial connections, it was possible to see a shift from zero-sum game struggles for individualized slices of the pie to real negotiations for the benefit of all parties. However, the cooperation method lost the arduous test of achieving substantial legislative change rather than announcing a new kind of constructive industrial relations.<sup>3</sup>

Industrial relations scholarship in general has been criticized of having “historical and conceptual amnesia”, a critique leveled even at researches on scientific development and its influence on jobs. It has lately been suggested that workplace practices scholarship has “far too little grasp of the past, and its fixation on the present is a continuing weakness”. The occurring situation provides a chance to concentrate on the implications of previous study on the multiple diverse aspects of labor and industry. Before diving into present crisis study, it is in need of a more retroactive and analytical technique to comprehending challenges important to latest tech, work, and industry if we are to construct meaning of changes caused about by COVID19.<sup>4</sup> Workplace monitoring is not a new concept; organizations have been looking for methods to proactively watch their staff for years. These days, corporate wellbeing initiatives give workers with access to wearable technology, which allow them to measure their wellness and even their work efficiency. For example, at certain businesses, workers who

fail to reach specified health and wellbeing criteria or who refuse to engage in a health scheme may be subject to monetary punishments. Aside from this growing attention in monitoring workers' wellbeing, the relation to organizational monitoring has witnessed a consistent growth in the previous ten years.<sup>5</sup>

### Frontline control and monitoring

The outcomes of available scholarship on workplace technology are dominated by job intensity and enhanced management control. The majority of labor-process studies have been on people who work in 'traditional' jobs are beyond homes. The technical implications of recent situation is most visible for many of the workers who continue to work in physical businesses. Before the emergence of COVID19, personnel in home care<sup>6</sup> and the rescue services were already straining owing to increasing computerized surveillance, job intensity,<sup>7</sup> and being driven to 'unnecessary extremes'.<sup>8</sup>

### Working from home: control and surveillance

Through this whole period, a large number of people have been compelled to operate from their homes in order to survive. A different paradigm for the many, and with it new obstacles, many of which 'do not absolutely correlate to the limitations of the old "workplace,"' will be encountered. Howcroft and Taylor<sup>9</sup> define a formalized formalized formalized formalized. It doesn't matter whether that is referred to as working at home or working remotely. An investigation into teleworking has netted an astounding volume of knowledge and perspectives into the challenges confronted by workforce who work from home.<sup>10</sup>

After organizations abruptly turned to teleworking in 2020, workplace monitoring became a significant concern. Afterwards when the WHO designated Covid-19 an epidemic on March 11, 2020, internet queries for "employee monitoring" soared. Employees' surveillance technology need climbed 74% from March 2019. After one and half year, many workers started remote working. With the passage of time, managers still believe the need to monitor their workforce and workplaces. So they use applications to trace and control staff members remotely.<sup>11</sup> Increasingly, businesses are turning to applications that keep control of their employees' work devices. Another device, dubbed "Time Doctor", utilizes a device's camera to snap a photo of the workers after every ten minutes and saves recordings of their computers.

Other systems may be deployed discreetly on the PCs of employees. Using a time-lapse chronology of every webpage and application they use, which ranks employees based on their efficiency rating for the given time period. In some cases, businesses use a low-tech method, forcing employees to participate in ongoing tele-conferences.<sup>12</sup>

### Potential for resistance

The pandemic caused many people to work from home. Numerous industries tried to find strategies to hold track of workforce who were no longer in the immediate line of fire. There are even now a lot of people who use tracking systems because they work from home and there aren't a lot of new workplace open positions. In reality, through use of latest and more impactful technology to track and maintain employees seems to be so prevalent that there have been calls for regulatory authorities in a lot of places. Staff members are no strangers to computerized surveillance; companies may track their employees' emails and online surfing histories. During the past one and half year, it has grown much more popular and some firms have resorted to performance tracking technologies in order for them know what their workers are up to while they are working remotely.<sup>13</sup>

In the process of becoming acclimated to their new environs and higher levels of control and monitoring, considering the prospect of employee protest, it is vital to have an open mind. Increasing the amount of decentralized work will almost certainly result in an increase in the amount of dispersed opposition, both collectively and individually. Despite the fact that labor unions have always had difficulty exercising power over the dynamics of technical change,<sup>14</sup> there have been several documented cases of pushback, both individually and collectively, to technological progress throughout history. Several examples highlighting the possibility for cooperation among homeworkers,<sup>15</sup> blogs and other social media platforms, have appeared in this magazine.<sup>16</sup>

It is essential to take into account the likelihood of employee dissatisfaction. Per the paper, increase in resistance, lower work engagement, higher pressure, diminished workplace dedication, and a greater tendency for turnover are all possible consequences of intensive supervision. Tracking and reporting may lead to unproductive conduct in the form of alternatives, as well as coordinated actions that question or defy observation and control. The problem prompted several employees to leave their employment.<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion

This article has offered a brief outline of the difficulties surrounding technological advances, functions, and employment in the COVID19 age. "Few organizations plan for the loss of their workplaces or workforces" and so the study informs us much more can be learned from analyzing our prior encounters with technologies to facilitate us comprehend the problems presently confronting us in the job market today and even beyond. The situation demonstrates the continuing implications and centrality of labor relations.

In light of the lessons learned from the preliminary COVID-19 strategy, it is critical to craft an effective teleworking policy that determines both manager - employee reviews on what has functioned well and what could be enhance, and also the prospective necessity investing in infrastructure and communication technologies required to undertake jobs remotely on a fairly long grounds by telecommuting better. As a result of the current epidemic, it is critical that employees and their organizations be included in the evaluation and subsequent adaptation to working remotely of the insights acquired from the pandemic situation.

### Policy recommendations

Social interaction, workforce participation, and explicit regulation surrounding workforce surveillance are the pillars of managing risk in the technological era and thus needs to be considered seriously when outlying new work policies in the post pandemic outbreak.

This means that national laws and legal requirements must be updated to deal with the issues created by electronic and technological surveillance of employees.

The claim to confidentiality, as well as the right to a decent and equitable work place, may be jeopardized by invasive, omnipresent, and invasive personnel surveillance.

It is critical to hold workers' surveillance the expansion of algorithm-based workplace administration approaches into more conventional areas of operation in order to prevent a negative cycle in workplaces and different conditions.

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## Conflicts of interest

None.

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