The impact of hyper connectivity on work and well-being

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A variety of ubiquitous technologies have allowed home and work life to overlap. However, the health and occupational impacts following these developments are far from clear. While some people can thrive in an 'always-on' environment, other research has focused on Cyberloafing - a term used to describe the actions of employees who use internet access for other activities while pretending to do legitimate work.

Today, the very same digital technologies used to conduct business can also log working patterns. Tracking such behaviour can help institutions meet compliance obligations and support healthy working practices, but remote monitoring may have unintended consequences. For example, even with good intentions, new systems will generate additional security vulnerability's and could inadvertently increase the risk of employee burnout.

Many questions remain when it comes to how people regulate their technology use to meet occupational and social obligations. Therefore, this PhD project will explore how mobile technology is changing the way we work and how it impacts individuals and their environment.

The successful applicant will help shape the project with the supervisory team. However, the PhD may consider:

(1) How employees from different sectors perceive the impact of digital working practices on productivity and well-being.
(2) How data from mobile or wearable devices (e.g. movement, location, and sleep quality) is associated with well-being and productivity.
(3) How digital traces can predict future absenteeism or reduced productivity.
(4) The ethical and security implications of new technologies that are already being used to monitor employees.

A better understanding of the above would help recognize and mitigate challenges associated with flexible working in the digital age. Similarly, from a technical perspective, results would aid the development of new systems that ethically support employees and employers in the future.