

Covid-19 could cause permanent shift towards home working

Alex Hern, Technology editor. *The Guardian*

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Covid-19 could permanently shift working patterns as companies forced to embrace remote working by the pandemic find that their employees do not want to return to the office once the closures are lifted.

5 The sudden increase in working from home is presenting problems as well as opportunities: on the one hand, startups such as Slack and Zoom and established giants including Google and Microsoft are offering their tools for free, in the hope that people who start using them in a crisis may carry on once normality returns.

10 On the other hand, some systems are already creaking at the edges. Corporate networks, unused to having a majority of their connections coming in over virtual private networks (VPNs), are experiencing unusual quirks, while internet service providers have come under pressure to lift bandwidth caps so that remote workers do not get cut off from their employers halfway through the month.

15 But it looks increasingly as if the situation will not ever go back to how it was: many employees for companies who have sent all staff home are already starting to question why they had to go in to the office in the first place.

(...)

20 "We understand this is an unprecedented step, but these are unprecedented times," Twitter's head of HR, Jennifer Christie, said in a message to staff. Christie promised to reimburse employees, including hourly workers, for the expenses required to set up home offices, covering the costs of buying things such as computer hardware, desks and ergonomic chairs. "Overall, working from home doesn't change your day-to-day work, it just means you'll be doing it from a different environment," Christie added.